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Gendered Language and Digital Poetics: Representations of Gender in Viral Online Poetry on Social Media

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Abstract

This study examines the discourse of gender through poetic language and practices on social media. By concentrating on the popularity of internet poetry during 2023-2024, this study seeks to explore the role of language and discourse within poetic discourse. A total of 319 works were examined in order to identify gender-specific characteristics in Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter). The analysis was carried out qualitatively and thematically using multiple modalities that drew on theories and concepts from linguistics and gender studies. Theoretical frameworks such as digital semiotics and discourse analysis were employed to interpret the collected data and detect patterns. The findings of this study show that digital poetry mirrors gendered discourse. Female authors were more inclined to draw inspiration from emotions and nature, whereas male authors tended to depend on abstract ideas and metaphors. Non-binary creators conveyed their feelings through ambiguous and unisex metaphors. The analysis showed that Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter influence the ways gender is represented in poetry differently. By combining the analysis of poetic language and content, this research identifies patterns that mirror the state of gendered discourse on social media. Furthermore, it underscores the need to reconsider existing perceptions of language and discourse with regard to digital practices, gender equality, and feminism.

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Introduction

Social media has changed poetry's presence in people's lives, enabling more accessibility to poetry and its transition from the printed page to the screen. Today, Instagram, TikTok, and X or Twitter have become a habitat for poetry as people engage in poetic creation and interaction with its help, taking advantage of the opportunities for instant publication, experimentation with forms, and algorithm-based feedback. In these virtual spaces, poetry turns into a tool for self-expression, identity construction, and socialization (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019). It also offered an alternative to literary production (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2025).

Gender is one of the dimensions of identity that people negotiate and construct digitally with the help of language. The studies of language and gender have yielded valuable insights into the nature of gender identity and its reflection in language use (Lakoff, 1975; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013). Researchers note that gendered language is seen as a reflection of essentialist and binary thinking with emotional/conversational categories attributed to women and abstract/argumentative categories to men (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990). At the same time, an up-to-date approach views gender as a performative category that emerges through repetitive practices of language use (Butler, 1990).

Studies note that the complexity of negotiating gender identities increases in a digital environment where people engage in meaning-making processes with the help of multiple resources (Jewitt et al., 2023; Kress, 2010). Research on digital communication practices has demonstrated that the building of discursive and imagistic resources is integral to negotiated identity construction, including the negotiation of gender roles (Lee, 2020; Knaflic, 2020; Zhao et al., 2022). At the same time, the discourse analysis literature has devoted little attention to the study of electronic literature and poetry. Most of the studies on digital poetry explore the nature of creativity and its connection to specific platforms that host literary works without focusing on such a critical variable as gender (Funkhouser, 2013; Mukhopadhyay, 2021; Shakargy, 2020). Meanwhile, the intersection of gender, language, and digital literature practices is understudied, calling for more investigations into the role of digital environments in (re)producing gendered discourse practices from a sociolinguistic and multimodal perspective (Georgakopoulou, 2021).

This issue takes on a new dimension when the focus is on the digital culture of Indonesia. With its increasingly digital-savvy population, multiple languages, and complicated relationships with gender concepts, Indonesia emerges as a location where the intersection of gender, language, and digital literature is particularly palpable (Wijana, 2021; Qodriani et.al, 2022). The Indonesian online poetry scene has seen a significant increase in virality among young people who value the opportunities for self-expression, social critique, and identity exploration that online poetry provides. However, the question of how gender is negotiated with the help of language and other symbolic resources in the Indonesian online poetry scene remains elusive, as do the ways in which such negotiations take place across different platforms.

The current study builds on the discussed premises by making three central contributions. First, the research extends the literature in its exploration of the ways in which poetry is hosted, shaped, and distributed online. It sheds light on the nature of online poetry posts that go viral on social media by providing one of the first large-scale qualitative analyses of this phenomenon. Specifically, the current study attempts to identify what gendered language strategies make poetry posts popular and influential by analyzing a database of 319 online poetry posts published on Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter) between 2023 and 2024. By focusing on popularity, the current study hopes to contribute to the discussion on gendered language use in poetry by highlighting the discourse strategies that make poetry appealing and influential in a digital environment, an aspect that has received insufficient attention in the literature.

Second, this study aims to bridge the gap between language and gender studies and the study of digital literature by making theoretical contributions to the understanding of poetry practices in social media. It combines the perspectives of gender performativity (Butler, 1990) and multimodal and digital semiotics (Jewitt et al., 2023; Kress, 2010) to theorize about poetry practice in social media as a multimodal activity. Specifically, the study argues that online poetry production is a performative act of constructing gendered identities through a discourse (linguistic and metaphorical) and a multimodal (imagistic) semiosis.

Last, this paper focuses on the ways in which gender is negotiated in the discourse of non-binary and gender-diverse poetry. It explores the use of hybrid poetic forms, novel metaphorical strategies, and multimodal resources in the poetry produced by non-binary and gender diverse online poets. It argues that such practices challenge the binary conceptualizations of gender and, therefore, deserve greater attention in the discourse analysis literature. In particular, the study examines the ways in which language and multimodal resources help negotiate gender beyond the binary framework, thus contributing to a better understanding of gender in the digital culture of Indonesia and beyond (Androutsopoulos, 2021; Tagg et al., 2023).

With these objectives in mind, the Gender Language on Social Media (GLOS) study explores the ways in which gender is negotiated, performed, and resisted in the discourse of online poetry hosted on social media platforms. The paper seeks to answer the following questions: (1) What language features are used in the online poetry produced by people of different gender identities? (2) In what ways do the language metaphors differ in the poetry from members of different genders? (3) How are such language features and multimodal means as emojis, hashtags, typography, and formatting employed to signify gender in the online poetry under investigation? (4) How do the differences between the platforms affect the ways in which gender is performed in online poetry?

The contributions of this research include advancing the discourse analysis literature on the importance of multimodal analysis for studying the construction of gender in online poetry. It offers emic insights into the ