

İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ORGANIZATION STUDIES PHD PROGRAM

**LINGUISTIC CHOICES OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE CONTEXT OF
CROWDFUNDING: DOES IT ALIGN WITH GENDERED EXPECTATIONS?**

Hatice ETEM
116801005

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İSTANBUL
2022

Linguistic Choices of Entrepreneurs in the Context of Crowdfunding: Does It Align with Gendered Expectations?

Kitlesel Fonlama Baęlamında Giriřimcilerin Kullandıęı Dilsel Tercihler: Cinsiyete Dayalı Beklentiler ile Kullanılan Dil Uyumlu Mu?

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| Date of Approval | : | 09/02/2022 |
| Total number of pages | : | 148 |

Anahtar Kelimeler

- 1) Giriřimcilik
- 2) Konuřma dili
- 3) İletiřim stratejileri
- 4) Toplumsal cinsiyet
- 5) Kitlesel fonlama

Keywords

- 1) Entrepreneurship
- 2) Spoken language
- 3) Communication strategies
- 4) Gender
- 5) Crowdfunding

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Gonca Gunay, without whose guidance this study would not have been possible. Her expertise encouraged me to exceed what I thought I was capable of. I would also like to acknowledge Assoc. Prof. Basak Ucanok Tan and Assoc. Prof. Deniz Kantur for giving me encouragement to continue with my doctoral studies. Finally, I would like to thank my mom, my dad and my stand-in parent for their understanding while I dedicated so much family time to finishing my thesis. Their unconditional support has been indispensable.

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ABSTRACT

Women's life has always been difficult due to the dominance of men over women. Gender-related biases, stereotypical beliefs, discriminations and prejudices which women face even today, are the outcomes of the superiority of men over women since the early ages. Entrepreneurship is one of the economic and sociological fields that is deeply affected by deep-seated barriers about women. In a male dominated world which is designed by man himself, women are the ones who have to challenge harder in crowdfunding platforms to raise the money they need for their projects. Several studies claim that venture capitalists prefer male entrepreneurs to invest in their projects more often because entrepreneurship has been codded as *masculine* since the field was designed. That is why, women who decide to be an entrepreneur is tagged as insufficient or less capable. These gender-related prejudices eventually lead female entrepreneurs to adopt more masculine manners. However, such female entrepreneurs experience career backlash as they are assumed to be too assertive or bossy. Such assumptions may also create some problems for male entrepreneurs which means even a male entrepreneur may have the potential to be judged negatively by the investors if he prefers to use more feminine language. So, language style and behavior, not only for female entrepreneurs but also for male entrepreneurs play the most important role in crowdfunding platforms. This study reveals many significant realities about entrepreneurship from the point of ages-long, deep-seated gender-oriented biases and prejudices on femininity and masculinity concepts.

Keywords: Gender; Entrepreneurship; Spoken language; Crowdfunding; Communication strategies

ÖZET

Kitlesel fonlama sitelerinde girişimciler bireysel destekçilerden (backers) ihtiyaç duydukları yatırımı talep ederken projelerini tanıttıkları bir tanıtım (pitch) videosu çekerler. Girişimcilerin tanıtım videolarında destekçileri ikna etmek için kullandıkları dil, özellikle yüz yüze iletişimin olmadığı böyle bir ortamda, çok daha stratejik ve etkin olmalıdır. Fakat girişimcilik dünyasının çarkları “erkek hegemonyası” altında işlemektedir; toplumlar ile birlikte şekillenmiş geçmişten süre gelen köklü cinsiyete bağlı klişe ve beklentiler girişimcilik dünyasında da varlığını sürdürmektedir. Kadın girişimciler ekosistemde kendilerine yer bulurken çok daha zorlanmakta ve cinsiyete dayalı klişelere çok daha yoğun bir şekilde maruz kalmaktadır. Her ne kadar kitle fonlama siteleri kadın girişimciler ile geleneksel yöntemlere kıyasla daha avantajlı olsa da erkek hegemonyası bu platformlarda da varlığını sürdürmektedir. Cinsiyete dayalı toplumsal beklentiler doğrultusunda “kadın” kavramı “feminen, pasif, edilgen, duygusal, temkinli” gibi *kadınsı* kavramlar ile bağdaştırılırken, “erkek” kavramı “agresif, zeki, atılgan, cesur, rekabetçi” gibi *erkeksi* kavramlar ile bağdaştırılmaktadır. Bundan dolayı kadının tam anlamıyla bir *leydi* gibi konuşması beklenmektedir: sakin, pasif, kibar, duygusal ve anlayışlı. Temel sorusu cinsiyete dayalı toplumsal beklentiler göz önüne alındığında kitle fonlama sitelerinde (indiegogo.com) kadın ve erkek girişimcilerin bireysel destekçileri ikna etmeye çalışırken farklı dilsel tercihlerde bulunup bulunmadıkları olan bu tez birçok farklı akademik alanlara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Cinsiyet; Girişimcilik; Kitle fonlama; Konuşma dili; İletişim stratejileri

INTRODUCTION

The gender-based division of lifestyle, in which women are supposed to be responsible for the family and other household issues, and men are chiefly subject to economy, politics and other institutions is deeply rooted in gender-based prejudices and biases. In the countries of early industrialization period, men became the majority of the labor force while women were marginalized and forced to stay at home to take care of their family. During the pre-industrialized era women were able to perform two jobs successfully; working at home for the family and for a living. After WW II, in 1950s the industrial revolution created the breaking point. The way works done, jobs' descriptions, and other related aspect of *labor* and *production* were transformed throughout the revolution. As a specific example of industrialized products, many artisans' work, even the farmers' could be listed. Very little manpower was left; almost the entire agriculture became mechanized. Capitalists began to control the whole production process as a result of gaining enormous power during that revolution. Soon, they started to control the markets, mechanisms, money, management, raw materials, labor; they became the ruling power. The former self-employed farmers and craftsmen had no choice but to sell their labor on the market to those proprietors, and women got the worst hit. Some parts of women's production that they carried in their homes to make money or to provide needed items for their family members while raising children such as clothes now became market-based production. As women's production of useful items was carried into factories, jobs that took place in those factories became available only for unmarried women. So suddenly, due to the industrial revolution, most women found themselves imprisoned either at home as an ordinary housewife with no money or in the factories used as a source for cheap labor; her social and economic rank and status was sharply downgraded. Such dramatic transformation created large crowds of *cheap labor* mostly from the working-class including females even if the number was small when compared to males'. Whatever the household produced in their homes earlier was being produced on a large scale at

factories. Physically and quantitatively the means of production altered through the new version of capitalism. Spinning, weaving, knitting, baking, and butchering were then being produced much faster and cheaper on a commercial basis as mass production by the *cheap labor* army. In fact, in the early era of industrialization, many countries, for instance England, did not have equal and fair regulated working conditions. People were forced to work long hours with no possibilities for maternity leave. It took long time to pass protective labor legislations in European countries. It was somewhere in between the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, working class in some production areas was granted some rights for the first time; legislation provided women some specific rights such as maternity leave and limited length of working hours and days; the new legislation opened a gate for females to earn their living whenever they feel the need to work because female labor is priceless not only for the family but also for the economy (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 50-51). However, for Schmitt (1995, 128) the new legislation which seemed to protect women was again linked to their sex, not to improve their working conditions. Alvesson and Billing (2009, 51) claim that it is the system that defines females' duties, and household issues are directly related to women. Kessler-Harris (1995, 23) seems to agree with Alvesson and Billing, saying that the new legislation meets the needs of what is required. According to Kessler-Harris, it helps the sustainability of 3 major areas of economy; sustainability of the wage of the family and of the breadwinner policy based particularly on males, the sustainability of sexually divided labor market and the sustainability of future generations as workers. As the family or home was not a production basis, it was crucial for both sexes to earn enough money on market to support themselves and their families. Capitalism, from that point of view, has a significant role in creating, sustaining, and reproducing the specific form of *gender-based division of labor*. In the new sectors, occupations began to be formed according to its *gender suitability*. As capitalism is a system that based on exploitation, women contrary to men were exploited more because of their man-made lower societal status. Almost every society all around the world labelled women's labor *cheap* and

unqualified (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 51-52). The prestigious status of any occupation was then dependent on its gender-association. Secretary, for instance, once known as *clerks* in 1870s while it was mainly occupied by men, was dramatically lost its status and dropped from class I to class III after labelling as *women's job* in the 1930s (Kirkham and Loft 1993, 509-510). In another instance, the development of technologies and machines was eradicated the relation between *milk* and *women*. Milk was no longer seen as a miracle of women's body (breast-feeding) thanks to the technological-scientific transformations that enabled the *milk industry* to produce milk on a large scale as a commercial product. Labelling and re-labelling of a job takes long time; no society, culture, country, or a system could have done it in a matter of days. As Bradley (cited in: Alvesson and Billing 2009, 52) explains such discourses needs dramatic transformations such as industrial revolution or mechanization. Such changes actually have two functions; while they were re-defining *women's division of labor*, they were also re-labelling what a *men* should do to earn money while getting others' acceptance. Alvesson and Billing (2009, 52) say beliefs that are changeable through time, could be used to redefine the gender-based division of labor. In other words, any area of work that is once accepted as a work for males only, could be defined as a work for females. Aircraft pilots, for instance, was one of the occupations that women got chance to access during World War I and II. To attract more women to blue-collar jobs (Reskin and Padavic 1994, 51) companies tried to persuade women saying that they can operate a rivet gun if they can use a sewing machine. As Reskin and Padavic argue women once worked as a bus conductor or had a chance to work for companies that build cargo planes by which women were able to fly. However, such changes mostly took place during the wars. When both wars ended, women were transferred to lower-status jobs such as assemblers or secretaries.

In the 1950s, thanks to the post-War economic prosperity, most states promoted *functionalist family model*; the specialization process that was formed, was based on gender roles. Men, in other words breadwinners, were seen as the most valuable and

suitable gender both for the family maintenance and for the social system as a whole (Sigle 2021, 386). Fordism, the new modern economic system, which was crucially based on mass production and mass consumption, empowered states with post-war recovery through enabling tremendous growth by supporting the *male breadwinner* and *female homemaker* family model in labor markets. The new model became so popular among the members of the middle class in the US and in Western European countries which enabled a constant full-time employment for men while protecting their family-wage (Berg 2017, 16-18). Bradley (cited in: Alvesson and Billing 2009, 52) sees two wars as a significant challenge to sex discrimination because women had a chance to prove that they could actually do anything if they are allowed to. Liberating women from its patriarchy chain showed that women could work for jobs which were highly associated with *men* such as managing or flying a plane. Unfortunately, wartime transformations did not last for a long time. After World War II, because of countries' new family/economy model, the *breadwinner ideology*, many women were transferred to service sectors, and many of them were pushed to marriage bars where they would find a husband. Once again, the system created its own *dependable married women* army. Those marriage bars were in service for a long time in the past. In Australia, for instance, bars were allowed to stay in business until 1966 (Sawer 1997, 7). The number of *dependable married women* of 1950s continued to increase in some countries such as Denmark, US and Sweden. In the beginning of 1960s a paradigm shift began to occur in Nordic countries. With the great increase in welfare, childcare became one of the significant responsibilities of government. Then in 1960s, almost %40 of females from Finland, Denmark and Sweden altogether were seen in various fields of business. By 1990s, this ratio had increased approximately to 80 per cent. Yet, in Western Europe, women were not as lucky as their fellows in Nordic countries due to the socio-cultural and political differences. One of the most crucial political differences, for instance, was that married women in Nordic countries have individual rights and regulations that support their economic independence whereas in Western Europe married women had limited encouragements both by the government and their

husbands or families (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 52-53). However, as Walby (1990, 20) argues women's entrance to labor market weaken the patriarchy system. Though taking care of home is still seen as *women's duty*, many women today try to be an entrepreneur to pursue their dreams. Entrepreneurs of both genders choose either traditional sources or crowdfunding sites to launch their campaigns. Since the traditional way has so many predictable and unpredictable financial risks, most entrepreneurs choose the road of digital platforms called crowdfunding sites to be able to collect the required funding for their creative ideas. Such digital platforms provide entrepreneurs with great chance to access funds and other related resources in a more innovative way. These crowdfunding sites operate like hubs where the needs of both parties meet; entrepreneurs aim to access the required funding through pitch videos in which they give specific details about the growth strategies, business opportunities, further goals of their own projects (Murphy 2017, 2-3) whereas investors or backers who watch those pitch videos, select the best project to fund as an investment of their own future. Yet, entrepreneurs, particularly female entrepreneurs experience various problems one of which and the worst is the gender-oriented thoughts and approach of investors. In other words, the long, male-dominated road to success seems to be jammed by man-made prejudices and ages-old gender discrimination for female entrepreneurs.. So, by distinguishing entrepreneurs simply as women and men, the study examines how language is perceived through gender lens and how stereotyped linguistic choices of masculinity and femininity are reflected by male and female entrepreneurs while pitching on crowdfunding source, indiegogo.com. In order to persuade backers, online entrepreneurs are to be very careful about the language style they use while pitching because without face-to-face communication, it would be more challenging for any entrepreneur to influence potential backers. Crowdfunding and narrative persuasion are then interwoven; the way online entrepreneurs use language, and the content of messages in pitch videos should deeply affect one's influential level. In order to success, an entrepreneur should portray a story (Gibson 2012; Patterson 2015) because he/she could be more influential or convincing only if she/he utilizes

persuasive linguistic strategies. According to Hamilton (2013, 94), within masculinized domain of entrepreneurship in online platforms, male entrepreneurs catch better fit while females experience hard times finding a place for themselves in the ecosystem at all. Language is the essential wheel for humans to integrate in social processes properly. One uses words to display his or her emotions, views, and stories in order to understand and interpret the world. While several studies seek to explore the relation between gender and language, there still remains some crucial gaps in entrepreneurship activities, such as whether entrepreneurs on digital platforms talk in parallel to the gender related expectations, or they prefer different persuasion strategies in order to succeed.

This research intends to cherish advanced thinking by challenging the assumption of gender reflections in communication divided as masculine and feminine ways of speech in digital entrepreneurship activities in general. In this study, with the aim to conduct a deeper and more specific research, a multidisciplinary approach including gender differences, communication and negotiation styles through the language practiced by entrepreneurs will be analyzed. However, this thesis will not analyze the relationship between the entrepreneur and the backer only on a basis of two different genders as male and female. For the success of the entrepreneur to raise capital, the impact of the relation among genders and the communication strategies used in speeches and persuasions will be discussed via multidisciplinary approach including sociology, negotiation, and linguistics, particularly sociolinguistics and semantics. In other words, the stereotyped approach of gender differences rooted from cultural and traditional norms that affect communications and negotiations' styles of the language practiced digital both by male and female entrepreneurs will be revealed. In this context, this study aims to cherish many different academic fields and aims to narrow the gaps in the literature.

The main thesis question is “Do female and male entrepreneurs differ in their communication strategies to influence the potential backers’ judgements?”. In order to address that question, Chapter I includes literature review from several fields of academic researches and theoreticians’ approach on entrepreneurship activities, gender, persuasion, and language on digital platforms. This chapter discusses the impacts of *gender*, and how socially constructed ideals affect other societal fields that exist in habitus such as entrepreneurship. Then, the chapter presents the literature of language and persuasion through gender lens, and argues that socially constructed belief systems have inevitable impact on entrepreneurs’ choice of language.

Chapter II presents methodologies of four analyses and a plan of all analyses in order to find answers to the main question.

Chapter III then represents the results of the both qualitative and quantitative analyses; all four studies are analyzed and deeply discussed in the chapter. Additionally, this chapter presents some related predictions about how online entrepreneurs use language in order to be more persuasive on crowdfunding source, *indiegogo.com*. Lastly, conclusion presents the integrated theoretical arguments of this research, and also addresses future directions and limitations in order to guide further researchers.

1. THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

Over the findings of the theoreticians and academicians selected in this section, many academic arguments and counter arguments on gender inequality will not only become more visible and understandable but also help prove or disprove the hypotheses stated in this research. Various academic approaches on the creation of gender stereotyping over the centuries; how socio-cultural formations influence individuals' thoughts and ideas about one another that end up in gender stereotyping and, in what ways this stereotyping, over the speeches and behaviors each gender group use and display, restrict female entrepreneurs' mobility to reach the required funding will be shown through citing. In other words, to be able to overcome biased thoughts and persuade the potential backers to invest in the projects they design or create, the struggle of communication strategies in female entrepreneurs' speeches will be reviewed from the point of some academic approaches. According to Beck (cited in: Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994, 174) some social rules and norms of societies change due to the changing conditions of the environment people live in. Modernization through time that improves social and economic life shapes the agents of societies, and those agents in their new forms gain power to soften or, better yet, to alter the negative connotation of socio-cultural forms and their impacts on humans. The decline in the level of structural determinism freed agents from the authority of structures. Hence, as Lash (cited in: Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1994, 111) argues, this is the process of expanding power of agency or social actors, that is directly related to the structure in which social assumptions, beliefs and norms are designed and redesigned. However, in some cases, liberation of the agency (individual) from social rules needs an undoing process of what is accepted as traditional rules, norms and expectations by societies. These traditional rules include gender, status and social rank. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1996, 29) state that socially organized concepts like gender, sexuality and social rank, including even the concepts of life and death, are becoming more of an individual choice because people are liberated from self-discipline. Hence, as they

argue, with the help of modernity, the power of external structures is exchanged for the authority of agents. Such replacement reinforces *individualization* through detraditionalization as agents can now create and define themselves as individuals. For Beck (1992, 90) individualization is a matter of duplication unit of social in the individual's world. For Bourdieu (cited in: Adkins 2003, 23), however, the *habitus* is important. The *habitus* is contained within the dynamic relations of structure and action; it is a kind of a lifelong moving system that is constantly creating patterns of interchangeable arrangements blended with past experiences, actions, appreciation and perception. Habitus therefore includes socially ingrained habits, skills, and arrangements; it is the way that agents interpret the social world around them, and the way that agents respond to that world. These arrangements are only shared by agents who have familiar backgrounds such as social class, nationality, education, and profession. Since habitus is generative of individual practices and collective actions, it symbolizes the culture of a specific community and shape those individuals' body and mind. As Bourdieu summarizes habitus as a formation of structural conditions and generates practices, thus when individuals act and perform agency they simultaneously echo and reproduce that social structure. Borrowing ideas from Noam Chomsky and Jean Piaget, Bourdieu linked his notions to two significant concepts: history and memory. A particular practice becomes a part of the social structure when the original intention of that practice is no longer can be remembered and only after socialized among the members of that society (Bourdieu 2013, 78-79). Mauss (cited in: Bourdieu 1990, 66-67) says since habitus is stuck in the body and daily practices, it carries norms, routines, learned habits, tastes, skills and constantly redesigned beliefs that are practiced without being questioned by some people. According to Bourdieu, this process is called *doxa* which means universally accepted deep-seated and learned obvious norms, values and ideas. Doxa, empowering the commanding and generally accepted norms, supports the established social positioning of the society. Bourdieu claims that habitus is the way how society reproduces itself as it is the cornerstone of social life in which habitus generates and regulates individuals' actions. Through *doxa*

individuals learn what they can do and what they cannot; it is the pre-adapting process (Bourdieu 1990, 54). But more than this, Bourdieu's definition of habitus functions within specific environments or areas. For him, the social world is an arrangement of political, economic and legal practices that are transformed but conjoining. Each field has its own logic that forms and establishes limits. Habitus and field however do not completely stick to each other but correspond with each other and, it is this correspondence that create compatibility on which the existence and the continuity of institutions significantly depend. *Habitus and field* therefore have a two-fold relation. First, the field exists only to the extent that social actors adopt the arrangements and set of perceptive designs that is required to define and inject meaning to it. Simultaneously, during the involvement in the field, actors adapt the essential know-how into their daily life (habitus) by allowing it to redesign the field. Habitus displays the structural conditions of the field, and the field softens the interaction between the habitus and practice. Bourdieu uses *field* as a bridging concept of agency-structure paradigm. For him, the field is a historical battlefield in which individuals maneuver and tussle to be on the scent of desirable assets. Agents and their social positions are situated in the field where the social position of each agent is given according to the outcome of relations between specific norms of the field, agent's social, economic, and cultural capital and habitus of the agent (Adkins 2003, 23-24).

Every field is involved in an interaction with one another but with a hierarchical basis; power and class. Yet, agents are not always reliable representatives of rules and norms of a particular environment even though the field establishes some certain barriers to limit actions, agents' practices have the ability to redesign both the habitus and the field itself as well. Therefore, the habitus is not only constructed by the agent's objective existence in the social structure but also constructs the agent's future existence in that social structure. This is done unconsciously, however. Agents for the most part are not aware of their constructional role. For Bourdieu, agents' actions, such as know-how, perceptions and other related practices, do not entirely formulated on purpose. Such

practices are performed below the level of consciousness. Williams (1995, 581) asserts that we do not appreciate the world we live in, we do not appreciate even ourselves. In fact, we do not question anything about us and around us because we do not have to. The *feel (refers to habitus) for the game (refers to field)* is, on that account, a *pre-reflexive* and *non-cognitive* mode of know-how that in all respects cannot be explicitly formed from A to Z (Adkins 2003, 24). Bourdieu (2000, 143) claims that agents without viewing anything or anybody far or near, think they know the world too well and [s/he] accepts it as it is, because he is entangled in it, closely connected with it; he wears it like an outfit. He lives in it like a familiar habitat; he feels at home in the world because the world is also in him in the form of habitus. Bourdieu (1990, 54) theorizes such taken-for-granted attitude with internalization. For him, children internalize the appropriated social arrangements at an early age. By learning suitable practices for them, children promote those behaviors for the rest of their life. Through internalizing such cognitive structures, social structures are embodied into individuals' natural existence. These social norms are often deep-seated and not easily twisted. Being different, acting against expectations are then viewed as unnatural and inappropriate. Children raised with constructed social norms might display gender discrimination approach to a woman with masculine behaviors as the woman is perceived as unnatural because people, as early as they are born, they start to internalize the constructed rules and practices, and as, they do not challenge such rules in the habitus they live in, gender related conflict seems to survive.

For Judith Butler (1990, chap. 1), in her book *Gender Trouble*, sees gender as a culturally formed concept. In other words, gender addresses to social, cultural, and psychological norms or assumptions of male and female way of living. Gender, in that manner, has a discursive meaning which constructs and shapes humans' understanding about their biological body. Butler describes gender as *repeated stylization* of the body that include movements, bodily gestures, and styles of various kinds. Butler also states that gender is *performative* which establishes *the identity whatever it is supposed to be*.

Therefore, gender is not something inborn; it is an outcome of historical and socio-cultural circumstances designed by the processes and relations that individuals give meaning and reproduce (West and Zimmermann 2009, 114). Butler adds that (1990, chap. 1) gender concept which is also the discursive/cultural tool, should identify the instrument of production that is established by individuals themselves. For Butler, such cultural constructions create strong assumptions about how women and men should perform; those who violate their gender related expectations will be inevitably punished by their society harshly. For Connell (cited in: Jewkes et al. 2015, 113-114) gender concept is designed through the relations between male and female. Performing such relations between different sexes and idealized concepts for *masculine* and *feminine* definitions which have great impact on shaping individuals' practices and experiences, become exist in societies. For him, both concepts are produced in opposition to each other; however, the former one usually depresses the later one. *Hegemonic masculinity* therefore, that is what inhabits the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations. The position that is granted is often competitive and contestable in which many situations give significant privileges to men over women. On that account, as Butler claims, Connell also agrees that gender is *performative*, and that is why masculinity and femininity concepts constantly reproduce through the ways men and women behave. Therefore, the concepts of masculinity and femininity are designed as oppositional and hierarchical forms in which societies usually give privilege to the former one. However, masculinity makes sense only if *men* is in relationship to *women* (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 44). Marxist and socialist feminists claim that concepts like *class and gender* create severe inequalities in societies all around the world. It is believed that *patriarchy* and *masculinity* are perceived as two interdependent systems that function together to harm women (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 60). Millet defines patriarchy as a *production of a specific design* for the system created via individuals' practices. The term patriarchal is directly related to ideologies that are either considered or assumed that man should have the woman as a kind of his own belonging, dictate her female gender role whenever and/or wherever he wishes

and should always tell her what to do. The ideology was one that the system favored men's interests in maintaining women's subordination without women realizing that this was the fact. The more the patriarchal gender assumption taken for granted, the more vigorous it is because gender related ideologies are performed in socially relevant conducts and are utilized to understand and inspire the practice itself. All societies, relations among different sexes, cultures, and other related specific forms of production, from that point of view, are viewed as male dominance. Despite the skeptical truthiness of the definition for today's modern societies, most would agree that patriarchy refers to specific form of hierarchical relations that occur between different sexes (men and women) to form and reproduce male domination to depress women (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 34-47). Rubin (1975, 159), for instance, describe these relations as a *sex/gender system*. Gender, on that account, is viewed as the fundamental law of patriarchal society. Social relations between male and female are constituted according to hierarchical ranking, in other words societal status. Since women and men see words differently, their understanding of reality differs as well (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 28). As Deaux and Stewart (cited in: 2001 Alvesson and Billing 2009, 101) argue that gender is something that is constructed in the early ages of a child and refers to "biological determinism – body leads to identity". Leaper (1994, 68) believes that girls and boys maintain distinct models of social interaction and activities in their individual peer groups in which the appearance of various norms for social behavior should not be unexpected. Girls' activities often cherish social sensitivity, affection and caring whereas boys', because of getting engaged mostly in physically aggressive activities, carry high competition and dominance. According to Maccoby's sociological argument (1998, 758) gender's *explanatory web* constructed by biological, cognitive and social drivers, designs diverse motifs of practice for boys and girls that is shaped in the womb, concretized in early childhood, pursued through adulthood to pass on to next generations. Maccoby's sociological argument of why diverse patterns exist between the two sexes, is explained by the greater strength of boys as opposed to girls. The binding drivers of girls are weaker than boys whereas

boys binding drivers are very strong and this strength leads boys to have greater urge for approval from other boys. The reason that boys do not ratify sissy behavior in the same way that girls ratify tomboy behavior is because boys are more cohesive, more harmonious, more gender-exclusionary. Most individual, either young or adult, then often *gender* themselves while *being gendered* by others to make sense of masculinity or femininity while interiorizing *doing gender* through involving in gender-appropriate practices and meanings (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 21-22). Masculinity and femininity are vague concepts and should be seen as *products* of different understandings and structures. Connell (2005, 23) says, masculinity can be defined as past experiences, social norms and meanings that are culturally interpreted as masculine and frequently feel *natural* to or refers to men instead of women in a particular cultural context. For the definition of masculinity, it is noticed that adjectives and nouns with strong meanings, such as hard, dry, rationalist, objective, analytical, explicit, outer-focused, action-oriented, dualistic, quantitative, linear, impersonal, reductionist, materialist (Hines 1992, 327), dominant, self-assertive, independent, and competitive are often used (Marshall 1993, 124). Femininity, on the other hand, is associated with *complementing* and *corresponding* concepts (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). For Hines (1992, 314) *feelings are of prior importance; the importance of the creativity and imagination associated with emotional tone, interdependence, design awareness, receptivity of cooperation, merging, acceptance, wholes and contexts, personalistic perception, intuition, synthesizing* (Marshall 1993, 124), empathy, compassion, sensitivity, and nurturing (Grant 1988, 57). Sahlin-Andersson (cited in: Alvesson and Billing 2009, 105) says that *being men* is often associated with being an autonomous person that who has an *individual identity* whereas *being women* is mostly identified with being a collective person that who has a *relational identity*. These masculine and feminine abstracts act as regulatory law; they create feelings of doubts and failure if one acts against their gender expectations. According to Lois McNay (cited in: Adkins 2003, 28-29) gender and sexuality is an issue of reflexive processes of reshaping and/or refashioning. While highlighting the potentiality for self-

fashioning of identity in late modernity, McNay argues that reflexive modernization theories that threaten reconstructing the separated and restrained subject of masculinity, may result in an urge against voluntarism. McNay, therefore refers to Bourdieu to draw attention to the embedded and embodied characteristics of identity; the recognition of the unconscious, non-cognitive and pre-reflexive mode of know-how of practice. To clarify the deep-seated views of gender identity, McNay highlight the ways in which unconscious investments in traditional images of masculinity and femininity that cannot easily be shaped might have been made by men and women. This kind of entrenched nature of gender affects other social structures and institutions and cannot be altered easily. As Bourdieu argues the unpredictability in the alteration of gender relations highlights the inactivity of the habitus; the habitus may continue to function long after the unbiased circumstances of emergence have been eliminated. The misfit between the gendered habitus and field, therefore, have crucial role in order to understand gender as a whole. Shifting back to Bourdieu's ideas about social transformation, McNay states that detraditionalizing of gender demands alteration and/or destruction of some specific rules, habits and norms. Furthermore, such Bourdieusian-inspired understanding of social transformation defines a stronger claim about the increase of transformity in gender's reflexive nature which is known as *the awakening of consciousness*. Due to increased level of critical reflexivity of the society, the adaptation routines between subjective and objective structures need to be drastically changed. As a result of pondering on the conventional beliefs of femininity, critical reflexivity toward gender may arise from the conflicts of discussing a misfit between habitus and fields and, those conflicts are executed in the discussion of female roles. So, it is believed that it is not McNay who popularized reflexivity but she describes it as subjects of cultural embeddedness within various modes of power relations. Any shifts in conventional modes of masculinity and femininity are deriving from the discussion of distinctions by individuals in their movement within and across fields of social action. Other authors have adopted Bourdieusian-style justification. Christopher Bryant (1995, 74), for instance, points to the mobile nature of habitus, and

how motions within or across fields of practice create *immediate reaction or immediate reflection*. He states that patriarchy at home might create serious challenges for girls, and might even prevent those girls from having some essential opportunities, but on the other hand, he adds that feminization of the public sphere might weaken the impact of patriarchy at home as other fields of life start to detraditionalize gender distinction with the help of the rotation of feminine habitus into those spheres of practice. Butler (cited in: Alvesson and Billing 2009, 36) also refers to Bourdieu's definition about the relationship between habitus and field which is seen as an encounter; that is as an "encounter with an external"; an understanding which argues that the field is a kind of preparation of the habitus for the approaching change in the field where the habitus always surrenders to the field. Henceforward, Bourdieusian social theory tends to hypothesize that the field cannot be changed by the habitus due to its specific external objective position so habitus adapts itself to the field. Understanding Bourdieu's theory based on habitus and field relationship, Butler states that while habitus consistently inclines toward adaptation, agents always yield to the superior. Then, Bourdieu realizes an imaginary reflective relation between field and habitus, object and subject, and observes that mimesis as a stage of adaptation. As Butler herself states that the mimetic appearance of the norm confronts a certain resistance because the new norm is not identified or accepted at the beginning; identification does not function properly until the new norm is fully absorbed. The regenerated differentiation of culturally particular *men* and *women* is the results of *socially organized practices* (Ochs 1992, 337); the ways in which members of a society systematically generate their gender as a noticeable *social fact*. In this respect, Garfinkel (1967, 180) views *the natural facts of life* as *socially organized* and *socially managed*. Such *managed production* was rooted into self-evident practices such as dress or make-up and internalized as *being taken as female or male* through adopting appropriate notions of observable *feminine/masculine comportment* like sitting, walking, or speaking (West and Zimmerman 1987, 136-137). In a nutshell, ideals like masculinity or femininity, as they are culturally constructed through *doing gender*, have significant impact on broad dimensions of life. Hence,

gendering in the use of language within the context of entrepreneurship will be discussed in the following sections.

1.1 Gender Stereotypes: Think Entrepreneur-Think Male

This section enlightens the main reasons of the difficulties female entrepreneurs experience during funding, and how and why the ever-lasting gender issue, restrict female entrepreneurs' mobility to reach the required funding for their own projects while benefitting the male entrepreneurs. In the late modernity, redesigning gender issues becomes visible in fields of action that were once coded as masculine. The integration of women into labor force, even professional and high-status positions they have in the economic fields of action do not eradicate some gender-related traditionally arranged prejudices and, indeed become more entrenched (Adkins 2003, 27-26). McNay (1999, 103) also agrees that women's entrance into labor force is an inefficient move to liberate women from her chains of household responsibilities; entering into the professional life have made the phase of individualization for women more complicated, as there is a severe struggle between *living one's own life* as achieving the individualized biography and *being there for others* as an actress of an ages-long traditional role. As this suggests, in the late modernity there have been critical self-conscious transformation of identity and gender, especially for women. For McNay (1999), this is the phase of *detraditionalization of gender*. She points to the timing of the conversations about detraditionalizing processes of women; an ongoing conflict between two opposing decision. She either stays at home and leads a traditional life or joins the labor force and gets individualized. By referring to the social theory of Bourdieu based on his beliefs about social transformation, McNay (1999) suggests that such gender detraditionalization processes could be assumed as transferring or a move of the *feminine habitus* into different fields of practice. Again following Bourdieu's footsteps on social change, she states that such moves of women into *traditionally non-feminine spheres of action* means that in late modernity there is a misfit between habitus

and field. Thus, women's entrance into entrepreneurship, a field that is previously possessed by men and it still is tagged as masculine might be more challenging for female entrepreneurs compared to male ones while persuading backers. The definition of *entrepreneur* originally stemmed from the work of Turgot (cited in: Hebert 1987, 204) and Say (cited in: Koolman 1971, 269). For them, the structural transformation from agriculture to modernity creates an emerging class of *capitalist-entrepreneur*; a new class of workman who creates or develops new businesses. Every *business idea*, from that point of view, is conceptualized by its own content, by its roots' circumstances and by the degree of uniqueness (Slavik 2020, 1). As Steve Blank (2013) states starting a business, compared to running one, is harder. Yet, finding the right and original business idea is even harder; a good business plan needs a systematic way of thinking and working out. An entrepreneur should then have skill, knowledge, know-how and ability to exploit opportunities (Fritsch and Wyrwich 2018, 338-339). A business idea, then, must be born with a discovery of an opportunity that has great potential to exploit. Yet, having such discovery is not enough. The entrepreneur must have the ability to make it happen as well. The function of an entrepreneur, on that account, relies on the ability of uncovering what has been overlooked before (Hougaard 2004, 13). In a market economy, surplus and profitability measure with scarcity; because in an economy which is defined by hyper-competition, scarcity is regulated with value and value is regulated with surplus and profitability. Under the guidance of such an *invisible hand*, entrepreneurs push themselves and others harder and harder to alter the traditional way of doing things by creating new ways and solutions through generating a new value both to the markets and customers, and even to the competitors itself. Thus, the concept of *business idea* and the concept of *scarcity* unavoidably mingle to each other (Heijden 2001, 14). As Porter (cited in: Ali and Anwar 2021, 43-44) argues that real scarcity in the world does not only mean that an entrepreneur must discover or invent something new or first-of-its-kind. Not only improving any product or service that already exist on the markets by offering new values to customers but charging any product or service with the cheapest price by leaving a great margin to the entrepreneur

himself/herself also gives the entrepreneur competitive advantage. He defined the former one as *differentiation* and the latter one as *non-differentiation*. An entrepreneur, thus, has to provide himself or herself a unique competitive position by finding an innovative product or service, or improving any one of them that is already available on the market through generating the right business idea. On that account, any campaign that lacks of such uniqueness is eliminated. For Cantillon and Schumpeter, on the other hand, an entrepreneur is an innovator (Bruyat and Julien 2000, 167). In fact, Schumpeter (cited in: Swedberg 2002, 15-16) defines an entrepreneur as an agent of change; an agent of *creative destruction*. An entrepreneur launches a new marketable product, sometimes with a new source of supply, creating a new market and demand for business. In other words, an entrepreneur alters the traditional way of doing business. For Schumpeter, being creative is the cornerstone of being an entrepreneur, but as he continues, an entrepreneur should also be a risk-taker and an investigator as well: The major drivers of an entrepreneur is the impulse to fight, the strong motive to become superior to others and incredible ambition to succeed for the sake of success itself. Therefore, such an entrepreneur is something that is labelled as *unusual*. He also clearly highlights that money is not the primary motivation for an entrepreneur, because an entrepreneur is not *an economic man in theoretical sense* (Schumpeter 1991, 408). Yet, Drucker's (1985, 17) definition of entrepreneurship is more systematic. For Drucker, entrepreneurship is not something *natural* or *creative* as Schumpeter claims, but it is a *work*. Entrepreneurship is something that involves *practice, discipline, and work*. Industries, for instance, are constantly altering as the newcomers are always willing to change the traditional way of doing things. Conversely, Drucker believes that an entrepreneur is not someone that creates a change or designs an alteration, but is definitely the person who always searches for change, make innovation and benefits from it as an opportunity (Dees 1998, 2). While Schumpeter focused on *why* and *who* an entrepreneur is, Drucker focused on *how* an entrepreneur should be. Regardless of contradictions between Schumpeter and Drucker, the certain thing about being an entrepreneur is exploiting opportunities by bringing some significant changes into the

markets or industries. Though entrepreneurship may seem a neutral career path, male entrepreneurs are outnumbered female ones, as such, women do not have relatively enough intentions or ambitions to start a new venture, and those who pursue an entrepreneurial career mostly stick within retail, healthcare, education, and other related service sectors (Loscocco and Robinson 1991, 527; Anna et al. 2000, 279; Calas, Smircich, and Bourne 2009, 557-558; Robb and Coleman 2009, 4-5; Guzman and Kacperczyk 2019, 1677). Brush, de Bruin and Welter (2007, 327-328), for instance, once explain that because *being women* is highly associated with *being a good mother* female entrepreneurs face inevitable struggles while balancing their work and family, and those who try to persuade potential investors frequently viewed as *hobby-pursuer* or *risky* (Smith-Hunter and Boyd 2004, 26; Mustapha and Subramaniam 2016, 225). As surely, access to financial capital regardless of their gender is the crucial process for entrepreneurs who desire to launch and grow their ventures (Davila, Foster, and Gupta 2003, 690). However, because the word *women* do not align with the word *entrepreneur*, even among those who launch their new ventures (Kirkwood 2009, 118), female founders face brutal discriminations (Buttner and Rosen 1988, 249-251; Smith-Hunter and Boyd 2004, 25-26; Mustapha and Subramaniam 2016, 225) while raising private (Becker-Blease and Sohl 2007, 504) or bank funding (Fay and Williams 1993, 363; Buttner and Rosen 1988, 2016, 255; Eddleston et al. 2016, 489; Mustapha and Subramaniam 2016, 225). Such gender-biased fights urge women to find the required capital they need from minor sources, such as crowdfunding, which is a microfinance ecosystem where entrepreneurs seek to raise funds from a large, diverse group of backers. Venture capitalists or angel investors who are known as traditional investors have relatively high net worth whereas backers are amateur investors. Despite little wealth, they back entrepreneurs financially, and entrepreneurs review their projects, pitch videos and prepare other related details about themselves to attract individual funders (Bogost 2012; Mollick 2014, 2; Li et al. 2017, 1075). However, new alternatives still cannot eradicate the gender gap, in such, men are still relatively outnumbered female entrepreneurs and female backers on most crowdfunding

platforms, and, thus, demographic inequalities inevitably support the *embedded patriarch standards* (Marom et al. 2019, 3-4). For instance, especially in high technology incubators, stereotypical gendered role expectations regenerate masculine normative standards for entrepreneurial practices (Marlow and McAdam 2012, 2). As Mirchandani (1999, 225) and Lewis (2006, 456) argue, even the existence of words such as “women entrepreneur” or “female entrepreneur” prove the fact that typical entrepreneur should be *man*, and thus, women’s engagement in entrepreneurship has different normative standards. According to Eagly and Wood (2012, 458-459), biases to women may derive from stereotyping of gender role (gender role theory); stereotypes that are based on gender role assumptions create inevitable differences about the way how men and women should behave, and sets its own normative standards by rewarding the ones who behave in the way they are supposed to and by punishing the ones who violate the expectations. Stereotyping is therefore *reductive* (Cameron and Coates 1989, 8-9) because it is a kind of negative fixed idea of a group of people about another group. As a presentational behavior, stereotyping includes *simplification, reduction* and *naturalization*; to make sense of various situations, *typing* objects and people in pursuant of the classificatory schemes in society, in the sense of the social place they occupy, their group membership, personalities, and other areas of interest. Typing is a legal activity performed by official institutions for various purposes. Stereotyping, on contrary, simplifies the differences of a place, of a group of people or of a group of objects; stereotyping simplifies anything. Though *typing* and *stereotyping* are the perpetuation of social and symbolic order, *stereotyping* differs in its severity: it reduces, essentializes, naturalizes and fixes the differences among groups of people or objects, facilitates the binding or bonding together into one single imaginary community; and it sends all of them into one symbolic exile (Hall 1997, 258). Groups of people ranked lower in society are the prays of the powerful. Stereotyping is one of the powerful weapons of hegemonic groups. Through stereotyping, ruling class constructs the natural and the inevitable sense of world in which they have succeed so far (Dyer 1977, 30). Constructing normalcy through stereotyping lets the power to rule

the entire society in conformity with their own ideology, norm system, and sensibility. In that sense, power is the key point. Since women is one of the largest subordinate groups, and men have the power, it is not surprising to see women suffer. In western countries, for instance, while men are supposed to be *agentic* such as acting more assertive, competitive, or being more ambitious, courageous, charismatic, or intelligent, women are expected to be communal as they are associated with being too affectionate, emotional, supportive, tenderhearted, sensitive, understanding, and caring (Bem 1974, 155-156; Kray and Thompson 2005, 104; Balachandra et al. 2017, 2). Those stereotypes do not only construct the meanings of *gender*, but also form other related ideals such as labor, occupations, or entrepreneurship (Heilman 1997, 5; Balachandra et al. 2017, 2). Such socially constructed and learned belief systems about gender, unfortunately, restrict women's actions, their access to capital, or finding a place in ecosystems for themselves (Carter and Rosa 1998, 225; Marlow and Patton 2005, 717; Balachandra et al. 2017, 2; Brush, Edelman, Manolova, and Welter 2018, 394).

Entrepreneurship is still a man's world. Eddleston et. al. (2016, 290) argue that the whole ecosystem has long been formed by *think entrepreneur-think male* ideology. Collins and Moore (1964, 5) once stated "however we will feel sympathy for the entrepreneur, he appears as more masculine than feminine and more heroic than cowardly". Though females' entrance into ecosystem might create some shifts in the field, being an entrepreneur is still associated with *masculinity* (Gupta et al. 2009, 409; Jeyasundaram 2021), as such, to be successful one should display risk taker, aggressive, daring, strong-willed, and bold; behaviors that are typically labelled as *masculine* (Ahl 2006, 600; Baughn, Chua and Neupert 2006, 689; Gupta and Turban 2012, 140-141; Blake-Beard, Shapiro and Ingols 2020, 607). Sandra Bem (cited in: Ahl 2006, 600), most well-known psychologist, once defined masculinity as being self-reliant, assertive, dominant, forceful, competitive, individualistic, ambitious, analytical, independent, and self-sufficient in such, who defends own beliefs, has

strong personality, has leadership abilities, makes decisions easily, and is willing to take a stand; characteristics that are strongly match with an entrepreneur, for instance, as Ahl (2006, 600) states an entrepreneur is someone who is self-efficacious, mentally free, strong willed, able to withstand opposition, unusually energetic, foresighted, seeking difficulty but optimistic, resolute, seeking power and private kingdom, intelligent, leading economic and moral progress, influential, and fighting to conquer, achievement oriented. Yet, Bem's definition of femininity such as being shy, gentle, soft-spoken, gullible, tender, eager to soothe hurt feelings, childlike, and warm is all opposite to the definition of being an entrepreneur. Women are perceived as less motivated (Weberova, Hitka, and Lizbetinova 2017, 507; Zhu, Kara and Zhu, 2018, 3; Kim 2020, 2), less entrepreneurial (Sexton and Bowman-Upton 1990, 29; Fagenson 1993, 411; Kumar and Dutt 2020) have less tendency to launch a new venture (Scherer, Brodzinski, and Wiebe 1990, 37; Devine et al. 2018, 1-2; Darnihamedani and Terjesen 2020, 1-2; Kumar and Dutt 2020) due to insufficient education or experiences (Boden and Nucci 2000, 347-348; Zhu, Kara and Zhu 2018, 4), behaving irrationally (Ahl 2006, 603) in business plans. Thus, it is nearly impossible for female entrepreneurs to attribute needed capitals, in such, as they are unable to be in part of an influential network (Aldrich, Reese and Dubini 1989, 340; Cromie and Birley 1992, 237-238; Ahl 2006, 603; Zhu, Kara and Zhu 2018, 4; Moletta et al. 2021, 2), they are to face unique entrepreneurial difficulties while launching a new venture more than their counterparts (Birley, Moss and Saunders 1987, 27-28; Pellegrino and Reece 1982, 15; Chaudhary 2015, 44; Zhu, Kara and Zhu 2018, 4; Salahuddin, Mahmood and Ahmad 2021, 1). Gupta, Gokhan and Gunay (2013, 282), for instance, highlight that men rather than women were positively associated with opportunity evaluation, even when gender related stereotypes were salient, which aggressively illuminates how cognitive biases could be influential on shaping entrepreneurs' or investors' perception about entrepreneurship. They later took a step further by claiming that when feminine stereotypical signals exist in the environment, women were stimulated more positively whereas men lost their passion. Thus, to eradicate gender related discriminations Gupta

and his colleagues strongly suggest integrating gender-neutral attributes into stereotypical fields of practices; a perfect world “where no stereotypes are in the air” (Steele 1997, 616-618; Gupta, Gokhan and Gunay 2013, 283). Marlow (2002, 84-86) says that whenever some differences particularly access to funding exist between female and male entrepreneurs, this is not because the female entrepreneur’s unwillingness to launch a project as claimed by some male dominated fields. It is probably the gender related practices that shuts the door to financial tools for the female entrepreneur. The differentiations between men and women, masculine and feminine, endorse and are immanent in the notion of, advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity create the belief that entrepreneurship is gendered. In that sense, gender is the cornerstone of practices. (Lewis 2006, 458). Masculinity means it is something that “never has to mention its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations” (Lipsitz 1988, 1, cited in: Pierce 2003, 55). Despite the look as a social organizer, masculinity lets minority group of people specifically female entrepreneurs to be judged by and evaluated against some normative directives that have been designed by the dominant group of people in societies that represents any self-evident standards as a universal mode of regulation (Lewis 2006, 455). Being judged and tagged as “othering” or as being non-male is not only against the norms of standard but also humiliating for female entrepreneurs. In the masculinized field of entrepreneurship *being male* catches a better fit with the habitus (Hamilton 2013, 94), but two new questions exist for the male entrepreneur to struggle. The first question to respond is *who I am* and the other is *when and how I should behave* (Swail and Marlow 2017, 33). Marlow and McAdam (2015, 795) state, “by definition, new firms [ventures/start-ups] lack legitimating track records”; thus, the entrepreneur “becomes the physical as well as the descriptive symbol of the predictable future firm”. Accordingly, the process of entrepreneurial legitimacy requires critical steps, such as persuading investors/backers, access to capital or resources but also, an actor who meets the expectations. Navis and Glynn (2011, 480) defines the process as, “the

constellation of claims around the founders, organization and market opportunity of an entrepreneurial entity that gives meaning to the questions of *who we are* and *what we do*’. To legitimate this *constellation of claims* entrepreneur should dedicate himself/herself to satisfy potential investors/backers, while developing desirable market offers (Fisher, Kotha and Lahiri 2016, 385). Therefore, female entrepreneurs face inevitable challenges whilst creating a balance between devalued femininity and the masculinized expectations (Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio 2004, 407-409). As a self-employed, women not only have to persuade potential investors/backers but also, to overcome embedded struggles that attributed to their *feminine* subjectivity (Swail and Marlow 2017, 32). Masculinized domination of entrepreneurship eventually places femininity in opposition to the norm. These gender-biased stereotypes rank female entrepreneurs as subordinate to male and their ventures *being of less importance* (Ahl 2006, 603-604), underestimating their capability to gain success. Accordingly, *being a woman* and *being an entrepreneur* create unbalances (Duberley and Cohen 2010, 189-190); this has to some extent, been addressed by the definition of the “female entrepreneur” and further labelled as “mumpreneurs” or “lipstick entrepreneurs” (Swail and Marlow 2017, 6) which aims to fight with masculinized norms as a whole. In fact, with these labels, some feminized roles such as being mother are attributed to entrepreneurship to eradicate the struggles of being *woman* and *entrepreneur*. However, there is still so much more to be done to truly alter the habitus itself (Alvesson and Billing 2009, 232; Gherardi 2015, 661-663; Stead 2015, 14). As Fauchart and Gruber (2011, 935) state entrepreneurship is a *social activity* that masculinized over time, in such, scaled to *being male*; thus, idealized entrepreneurial activity is basically configured into masculinity (Hamilton 2013, 54). Hence, such *stereotyping* creates inevitable challenge for entrepreneurs who behave more feminine, especially for female ones (Alsos and Ljunggren 2017, 585). Nilsson (2013,657) claims that in some situations women have to embrace masculine manner by giving up on their feminine side to gain legitimacy in the entrepreneurial world. Although investors prefer to invest less in entrepreneurs who behave more feminine regardless of their gender,

female entrepreneurs' who perform more masculine are simply tagged as not being a woman. In some cases, therefore, acting masculine does not help women overcome the challenges or barriers as well (Rudman and Glick, 1999, 1005; Heilman 2001, 667; Eagly and Karau 2002, 575-576; Rudman et al. 2012, 166; Johnson, Stevenson, and Letwin 2018, 3). Moreover, in some studies theoreticians found that women who perform more masculine behaviors are judged more negatively than the ones who perform more feminine (Eagly and Karau 2002, 575-576; Heilman et al. 2004, 426; Johnson, Stevenson, and Letwin 2018, 15; Zisser et al. 2019, 676). As Diaz-Garcia and Welter (2013, 399) claim since female entrepreneurs cannot hide their biological sex, who violate gender related rules and expectations eventually lose their legitimacy. Thus, such violations can easily be detected by potential investors. Contrary to this situation, highly domestic women are blamed for being deficient and highly powerful women receive backlash for not being feminine enough. Rudman and Glick (1999, 1005) define these gender related discriminations as *backlash effect*. Such prejudice is called *double blind*; women are evaluated negatively if they are perceived as too feminine or too masculine (Heilman et. al. 2004, 426). As Lee and Huang (2018, 1) state these discriminations create implicit biases against female entrepreneurs. Female-led new ventures, for instance, are less likely to receive bank loans (Buttner and Rosen 1988, 255; Mustapha and Subramaniam 2016, 225) and are more likely to raise lower share of fund from investors (Kanze et al 2018, 3); female entrepreneurs are relatively more punished than their male counterparts due to gender biased approach which, in turn, leads investors to evaluate female entrepreneurs less capable and riskier (Lee and Huang 2018, 2). Yet, others argue that gender inequalities in funding do not precisely occur as a result of gender related discriminations but that investors offer women with a lower share of funds simply because female entrepreneurs ask for less capital (Orser, Riding, and Manley 2006, 659; Becker-Blease and Shol 2007, 518; Brush et al. 2017, 4). Incontrovertibly, socio-cultural realities and expectations about men and women are often negatively influenced by ages-old understandings and meanings. Though some of them may evolve and change over time, constructed realities still have significant

impact on how people as human beings interpret, judge, and deal with gender as a whole.

1.2 Linguistic Stereotypes: Reductive Tendency

Raising through two different gender related cultural norms that strongly embedded into societies, boys and girls vary in the way they speak (Maltz and Borker 1982, 200). Boys, for instance, gravitate to masculine manners which discursively affect the way they speak, the words they choose, or even the volume of their voice; creating an ecosystem that precisely subject to childish cultural norms like competition or aggression which have inevitable impact on child at a tender age. On contrary, girls expose to feminine ethos such as affection or affiliation, and instinctively seek to maintain the mentality of *quasi-familial* relations in an ecosystem where cultural norms are discursively shaped and produced through feminine manners. Hence, being raised through two opposing standards eventually lead women and men to embrace diverse forms of speeches such as explicit or inexplicit (Farris 1991, 204). For Maccoby (1998, 41) the reason behind divergent linguistic patterns is the greater strength of binding forces of boys that leads them to a much more stressful and emotionally taxing situations by forcing them to seek for approval from other boys, and eventually pushing boys to participate in *status-oriented discursive* manners. A representation of language is always a depiction of humankind; behind acceptable, linguistic patterns are consistently reproduced through the basic discourses of cultural norms or moral orders; the vicious cycle is hard to disrupt (Gal 1995, 171). The meaning of a linguistic sex difference is therefore a *social negotiation*; it is culturally constructed (Crawford 1995, 16). Bourdieu (1991, 1), on one hand, sees language as a tool that construct the way individuals communicate with each other, and as a law of power and authority on the other. The linguistic style an individual prefers is allocated by his or her relational position in the field; languages echo the specific positions of each speaker. Constructed discursive realities by reproducing the field itself specify the normative standards of

the social arrangements, and repeatedly give significant priorities to specific group of people to talk, interrupt, or ask question first. For Penelope Eckert (and Sally McConnell-Ginet, 1992, 464) the relation between language and gender is constructed through social identities, including gendered identities, and primarily emerges from the practices of specific group of people. Such *community of practices* are deeply formed by a particular group of individuals who make a concerted effort to voluntarily hand over the repertoire of shared assets, including language. Gender is a global phenomenon, and has a tremendous impact on certain practices of the world around, but the real impact of such gendered participation often emerges from the inclusion of specific group of individuals in an ecosystem that they constitute through the *community of practices* they shared, and by travelling between these communities, that particular group of people constantly reshapes the other *community of practices* universally. Such specific collective practices are however connected to one another and to different institutions and fields of the society (McConnell 2003 ,71). For Eckert (1989, 245) “the correlations of sex with linguistic variables are only a reflection of the effects on linguistic behavior of gender – the complex social construction of sex – and it is in this construction that one must seek explanations for such correlations”. Judith Butler (1990, 145-146), author of *Gender Trouble*, views speakers, or *culturally intelligible subjects*, as the outcome of an emergent but inherently particular discursive reality to which all must tally up with the normative language standards, in such, rather than being an architect, they become one of the products of their preconstructed realities. As discursive realities are constantly reforming the practices of individuals including the way they think or speak, the practice of discourse becomes *performative*; language is then continually externalizing the gender itself. Speakers mostly limit themselves to the syntactic structures and vocabularies in the scope of gender, namely in the conventional roles of being *male* or *female*. Individual speakers cannot freely embrace a gender position of which they are fond; agents are limited simply to *variations on repetition*. She views gender related norms and orders as a significant cornerstone of the meanings of *men* and *women* in order to keep the present system in

line. Butler (1990) support her ideas by saying that “the loss of gender norms would have the effect of proliferating gender configurations, destabilizing substantive identity depriving the naturalizing narratives of compulsory heterosexuality of their cultural protagonists”. Women are not biologically weaker or submissive speakers; on the contrary, women were exposed to feminine notion and practices in a patriarchal culture they live in which continually endeavor to suppress them for keeping their lower hierarchical rank in society (Cameron 2003, 454). Language is therefore partly responsible for the existence of stereotypes and echo them throughout the agents (Livia 2003, 149). The term *stereotype* in the field of language often represents the moral order of the unexpressed expectations about certain practices, rather than the expressed ones. Victoria Bergvall (1996, 192) states that women who want to be active in traditionally masculine areas such as engineering are to face conflicting demands. On the one hand, if they involve in social contacts, women are expected to display *feminine* behaviors: they need to talk tentatively, be caring, and act coordinated. On the other hand, if women want to succeed in such masculine areas, they must behave *masculine*: they need to talk assertively, be competitive, and act agentic. Women therefore are to be very conscientious while displaying discursive practices since they are subject to unclear stereotypical boundaries. There is no-win situation for those women who choose to be active in traditionally masculine areas as such conflicting demands cause *double-blinding*. Linguistic stereotypes are therefore firmly linked with gender ideologies. As Deborah Tannen (cited in: Schmid 2002, 185) states men and women see and understand the world differently and those differences are inevitably reflected in their linguistical and communicational styles. Such gender-driven communication styles are based upon on gender and cultural conditioning: while boys adhere to the rules of a *male culture* in which they internalize speaking or behaving like a men, girls adhere to a *women’s culture* in which they embrace to act or talk like a lady (Plug et al. 2021, 46). For Chambers (cited in: Romaine 2003, 103-104) linguistic differences lie in female’s assumed better *awareness of the social importance of variants, status-consciousness, and care for kindness*. In some situations, women may end up using

language as a tool to gain status or equality because they have limited access to significant opportunities in education, labor, or other related resources that exist in societies. Since the marketplace offers great values to men in economic terms, women can only gain symbolic successes like *being a good housewife*, *being a good mother*, or *being a good wife* which are in parallel with the notion of femininity. During Victorian era, for instance, the discursive concept of *speaking properly* was twisted into something toxic, and became the normative form of *being a woman*, in particular *being a lady*. Since women could only gain *lady* status through marriage, *talking like a lady* became obligatory for women. Women also have great tendency to apologize, thank, or appreciate; they are subject to stricter norms to reinforce the *maintenance of a civil environment* unlike men. Men, on the other hand, usually involve in less polite practices; they are more anxious about possible threats that could undermine their freedom of expression or speech compared to women (Herring 2003, 207-208). As a result, men's discursive practices are all formed by the notion of *what is needed to be a good men*, and women's discursive practices are all shaped by the norms of *what is needed to be a good mother*. While female's discursive styles are characterized with intimacy, rapport, sympathy, private, supportive, listening, and connection, male's with report, lecturing, problem-solving, public, oppositional, independence, and status. Through *stereotyping* society proceeds to idealize women in human nature with being *mother* and *womanhood* in general and men with *power* and *privilege* (Talbot 2003, 475-476).

Language does not passively mirror the society; it forms the society as well. Society is to change first, and only after language can reflect those changes and will alter eventually. Hence, it is not only the changing patterns of women that should be transformed, it is also the men's; masculinity just like femininity is a constructed matter (Romaine 2003, 112). For Tannen (cited in: Rubab and Akbar 2020, 123), women use *rapport-talk* to signal support and caring while gaining and maintaining solidarity whereas men mainly prefer *report-talk* to signal independence while reinforcing their

hierarchical social rank. Generally, women tend to focus on feelings or emotions and building strong relationships or networks while men mainly aim to support their power and status. Girls, for instance, are persistently taught to believe that language is the cornerstone of any social relation since communication holds networks together through creating intimacy, so adults' dialogues can turn a persuasive weapon for girls to form and reinforce closeness, and keep negotiations vivid while maintaining support to reach consensus. Boys however, are taught to believe that it is the practice not the language that reaches any social contact, so adults' beliefs are assumed to be a *contest* for boys; that's why a little boys while growing up start to compete with other boys and, as an adult he always ranks himself in the society with other males. Tannen also points out that female and male vary in the priorities about the things that are important or necessary to mention and the things that are not. Female entrepreneurs, for instance, tend to focus on the present time zone while pitching their ideas. Women like to talk about the current position of their new venture, and thus, likes to give specific details about what they're currently establishing (Bellstrom 2017) contrary to male entrepreneurs who tend to pitch a larger vision of their new venture such as the potential or the new abilities of growth. Otto Jespersen (1922, 246; 250) characterizes women as being *softspokeness* who do a lot *irrational topic shifts*, and simply label them with *vaucity* and *volubility*: babbling a lot without making any sense. For him, women were just decorative dolls; they never have anything to say, but when they speak, they talk pleasantly. Men on the other hand speak *intelligently*; they do not make troubles and they do not respond *emotionally*. Their talk is not *meaningless* or *personal* because their talk has *content*. One of the other most influential examples about gender differences in linguistic choices is belonged to Elinor Ochs Keenan (cited in: Bucholtz 2003, 47). Keenan found that while women preferred more direct speech style, men often preferred indirect. Each notion of discourse as she points out represent specific form of authority. Though female's choice of direct discursive style let women to engage in social situations such as political or economic, that style is labelled as *unsophisticated* (in Malagasy culture). Men's speech style on the other hand is

associated with *skilled* and *artful* and favored by society more. As she states those gender related discursive differences which construct the notion of power creates gender discriminations and inequalities in societies; if a woman prefers indirect speech, she is considered as *fuzzy-minded* or *manipulative* whereas if that women prefers man's speech style, she is inevitably be labelled with *shrew* or *bitch*. Findings that view female's language as less valued than male's are significantly reviewed in several academic works as well. However, one of the Joel Sherzer's studies (cited in: Bucholtz 2003, 47) challenge these assumptions by claiming that both genders' discursive styles are in some situations different, but sometimes the same; in some situations women's are superior or equal, sometimes inferior; in some situations women's are public and sometimes private. Whether supportive or not, these anthropological studies of discourse clearly highlight that language should be understood in regard of culture and cultural variations. As Harold Garfinkel (cited in: Bucholtz 2003, 50-51) states social world is constructed through everyday interactions. Through ordinary practices, social order arises, and gender has a crucial role in the existence of these social orders. Gender on that account should be understood in terms of constructed ideals which has an inevitable impact on people's everyday interactions, especially how they behave or talk. As an addition to these studies in ethnography of communication, negotiation literature also tinkers around with the same topics. Kray and Thompson (2005, 104) simply ask whether female and male vary in their persuasion strategies while claiming value at bargaining table. To access the needed resource, should women need to adopt more masculine linguistic style, or can they persuade others by acting more feminine? Gender related stereotypes are endowed with both great authority and power while influencing one's practices. While men are expected to act more masculine such as assertive, competitive, or rational, women are expected to behave more feminine like emotional, passive, or submissive (Deaux and Lewis 1984, 992; Kray and Thompson 2005, 104; Wang and Depner 2016, 66; Cowden, Creek, and Maurer 2021, 4; Lin et al. 2021, 262). While both women and men are restricted in some degrees in their emotional expression, the limitations on both appear to nourish the gender-based power

imbalances that already exist. Women, for instance, should not display their frustrations even though it is almost impossible for a woman. Another example is the vulgar tongue that is not preferable for women. Men should strictly avoid expressing how upset they are due to a mistake they make. In addition, men are not supposed to shed tears at all. Expression of sadness is an expression of powerlessness; anger is vigor. Such gender thematic norms reinforce both genders' authorities in the opposite way; reinforcing men's power on the one hand and women's powerlessness on the other. If women for example express her anger, that women's authority will be rejected abruptly ("*You are so attractive when you are angry*") (Lakoff 2003, 163). Women, as Lakoff states (1973, 50-51), are emboldened to act and talk like *little ladies*. *Little ladies cannot* show temper or scream like little boys; *aggressiveness* or *high spirits* are tolerated only for men. However, encouraging men to express their *high spirits* eventually strengthens men's hierarchical status necessarily. For surely people have better respect to someone who express his or her opinions vigorously, and if one is discursively less forceful in voicing his or her thoughts, that one has to struggle when he or she wants to be taken seriously or approved by others. Thus, because men's tendency to be more aggressive is much better at claiming value at the bargaining table. However, for Maccoby (1988, 757) being less aggressive does not constitute a significant limitation for women as their superior verbal skills make women more persuasive; women could understand needs and interests of others' better. Nevertheless, though women have more tendency to create positive impact through their linguistic abilities to maintain the solidarity, male's competitive and aggressive nature make them more powerful while claiming value or economic resources (Kray and Thompson 2005, 139). Several academic research indicate that men apparently tend to ask questions, using *we* pronoun more frequently (Neu, Gramham, and Gilly 1998, 440), offer more self-helpful information (Deal 2000, 718), or mentioning money more and earlier (Kray and Thompson 2005, 142) as to strengthen their hierarchical status or position (Schmid 2002, 185). Yet, for Caldwell (cited in: Kray and Thompson 2005, 142) women tend to behave and talk in a more friendly manner because of having

feminine nature, and prefer more disclaimers and hedges, in other words tentative language, especially in a mixed-gender contexts. Such *woman's language* makes women more persuasive when they are evaluated by their male counterparts (Carli 1990, 942; Rudman and Glick 1999, 1005; Reid et al. 2009, 466; Hmieleski and Sheppard 2018, 5). Leaper and Ayres (2007, 329-330), who conducted a meta-analysis research by studying gender-linked linguistic styles through categorizing language use as *affiliation* and *assertiveness* to analyze how gender affect language choices, found that men preferred assertive language more. While *affiliation language* associates with active understanding agreement, support, and acknowledgement, the latter one refers to suggestions, disagreements, imperative statements, and criticisms. Such assumptions on *tentative* and *assertive* linguistic usage were originally published in one of famous linguist Lakoff's *Language in Society* book which is widely cited and played an important role on gendered-link language debate. According to Lakoff (1973, 51; cited in: Hall 2003, 364-365; Talbot 2003, 474), men due to possession of high hierarchical status, prefer assertive discursive style more often. Women, on the other hand, communicate in a more tentative (also referred as affiliation) and kind manner as they hold the subordinate status in the hierarchical order. As she points out, such gendered linguistic differences reflect the dark truth about social inequalities and discriminations because women's speech, despite its *correctness* and *properness*, is *powerless* and less influential than the discursive notions of men (cited in: Romaine 2003, 104) as tentativeness is mainly associated with *emotions, vagueness, euphemism, sweetness, mindless, endless, high-pitched, and stupidity* (Epstein 1973, 34). Lakoff positions that gender within a passive and ineffectual *female class* by aligning the notion of femininity with a *fourth world* hierarchical status, or portrays that women who must live in a *separate castle* in order to create an alternative reality to find a way to survive outside the institutionalized authority of social order (Hall 2003, 363). For her the long silenced and humiliated female principle is a *female culture of talk* and if that woman do not obey her gender related discursive expectations, and challenge the traditionalized norms of *talk like a lady*, will surely be exposed to significant criticisms

and labeled as unfeminine; if that women on the other hand internalize discursive feminine notions and talk like a lady, will eventually be perceived as stupid and that women will surely struggle to find a position in serious discussions or social discursive activities; in some situations, even will be viewed as *less than fully human* unavoidably (Lakoff 1975, 6). Vulnerability of that gender is then strongly mirrored in the discursive arrangements that women are stereotypically subjected to, and in the discourses of the way that women talk or communicate; both functions to depress women into a submissive status in society: “that of sex object, or servant”. Thus, Lakoff views language as a significant reflection of inequalities and discriminations that the societies hold against their individuals, especially female individuals. Through self-analyzing of her own and her acquaintances’ speech, Lakoff defines linguistic features that forms a certain type of language which she labels *women’s language*. For her, typical female language comprises of hedges, empty adjectives, super-politeness, tag questions, intensifiers, hyper-correct grammar and pronunciations; all of which suppress that gender’s identity through dispossessing women to express herself powerfully (McHugh and Hambaugh 2010, 382). Hedges, for example, is used by one’s who willing to soothe or lighten his or her statement, and/or lessen any threat (Hyland 1996b, 156; Leung Chi Kong 2015, 1). Hedges also represent some degree of indirectness (Hinkel 1997, 362; Cheng and Warren 2003, 382; Leung Chi Kong 2015, 1) like *somewhat*, presents the degree of an addresser’s certainty (Markkanen and Schroder 1987, 48) such as “I’m *not sure*”, and displays an epistemic status with a high degree of uncertainty (Crompton 2012, 60) like “I *guess*”. By using hedges therefore one reveals the appropriate level of sureness or uncertainty when declaring his or her views or opinions (Varttala, 2001, 54). Different researchers on the other hand suggest that hedges may also indicate politeness in interpersonal communication (Salager-Meyer 2000, 176; Leung Chi Kong 2015, 2). Einhorn’s (1981) research, though focuses on powerful and powerless language forms within the context of job interviews, analyzes hesitation, fillers and communicative behaviors in 14 job interviews. Another specific example is Bradac and Mulac’s (1984, 307) study which focuses on several variables

on job interviews. The variables they conducted on speech are hedges, tag questions, intensifiers, polite forms, hesitations, deictics and powerful speech. In both researches women were found to be more perceptive in evaluating speech style differences than men. According to Lakoff (1975, 54; cited in: Sommerlund 2017, 18), women prefer hedges to soften their authority when they try to avoid telling or claiming any precise or definite statements during the conversation. Tag questions, however, is used when a speaker desires to create an immediate confirmation of a declarative statement such as “Today is cold, *isn't it?*”. A tag, in its usage, finds a compromise between an absolute assertion and a yes/no question; tag question is less aggressive than the absolute declaration, yet more bold than simply a yes or no question. Therefore, acting as a mediator between these two certain situations tag question is used if one is indicating a claim, but have doubts about the truthiness of that claim. Such sentence-types questions can avoid any conflicts between the speaker and the addressee, yet by so doing one may also arise the idea of not being definite or certain about something which the addressee may likely to know better. However, by leaving a decision open by not dictating opinions or thoughts on anyone else, tag question is one of the aspects of *politeness*; it does not impose any belief or claim on the addressee. Thus, women prefer tag questions for not being viewed as *assertive* or *agentive* through talking polite and less forceful (Lakoff 1973, 54-56). According to Fishman (cited in: Leaper and Robnett, 2011, 131), women prefer tag questions to keep listeners active through engaging in dialogue during the conversation. For McMillian et al. (1977, 554) and Fishman (1978, 404), women’s discursive styles reflects much interpersonal sensitivity than men’s as female use more tag questions. Intensifiers such as *very*, *so*, or *really*, contrary to hedges, represents one’s degree of certainty level (Hyland and Tse 2004, 168); they indicate *an increase in intensity* (Leung Chi Kong 2015, 2). Intensifiers magnify one’s degree of commitment with a high level of confidence (Holmes 1982, 11; Hyland 1998, 350; 2000, 179); because they are *certainty makers*, in such, they display that one’s level of truthiness (Crismore, Markkanen and Steffenson 1993, 52). For Lakoff (cited in: White 2003, 4), women use intensifiers to strength their assertion.

Since agents are the natural creations of the societies in which they exist, the relations between an agent and a culture is super dynamic and truly overlearned by discursive behaviors as well (Ochs 1996, 416). If, as Lakoff (1975, 6; cited in: Hall 2003, 365) continues, any women who abandon tentative language and prefer more assertiveness, there is a strong chance for those women to be judged negatively for being unfeminine, in other words for being less women. Although those women may seem more intelligent, as Rudman and Glick (1999, 1005) claim it is highly impossible for them to avoid backlash effect. Yet, Wiley and Eskilson (1985, 1004; see for more: Manian and Sheth 2021, 4) found that despite criticisms of being seen as less attractive, female managers who preferred assertive discursive styles were viewed as more powerful and successful. Surely, there are more academic studies claiming that tentative speech styles make women more influential, especially if they are communicating with male colleagues, no matter how embracing feminine discursive notions portray women as less capable or qualified (Watson 1988, 163; Carli 1990, 942; Carli, LaFleur, and Loeber 1995, 1030; Matschiner and Murnen 1999, 631; Reid, Keerie, and Palomares, 2003, 210; Liu and Ren 2020, 243). Carli (1990, 944), for instance, argues that women are “expected to show relatively little competitiveness or dominance” while talking, especially to men, because tentativeness give strong signals to the men that she is not trying to heighten her social order over him. Such specific expectations about female behavior or talk might eventually trigger the need for women to prefer more tentative language in their daily or professional life. As she states, because women may struggle to persuade or influence men if they behave or talk too agentic, they may instead prefer more subtle and less forceful strategies such as tentativeness to have an impact. One of her studies showed that “women were more influential with men when speaking tentatively”, whereas tentativeness did not create any persuasiveness on other women. For her, speaking tentatively creates an advantage for women as such linguistic style help women to gain power and influence over men. Brush and her colleagues (Balachandra et al. 2017, 14), on the other hand, argue that tentativeness does not create any advantages for female entrepreneurs; in fact, tentativeness also create inevitable

barriers to male entrepreneurs as well since *femininity* is associated with *too risky*, and *lack of preparedness and competition*. Therefore, women entrepreneurs only experience barriers if they talk more tentatively. However, since female entrepreneurs perceive themselves as being *women*, they might tend to embrace feminine discursive norms, which in turn, eventually create some significant struggles while raising capital via investors or backers. However, Aries (1996, 5-6) states that such gender related differences are mainly context dependable; in some situations feminine speech styles might outperform masculine discourses at all (Spender 1984, 1; cited in: Trömel-Plötz 1981, 432). Using tag questions, for instance, might reinforce and maintain positive emotions as such an interactive style could keep refresh and vivid the conversation. On that account, why, how and on what occasion male and female entrepreneurs prefer *tentativeness* or *assertiveness* may differ based on the context they engage in. Hence, entrepreneurs who prefer *feminine* language regardless their gender, might be more persuasive and influential on the backers if there is not a mismatch between expectations and behaviors.

Additional to Lakoff's and other related hypotheses, research in psychoanalysis, sociolinguistics, and cognitive linguistics analyses highlight the significant roles of words choices, especially the *style words* which form and reinforce how the things are said or presented by including all the traditional language components like verb tenses, prepositions, negations, articles, as well as emotional words, words that indicate cognitive processes, and time related words (Pennebaker, Mehl and Niederhoffer 2003, 548; Abe 2011, 214; Pennebaker 2011, 43-45; Chung and Pennebaker 2012, 2-3; Parhankangas and Renko 2017, 28-219). Style words therefore is declarative of one's attentional focus, sensitivity, truthfulness and emotionality. Varieties in the usage patterns of such specific group of words then indicate how differently one thinks, understands and interprets the word he or she makes use of. Preferring "you" and "I" rather than "we", for instance, evoke different emotions. Truthful communications say Berry et al. (cited in: Parhankangas and Renko 2017, 219) and Robinson et al. (cited

in: Parhankangas and Renko 2017, 219) should include more “I” and other related first singular personal pronouns and exclusive words such as *without*, *expect*, or *but*. However, usage of “I” may also create psychological distancing if the addresser distances himself or herself from the presented topic or idea. Focusing on more oneself through frequent preference of first-singular pronouns may create negative emotions on others (Davis and Brock 1975, 382; Toma and D’Angelo 2015, 38). In Mehl and Pennebaker (2003, 865) study, findings show that women used first-person singular pronouns more than that of men, despite the word “I” indicated selfishness or individualism and highly associated with male stereotype (Newman et al. 2008, 214). Mulac, Bradac and Gibbona’s study, (2001, 132), on the contrary, found that men, compared to women, preferred first-person singular expressions more frequently. Moreover, the one who prefer “you” and other related second personal pronouns often has a great tendency to give his or her primary attention to the others; if that person, however is highly self-aware of him or herself, he/she generally prefers “I” and other first person pronouns more (Seih, Beier, and Pennebaker 2017, 344). Thus, language gives significant clues about individual’s social and psychological processes as language itself consists of rich information about speaker’s thoughts and mind-sets. Both entrepreneurs might be also dissimilar in the degree of preferring *abstract* or *concrete* linguistic style, in such, they may prefer to focus on bigger picture more or choose to communicate with a more contextualized and specific manner (Huang et al. 2020, 3). Abstract language (or high-level construal) tends to focus more on an object’s or event’s defining aspects on the final aspects of a practice, or defining macro-level aspects whereas concrete speech (low-level construals) represents the physical details or means of that object or event through focusing more on incidental and specific features. Thus, while the former one is decontextualized, the latter one is more contextualized and detailed (Lieberman and Trope 2008, 1201-1202; Norman, Tjomsland, and Huegel 2016, 2). For instance, one may use more concrete nouns, such as *table* or *pasta*, which are more easily to visualize or experienced through senses, or may prefer more abstract nouns, like *justice* or *ethic*, which are hard to visualize

(Brysbaert, Warriner and Kuperman 2014, 906). Usually, people prefer abstract linguistic style to focus on *why*, whereas use concrete language to focus on *how* (Kleinberg et al. 2019, 3). As Joshi and her colleagues (2016, 37-38) argue that the distance of the audience may affect people's choice of words; if an audience is physically farther away, the addresser will have a great tendency to prefer abstract speech style more. Also, people tend to use more abstract speech if he or she communicates with a large audience (Joshi and Wakslak 2014, 351; Huang et al. 2020, 7). The speaker's hierarchical status in the society is another dimension that have an effect on linguistic choices (Magee, Milliken and Lurie 2010, 356; Huang et al. 2020, 7). Speakers have a great tendency to familiarize themselves toward either to connections of power (hierarchy) or to connections of solidarity (social distance). As Goodwin (cited in: KiesUng 2003, 514) states men who have more tendency to orient themselves with relationships of power prefer directives that stress hierarchy whereas women who have more tendency to orient themselves with the latter one prefers directives which stress solidarity and inclusiveness. Thus, people who have higher hierarchical status or power tend to prefer abstract speech more (Magee, Milliken and Lurie 2010, 356). Individuals who experience power feel more distant from others, thus, such psychological distance leads them to communicate with a more abstract manner (Magee and Smith 2013, 1). Women and men, as mentioned before, experience different levels of hierarchical status and power in societies. Women's role has been rooted into much lower status or lack of power compared to men's social role, especially in the workplaces or jobs. As Gino, Wilmuth and Brooks (2015, 5) claim, today's women still perceive themselves poor fit with the jobs or works that are associated with high power or status. Women compared to men, thus, emphasize interpersonal closeness with others (Barron 2003, 654 ; Eagly 2009, 645; Wood and Eagly 2012, 81), and seek to build strong relational goals through their communication skills (Rubin, Perse and Barbato 1998, 620; Brescoll 2011, 625; Joshi et al. 2020, 2) As women perceive themselves more interdependent with others, they feel less distant from their audience while speaking, which in turn, leads women to prefer more

concrete speech style due to the respect they feel for the audience they communicate with; the distant of audience and interpersonal closeness lead one to talk concrete more (Ijzerman and Semin 2009, 1214; Semin et al. 2002, 11; Joshi et al. 2020, 3). Also, as women occupy lower hierarchical status and power in societies, women, rather than men, tend to prefer concrete language more (Joshi et al. 2021, 147). Female entrepreneurs undoubtedly see themselves out-of-group (Lewis 2006 465; Bullough, Renko and Abdelzaher 2014, 6), in turn, push themselves harder to establish a tie with their audience or investors to form a closeness; feeling more interdependent to others female founders may prefer low-level abstract speech (Huang et al. 2020, 34-35). Briefly, how gender influences female and male entrepreneurs' communication strategies while persuading potential backers in order to raise the capital they need is the major concerns of them all.

1.3 Gender-Related Linguistic Differences in The Context Of Entrepreneurship

As presented in the previous sections, entrepreneurship is a highly gendered-phenomena. Given the linguistic stereotypes, male and female entrepreneurs might be expected to use different styles of language while persuading potential backers. In this section, expected differences in language use will be discussed based on four different levels. In fact, the research has been conducted in four different levels each of which is tested for different hypothesis. For each level, which are discursive, tentativeness, overall tone and construal respectively, different speech style variables are examined one by one, and the results are evaluated in depth. While all the variables analyzed at Discursive Level include linguistic parameters, all the variables analyzed at Tentativeness Level are compiled to measure the degree of femininity and masculinity. Then, at the Overall Tone, the scores measured by the LIWC program are examined. For the last level which is the Construal Level, the intensity of concrete and abstract elements are studied.

1.3.1 Discursive Level

It will be analyzed at the discursive level whether there is a gender-based difference in the style words that the entrepreneurs prefer.

1.3.1.1 Personal Pronouns

As discussed, there are gender related differences in the language usage. Several academic studies for example suggest that women rather than men prefer “I” and other related first singular personal pronouns such as “my” or “me” more often (Mehl and Pennebaker 2003, 865; Newman et al. 2008, 214). One of the reasons of having gender related difference is women’s hierarchical rank: women having lower hierarchical rank tend to be more self-focused and tentative. Therefore, at least in challenging situations, woman might have difficulty inviting others to participate in her speech. Another significant problem for women is self-consciousness, which, in turn, it creates a self-insecurity. Women are then more likely to give specific details about their own selves, feelings, or thoughts while making a statement. Due the fact that they know that they are in a man’s world, they feel insecure (Kiely, 2012). That’s why female entrepreneurs struggle while legitimizing their ventures or raising fund. On the contrary, men prefer “we” or “you” more often which indicates high level of self-confidence. Since men hold powerful and higher positions in both economic and political fields, they focus on others rather than focusing on themselves, especially when they have to persuade an addressee (Kiely, 2012). Therefore, in this part the hypotheses are as follows:

H1a: Female entrepreneurs use first singular personal pronouns more than male entrepreneurs.

H1b: Male entrepreneurs use first plural and second person more than female entrepreneurs.

1.3.1.2 Affect Words

Expressing emotions, especially passion or enthusiasm, create influential look for entrepreneurs while raising funds. A recent study, for example, found that an entrepreneur who displays higher degree of passion tends to raise more capital than the one who expresses less degree of passion or enthusiasm (Warnick et al. 2018 315; Shane et al. 2019, 1). Gender related literature, however, argued that men considerably feel notable socio-cultural pressures on themselves, for example, keeping their feelings a secret, and eventually, that pressure prevents them from expressing their feelings, except the situations that make them angry. On the contrary, women tend to express their emotions easily, especially when they are sad, happy, or anxious. Even though it is crucial for an entrepreneur to express feelings, both genders' discursive strategies carry the mould of the society's socio-cultural conditions they exist in; literature strongly argues that both genders belong to different linguistic realities (Gallus and Bhatia 2020, 116-117). Therefore, in this part the hypotheses are as follows:

H1c: Female entrepreneurs use words that indicate positive emotions, anxiety, and sadness more than male entrepreneurs.

H1d: Male entrepreneurs use words that indicate angriness more than female entrepreneurs.

1.3.1.3 Cognitive Process

The first analysis further examines how both genders' mirror their cognitive processes of thinking or reasoning while pitching. Causation words such as *why* or *because*, for example, represents the degree of one's cognitive ability about how that one forms cause and effect relations while making a statement, or words like *always* or *absolute* indicate the degree of one's certainty level. On the other hand, tentative words such as *perhaps* or *maybe* or discrepancy words like *might* or *could* represent the degree of one's ambiguity (Pennebaker and King 1999, 1299). As argued, how one understands

and interprets the particular socio-cultural conditions he or she exists in, affect that one's cognitive processes of thinking or reasoning. Women then tend to prefer words that indicate tentativeness or discrepancy more often since women's discursive choices are stereotypically associated with weakness or ambiguities (Bergvall 1996, 192; Kray and Thompson 2005, 142; Balachandra et al. 2017, 14; Hmieleski and Sheppard 2018, 5; McGee 2018, 46; Liu and Ren 2020, 243). Therefore, the hesitation of women about being an entrepreneur in the ecosystem of the entrepreneurship is formed by masculine notion would be reflected in their speech styles. Therefore, in this part the hypotheses are as follows:

H1e: Female entrepreneurs have higher frequency usage of discrepancy and tentative words compared to male entrepreneurs.

H1f: Male entrepreneurs have higher frequency usage of causation and certainty words compared to female entrepreneurs.

1.3.1.4 Time Orientation

The last variable of the first study is simply references to temporal time zones: past, present and future. It is unfortunate that academic studies on gender differences in the usage of tenses are relatively few in number. Despite the fact that it is few in number, Newman et al. (2008, 216; 229) argue that women rather than men tend to focus on present and past temporal time zones more often. Additionally, women's language is associated with "involved" speech style; women tend to prefer present-tense verbs more often compared to men. As argued, gender differences in discursive preferences are significantly related to the society's constructed realities about femininity and masculinity. Gender differences in the usage of polite phrases such as "conventionalized polite imperatives" (e.g. *Could you turn the tv off?*) or "direct imperatives" (e.g., *Turn the tv off.*) are formed throughout the childhood; while mothers prefer the former one, fathers frequently prefer the latter one. Such small but significant details about parent's semantic preferences then affect both genders'

sociolinguistic acquisition entirely, even their verb tense choices (Gleason 1987, 194-1999; Ladegaard and Bleses 2003, 224). Therefore, in this part the hypotheses is as follows:

H1g: Female entrepreneurs prefer present and past tense more.

1.3.2 Tentativeness Level

It will be analyzed whether there is a difference in the tentative language choices of entrepreneurs based on gender.

1.3.2.1 Language Metrics

Several studies found positive relation between persuasion and *length*; longer words and longer sentences make one more influential, especially in online context. Furthermore, messages which are more easier to read have negative correlation with persuasion whereas messages that are more difficult to read are more influential, especially in online context as well (Ta et al. 2021, 1; 14). As argued, men tend to prefer complex linguistic features like long sentences, long words or other related complex language structures more (cited in: Abbas 2014, 9). Therefore, in this part the hypotheses are as follows:

H2a: Male entrepreneurs prefer longer sentences and longer words compared to female entrepreneurs.

H2b: Male entrepreneurs have lower reading-ease score compared to female entrepreneurs.

1.3.2.2 Gender-Driven Word Choices

As mentioned, women's language is primarily associated with affiliation speech style and men's with assertive. Several studies suggest that women should embrace feminine discursive strategies in order to be more influential, especially against their male

counterparts. However, investors do not tend to invest in an entrepreneur who embraces feminine stereotypical discursive strategies regardless of their gender because that entrepreneur is tagged as not being assertive or competitive enough (Balachandra et al. 2017, 2). As argued, in societies there are language patterns that are assumed to belong specific gender; women are supposed to be more joyful, caring, supportive, and affiliated whereas men are assumed to be more aggressive, competitive, intelligent, and risk-taker. The expectations mention fit with the academic studies on entrepreneurship as well. For example, as Ahl (2006, 600) suggests an entrepreneur is someone who is intelligent, achievement oriented, fighting to conquer, and seeking difficulty, power and kingdom. In line with these societal expectations, there seems to be a connection between entrepreneurs gender and some word categories. Therefore, in this part the hypotheses are as follows:

H2c: Female entrepreneurs prefer words that indicate discrepancies, tentativeness, emotions, and affiliation more than male entrepreneurs.

H2d: Male entrepreneurs prefer words that indicate achievement, power, reward-focus, and risk/prevention more than female entrepreneurs.

1.3.2.3 Lakoff's Argument

The last variable of the second analysis is Lakoff's arguments about women's language; she insistently argues that uncertain or vague linguistic preferences such as hedges and intensifiers are seen in women's speeches more often (Lakoff 1975, 54). However, several studies found negative relation between hedges and persuasion; preferring hedges make one less persuasive (Blankenship and Holgraves 2005, 19; Hosman and Siltamen 2006, 43). To test such tentativeness level in entrepreneurs' pitches, the hypothesis is as follows:

H2e: Female entrepreneurs prefer intensifiers and hedges more than male entrepreneurs.

1.3.3 Overall: LIWC Outputs

As argued, women prefer communicating with a high level of emotional tone; emotions, senses and other related specific thoughts and feelings are highly seen in women's discursive choices (Thomas and Murachver 2001, 193; Wang and Depner 2016, 66; Gallus and Bhatia 2020, 116). On the other hand, men's linguistic preferences are stereotypically associated with causality, critical thinking, and logical reasoning, which, in turn, they are assumed to tend to embrace with analytical way of thinking rather than intuitive (Yulina, Permanasari and Setiawan 2019, 2). The latter way of thinking is then stereotypically associated with feminine discursive features. While the former one depends on one's specialist knowledge, the intuitive way of thinking relies on one's tacit knowledge, in such, if one could be successful while stimulating others emotions, that one will then have a higher chance to persuade that addressees' (Epstein 1994, 713). However, persuasion literature persistently states that analytical language is more persuasive compared to intuitive one; messages that involve less personal details promote more persuasion more (Ta et al. 2021, 14). As mentioned before, women seem to be more sincere because they have more tendency and courage in expressing their emotions. That's why they do not experience much difficulty stimulating others' emotions. Therefore, the level of female entrepreneurs' analytical way of thinking is assumed to be lower when compared to male's. Further, the study also examines entrepreneurs' clout score; the score measures one's degree of confidence and certainty. As clout score represents one's level of confidence, know-how and expertise, low clout score indicates tentativeness and vagueness (Jordan et al. 2019, 2). To test entrepreneurs' emotional tones, clout scores and analytical thinking degrees, the hypotheses are as follows:

H3a: Male entrepreneurs have higher frequency in analytical thinking compared to female entrepreneurs.

H3b: Female entrepreneurs have higher frequency in emotional tone compared to male entrepreneurs.

H3d: Male entrepreneurs have higher frequency in clout tone compared to female entrepreneurs.

1.3.4 Construal Level

As argued in literature review, women's language is precisely associated with informal and personal speech style; they tend to focus on specific details while communicating (concrete language). Men, on the other hand, mainly focus on the broader aspects of things or events while speaking (abstract language). According to Lyne, (Bellstrom 2017) while pitching, male entrepreneurs, unlike female's, like to mention specific details about their venture's near future growth strategies more often. His assumption seems to be one of the leading findings for analyzing the score of abstract and concrete languages entrepreneurs prefer. If, for example one prefers abstract language rather than concrete while addressing an audience, and if that audience has an abstract mindset while receiving persuading messages, both addresser and addressees than catch positive match with each other, which, then, made that addresser more persuasive (cited in: Teeny et al. 2020, 6). Therefore, in this part the hypothesis is as follows:

H4: Female entrepreneurs prefer concrete language more than male entrepreneurs.

Consequently, testing the procedure of all hypotheses considering gender, linguistic and persuasion literatures aims to close the gap in the academic field of entrepreneurship. In the next chapter methods by each hypotheses are analyzed will be explained in depth.

2. METHODOLOGY

Linguistic research methods are often conducted as either qualitative or quantitative paradigm; the former focuses on forms and sequences in order to study the nature of the context whereas the latter conducts the quantity of specific items or typical features of the given context. Qualitative methods are therefore inductive; theory being derived from results. Quantitative methods on the contrary are deductive: “hypotheses based on already know theory are developed, and then proven (or disproven) through empirical investigation” (Rasinger 2010, 52). Thus, through quantitative methods, researcher could compare a large number of items or characteristics more easily. In addition, they are more functional while generalizing findings or results because qualitative research offers in-depth data analyses, especially if the researcher studies on rich or big data (Angouri 2010, 33). In the last decade or so, however, researchers have persistently advocated for, and verily adopted mixed method approaches (Holmes and Meyerhofs 2003, 15) that pursue the balance between two techniques through “mixing or combining” both approaches (Jonson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, 17). Studies argue that such mixed method approaches mainly facilitate comprehensive analyses that provide significant benefits for the researcher while studying several research questions at once (Greene et al. 1989, 255): only such a combined approach offers extensive explanations for the questions that could not be answered otherwise (Ward 2015, 171), as well as unveil “different aspects of reality” (Lazaraton 2005, 219). Because mixed methods provide variety of opinions, it is often used to cherish both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis (Rasinger 2010, 52) by means of “convergence of findings and corroboration of research results” (Angouri 2010, 34). Thus, the present study combines mixed methods to analysis the language patterns of entrepreneurs who preferred indiegogo.com to highlight how gender related stereotypes affect their persuasive strategies.

2.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features

“An analysis of the lexico-grammatical features that characterize a particular genre often included the quantitative (as well as qualitative) analysis of specific linguistic features that characterize a representative sample of a particular genre. This level of analysis may, for example, involve a statistical analysis of a corpus” (Schnurr 2013, 50). In the current study, both methods were applied to study the statistical significance of linguistic items such as *hedges*, *intensifiers*, and *pronouns*. To conduct a textual analysis, first, entrepreneurs’ pitch videos were converted into texts, and then, contextual analysis led to acceptance or rejection of particular linguistic items based on the rhetorical strategy they have. The word *like*, for instance, can only serve a rhetorical strategy as a hedge if it’s used as an propositional expression (G. Lakoff 1973, 473).

- He’s really *like* a geek (propositional hedging)
- He *likes* to play music (verb -not hedge)

Following the qualitative analysis, to test and identify linguistic patterns of both female and male entrepreneurs’, statistical computer-based tools such as Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC2015) software, and SPSS 21.0 were used. Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC2015), one of the computer-based text analysis tools that was used in this study, was originally developed by Pennebaker and Francis to study language and disclosure (Pennebaker and Francis 1996, 605). The tool, briefly, analyzes any written text based on the frequency of word usage by classifying them into 90 different linguistic categories which includes word count, 3 general descriptor categories (words per sentence, percent of target words captured by the dictionary and percent of words in the text that are longer than six letters), 4 summary language variables (analytical thinking, clout, authenticity, and emotional tone), 6 personal concern categories (e.g., home, work, leisure activities), 21 standard linguistic dimensions (e.g., percentage of words in the text that are articles, pronouns, auxiliary verbs, and other related dimensions), 5 informal language markers (swear words,

assents, netspeak, fillers), and 41 word categories tapping psychological constructs (e.g., drives, affect, cognition, biological processes). Each dictionary has their own sub-categories or sub-dictionaries. The word “cried”, for instance, belongs to 5 different word categories such as negative emotion, past focus, overall affect, verbs, and sadness. Therefore, “cried” is incremented into those related sub-categories (Pennebaker et al. 2015, 2). As Pennebaker, Mehl and Niederhoffer (2003, 548) persistently argue, word choices highlight significant psychological clues about the speaker itself. Via the software, those hidden psychological connections could be easily detected and coded, especially the patterns that might ignored or unnoticed (Parhankangas and Renko 2017, 222). In this study, entrepreneurs’ word choices such as pronouns, hedges, intensifiers, words that indicate emotion, time and cognitive process were analyzed through their usage frequencies that are collected via LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) computer software.

Additional to LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count), Linguistic category model (LCM), other linguistic-psychological theory, was used to study entrepreneurs’ level of abstractness and concreteness. Semin and Fiedler (1988, 558-559) categorized four types of linguistic words which underlie the hidden logic of speaker’s or writer’s way of understanding the world. Adjectives for example which represents the most highest abstractness in LCM (Linguistic Category Model) generally preferred to define personal traits that cannot be neutrally observed (e.g. *reliable*, *charming* or *helpful*). Verbs which are categorized into three specific types by Semin and Fiedler, on the other hand, are associated with low abstractness and high concreteness. State verbs (SVs), the first sub-category, basically defines mental state or feelings that represents dimness beginning and ending such as *like*, *admire* or *notice*. Such SVs are detached from observable events. Though they are considered as lower abstracted than adjectives, SVs represents the highest abstractness level among the all three sub-categories of verbs. Interpretative action verbs (IAV), on the other hand, are mostly used to describe more general rank of behaviors which indicate an invariant action like

help, cheat or imitate. Those verbs also have positive or negative semantic connotations such as *encourage* or *harm*. IAVs, briefly, represent several different actions that have nothing in common to share. IAVs, on that account, are more concrete than SVs. Descriptive action verb (DAV), the last sub-category, are the most concrete ones. DAVs defines particular and observable practices or activities of which has an apparent beginning and ending by including at least one common feature shared such as *walk, kiss* or *stare*. Briefly, both adjectives and SVs represents person-specific patterns, IAVs defines situation-specific issued, and DAVs highlights context-specific actions or practices. While SVs describe uncontrollable affects or cognitive state, IAVs generally describe controllable and voluntary behaviors. Hence, the LCM (Linguistic Category Model) examines the degree of abstraction in one's language. To calculate the level of abstractness or concreteness, first, text analyses were conducted to categorize verbs into DAVs, IAVs, SVs, and adjectives, and by integrating the coded corpus into LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) computer software, the frequency usage of verbs were calculated in order to obtain an LCM (Linguistic Category Model) score. Linguistic Category Model (LCM) suggests four different linguistic categories (DAVs, IAVs, SVs, and adjectives) that are orderly and continuously form the concreteness-abstractness. Based on those various dimensions, an algorithm was used (Semin and Fiedler 1988, 563).

Briefly, the algorithm is as follows:

$$LCM \text{ score} = \frac{[(DAVx1) + (IAVx2) + (SVx3) + ADJx4]}{(IAV + ADJ) + DAV + SV}$$

Every specific linguistic category (DAVs, IAVs, SVs, and ADJs) was scored with a theoretical weighted ranked from 1 to 4, and then divided by the sum of the sub-indices in the algorithm to give a corollary LCM (Linguistic Category Model) score that ranks from 1 that indicates highest concreteness level, to 4 that represents highest abstractness level. The mathematical equation is then preferred by one who wants to

classify certain words into their abstractness or concreteness level to conduct a comprehensive text analysis. Each of the weights assigned to different word classes. While adjectives are ranked with the highest abstractness level, interpretive action verbs are ranked with the highest concreteness level. In this study, LCM (Linguistic Category Model) score algorithm was applied to highlight whether there are differences in entrepreneurs' level of abstractness.

2.2 Data Gathering and Interpretation

Entrepreneurs receive funding either through brick-and-mortar activities or online platforms. Since the main aim of this research is to analyze linguistic differences between male and female entrepreneurs while they are persuading potential backers, online platforms provided a better setting to better control other variables that might influence the decision of investors such as appearance, gestures or body movements compared to other settings. Among such platforms, indiegogo.com and kickstarter.com are the two most popular. In order to be able to collect the required data for the analysis of the relationship between the entrepreneurial activities, particularly female entrepreneurial activities and investor approach to their presentations on such platforms, it is a necessary step to respond to some questions such as why those two online platforms are more popular than the others and what kind of limitations they have. Due to their marketplace size and capacity that create a wide variety of opportunities and mutual benefits, entrepreneurs and investors recently prefer these two platforms. Besides, one should keep in mind that people always favor the larger platforms over the smaller ones as their “network effect” is much higher. Entrepreneurs, thus, have a higher chance to gain access to more backers to raise the required capital they need. For backers, there might be some promising projects offering gigantic profits in the future which could be in any area of which investors have never thought. Backers could have the chance to spot and to invest in any of them they select. Yet, those two online platforms have some disadvantages as well as

advantages. For instance, while Kickstarter has a more standardized experience with more strict rules for entrepreneurs, Indiegogo has more flexible and inclusive standards for entrepreneurs. These differences make the latter one have a much broader range of campaign creators. Hence, such structural differences between Kickstarter and Indiegogo have a great impact on entrepreneurs when choosing the platform to launch their campaigns. If, for example, a project needs a complex manufacturing and distributing process, Kickstarter requires a functioning prototype from the entrepreneur before launching a campaign on the site. However, Indiegogo allows entrepreneurs to host any campaign they desire to launch on the platform even if they do not yet have a functioning prototype. If developing such a prototype is beyond entrepreneur's financial status, the latter one is more advantageous as it allows entrepreneurs to launch their campaigns. There are also some boundaries for entrepreneurs on both platforms. For instance, both platforms require government-issued identity document before a campaign could go live. Another barrier is the countries the platforms function. Kickstarter is open to backers all over the world, but only allow project creations in New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, the Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Hong Kong, Spain, Australia, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway, France, Belgium, Singapore, Switzerland, and Germany. However, Indiegogo supports all the 224 countries and territories in the world in which PayPal payment is actively used. If the country is not supported by either platform, any entrepreneur is to choose alternative platforms. Also, there are great differences about the categories that both platforms offer their creators. While Kickstarter has 15 categories (art, comics, crafts, dance, design, fashion, film and video, food, games, journalism, music, photography, publishing, technology, theatre), Indiegogo has 33 categories (explained later) (Backerkit, chap. 3). The other major difference between those two platforms is the funding standards. Indiegogo offers "flexible funding goals" whereas Kickstarter does not. If an entrepreneur was to set a goal of US\$20,000 but ended up raising only US\$15,000, his or her campaign would fail on Kickstarter. Conversely, any entrepreneur who chooses the "flexible funding goals" opportunity on Indiegogo

could still get all the funds raised, even if the entrepreneur could not make it all. Also, while Indiegogo give backers' contact information to creators as soon as they pledge, Kickstarter waits until the end of the campaign. Thus, any entrepreneur who launch a campaign on Indiegogo could advertise the same campaign on Facebook to similar audiences (Naek, 2021). Partnerships and supports that both platforms offer their creators also have some great differences. Indiegogo offers design, prototyping and manufacturing partners for entrepreneurs to guide them about the knowledge they need such as marketing, fulfillment, and shipping. Creators can also use the education center that the platform offers them (Indiegogo for entrepreneurs). Hence, many entrepreneurs choose Indiegogo over Kickstarter because of the superior communication style and support system the platform provides. (Narek, 2021). That is why I choose indiegogo.com to collect the needed data, as the data that Indiegogo provides is more convenient and diversified compared to Kickstarter.

To study how gender related role expectations impact entrepreneurs' language choices, 415 videos over 23,758 success videos via indiegogo.com were collected and converted to text. Accepted criteria for success in this research is the criteria same as the one on indiegogo.com which is collecting a specific amount of money required for the project offered by the entrepreneur or any project reaching the budget target at raising money on indiegogo.com is the success criteria for the thesis. The total selected data of female entrepreneurs is 151, and of male entrepreneurs 263. There are three main categories on Indiegogo that an entrepreneur can start his or her campaign on: *technology and innovation*, *creative works* and *community projects*. Each main category has their own sub-categories. The first one has 12 sub-categories: audio, camera gear, education, energy and green technology, fashion and wearables, food and beverages, health and fitness, home, phones and accessories, productivity, transportation, travel and outdoors. Creative works, the second main category, has 11 sub-categories which are art, comics, dance and theater (no data is selected in that sub-category as no convenient data is found), film, music, photography, podcasts blogs and Vlogs (no data is selected from

that sub-category as no convenient data is found), tabletop games, video games, web series and TV shows (no data is selected from that sub-category as no convenient data is found), writing and publishing. Community projects, the last category, has 5 sub-categories: culture, environment, human rights, local businesses, wellness. Not all successful videos were selected for the thesis though only those that meet the criteria were selected. The elimination criterions are as follows:

- Same/alike campaigns (eliminated the projects that raised lower funds)
- Same/alike campaigns that already exist on the market
- Campaigns that had lack of business idea
- Campaigns that do not have verbal expressions (some of the success videos had only visual expressions)
- Campaigns in which languages other than English were used
- Campaigns that consist only of users' comments (such expressions did not belong to the entrepreneur, so I eliminated those videos)

Table 2.1 The Gender Distribution among Entrepreneurs.

| | | n | % |
|--------|--------|-----|------|
| Gender | Female | 152 | 36,5 |
| | Male | 264 | 63,5 |

As you can see in the Table 2.1, 152 female entrepreneurs and 264 male entrepreneurs were chosen. When the ratio of two different genders is calculated to be compared, male entrepreneurs cover a very high share of 63.5%, whereas female entrepreneurs have a very low share of 36.5% which highlights that the percentage of female entrepreneurs is almost a quarter of male entrepreneurs. Even these facts reveal that even online entrepreneurship seems to be under male dominance. To raise the capital they need, female entrepreneurs appears to prefer online platforms relatively less than that of male entrepreneurs.

2.2.1 First Category: Discursive Level

The first analysis, labelled Discursive Level, was quantitative, and to gather the frequency usage of *personal pronouns* (1st singular personal pronouns, 1st plural personal pronouns, 2nd person pronouns), *words that indicate emotion* (positive emotion, negative emotion), *cognitive process* (causation, discrepancies, tentativeness, certainty) and *time orientation* (past focus, present focus, future focus). LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software was used, and then, to see any statistically significant differences in gender among entrepreneurs SPSS 20.1 computer program was used. Table 2.2 highlights all related details about the analysis.

Table 2.2 Categories of Different Style Words.

| Style Words | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Pronouns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal pronouns (1st person singular, 1st person plural, 2nd person) |
| Affect Words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive emotion (such as love, nice) • Negative emotion (anxiety such as fearful, worried; anger like kill, hate; sadness such as sad, crying) |
| Cognitive Process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causation (such as effect, because) • Discrepancies (such as would, should) • Tentativeness (such as perhaps, maybe) • Certainty (such as never, always) |
| Time Orientation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past focus (such as did, ago) • Present focus (such as is, today) • Future focus (such as will, may) |

Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted on SPSS 21.0 to detect whether the sample is normally distributed or not. Parametric statistics were used if the variable was normally distributed, and nonparametric statistics were preferred if the variable levelled off at normally distributed. Table 2.3 below illustrates the results of the normality test of second analysis.

Table 2.3 The Normality Test of First Analysis.

| | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|------------------|--------------|-----|------|
| | Statistic | n | p |
| 1st singular (I) | ,684 | 416 | ,000 |
| 1st plural (we) | ,953 | 416 | ,000 |
| 2nd (you) | ,977 | 416 | ,000 |
| Positive Emotion | ,978 | 416 | ,000 |
| Negative Emotion | ,792 | 416 | ,000 |
| Anxious | ,647 | 416 | ,000 |
| Anger | ,547 | 416 | ,000 |
| Sad | ,607 | 416 | ,000 |
| Causation | ,978 | 416 | ,000 |
| Discrepancies | ,969 | 416 | ,000 |
| Tentativeness | ,918 | 416 | ,000 |
| Certainty | ,957 | 416 | ,000 |
| Past Focus | ,936 | 416 | ,000 |
| Present Focus | ,997 | 416 | ,741 |
| Future Focus | ,875 | 416 | ,000 |

2.2.2 Second Category: Tentativeness Level

The second analysis, labelled Tentativeness Level, involved both methods of analyses. To gather the frequency usage of words more than 6 letters, words per sentence, words that indicate discrepancy, tentativeness, emotion, achievement, power, affiliation, certainty, reward-focus, and risk/prevention LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software were used, and to calculate each entrepreneur's FLESCH score (FRES) a mathematical algorithm was applied. "The Flesch-Kincaid" (F-K) reading grade level was first developed by J. Peter Kincaid and his coworkers under the contract of U.S. Navy in 1975 (Kincaid et al. 1975, 1) to measure the level of difficulty of technical manuals in 1978 to adjust the United States Military Standard. As measured by the formula, ninth-grade level readability is today the universal difficulty level in many U.S. states and for many legal documents (McClure 1987, 12). Higher scores in Flesch reading-ease indicate that the context is easier to understand whereas lower ranks show that the context needs higher degree of age or graduation.

The formula of FRES is as follows (Kincaid et al. 1975, 14):

$$206.835 - 1.015 \left(\frac{\text{total words}}{\text{total sentences}} \right) - 84.6 \left(\frac{\text{total syllables}}{\text{total words}} \right)$$

FRES ranks are illustrated in the Table 2.4 as follow:

Table 2.4 Flesch Reading-Ease Score Difficulty Levels.

| Score | School Level | Difficulty Level |
|---------------|--------------------|--|
| 100.00 – 90.0 | 5th grade | Very easy to understand by an average 11-year- old student. |
| 90.0 – 80.0 | 6th grade | Easy to understand. Conversational English. |
| 80.0 – 70.0 | 7th grade | Fairly easy to understand. |
| 70.0 – 60.0 | 8th & 9th grade | Plain English. Easily understood by 13- to 15-year-old students. |
| 60.0 – 50.0 | 10th to 12th grade | Fairly difficult to understand. |
| 50.0 – 30.0 | College | Difficult. |
| 30.0 – 10.0 | Collage graduate | Very difficult to understand. Best understood by university graduates. |
| 10.0 – 0.0 | Professional | Extremely difficult to understand. |

Rakt, 2019.

The Flesch reading-ease rank does not suggest any lower bond; the score only offers a possibility to the individuals who want to adjust and find the right difficulty level both for themselves and for their target audience. Hence, people have an opportunity to know how understandable they are to the audience they want to reach, and make the necessary changes, if there are any. In language, the difficulty level of any written or spoken context depends on the content complication such as the syntax patterns or the tangled vocabulary that one prefers. How complexly female and male entrepreneurs prefer to talk, on that account, matters. As Kimble (cited in: Stoop 2011, 334) states clean and understandable language is more effective while communicating. Hence, using such language will simplify the message or the information to the point. Yet, this does not mean that someone who prefers such easy-to-be-understood language is anti-intellectual or unsophisticated. In fact, it is the style of Mark Twain, Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill, and many other intellectuals. Therefore, simple words through

refreshing senses influence others more, and inhold great power (Hartley, Pennebaker and Fox 2003, 392).

To test Lakoff's hypotheses, on the other hand, a hand coded corpus was established, and then, that coded corpus was integrated into LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software to gather the required frequency usage. Salager-Meyer (2000, 176) suggests an introspection and intuition approach while studying *hedges*. Thus, a qualitative method, mainly textual analysis, was used firstly to create the needed corpus; to identify hedges, representative texts were read, and only after, criteria of what should be counted as a hedge for this study were specified. For instance, George Lakoff (1973, 471), in his article *Hedges: a study in meaning criteria and the logic of fuzzy concepts*, studied how hedges could make statements more or less fuzzier than the way they should be by exploring *hedging* as a linguistical term. He was the first who conducted a semantic categorization of *hedges* which has often been associated with one's semantic ability, or one's ability to give meanings to the objects or things. To illustrate his argument, Lakoff (G. 1973, 473; 475) studied a small number of lexical items in terms of *hedges* such as "par excellence" and "strictly speaking" to prove how their usage can change semantic meaning. "Strictly speaking", for instance, represents how the addresser prioritize the value of statement by emphasizing primary features on the one hand and other characteristics on the other.

Linguists, further, began to study how hedges can also be used as pragmatic meaning; the concept of *hedging* was further used in discourse analysis to highlight its usage in the context of social communication. Then, *hedging* is often associated with epistemic modality, metadiscourse, stance, politeness, and vagueness. Epistemic modality, which reflects epistemic meaning, is the first concept of hedging as associated with. Declerck (2011, 36) stated that hedges can serve epistemic meaning if one has to express some degree of (un)certainty about the nature of a situation that exists in the valid reality in which the possibility represents the present or future time zones. For example, "John is driving home" reflects certainty while "John may be driving home" expresses a

degree of uncertainty. The epistemic modal verb *may* is used to reflect speaker's degree of truth. Epistemic modality, then, is linked to expressions of doubts, certainties, or truthiness. Therefore, *hedges*, as Lakoff (1973, 471) classified as *fuzziness*, indicates the valid value of an individual in a proposition or statement (Ward 2015, 98). Hyland (2005, 37), on the other hand, categorized *hedges* as *metadiscourse*; available as a cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assists the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and to engage in readers' particular community as a member. Thus, *hedges* might be used to open a *discursive space* in which further viewpoints can be declared. Peter White (2003, 260) distinguished *hedges* rhetorical functionality in two; if *hedge* is dialogically expansive, it offers alternative viewpoints while if it is dialogically contractive, it reflects a challenge, or limits. The hedges "suggest" or "may", for instance, indicate that one's trying to open other suggestions or alternatives to the arguments they declare such as "Our results *suggest* that..." (Ward 2015, 100). Therefore, *hedges* can be used to persuade others. Other phenomena that *hedges* is linked to is *politeness*; hedges could also be used as a tool to support, endanger or control the language. In other words, they are the constructors of symphonious associations while governing the social relations (Spencer-Oatey 2000, 3). "Hedges" therefore can minimize any possibility of threat that either the addresser or the addressee might feel uncomfortable further. For example, if one prefers *show* instead of *suggest* and say "Our results show that..." could lead to criticism or conflict between both the addresser and the addressee (Ward 2015, 102). And the final concept that *hedges* linked to is *vagueness* (Markkanen and Schröder 1997, 7; Fraser 2010, 26; Ward 2015, 103). Fraser (2010, 26) defines vagueness when the information that an addressee get is less certain than it would be supposed to. A *hedge* such as *so on* can reflect vagueness if one says "He visited Japan, Hong Kong and *so on*". Thus, vague language is mostly preferred when the addresser tries to hide the fact he or she does not have comprehensive knowledge of precise details. However, classifying *hedges* is not an easy task because it involves an infinite forms of possibilities that can be used as a linguistic tool in many different ways

(Brown and Levison 1987, 146) meaning that hedges are not always predictable (Crompton 1997, 281). Salager-Meyer (1994, 153), however, classified “hedges” through both formal and functional parameter she says and continues, “ Though hedges represent one’s mental ability about the ways how the individual crafts some particular language features such as epistemic verbs, modals, and approximators, these outcomes do not always serve the purpose. Thus, such ambiguity causes difficulties of identifying which of these linguistic forms should be counted as hedges and which should not. Her characterization of “hedges” as follows:

- Shields: semi-auxiliaries such as *appear*; epistemic verbs such as *suggest*; modal verbs expressing possibility; probability adverbs such as *probably* or *likely* and adjectives
- Approximators like *roughly*, *somewhat*, or *often*
- Expressions of the addresser’s doubt such as *I believe*, *I think* or *I suppose*
- Emotionally-charged intensifiers like *extremely difficult*, or *extremely interesting*
- Compound hedges: double hedges such as *It may suggest that*; quadruple hedges like *It would seem somewhat unlikely that*; treble hedges like *It would seem likely that* (Salager-Meyer 1994, 155).

Hyland (1996a, 272), on the other hand, provided a characterization of “hedges” with a simpler classification: Modal verbs such as *would*, *may* or *could*; epistemic lexical verbs like *suggest*, *indicate*, or *appear*; epistemic adjectives such as *possible*, *likely*, or *apparent*; epistemic adverbs like *probably*, *apparently*, or *relatively*; and epistemic nouns such as *possibility*. Just like Hyland, Bloomer and Bloomer (2007, 103) also classified “hedges” into three easy categories: Approximators such as *roughly*, *approximately*, or *sort of*; modality like *may*, *might*, or *could*; and perceptive verbs such as *think*, *believe*, or *suppose*.

To summarize, functions of “hedges” in this study involved:

- Allowing the addresses to indicate his or her lack of the truth value of the argument or viewpoint (Fraser 2010, 26)
- Protecting the addresser from the possibilities of negative or embarrassing responses (Ward 2015, 150)
- Allowing the addresser to embrace a politeness strategy (Spencer-Oatey 2000, 3)
- Allowing the addresser to soften his or her arguments in order to avoid conflicts (Ward 2015, 181)

Apart from hedges, the thesis also searches for *intensifiers*. Authors and academicians often classify *hedges* and *intensifiers* as interrelated (Grabe and Kaplan 1997 155; Silver 2003, 365; Leung Chi Kong 2015, 83). In the categorization of *metadiscourse*, for example, the latter ones are classified as sub-category of hedges, where both *hedges* and *intensifiers* are based on similar phenomenon; reflects one’s degree of truthiness. *Intensifiers* however as signifying certainty or full commitment are opposite to *hedges* as a whole (Lorenz 1999, 24). The addresser then prefers to use *intensifiers* to be more impressive, persuader, and influential (Partington 1993, 178). For Bolinger (1972, 18), intensifiers “afford a picture of fevered invention and competition that would be hard to come by elsewhere, for in their nature they are unsettled.”. That is a nested loop; the process constantly echo itself. For instance, one may use “topping” as an intensifier, and later that person can prefer “too divine”, and then that person may use “marvelous” as an intensifier. According to Peters (1994, 271) they are contingent upon trends; the addresser desires to be unique in order to appeal to the addresses’ feelings (Tagliamonte and Roberts 2005, 281). Nevertheless, though intensifiers and hedges are interrelated with each other, their semantic meanings differ significantly. For Bolinger, for example, grammatical items such as “*more* and *most* and the suffixes of comparison – e.g., *-er* and *-est*” are categorized as *intensifier* (1972, 18). Allerton (cited in: Leung Chi Kong 2013, 84) and Quirk et al. (cited in: Leung Chi Kong 2013,

84), in addition, provided a characterization of *intensifiers* with a simpler classification: Verb modifiers such as *definitely*; noun modifiers like *terribly*; adjective modifiers such as *extremely*; adverb modifiers like *very*; and pronoun modifiers such as *much*. Cacchiani (2009, 231) further states that multiple intensifiers can be used together such as *quite very popular* or *rather very insensitive*. Because grammatical usage of “intensifier + adjective” is context-dependent, an intensifier can later adjust the usage patterns of intensifier + adjective either to function as an accumulator like *so very tall* or as a reduplication such as *very very tall*. Paradis (2003, 202-203), for instance, says that an intensifier *really* represents the degree of intensity like *really nice*, *really funny*, or *really good*. The adjectives such as *nice*, *funny*, or *good* are here ranked on a scale that allows the intensifier *really* to function as a fortification. Intensifiers then through modifying “the illocutionary force” (Leung Chi Kong 2015 ,36) strength “the sake of politeness” while justifying addresser at all since addresser’s “truth of assertion’ left “no danger of offence” (Leung Chi Kong 2015 , 2). However, expressing such degree of certainty with high self-confidence is definitely based on one’s knowledge or experience (Leung Chi Kong 2015, 1).

Briefly, functions of “intensifiers” in this study involved:

- Allowing the addresser to exaggerate and reinforce the truth value (Hinkel 2005, 30)
- Intensifying the certainty, or indicating politeness and interest such as “you have made an *excellent* performance” (Leung Chi Kong 2015, 91)
- Allowing the addresser to exaggerate number’s role like “*a huge amount* of money” (Channell 1994, 89)
- Intensifying addresser’s emotion to attract more attention from the audience (Peters 1994, 271)

Beside hedges and intensifiers, for Lakoff (cited in: McHugh and Hambaugh 2010, 382), women’s language is also linked to the usage of tag questions, swear words,

hypercorrect grammar, and polite phrases as well. However, through conducting contextual analysis, it has been revealed that none of the entrepreneurs, either male or female, use tag questions or swear words at all. Therefore, tag question and swear word parameters were omitted in Lakoff's argument analysis. In addition, both genders prefer pretty same opening and closing phrases such as "hello" or "thank you for watching", in such, entrepreneurs behave with same *politeness* notion to convince backers while raising fund. Therefore, politeness parameter was also omitted in Lakoff's argument analysis as well, but, some related details about politeness parameter would be mentioned in conclusion part as a relatively small conceptual analysis.

Female-gender driven words choices of which indicate discrepancy, tentativeness, emotions and affiliation and male-gender driven words choices which are associated with achievement, power, reward-focus, and risk/prevention, on contrary, were chosen as a dimension of tentativeness after reading representative texts and studies of theoreticians (argued in literature review). Femininity is stereotypically associated with being emotional, submissive, affectional, supportive, tenderhearted, sensitive, or caring whereas masculinity is stereotypically associated with assertiveness, competitiveness, rationality, ambitious, courageous, or intelligent (discussed in literature review). Henceforward, some specific LIWC (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) word categories were classified into gender related word choices to analyze the statistical relations, if there is any.

Finally, to detect any statistically significant differences in gender among entrepreneurs SPSS 20.1 computer program was used. Table 2.5 shows all related details about second analysis.

Table 2.5 Dimensions of Tentativeness.

| Tentativeness | |
|--|---|
| Language Metrics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words per sentence • Words > 6 letters • FLESCH score (FRES) |
| Female-Gender Driven Word Selection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrepancies (such as should, would) • Tentativeness (such as maybe, perhaps) • Emotions (such as love, hate) • Affiliation (such as ally, friend) |
| Male-Gender Driven Word Selection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement (such as success, win) • Power (such as bully, superior) • Reward-focus (such as benefit, prize) • Risk/prevention focus (such as doubt, danger) |
| Lakoff's Argument | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedges • Intensifiers |

Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted on SPSS 21.0 to detect whether the sample is normally distributed or not. As all variables levelled off at normally distributed, nonparametric statistics were chosen. Table 2.6 below illustrates the results of the normality test of second analysis.

Table 2.6. The Normality Test of Second Analysis.

| | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-----|------|
| | Statistic | n | p |
| Words Per Sentence | ,954 | 416 | ,000 |
| Words >6 Letters | ,924 | 416 | ,000 |
| Flesch Score Fres | ,978 | 416 | ,000 |
| Discrepancies | ,969 | 416 | ,000 |
| Tentativeness | ,918 | 416 | ,000 |
| Emotions | ,989 | 416 | ,003 |
| Affiliation | ,966 | 416 | ,000 |
| Hedges | ,949 | 416 | ,000 |
| Intensifiers | ,890 | 416 | ,000 |
| Achievement | ,940 | 416 | ,000 |
| Power | ,932 | 416 | ,000 |
| Reward-Focus | ,961 | 416 | ,000 |
| Risk/Prevention | ,755 | 416 | ,000 |

2.2.3 Third Category: Overall

The third analysis, labelled Overall, was again purely quantitative, and to gather the results of three summary variables, which are analytical thinking, emotional tone, and clout score, LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software was used, and then, to be able to detect any statistically significant differences in gender among entrepreneurs SPSS 20.1 computer program was used. Table 2.7 highlights all related details about analysis.

Table 2.7 Results Obtained from LIWC2015 Computer Software.

| Summary Variables | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Analytical thinking | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Categorical-dynamic index thinking: the use of analysis or logical reasoning. People who ranks low in analytical thinking tend to prefer informal, narrative, and more personal language. |
| Emotional tone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim of emotional writing is to provoke emotional reactions with the audience. • Measured based on positive and negative emotions, social processes, and causation. |
| Clout | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to the relative social status, confidence, or leadership that people display through their writing or talking. • High degree in clout indicated a communication style that is high in confidence, leadership, and social status, whereas a low degree of clout number suggests a more tentative and humble style. |

Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted on SPSS 21.0 to detect whether the sample is normally distributed or not. As all variables levelled off at normally distributed, nonparametric statistics were chosen. Table 2.8 below illustrates the results of the normality test of second analysis.

Table 2.8 The Normality Test of Third Analysis.

| | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---------------------|--------------|-----|------|
| | Statistic | n | p |
| Analytical Thinking | ,947 | 416 | ,000 |
| Clout | ,813 | 416 | ,000 |
| Emotional Tone | ,831 | 416 | ,000 |

2.2.4 Fourth Category: Construal Level

The last analysis, labelled Construal Level, was purely quantitative as well. To analyze the abstractness level of entrepreneurs' language usage, conceptual model proposed by Semin and Fiedler (1988) was used. The needed LCM (Linguistic Category Model) dictionary have already been integrated into LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) computer program. Thus, without hand coding, LIWC's LCM (linguistic category model) dictionary (based on Semin and Fiedler's study) was used, and to find any statistically significant differences in gender among entrepreneurs SPSS 20.1 computer program was used. Table 2.9 highlights all related details about analysis.

Table 2.9 Results Obtained from LIWC2015 Computer Software.

| Concrete language | Abstract language |
|---|---|
| <p>Descriptive action verbs (DAVs/most concrete ones): describe a particular and observable practices or activities of which has an apparent beginning and end by including at least one common feature shared such as <i>walk, kiss, or stare</i>.</p> <p>Interpretative action verbs (IAVs): describe more general rank of behaviors which indicate an invariant action like <i>help, cheat or imitate</i>.</p> | <p>State verbs (SVs): describe mental states of feelings which contain a dimness beginning and end such as <i>like, admire or notice</i>.</p> <p>Adjectives (ADJs/most abstract ones): describe personality traits that cannot be objectively examined such as <i>charming, reliable, or helpful</i>.</p> |

Shapiro-Wilk normality test was conducted on SPSS 21.0 to detect whether the sample is normally distributed or not. As the data levelled off at normally distributed, nonparametric statistics were chosen. Table 2.10 below illustrates the results of the normality test of second analysis.

Table 2.10 The Normality Test of Linguistic Category Model Score (LCM score).

| | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|-----------|--------------|-----|------|
| | Statistic | n | p |
| LCM Score | ,981 | 416 | ,000 |

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The empirical research conducts the relation between gender and language style choices among entrepreneurs who choose to raise the capital they need via crowdfunding sources, indiegogo.com. The third chapter, results and discussions, summarizes the results of four comparative analyses which are linguistic level, tentativeness level, LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) overall scores, and construal level.

Section 3.1 discusses the results of the first analysis (discursive level), which was carried out through qualitative (checking the rhetoric meanings of specific words) and quantitative analyses (LIWC2015 and SPSS 21.0 tools). The analysis was carried out firstly through highlighting specific group of words via LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) computer program, and after checking their rhetoric meanings, words frequency usage was calculated with LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) and statistically tested using SPSS 21.0.

Section 3.2 presents the results of the second analysis (tentativeness level), which was also carried out through both methods: text analysis as qualitative and computer-based analyses (LIWC2015 and SPSS 21.0) as quantitative. The analysis was carried out firstly through examining the literature to determine which words should be counted as hedges and intensifiers, and after setting limitations, entrepreneurs' pitch texts (videos converted into texts to conduct the study) were manually coded to create the needed corpus. Integrating hand coded corpus into LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software, words frequency usage was calculated, and only after, entrepreneurs' tentativeness level was statistically compared to whether detect any gender related differences.

Section 3.3 reports the results of the third analysis (overall scores), which was quantitative in nature. Through LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count)

computer program, entrepreneurs' three significant scores which are analytical thinking, emotional, and clout were measured. Then, scores were statistically tested using SPSS 21.0 to highlight gender related differences, if there was any.

Section 3.4 presents the results of the last analysis (construal level), which was also quantitative in nature. To measure entrepreneurs' abstractness level, LCM (Linguistic Category Model) classification was used. The dictionary has already been uploaded into LIWC2015 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) software. Thus, that dictionary was used to find out entrepreneurs' frequency usage, and then calculating usage percentages, LCM (Linguistic Category Model) score's algorithm was applied to measure every entrepreneur's abstractedness level. Only after, specific statistical methods were applied to detect gender related differences, if there was any.

Nevertheless, because some of the results that obtained from LIWC2015 software, such as words that indicate tentativeness or discrepancies, were not completely reliable or verifiable, checking these specific words' rhetoric meanings was the crucial process at all. Thus, checking their strategic position allowed for initial conclusions to be reached concerning the role and notion of femininity concept is the first step to be taken. Qualitative methods enabled for an ideal approach with the goal of ensuring reliability of any results obtained is the next and probably the most significant step.

3.1 First Analysis: Discursive Level

This section presents the quantitative analysis of entrepreneurs' usage rates of *personal pronouns*, *affect words*, *words that indicate an entrepreneur's cognitive process* and *words that represent an entrepreneur's time orientation focus*, and statistical results were reflected in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 The Results of Statistical Analysis.

| | Gender | | | | Test statistic | p |
|------------------------------|--------|------|-------|------|----------------|-------|
| | Female | | Male | | | |
| | Mean | ss | Mean | ss | | |
| 1 st singular (I) | 1,44 | 2,10 | ,78 | 1,17 | 17113,000 | ,009* |
| 1 st plural (we) | 2,77 | 2,03 | 2,69 | 1,89 | 20063,500 | 1,000 |
| 2 nd (you) | 4,03 | 2,24 | 4,24 | 2,31 | 19156,500 | ,442 |
| Positive Emotion | 4,72 | 1,84 | 4,44 | 1,55 | 18628,500 | ,224 |
| Negative Emotion | ,92 | ,91 | ,70 | ,81 | 16952,000 | ,008* |
| Anxious | ,22 | ,35 | ,17 | ,31 | 18709,000 | ,192 |
| Anger | ,19 | ,36 | ,11 | ,23 | 17975,500 | ,030* |
| Sad | ,16 | ,29 | ,14 | ,26 | 19905,500 | ,873 |
| Causation | 3,07 | 1,23 | 3,01 | 1,28 | 19291,500 | ,513 |
| Discrepancies | 1,25 | ,67 | 1,15 | ,73 | 17792,500 | ,054 |
| Tentativeness | 1,93 | 1,19 | 1,98 | 1,05 | 19031,000 | ,382 |
| Certainty | 1,68 | 1,05 | 1,68 | ,85 | 18745,500 | ,264 |
| Past Focus | 2,29 | 1,57 | 2,07 | 1,36 | 18898,500 | ,324 |
| Present Focus | 11,46 | 2,63 | 11,11 | 2,77 | 1,288 | ,198 |
| Future Focus | 1,00 | ,88 | ,80 | ,66 | 17374,500 | ,023* |

Mann Whitney U test *p<0,05

3.1.1 Personal Pronouns

Hypothesis 1a predicted that female entrepreneurs use first singular personal pronouns (I) more and *hypothesis 1b* predicted that male entrepreneurs prefer first plural personal pronouns (we), and second person pronouns (you) more. As reported in Table 3.1, Mann Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of first singular pronouns, “I”, (.009). However, same quantitative analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of first plural pronouns “we” (1,000) and second person pronouns “you” (.442). Therefore, while the *hypothesis 1a* was supported, there is no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 1b*.

Unlike previous studies (Davis and Brock 1976, 382; Pennebaker 2003, 865; Seih, Beier, and Pennebaker 2017, 344; Kacewicz et al. 2013, 4), male entrepreneurs did not prefer first plural (we) and second person pronouns (you) relatively much. Even though

there were gender differences in the usages rates of “I”, female entrepreneurs preferred “we” and “you” relatively greater than “I”. Several studies highly associated “we” and other related first plural personal pronouns usage with being “collective oriented” and “externally focus” (Tausczik and Pennebaker 2010, 31; Kacewicz et al. 2013, 4), and “you” and other related second person pronouns with collaboration and cooperation (Slatcher, Vazire and Pennebaker 2008, 408). Female entrepreneurs, for instance, self-advocate their capabilities, or their qualifications by saying:

“I just graduated from UC Berkeley and I’m co-founder of AXCENT”; “... I was a family physician... The turning point for me as a doctor ...”

“I’m Anita, an engineer, and also the creator of this project.”

“I’m an engineer from Stanford...”

However, the fact that female entrepreneurs preferred “we” and “you” relatively often than “I” actually revealed a significant reality about female entrepreneurs since results clearly suggest that while pitching, female entrepreneurs just like male entrepreneurs predominantly gave their attention to backers and to their team members as well; female entrepreneurs surely desired to be more “externally focused” rather than to be “self-focused”. For example, most of the female entrepreneurs put forward their team members by saying that:

“... we came up with the idea ...”

“One of the things that we ended up changing through feedback from our fans ...”

“... we win by doing it together showing the world that this is a cause everyone should care about.”

“With our strong team ...”

However, since male entrepreneurs did not prefer to self-promote themselves, they precisely bring out their team members by expressing how strongly they bond to each other. For instance, male entrepreneurs mostly highlighted their uniqueness or brotherliness by saying:

“We create products ...”

“We have put an equally obsessed team together ...”

“We’re Morrell and we make...”,

“Through our revolutionary approach ...”.

Briefly, female entrepreneurs seemed to use personal pronouns (mostly “I” and “we”) as a weapon to promote their campaigns while focusing both on themselves and their team members. However, as male entrepreneurs feel less pressure on their shoulders to prove their capabilities (discussed in literature review) they mostly gave their attention to others and their team members while establishing “collective identity” to persuade backers.

3.1.2 Affect Words

Hypothesis 1c predicted that female entrepreneurs prefer words that indicate positive emotions (such as love, nice, and other related words), anxiety (such as worried, fearful, and other related words), and sadness (such as crying, grief, and other related words) more and *hypothesis 1d* predicted that male entrepreneurs use words that indicate anger (such as hate, kill, and other related words) more. As reported in Table 3.1, Mann Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage of words that indicate negative emotions (.008), and anger (.030). However, same quantitative analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of words that indicate positive emotions (.224), anxiety

(,192), and sadness (,873). Therefore, there are no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 1c* and *hypothesis 1d*.

Though previous studies found positive relation between expressing negative emotions, especially anger, and man's language (Lyons and Serbin 1986, 306; Mulac, Studley and Blau, 1990, 439; Fabes and Martin 1991, 533; Dember et al. 1993, 579;; Thomas and Murachver 2001, 193; Brescoll 2016, 5), this research suggest otherwise; female entrepreneurs preferred words that indicate negative emotions and anger more often compared to male entrepreneurs. Though *anger* is viewed as *masculine*, women are persistently encouraged to show their anger more often because it is unfair to expect women to feel ashamed or bad while showing their emotions, even if it is "anger" or "rage" (Fraga 2018). Deborah Cox (cited in: Cox, Velsor, and Hulgus 2004, 873-875), the co-author of the book *Women's Anger: Clinical and Developmental Perspective*, argued that though women might feel uncomfortable with the idea of expressing their negative emotions such as anger, they actually show their such feelings as well as men do. The major gender differences is in the harboring anger or grudge period of time; it is mostly women force themselves to hold their anger or range in for a long time before exposing them. In addition, regardless to their gender, both male and female entrepreneurs used words that indicate positive emotions, sadness, and anxiety relatively in the same way. Despite different styles of socialization processes, societies transfer gender related expectations to coming generations particularly the so-called different emotions each gender should experience (Wang and Depner 2016, 66). However, some researchers found that men and women experience emotions on a similar level. Thus, many psychologists challenge that "self-reliant" notion and suggest men to express their emotions more often (Dekin 2020). From that point of view, this study actually shows how male entrepreneurs also began to question some gender role expectations since they were not afraid to express their feelings like their female counterparts while pitching. While entrepreneurs used their emotions to persuade backers, the logic or reasons why they

felt sad, anger or anxious strongly differed. For instance, a female entrepreneur expressed her sadness about why gender related role expectations still exist in social habitus such as economic or education field: *“I’m an engineer from Stanford and I was always bothered by how few women there were in my program.”* She continued to reflect her sadness about same gender role discriminations as: *“You want your little girl in playfully box because as much as she likes dress-up and princess stuff – and don’t get me wrong, I like that stuff too, there’s much more to her than that.”* However, male entrepreneurs mostly felt sad or anxious about ordinary things or problems in their personal lives or others’. For instance:

“With our love for music and outdoor sports, we struggled to find an audio product that worked well when wearing a helmet.”

“Mighty was born from personal frustration with the current on the go music experience.”

In addition, female entrepreneurs mostly expressed their anger about some societal realities, for example: *“Despite all the pressure to bring diversity to the workplace, here’s the hard truth: women currently hold only %17.7 of the board seats at the largest publicly traded companies in the United States.”* She continued by saying: *“If you look at male board members and male CEOs, who we would agree dominate boardrooms, their own networks are themselves homogeneous.”* Another female entrepreneur showed her frustration about how entrepreneurship is still considered as man’s world: *“And when I decided a few years ago to make the leap into full-time entrepreneurship, it felt like a constant struggle to connect with others who understood that unique challenges I faced as a young female entrepreneur of color.”*

Briefly, both male and female entrepreneurs expressed their emotions deeply. However, the ways entrepreneurs discursively show they emotions seems to be differed.

3.1.3 Cognitive Process

Hypothesis 1e predicted that female entrepreneurs prefer words that indicate discrepancy and tentativeness more and *hypothesis 1f* predicted that male entrepreneurs use words that indicate causation and certainty more. As reported in Table 3.1, Mann Whitney U test revealed that there are no statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of words that indicate discrepancy, tentativeness, causation and certainty. Thus, there are no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 1e* and *hypothesis 1f*.

Unlike previous studies (Lakoff 1973, 50-51; Hall 2003, 364-365; Talbot 2003, 474; Deaux and Lewis 1984, 992; Schmid 2002, 185; Plug et al. 2021, 46), female entrepreneurs did not prefer words that indicate “discrepancy” or “tentativeness” often, or male entrepreneurs did not prefer words that indicate “causation” or “certainty” more. Cognitive processes such as “causation”, “tentativeness”, “certainty” or “discrepancy” are mirrored in both language and the way of how it’s expressed. These processes are used to predict or interpret specific circumstances such as when one wishes to give meanings to things or reconstruct these meanings to provide explanations; causality is used to understand past better or one prefers words that indicate certainty to reinforce his or her arguments (Brownlow, Fogleman and Hirsch 2020, 11-12; Moore, Yen and Powers 2021, 486). Kacewicz et al. (cited in: Moore, Yen and Powers 2021, 486) studied how the way of causal thinking was highly reflected in the precise and concise language and found statistically significant association between causality and high level of understanding and cognition. For example, Lin, Yu and Dowell (2020, 333) suggest that women, especially female students, should strengthen their causality way of thinking through learning, and education. Though talking precise and concise is stereotypically associated with men (Leaper and Ayres 2007, 329-330), both female and male entrepreneurs used causational thinking effectively while persuading backers. For example, a female

entrepreneur reflected her causality way of thinking while pitching as follows: “*SHIVR is revolutionizing the headphone industry. It’s combining high-end creative design with next level technology that is flipping the entire industry on its head. After running headphones for a long time, you can suffer from fatigue and even dizziness. As an audiophile I’ve tried lots of headphones, but I still couldn’t find a solution. Because when you wear a headphone, the sound pours directly into your ears. We feel the music echoing inside our head which is the reason for the dizziness and discomfort. It took 3 years to bring our patented algorithm to solve this problem by creatively implementing a customized built-in gyroscope. We provide revolutionarily comfortable listening experience by eliminating in-the-head localization effects.*”. Male entrepreneurs also reflected their abilities while pitching as follows: “*Think about all the earphones you’ve ever had. If you’re like me, you’ve gone through a lot and it’s frustrating. Their uncomfortable, they don’t fit well, and they fall out of your ears. The reason is simply. Our ears are as unique as our fingerprints, and custom fit earphones are the solution.*” This study on that account suggest that female entrepreneurs just like their male counterparts could reflect their thinking abilities effectively while pitching. Other dimensions of cognitive processes which were analyzed through gender lens had either ambiguous (words that indicate tentativeness and discrepancy) or precise (words that indicate certainty) language. As Hirschman (cited in: Boakye 2007, 11) and Preisler (1986, 10) state phrases like “maybe” or “sort of”, which are categorized as “discrepancy” and “tentative” in LIWC2017 (Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count), denote *vague language*; opposite linguistic style of “exact” or “precise”. Mostly women prefer such language when they have doubts, or insufficient information/details about the things they are talking about. Adjoa (cited in: Alkhatnai 2017, 123) explains this phenomenon with several reasons: Firstly, vagueness is highly stereotypically linked to women, whether or not they actually talk with that manner. Second, she points out the power relations between genders, specifically in the notion of politeness. As Lakoff (McHugh and Hambaugh 2010, 382) views, politeness is also highly stereotypically associated with women. It is commonly believed that “good” language

should involve features like “clarity” and “certainty”, and therefore, “tentativeness”, “discrepancy” and “ambiguity” should be avoided. However, Channell (cited in: Ediger 1995, 130) rejects this argument; she believes that such notions should be used but very appropriately. For her, the addresser prefers “tentativeness” or “discrepancy” in order to make his or her arguments suitable to the context or circumstances. For example, female entrepreneurs used words that indicate discrepancy and tentativeness just as Channell argues by saying:

“We really hope that you support us.”; “We hope to create smart glasses that are simple...”

“You might not notice at first, but we spent a lot of time making sure optical sensors are stopped and hidden within”

“While the funds are important for use we’re mostly interested in your feedback on how we can improve the Beam.”.

Male entrepreneurs also preferred these words to persuade backers while making their arguments more suitable and influential:

“It’s time for something better.”

“It was a great challenge to make these earbuds as small as possible while still giving them a great battery life.”

“The durmaMOBI HumBird is a next generation audio device that turns almost any surface into a speaker.”;

“Music is a part of almost everyone’s life and so we want Mighty to be the bridge between your music and your fitness.”

Contrary to vagueness, “certainty” is stereotypically associated with men. Laurie Heatherington and her colleagues (1993, 739) argued that while women precisely choose to boost the degree of certainty while claiming statements, men generally prefer to cutback the degree of uncertainty while positioning themselves. Women as a result of their socialization processes become unable to express themselves precisely when turn into adulthood. However, both male and female entrepreneurs used words that indicate “certainty” relatively the same while pitching, for instance, female entrepreneurs expressed themselves precisely by saying:

“It perfectly fit in your ears at any time.”

“HUMU is the real deal; one of these magical products that always hope to find.”

“FIFISH is specifically designed for complicated tricky underwater environments.”

“Your children will always be engaged and happy with ROYBI.”

Male entrepreneurs also preferred these words to persuade backers, for instance:

“... to make sure that Woojer Edge is for everybody.”

“The frictionless motion guarantees precise harmonic reproduction and ...”

“They’re designed for you, so they fit perfectly every time.”;

“But to truly deliver great earphones, the sound must be as perfect as the fit, and ...”.

Briefly, the study suggests that both female and male entrepreneurs use their cognitive abilities pretty the same to persuade backers while pitching.

3.1.4 Time Orientation

Hypothesis 1g predicted that female entrepreneurs prefer present and past tense more. However as reported in Table 3.1, Mann Whitney U test revealed that there are no

statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of words that indicate present and past time. Yet, the same analysis revealed statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of words that indicate future time. Therefore, there is no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 1g*.

Though Newman et al. (2008, 229) found positive relation between present and past tense usage and women's language, this research suggest otherwise; female entrepreneurs did not use present or past time more often. In addition, female entrepreneurs, unlike male entrepreneurs, focused on future relatively more. However, female entrepreneurs and male entrepreneurs' usage frequency of "present tense" was undoubtedly higher than other time zones (reported in Table 3.1). Though entrepreneurs might be expected to act as "story tellers" or "future oriented", they preferred to focus on present time zone more. Stephens and his colleagues (2010, 14426), for instance, found positive correlation between present tense usage and persuasion; including more present tense while communicating will make the addresser more influential. Communication is a shared process; transition of brain activities from an addresser to an addressee. Thus, paying attention to past or future may create misleading or loss of attention. Whether consciously or not, both female and male entrepreneurs by embracing same notions used present time zone as an effective communication strategy while persuading backers. For example, female entrepreneurs preferred to focus on "now" while pitching as follows:

"In yoga we learn about the ancient science of the chakras. These are immensely profound tools for bringing more balance into your life. The chakra teachings are about transformation and have personally helped us through some of the toughest times in our lives. After hosting eleven chakra based retreats around the globe, I am compiling my most valuable practices into a book, called ANGELUS."

"Imagine you're a 12 year old girl in a developing country. Your stomach is aching and you're bleeding between your legs. You ask for help, but ashamed and insulted."

You feel isolated and terrified. This is the reality today for many women in developing countries because periods are completely taboo.”

“Have you ever had that feeling where you hear a song for the first time and you know it’s going to be one of your favorites. That’s the feeling that SHIVR gives you. SHIVR is revolutionizing the headphone industry.”

Some of other examples from male entrepreneurs:

“Plastic is everywhere. It’s in our homes, cars, places of work. But it’s also ending up in rivers, lakes and oceans. Just one plastic bottle can take up to 1000 years to decompose. So, if we keep using plastic like we do today, generations of people after us will be stuck in a world full of today’s plastic waste. Luckily, there’s an easy way to cut down on plastic every day. All you have to do is shower. Meet Nohbo: the world’s first ecofriendly shampoo ball.”

“We live in a world where one value is prized above all others; freedom. Freedom to speak. Freedom to move. Freedom to live. It’s what allows us to chart our own course, to be who we are and to determine our own way. When you think about the Internet, why should it be any different? Shouldn’t technology make us more free?”

“... And one of the coolest things about it is that you can add effects to your tracks. Imagine that. So, take the Ball outside, go out on the streets and lose yourself. The new way of making beats.”

Henceforward, this study suggests that online entrepreneurs regardless of their gender seem to use “present time” zone as a rhetoric strategy while pitching to persuade backers for raising the capital they need.

3.2 Second Analysis: Tentativeness Level

This section presents quantitative analysis of entrepreneurs’ *language metrics* (words per sentence, words more than 6 letters, Flesch reading ease score), *Lakoff’s argument* (hedges, intensifiers), entrepreneurs’ usage rates of *female-gender driven words*

choices (discrepancy, tentativeness, emotions, affiliation) and usage rates of *male-gender driven words choices* (achievement, power, reward focus, risk/prevention, certainty), and all dimension's statistical results were reflected in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 The Results of Statistical Analysis.

| | Gender | | | | Test statistic | p |
|---------------------------|--------|------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | Female | | Male | | | |
| | Mean | ss | Mean | ss | | |
| Words Per Sentence | 14,47 | 3,45 | 12,20 | 5,02 | 14871,500 | ,000* |
| Words >6 Letters | 19,77 | 4,65 | 17,79 | 7,14 | 17610,000 | ,038* |
| Flesch Reading Ease Score | 66,93 | 9,84 | 66,81 | 10,30 | 19883,000 | ,878 |
| Discrepancies | 1,25 | 0,67 | 1,15 | 0,73 | 17792,500 | ,054 |
| Tentativeness | 1,93 | 1,19 | 1,98 | 1,05 | 19031,000 | ,382 |
| Emotions | 5,70 | 2,02 | 5,28 | 1,67 | 17882,500 | ,065 |
| Affiliation | 4,59 | 2,78 | 4,24 | 2,41 | 19158,500 | ,443 |
| Hedges | 1,74 | 0,92 | 1,62 | 1,02 | 17889,500 | ,066 |
| Intensifiers | 0,62 | 0,56 | 0,66 | 0,56 | 19360,000 | ,550 |
| Achievement | 2,45 | 1,23 | 2,37 | 1,15 | 19368,500 | ,556 |
| Power | 2,58 | 1,52 | 2,47 | 1,13 | 19970,500 | ,937 |
| Reward-Focus | 1,82 | 1,13 | 1,68 | 0,88 | 19002,000 | ,368 |
| Risk/Prevention | 0,47 | 0,64 | 0,44 | 0,58 | 19725,500 | ,766 |

Mann Whitney test *p<0,05

3.2.1 Language Metrics

Hypothesis 2a predicted that male entrepreneurs prefer longer sentences and longer words and *hypothesis 2b* predicted that male entrepreneurs have low Fresch reading-ease score. As reported in Table 3.2, Mann Whitney test revealed statistically significant differences, for gender, in words per sentence (longer sentences) and words that more than 6 letters (longer words). However, same analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences, for gender, in entrepreneurs' Flesch reading-

ease scores. Therefore, there are no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 2a* and *hypothesis 2b*.

Unlike previous studies (Newman et al. 2008, 224), female entrepreneurs, rather than male entrepreneurs, preferred longer sentences and longer words more often. Though these dimensions are stereotypically associated with men (Newman et al. 2008, 229) since longer sentences and longer words indicate complex (Hartley, Pennebaker and Fox 2003, 394) and “informative” language (Newman et al. 2008, 216), findings suggest otherwise. As Chambers (cited in: Romaine 2003, 103-104) state in specific circumstances women use language as a tool to earn status and respect. Since feeling an inescapable pressure to impress others, women may end up embracing “unfeminine” notions to gain legitimacy in the fields codded as “masculinized” such as entrepreneurship. Though several studies (mentioned in literature review) strongly point out how such manner might create struggles to women, this study suggest otherwise. For instance, female entrepreneurs mainly preferred longer sentences to provide accurate information about scientific or mechanical details about the product they’re pitching:

“Lolly straw creates new value after it's used in three key ways by transforming into plant fuel through composting, machine fuel through anaerobic digestion or human fuel through eating. Now more than ever before we need a solution.”

“3 ultra bright and highly efficient LEDs and two total internal reflection lenses direct in focus light in wide closed and long distance beams to maximize your visibility in bright sunlight and on dark roads.”

“Equipped with Ambarella chipset, 1-inch SONY CMOS sensor and 162 FOV ultra wide angle lens, FIFISH P3 could capture 4K HD footage and 20-Megapixel photos in underwater environment.”

Therefore, the reason female entrepreneurs preferred longer sentences were mainly related to the need of proving their capabilities and knowledge for others (Patil and

Deshpande 2019, 31-32). In addition, both female and male entrepreneurs' Flesch ease score mean value was somewhere between 66,0 and 67,0 which indicates that both genders preferred plain English rather than complex language, in such, both female and male entrepreneurs could be easily understood by 13- to 15-year-olds. Therefore, anyone who had an 8th or 9th grade degree could understand both female and male entrepreneurs' online pitching campaign videos that were selected to this study. Understandable language involves simple, easy and clear words and phrases while explaining or declaring an argument. Instead of asking for example "Do you feel the pain?", one should simply ask "Do you feel better?" (Sully and Dallas, 2010). Therefore, regardless of their gender, entrepreneurs might prefer understandable language as a communication strategy to be more influential while pitching.

3.2.2 Female-Gender Driven and Male-Gender Driven Words Choices

To give accurate examples from entrepreneurs, I discuss both sub-categories (female-gender driven word choices and male-gender driven words choices) results under the same section. *Hypothesis 2c* predicted that female entrepreneurs prefer words that indicate discrepancy, tentativeness, emotions, and affiliation more and *Hypothesis 2d* predicted that male entrepreneurs prefer words that indicate achievement, power, reward-focus, and risk/prevention more. However, as reported in Table 3.2, Mann Whitney test revealed that there are no statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of female-gender driven words choices and male-gender driven words choices. Therefore, there are no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 2c* and *hypothesis 2d*.

Unlike previous studies (Lakoff 1973, 50-51; Carli 1990, 944; Leaper and Ayres 2007, 329-330; Plug et al. 2021, 46), there was no gender differences in the usage rates of words that indicate femininity or masculinity, and yet, both female and male entrepreneurs were still able to persuade backers while pitching. Carli (1990, 942), for instance, suggest talking tentative especially in mix-dyads contexts make women more

influential. However, in their study Wiley and Eskilson (1985, 1004) found otherwise. Despite being criticized as less likable, women managers who preferred assertive language were perceived more powerful and successful. In addition, since being an entrepreneur is stereotypically associated with men, male entrepreneurs were expected to behave parallel to gender related expectations. For instance, socially learned belief systems about “who can be an entrepreneur” or “how an entrepreneur should talk” create great struggles to submissive groups while legitimating the dominant ones such as white male entrepreneurs, thus, others in most times face challenges while accessing fund or finding a place in the ecosystem (argued in literature review). However, this study rejects both arguments; through harmonizing each gender specific features, both female and male entrepreneurs could actually convince backers and run successful funding campaigns on indiegogo.com at the same time. For example, some female entrepreneurs preferred words that indicate their “achievements” while being without expressing any vagueness about themselves: “*Our efficient and proven planting system allows you to start the growing process at home.*” or “*We feel so strongly about the value of this book that we decided to make one sample chapter.*” Same entrepreneur also expressed her “affiliation” by saying “*With your help we can make the remaining six chapters and finish the entire book.*” Male entrepreneurs also were not afraid to express their “emotions” or “affiliation”: “*With your help we can revolutionize the industry, and provide listeners with the ultimate custom gear phone solution.*” or to highlight their “achievements” and “power”: “*It has one super powerful awesomeness.*” or “*Dan and I were determined to create a solution that brought this revolutionary fitting technology to everyone.*” However, while female entrepreneurs were humble about their achievements or capabilities, male entrepreneurs were bold. For example, female entrepreneurs downplayed their “achievements” or “power” by preferring simple or causal words such as:

“*Octobo will challenge kids' motor abilities, teach the memory, color, shape and letter recognition and stimulate emotional development.*”

“Since children are spontaneous and unpredictable, one of the features we added was the ability to poke his eyes because that's just what kids kept doing.”

“Meet Dolfi; the world's smallest washing device that cleans your clothes with the power of ultrasonic technology. Dolfi is just the size of a smartphone, perfectly portable to fit in any bathroom or travel luggage.”

Male entrepreneurs even while expressing their “affiliation” did not hesitate to be bold:

“So, join us today and be the first to ride with a Domio Pro. A game changer helmet, audio and communication.”

“We need you to back and share Soundbops and join us on our mission to revolutionize the music.”

“We've engineered the Moon by 1-Ring as the most sophisticated smart camera for your home and office. Support our project and make the dream of a truly flexible and easy to use smart home come one step closer.”

Though there were no statistically significant usage frequency of female and male-gender driven words choices, how they expressed their motives and emotions differed. While female entrepreneurs reflected their capabilities and skills, they still talked humble and pitched well-controlled. Male entrepreneurs, on the other hand, did not hesitate to pitch bold. Henceforward, despite failing to support hypotheses, some gender-specific attributions still seem to exist.

3.2.3 Lakoff's Argument

Hypothesis 2e predicted that female entrepreneurs prefer intensifiers and hedges more. However, as reported in Table 3.2, Mann Whitney test revealed that there were no statistically significant differences, for gender, in the usage rates of hedges and intensifiers. Therefore, there is no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 2e*.

Unlike previous studies (that mentioned in literature review), female entrepreneurs did not prefer “hedges” or “intensifiers” more. Lakoff (1975, 54; cited in: White 2003, 4; cited in: Sommerlund 2017, 18), was the first to study the association between “hedges” and women; for her, women prefer “hedges” and “intensifier” more often since typical *women’s language* involves vagueness, tentativeness and emptiness. However, Janet Holmes (1990, 192), linguist who studied specific hedges of *you know* and *sort of*, found that while there was no significant gender differences in the instances of *you know* in both genders speech, men preferred *sort of* relatively more often than women. Further, Dixon and Foster (1997, 89) studied the relation between hedges and intensity of competitiveness, and found that none of the genders, either male or female, seem to prefer hedges in a high competitive situations. Just like Leaper and Robnett (2011, 137) suggest, they also highlight the significance of social context; *tentativeness* or *vagueness* are highly context and situation dependent. Dixon and Fosters’ (1997, 102) suggestion is then studying such fragile concepts like hedges is complex. Lakoff (1975, 54; cited in: White 2003, 4; cited in: Sommerlund 2017, 18)) also associated *women’s language* with higher usage of *intensifiers*. Fahy (2002, 12) challenge Lakoff’s suggestions about intensifiers as well; while Holmes did not find any significant dissimilarity in the user rates of intensifiers in both genders speech, Fahy indicated that men rather than women preferred intensifiers more often such as *very*, *only*, *every*, *never* or *always*. Since online entrepreneurship has its own unique dynamic and definitely has its own contextual structure, entrepreneurs, especially female ones, might set different roles that could eventually blurred some gender related expectations. Though there were not any significant gender differences in the user rates of hedges and intensifiers in both genders’ pitches, gender differences in the usage rates of specific kind of hedge or intensifier were observed. For example, while female entrepreneurs preferred the hedges of *one of* (e.g., *Geothermal energy is one of those alternatives*) and *few* (e.g., *There will be able to start shipping soon to our backers in just a few short months*) relatively more, male entrepreneurs preferred *almost* (e.g., *After ten months of development, our systems and software are almost ready*) and a

little (e.g., *All I have to do is wet my brush a little bit, pick the color and that's it*) more often. However, both female and male entrepreneurs preferred the hedges of *possible* (example from a female entrepreneur: *We're were working really hard to get this product out as soon as possible*), *many* (example from a male entrepreneur: *Our technology was achieved through the work of many different specialists in acoustics, electronics, signal design and industrial design*), and *about* (example from a female entrepreneur: *After about 30 minutes your clothes are clean and fresh*) relatively same with a high frequency in all hedges. On the other hand, both female and male entrepreneurs preferred different kind of intensifiers at all: while female entrepreneurs preferred *enough* (e.g., *I spent hours in three leather markets, touching every piece of leather until we found the perfect one that was smooth, had enough texture to be interesting and to be soft against your skin*), *so* (e.g., *It's so beautiful*) and *pretty* (e.g., *We're pretty sure it's going to be your favorite T-shirt*) more, male entrepreneurs preferred *very* (e.g., *Streaming of the sound does not change or harm the analog sound because we're using the very best codec available with the very best transmission*), *really* (e.g., *By having this dual sided magnetic structure with this really rigid diaphragm we're able to deliver sound that is phase correct unlike virtually any other headphone driver that exists*), *well* (e.g., *The iGulu social platform provides users hundreds of standard recipes well built by excellent brewers around the world*) and *just* (e.g., *Get your SpoonTEK today for just \$29.00 on Indiegogo*) more often.

3.3 Third Analysis: Overall

This section presents quantitative analysis of entrepreneurs' *analytical thinking score*, *clout score*, and *emotional tone*, and statistical results were reflected in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 The Results of Statistical Analysis.

| | Gender | | | | Test statistic | p |
|---------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|----------------|-------|
| | Female | | Male | | | |
| | Mean | ss | Mean | ss | | |
| Analytical Thinking | 65,39 | 19,45 | 71,18 | 17,30 | 16387,000 | ,002* |
| Clout | 87,20 | 13,81 | 88,14 | 10,95 | 19660,500 | ,733 |
| Emotional Tone | 81,20 | 19,58 | 81,72 | 19,02 | 19949,500 | ,923 |

Mann Whitney test *p<0,05

Hypothesis 3a predicted that male entrepreneurs have high frequency in analytical thinking, *hypothesis 3b* predicted that male entrepreneurs have high frequency in clout score, and *hypothesis 3c* female entrepreneurs have high frequency in emotional tone. As reported in Table 3.3, Mann Whitney test revealed statistically significant differences, for gender, in entrepreneurs' analytical thinking score. However, same analysis revealed that there are no statistically significant differences, for gender, in entrepreneurs' emotional tone, and clout score. Therefore, while *hypothesis 3a* was supported, there are no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 3b* and *hypothesis 3c*.

Unlike previous studies (Bem 1974, 155-156; Mulac, Studley and Blau 1990, 439; Thomas and Murachver 2001, 193; Kray and Thompson 2005, 104; Balachandra et al. 2017, 2; Rubab and Akbar 2020, 123), both female and male entrepreneurs preferred to communicate with a high level of emotional tone. Thoughts, emotions and senses were positively available in entrepreneurs' pitch videos. Most studies generally state that while male tend to minimize their emotional expressions, women tend to express intense emotions, especially in social contexts (Newman et al. 2008, 229; Brescoll 2016, 5). However, Rocklage and his colleagues (2018, 749) studied emotionality from a different angle; exploring how the addresser talks with the addressee while trying to convince them, and found that people whether positive or negative tend to prefer emotional language to boost their power of persuasion, even if it could backfire. For example, people preferred words that indicate greater degree of emotions such as *exciting* or *thrilling* rather than using simpler or ordinary words like *excellent* or

outstanding. However, most importantly while persuading, one shifts toward emotional language unconsciously, but naturally. Barreett (cited in: Lasschuijt 2019, 3-4) Geraghty (2017) also highlighted the power of positive emotions while convincing others and stated statistically significant association between positive messages and persuasion. Henceforward, female and male entrepreneurs might prefer to express high degree of *positive emotionality* as a communication strategy while pitching in order to be more persuasive. For instance, female entrepreneurs showed their high emotionality as follows:

“Zora's House is a place where you could curl up with a new Toni Morrison book one day, attend a workshop oneself love or marketing a passion based business the next, and wrap up the week with the yoga class infused with jazz music and spoken word poetry.”

“These are immensely profound tools for bringing more balance into your life.”

“We provide revolutionarily comfortable listening experience by eliminating in-the-head localization effects.”

“It is traumatically different from other flashlights as it embraces an area faster than visual angle.”

Male entrepreneurs also preferred to express high degree of emotionality, such as:

“But the overwhelming support that we received from you the Indiegogo community gave us the extra courage that we needed to make sure that we deliver Kite.”

“Drop is a community driven brand. When it comes to product design, we design products for the enthusiasts with thoughts and feedback, and designs from the enthusiast community.”

“*It's ridiculously easy.*” or “*This baby holds enough goodness to make up the four boost tastic cocktails at one time.*”

In addition, both female and male entrepreneurs had higher frequency in their clout score. Clout category measures the level of confidence and certainty in one's speech (Li, Kuan and Liu 2019, 4; Moore, Yen, and Powers 2020, 4). While low clout score indicates vagueness, high clout score implies self-confidence and leadership spirit (Jordan et al. 2019, 2). Several studies are stereotypically associated women with vagueness, having less leadership skills, and self-insecurity (mentioned in literature review). As Eagly and Karu (2002, 575-576) once mentioned women are truly aware of gender role stereotypes, and this awareness mostly urges women to adopt more discursive styles (Kray, Thompson, and Galinsky 2001, 942; Von Hippel et al. 2011, 1312) which is supposed to belong to men. For instance, about half of female entrepreneurs believe they must embrace more masculine traits such as confidence, strength or boldness; feeling an incredible urge to prove their values and skills, female entrepreneurs increasingly believe that they must possess power-based and strategy-based attributions in order to be successful (Women's Entrepreneurship Barometer Global Report 2021). Women's confidence in entrepreneurship is then the key. For example, Koellinger et al. (2006, 513-515) argue that regardless of their gender, entrepreneurs have tendency to display high level of self-confidence when compared to the ordinary individuals of that given society; they are to behave in greater degrees of overconfidence in order to be influential and successful. Some women entrepreneurs might struggle to believe themselves which then lead them to have lower self-confidence. Yet this is not a binding situation for all female entrepreneurs (Fielden et al. 2003, 162; Kirkwood 2009, 119). The *locus of control* which indicates “the level an individual perceives success or failure as being accidental on personal initiative” (Bonnet and Furnham 1991, 467; Kirkwood 2009, 119) might be then the motivational trigger of female entrepreneurs to display overconfidence. In addition, women's greatest awareness of their “status consciousness” (Chambers 1995, 132-133) might

also stimulate female entrepreneurs' internal locus of control, and lead them to display high frequency in clout score as well. The degree of one's skillfulness and confidence are therefore highly related with clout score (Lasschuijt 2019, 4). Providing verified information while pitching, for instance, can reflect entrepreneurs' degree of skillfulness. Luthra and Dahiya (cited in: Lasschuijt 2019, 4) found positively significant association between entrepreneur's expertness and likelihood of funding; only if one can manage to build strong trust with backers by reflecting his or her expertness while pitching because this can increase the likelihood of receiving fund. For example, some female entrepreneurs displayed their high self-confidence and skillfulness while pitching as follows:

“SHIVR is revolutionizing the headphone industry. It's combining high-end creative design with next level technology that is flipping the entire industry on its head. After running headphones for a long time you can suffer from fatigue and even dizziness. As an audiophile I've tried lots of headphones but I still couldn't find a solution. Because when you wear a headphone the sound pours directly into your ears. We feel the music echoing inside our head which is the reason for the dizziness and discomfort. It took 3 years to bring our patented algorithm to solve this problem by creatively implementing a customized built in gyroscope. we provide revolutionarily comfortable listening experience by eliminating in-the-head localization effects. These headphones are going to change the way you experience sound entirely.”

“With MusicLens you can answer your calls with high sound quality in a noisy environment. Music lens picks up local FM radio signals directly. So, you can easily listen to the radio. MusicLens also has touch controls and smart facial recognition which automatically pauses the audio when you take the glasses off. MusicLens does not transmit sound through your ear drops. So, wearing them for a long time won't hurt your ears. In addition to protecting hearing, MusicLens also helps people with ruptured eardrums or hearing loss to hear sounds. Compared to other music classes,

music lands is much more advanced and substantially ahead of the curve in terms of sound quality, sound production, and appearance. We believe that wearable smart devices will not only make people's lives more convenient, but also perfectly combined technology with current fashion trends.”

“Dolfi's innovative technology has been developed and tested by MPI ultrasonics engineering laboratories in Switzerland. The heart of the device, a powerful transducer, creates and emits ultrasonic waves that are multimode, wideband and progressive. These precisely modulated sound waves travel through water and form microscopic high pressure bubbles. This process is called capitation. The tiny bubbles then imploded, creating millions of microjet liquid streams. Those invisible yet powerful streams safely wash away all the dirt from the fabric. Dolfi is great for your personals, silk, lace, cashmere, everything that you would normally hesitate to throw into a washing machine.”.

Male entrepreneurs also displayed high self-confidence and skillfulness while pitching by saying:

“Imagine you're in a concert, standing right in front of huge speakers, that all you feel in your body. That's what Woojer feels like. In more technical terms, our patented oscillating frame, which we fondly call osci, accurately reproduces and plays frequencies up to 200 Hertz including subsonic frequencies that are below the threshold of the human ear. The frictionless motion guarantees precise harmonic reproduction and reduces distortion while remaining completely silent of the surrounding environment. In less technical terms, the dinosaur in the game is getting closer you feel every step. You're playing a game every explosion, every encounter and every strike feel as if you're right there. The song goes into a killer bass riff. You'll sense every string in your bones.”

“Through the combination of the Drop planner ribbon driver, the THX AAA amplifier technology, and the Sony LDAC wireless codec, we've reached that full wireless audio file system for the first time. Drop planner ribbon driver delivers a sense of realism that's unique. By having this dual sided magnetic structure with this really rigid diaphragm we're able to deliver sound that is phase correct unlike virtually any other headphone driver that exists.”

“This camera is completely autonomous. Autonomous means that you don't have to do anything at all. We've created and patented an underwater localization technology. It enables iBubble to know where you are and to keep you or your surroundings in the frame. Now you can record your diving adventures with no camera handling whatsoever. iBubble comes loaded with a built-in library of carefully designed camera movements. All you have to do is choose your shot from the control bracelet and iBubble executes.”.

On the other hand, male entrepreneurs had high frequency in analytical thinking; they preferred more well-structured speech style as follows:

“This is Pictar Pro. It makes your phone function and feel like a DSLR. See, every time a new smartphone comes out it's always about one thing: the camera. They've got an amazing. Every small detail the camera is always exact; the size of the sensor, the amount of light that goes in, any special tech for pixels and mountains of software and algorithms as they called today AI. When you look closely at the efforts they've made of two different things: one is to make a better camera and the other is to make everyone's experience with it a good one. That second part basically means that you and a man who lives in a cave will have the same outcome.”

“Hi! I'm Jon and I invented mifold: the grab and go booster seat. This is a regular car booster seat, and this is mifold. mifold is the most advanced, compact and portable booster seat in the world. It's more than 10 times smaller than a regular booster and

it's just as safe. How's that possible? Well, a regular booster seat lift the child to be in the position of an adult. mifold does the exact opposite; instead of lifting the child up, it holds the seat belt down. It's that simple.”

“When we created Legion Solar four years ago, we asked a simple question “why does solar have to be so expensive and complicated?”. In the United States the average cost of electricity per household for 30 years is over \$70,000. With the rapid emergence of electric vehicles and working from home becoming the new normal, this figure is expected to double. We created a game changing solar system not only capable of reducing your electric bill to nearly zero, our system outperforms nearly all other forms of energy in long-term energy production value and outperforms nearly all other financial institution investments. For the first time investing in your own clean energy equipment can be profitable for your bottom line.”

On the other hand, female entrepreneurs preferred more narrative speech style and integrated their stories into their pitches as follows:

“As a woman of color attending a predominantly white university, I knew that stepping foot into either of these two spaces met the ability to connect with likeminded individuals to encounter mentors and friends who look like me and to attend programs and access resources that spoke directly to my particular identity and experiences. But after graduating college, I quickly realized that spaces like these were not the norm out in the real world. The first time I moved to a new city, I remember wanting to make new friends but having no idea where to start. And as a young professional, I was interested in connecting with peers and mentors but not if it meant attending networking event after networking event. And when I decided a few years ago to make the leap into full-time entrepreneurship, it felt like a constant struggle to connect with others who understood that unique challenges I faced as a young female entrepreneur of color. It took me several years of searching to realize that what I was looking for didn't exist and from there the idea for Zora's House was born.”

“ Over a year and a half ago, my partner Kevin and I began working towards zero waste lifestyle when we realized we were producing too much trash. However, trying to source products free of plastic packaging and plastic has us traveling to numerous outlets just to complete our groceries. Our mission at Zero Waste Bulk is to make it easier to live more sustainably by offering package free goods, sourcing locally and organically, and offering plastic free alternatives whenever we can.”

“When we were children every little thing fascinated us; the wind, the trees, the waves. We should start believing in our own creativity and potential again, as if you were children. Take your crayons back and paint your life with stories. Scribble, do cartwheels and feel the wind. Your inner child is calling you. At Scoria we create yoga gear and clothing inspired by children's imaginations for your playful yoga practice. It's time to rediscover your imagination. We worked really hard to bring your imaginary mat to life. And now it's here.”.

Henceforward, this study suggest that though both female and male entrepreneurs used positive emotionality as a persuasive strategy, both reflected their cognitive abilities differently; while female entrepreneurs used their tacit knowledge and integrated their stories, past experiences and other related details that indicate narrative and informal speech, male entrepreneurs relied on their specialist knowledge and integrated their logical and analytical way of thinking abilities relatively more.

3.4 Fourth Analysis: Construal Level

This section presents quantitative analysis of entrepreneurs' *linguistic category model score* (LCM score), and statistical results were reflected in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4 The Results of Statistical Analysis.

| | Gender | | | | Test statistic | p |
|-----------|--------|-----|------|-----|----------------|------|
| | Female | | Male | | | |
| | Mean | ss | Mean | ss | | |
| LCM Score | 2,24 | ,16 | 2,23 | ,13 | 19613,000 | ,703 |

Mann Whitney test *p<0,05

Hypothesis 4 predicted that female entrepreneurs prefer concrete language more. As reported in Table 3.4, Mann Whitney test revealed that there are no statistically significant differences, for gender, in entrepreneurs' linguistic category model (LCM) scores. Therefore, there is no significant evidence to support *hypothesis 4*.

Under the linguistic category framework, Semin and Fiedler (cited in: Reich 2016, 28) studied the network between language usage and social cognition. Semin and Fiedler's model of interpersonal linguistic level identifies the notions of how one uses interpersonal terms while they are communicating, in turn, the model is informative about how verbal practices are strategically driven through psychological process and language constraints. Concretely, for instance, draw attention to particular perspectives of the physical, psychological, and social conditions in communication. Contrastively, abstractness draw attention to the common features of an object or event. According to Priyanka Joshi and her colleagues (2020, 3), men tend to prefer more abstract speech which mainly focuses on the broader picture and fundamental aims of practice. While men tend to draw attention to the *big picture*, women tend to draw attention to the specific details. Joshi and her colleagues believe this gender differences in language use between male and female genders may be related with power dynamics. Historically, men have powerful societal status in society, which may be the basic explanation why they tend to prefer more abstract speech. Since women mainly occupies lower status roles, they feel great pressure to prove themselves, and thus, to be taken seriously, they tend to prefer detailed but interpersonal speech. In addition, women tend to socialize in closely small groups, in turn, they desire to create and maintain close interpersonal relations. Several studies on men's entry into the entrepreneurial world has begun to bear fruit as time passes by as tendency to stereotyping started to blur. In fact, female entrepreneurs today are well-educated, relatively more interested in technology and other related areas such as economy and politics, and do not hesitate to engage in tasks or occupations that were tagged *masculinized* once (Sisson 2010). Additionally, women-owned ventures are more

likely generate profit since they have a tendency to behave self-possessed while minimizing financial risks (Kepler and Shane 2007, 1). For example, women-owned ventures generally earn two times more per dollar that invested than those owned by men (Phillip 2020). Though their entrepreneurial practices are embedded in a complex cultural dimensions, the more women entrepreneurs have succeed, the more they become powerful. Moreover, the results also showed that both entrepreneurs preferred to stand somewhere in the middle rather than choosing one of the specific sides: abstractness or concreteness; both male and female entrepreneurs preferred to emphasize on *why* and *how* simultaneously while pitching. In addition, both female and male entrepreneurs did not distant themselves from backers; both desired to establish strong interpersonal tie with potential backers. For example, female entrepreneurs draw attention both to specific details and broader picture while pitching as follows:

“Sitting, we do it for over 9 hours every single day, and because of the way we're doing it 90% of us will get back pain in our lives. Seriously when we hunch and slump, it effects our mood our happiness even how optimistically feel. Look at yourself right now. How are you sitting? How's your back and your neck? Probably not too great, huh? Hi, my name is Katherina Krug and I started working on my posture two and a half years ago when I started having terrible sciatica pain. I have spent so much time and money on doctor's visits, therapies, special pillows and all these ridiculous products. But, I couldn't find anything that just worked. So for the past year, I've been creating a real solution with the most amazing designers an prototypes and dozens and dozens of people with really bad backs. It was important to create something small enough I could fit in my purse and something effortless so I could just count on it working in five seconds flat. Something reliable and something that would help me improve my posture even when I wasn't wearing it. This is BetterBack. It allows you to effortlessly sit in perfect posture, easing back pain and training yourself how to sit. Use it when you're sitting at your desk, on an airplane, watching a game or even when you meditate. Basically use it anytime you have to sit. You don't have to go far to find people

with bad posture, back pain, a friend, a parent, someone you work with or even people you meet product testing around San Francisco every Friday. BetterBack gives you better posture. It allows you to not fatigue the muscles that you use when you're sitting down. So, when you do stand up your posture is literally changed. Good posture can change who you are. It effects your attitude, it effects your decision. Making good posture changes who you are literally. Sitting correctly overtime does more than stop slumping stress on your spine. It also retrains your body's natural default posture, so whether you're standing or sitting without BetterBack your posture is greatly improved. Let me show you how it works. BetterBack zips itself into a portable case. Throw it in your bag and unpack it when you're ready to sit. Wrapped the back pad around your back and knee wraps around your knees. All there's left to do is to pull on the adjustable leg straps to stack your spine into perfect posture. So, if you're going to spend 9 hours of your day sitting you might as well be doing it right. When you're pain free and your body is perfectly aligned, you feel happier more confident and you regain your ability to focus on whatever it is you want out of life.''

“Every day we strive to become better versions of ourselves, but what do we really know about the micro patterns in our behaviors and emotions? We've learnt to count our calories, measure our steps, optimize our to-do lists and calculator our hours of sleep. Yet, it seems we're overlooking the most important part; understanding how we feel. This is why we create Zenta: your personalized coach for both body and mind. Zenta is a next generation product. It combines notification management, sleep monitoring, activity tracking and everything you'd expect from a modern wearable device. Plus a feature not yet seen on the market: emotion tracking. What if your technology could enhance your emotional intelligence by helping you understand your own behavioral patterns and reactions? Imagine an accessory you love to wear that helps you better understand yourself every day. Leveraging the most advanced patented sensor technology Zenta collects physiological cues structures, heart rate variability, headaches rodent activity, respiration and blood oxygen levels. This data

is then cross-referenced videos math in your own subjectivity to provide personalized and actionable insights. Zenta can help you understand when a while you're at your happiest. Learn to manage stress and be more productive. Find moments of tranquility. Listen to your body. Train your brain to focus on the important things, and just generally make life easier. Zenta collects and synthesizes complex information about your life. Our adaptive machine learning algorithms get accustomed to your behavior and build a profile of you overtime to help you better understand your emotional well-being. At Vinaya we believe humans come first and technology second. This is why human insight is the starting point of every product we create. Our team of scientists, engineers and designers are passionate about using technology to elevate human potential. Through our journey we have developed a deep understanding of the modern human condition. We want to use our expertise to build products that can really improve people's lives.''

Male entrepreneurs also draw attention to both aspects while pitching for example:

“Hey! We're Morrell and we make high-end audio systems for homes and vehicles. If you've driven a luxury car recently, odds are its sound system was ours. We're kind of the gold standard. We've been traveling the world for years and as audiophiles portable speaker audio was a compromise we've had to live with. So, we decided to change that and let people judge portable as they do with home high end loudspeakers. Meet Nomadic Audio: a portable sound system for people who care about sound. Our speakers holds two acoustically advanced drive units with two open woofers and standalone softball tweeters with a sound pressure level of 98 DP in a 60 watt class D amplifier. We could only wish you to hear it for real not with your computer speakers or headphones because it's so good. We do less digital signal processing which is designed to let you brain fill in the gaps and more air moving which is actual natural sound. It's good. Grady. But to make high end sound, you need a sound box. So, we thought ‘What is the most portable thing everyone takes with them when they travel?’”,

and we found it. Meet the Nomadic Audio Suitcase. When you close the stand on the Nomadic speaker, it stops all digital signal manipulation and uses a sound box instead, creating the highest and portable speaker ever. Through their synergy the Nomadic plays much higher volumes before distortion and full range sound is distinct even at low volumes. Resolution is crisp with every single sound clear and well defined. The bass gets an incredible boost and gives out a chest feeling and the entire sonic presence feels as if the musicians and instruments are in the room just next to you. Now you can take your high-end sound anywhere. And because we think standards should be high for everything we do, we also did it with a suitcase. It's brilliant on its own. Polycarbonate with an aluminum reinforced frame. Shock absorbent to protect both speakers and case. High-end double wheels and no rattling parts. And with a lot of room for everything you take with you, even with the speaker inside it only takes 4% of the space. We've been producing high-end audio for forty years. Now, we're putting our experience to work for portable audio.'"

"Music is magical, but traditional instruments are not suitable for young children. To tackle this, we've created the world's first musical building blocks: Soundbops. Soundbops enable the children to learn and play music early. My name is Michael, a musician and a creative of Soundbops. Our goal is to empower music now. I spent my childhood with my dad learning music and I want to enable all children to have this joy of music without any barriers. Soundbops are innovative and unique musical building blocks that each represent a note. It can be placed anywhere on the board and even stacked on top of each other to create chords. Music makes kids more mindful and makes them more intelligent, social, creative and happy. Soundbops is an easier and more intuitive way to play. Each note is a different color and we have simplified the music notation. Complex concepts such as chords within a simple press is open structure makes a more engaging and social experience having achieved the first positive experience of music because each block is a different note a child can explore and experiment with the fundamentals of music as they go. Soundbops encourages

children to be artistic and creative allowing them to easily move on to traditional instruments when they're older. We have developed many working prototypes with the help parents, teachers and children. This has allowed us to overcome design and technical challenges to create something special. Our goal is to enable young children to learn and play music, but we need your help. We need you to back and share Soundbops and join us on our mission to revolutionize the music.”

Briefly, the study suggest that female and male entrepreneurs might strategically prefer to harmonize both speech styles in order to persuade backers while pitching.

CONCLUSION

The greater power that men have gained since the early ages, results in gender -related inequalities and discriminations and, that superiority of men over women continually reinforces stereotypical beliefs and attitudes. Entrepreneurship is one of the economic fields that is deeply influenced by such gender related expectations. In a chaotic and constantly changing world, almost all entrepreneurs face great challenges while they launch their start-ups, build their networks, raise capital, and persuade potential investors/backers. Yet, in a man's world, female entrepreneurs face the hardest challenge; women are the ones who have to fight more to overcome gender-oriented barriers to be able to accomplish their mission. Several studies argue that venture capitalists choose male entrepreneurs to invest in their projects more often due to stereotypical discriminations against female entrepreneurs (Buttner and Rosen 1989, 249; Marlow and Patton 2005, 717) even though female entrepreneurs who are able to exploit higher growth rates of enterprise (Cliff 1998, 523; Morris et al. 2006, 221). Discriminations against female entrepreneurs are mainly proceed from gender related stereotypes; entrepreneurship has been coded as *masculine* since the field was established whereas women who decide to be an entrepreneur is labelled insufficient or less capable. These stereotypical beliefs eventually lead female entrepreneurs to embrace more masculine manners, though, which in turn, creates mismatch between being women and being entrepreneur at all (Gupta et al 2009, 401). Several studies, for example, found that female leaders who face with career backlash are particularly the ones who adopt more masculine notion; they are assumed to be too assertive or bossy (Carli 1990, 942; 944; Eagly and Karau 2002, 575-576; Heilman et al. 2004, 426). Investors, therefore, may not choose to invest in female entrepreneurs' projects simply because, they look either too feminine or too masculine. Due to the prejudice towards women, especially feminine language style and behavior, create great difficulties and barriers. In that case, it means even a male entrepreneur may have the potential to be judged negatively by the investors if he prefers to use more feminine language. That is

why how entrepreneurs use language and craft words have a crucial role for both male and female entrepreneurs in order to persuade backers positively.

This study highlighted many significant realities about online entrepreneurship from the point of ages-long, deep-seated gender related biases and prejudices on femininity and masculinity concepts even though there was not enough evidence to support several hypotheses (hypothesis 1b, hypothesis 1c, hypothesis 1d, hypothesis 1e, hypothesis 1f, hypothesis 1g, hypothesis 2a, hypothesis 2b, hypothesis 2c, hypothesis 2d, hypothesis 2e, hypothesis 3b, hypothesis 3c, and hypothesis 4). The first significant finding of this research is the language both genders used; regardless of their gender, both female and male entrepreneurs preferred “plain English”. This means that both genders realized the importance of simple words in effective speech. Second findings suggest that both genders preferred to focus on “now” while giving specific details about their current and feasible goals. Though both genders did not neglect to touch on near future goals or prospective growth orientations, they mainly preferred to draw attention to the present time while persuading backers. In addition, both female and male entrepreneurs desired to form and reinforce their relations with backers by displaying a “powerful leadership”; both genders perfectly blended their leadership and entrepreneurial skills effectively. While pitching, both genders harmonized concrete and abstract speech styles in order to be more persuasive. Embracing such attitude could enable both female and male entrepreneurs to emphasize broader and specific aspects of their campaigns simultaneously. Though female entrepreneurs were self-advocate themselves relatively more, both genders preferred “you” and other related second personal pronouns more often. Hence, regardless of their gender, both female and male entrepreneurs consciously gave their attention to potential backers in order to be more influential. When it comes to Lakoff’s arguments about “women’s language” (1975), the study also revealed significant facts of “femininity” and “language preferences” in online entrepreneurship activities. Contrary to Lakoff, female entrepreneurs did not prefer tag questions, hedges, intensifiers, or hyper-corrected language more when compared to

male entrepreneurs. In addition, male entrepreneurs did not prefer assertive language, either. Male entrepreneurs, for example, did not hesitate to express politeness and positive emotionality at all. Moreover, several academic findings claim that women avoid to express their anger deliberately (Dember et al. 1993, 582; Fabes and Martin 1991, 533). However, the study suggested otherwise; female entrepreneurs expressed their anger more often when compared to their male counterparts. Most female entrepreneurs did not hesitate to express their anger about the way society stereotypes them; they freely showed their frustration and deeply criticized some specific societal and cultural conditions that are embedded in economy, education, and social fields. That's why female entrepreneurs did not only desire to bring significant shifts in entrepreneurship activities, but also in other aspects of life as well by being a role model to others; they encourage females who hesitate to start a business. Yet, the most specific gender difference between female and male entrepreneurs in the language use was related to the way of thinking; while female entrepreneurs used their tacit knowledge, male entrepreneurs relied on their specialist knowledge. Female entrepreneurs mainly preferred narrative and informal speech form, and male entrepreneurs primarily preferred being logical and analytical. However, such way of thinking did not withhold male entrepreneurs to express their emotions. Henceforward, though both genders displayed different cognitive abilities, female and male entrepreneurs used positive emotionality as a persuasive strategy while reflecting overconfidence. Briefly, the study suggest that by abending their *lady* or *assertive* sides, both female and male entrepreneurs could still manage to run successful campaigns on crowdfunding site, Indiegogo.com. Since gender related concepts like *masculinity* or *femininity* are highly context-dependent (Aries 1996, 5-6; Leaper and Robnett 2011, 137), online entrepreneurship might require different linguistic strategies. Besides, taboos on genders, particularly on females seem to be self-destructive when social, cultural and economic change in societies via advanced technology is concerned.

Within late modernity, the past decade has witnessed the rise of females in many fields of the business world. In fact, it seems to be the era of female entrepreneurs due to the social transformation. More and more women are destructing the enforced taboos, establishing their own businesses and stepping into a new world dominated by males. The first group of women who prefer self-employment are mostly well-educated, highly-qualified and mostly have well-paid positions in corporate business life. The answer to why they leave their careers and give a start to their own projects lies in the deep frustration they experience in the companies they work for. The frustration sometimes derives from unequal pay-checks, sometimes the glass-ceiling phenomenon and sometimes from the barriers for top positions they face that are designed by male executives (Knopik and Moerer 2008, 140-141). The second group of women are ordinary women with great ideas but have no chance to be taken seriously. Some of them in the second group are mostly divorced with some kids of their own and, some are widows again with kids. They have to find new ways to survive. So, either through traditional sources but, mostly through the crowdfunding sites, women have been entering into the dynamic ecosystems where they can create and exploit opportunities simultaneously. Such women are no longer viewed as followers or obeyers; they have become leaders. Female entrepreneurs are no longer associated with certain occupations, but as innovators and improvers (Bender 2000, 2). In fact, despite the taboos and prejudices, early and mid-20th century witnessed many successful female entrepreneurs. For instance, not long ago, on August 19, 1883 a girl named Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel was born in France. At the age of 12, her mother died and her father took her to an orphanage and left her there. Raised by nuns who taught her sewing, that unfortunate girl became the most renowned fashion icon in the world known as Coco Chanel. At the age of 18, she started working in a shop and, at night she was singing in a club. She was a working girl. Then, she started making hats. In 1914, she opened her first shop and freed women from layers of clothing and corsets; she freed women's physical forms. She was the first woman to wear pants. In her designs, nuns' strictly black and white clothes played an important role but, in a revolutionary style. With her

perfume Chanel No.5, her petit robe noir, Chanel 2.55 which is the most copied bag, her knitted Chanel suit and her pants, Coco Chanel made a big change in international fashion and in the concept of dressing the woman's body (Bibliogpahy.com Editors 2022). Another example for female entrepreneurs is Ruth Handler. The doll she made for her daughter Barbara laid the foundation of a huge toy empire. Probably, the first real social transformation was triggered by a doll called Barbie on March 9, 1959. Ruth Handler from southern California, with her husband Elliot founded a toy company named Mattel and introduced a doll inspired by a character called Lilli doll from Bild Zeitung. The doll was a great success against 1950s gender roles because she was not like other baby dolls; Barbie did not teach nurturing. She had no off-spring or parents. She was not defined by any relationships of responsibility to men or family. The doll was a role model for females for financial self-sufficiency. In Barbie's CV, she was an astronaut, Olympic athlete, airline pilot and US presidential candidate and doctor. She had various apparels but never a mother's apparel she owned (Lord 2021). In recent years, among many more, the third and the most specific example is the Turkish-German scientist Özlem Türeci whose scientific diligence and innovative strength helped her produce a vaccine with mRNA to combat with a new type of coronavirus called Covid 19. She is the daughter of a Turkish surgeon who settled in Germany with his family. Özlem Türeci earned an MD degree at Saarland University. She founded the company Biontech in 2008 in Mainz with her husband Uğur Şahin. She saved millions of lives during the COVID 19 pandemic. Nowadays, she has been studying to develop a new vaccine for cancer treatment (Bloomberg 2021).

As seen in the examples above, female entrepreneurs with creative spirit and innovative strength could not only achieve individual success but also change the traditional way of life of other females in different locations of the world. These females have become the role-models for thousands of females. In fact, they act like powerful transformers of societies. Like the way Bullough et al. (2019, 1) suggest, a supportive ecosystem, especially for women's entrepreneurship, should involve fair investments, well-

organized human and financial capitals, accessible opportunities, disruptive institutions, and progressive infrastructures it requires a “social transformation”. Social practices like policies, laws, or expectations are deeply rooted in fields like education, and economy (Brush, Edelman, Manolova, and Welter 2018, 396). Yet, women’s entrance into entrepreneurship has now begun to shake and transform embedded routines, norms, and habits that have been ongoing for decades between subjective (entrepreneurs) and objective (entrepreneurship) structures. Traditional way of “gendering” have now begun to be disrupted due to the increased transformation in reflexive nature of gender based on the awakening era of female consciousness; the critical but essential era of “undoing gender”. Drawing back to Bourdieu’s ideas about social transformation, this study suggest that women’s integration into entrepreneurship has been initialized the “detraditionalization of gender” process thoroughly. Entrepreneurs, especially female ones, have found themselves questioning the traditional beliefs about “femininity” and “masculinity”, in such, new negotiations and arrangements between agents (entrepreneurs) and field of social actions (entrepreneurship) have eventually come to the fore. Social realities are complex and involves conflicts, and so does “gender” patterns. Yet, as explained in detail in previous chapters, such gender-related connections are not stable; though they seem well-structured, they are changeable, and how subjects (entrepreneurs) constitute or reproduce, disrupt or challenge gender related meanings, practices, routines, or norms are the crucial steps of the transformation. This study for example offers a better fit with such transformation. As findings suggest, female and male entrepreneurs pitch in almost similar ways. In the same economic field, though smaller, but still essential and expanding, academicians argue that female entrepreneurs are more network-oriented (Forret and Dougherty 2004, 421; Gewin 2018; Uzzi 2019), skilled in exploiting opportunities (Farery, and Samson 2021, 58), and well-educated (Lenz and Aspan 2018). Researchers suggest entrepreneurs to be “who they are” and “talk the way they are” (Gino, Sezer, and Huang 2020, 15). Rather than assuming that such theories are validated or falsified, it is better to view them as opening new insights and

meanings. Theories are sometimes adaptable with the nature of the study and sometimes are not, in such, since gender related concepts like “masculinity” or “femininity” are highly context-dependent, sometimes a theory may offer an enhanced perspective, and sometimes it fails to satisfy. In terms of online entrepreneurship, it is rather clear that regardless of the scope of support to the hypotheses of a specific gender related to language usage, there are female and male entrepreneurs who moderate their constructed expatiations, and choose different speech styles to be more persuasive on crowdfunding site, indiegogo.com. The historical arrangements of gender of course, does not alter swiftly, but, gender stereotyping on business issues seems to be changing, at least in online entrepreneurship activities. Other notions of entrepreneurship might be changing slowly, or traditional way of doing things might tend to be more stable than expected, but surely a new historical period has opened with women’s entrance into the “masculinized” occupations, and such movement is ready to open new variations. It is crucial to suggest that gender is not a firm belief, but it is what we do in a process; “masculinities” only has power in relation to “femininities”, “men” in relation to “women”. Who knows, gender might even vanish, if new social relations emerge. Though, we surely are far from such new world, and some still would argue that biological-based differences may always cause stereotyping or gender related expectations, and we may still need more time to create radical transformations, it obviously seems that gender related division of labor is being weakened. In sum, such unavoidable weakness would be eventually weaken the law of “gender” and other related and deliberately constructed realities such as “masculinity” or “femininity.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Previous studies on entrepreneurship, persuasion, and gender have focused on variety of methods, which are mostly either qualitative or quantitative in nature but most of those studies have analyzed these concepts through surveys or similar methods.

However, such researches on pitch videos of various entrepreneurs do not provide credible evaluation on gender differences and/or similarities in speech styles on crowdfunding sites. In addition, such studies are rare and, the ones one could find focus on such videos from different perspectives; not through speech styles. A combination of conceptual analysis and computer-based statistical methods were then preferable for this study because combining both methods may guide professionals new and farther meanings of (1) how entrepreneurs express themselves through language in crowdfunding campaigns and (2) whether displaying more masculine or feminine manner in crowdfunding campaigns affects the success of entrepreneurs. In many ways, the dissertation seeks to cherish many academic areas integrally. The analyses of four studies of the dissertation have begun to explore entrepreneurs' communication strategies in crowdfunding campaigns on indiegogo.com, but the results of analyzes should be considered in the context of the limitations. First and foremost, the study examines linguistic patterns that exist in entrepreneurs' pitch videos through gender lens, and research assumed that gender related linguistic patterns did not actually exist in crowdfunding campaigns. Both female and male entrepreneurs neither choosing assertive or tentative speech styles; they preferred to harmonize them in order to be more influential. For example, both genders used positive emotionality as a persuasive strategy, and did not hesitate to reflect overconfidence, even those could be backfired. However, the study has two limitations as well: (1) The concept of culture is not included in this study; whether or not, culture has an impact on language style and manner is not tested. (2) The concept of "Identity" is another argument that is not included; whether or not, identity has an impact on language strategy and manner is not tested. Future researches may then study identity and/or culture in order to examine the relation between entrepreneurs' success on crowdfunding sources, and to see whether or not, those concepts affect entrepreneurs' choices of language such as assertive or affiliation speech.

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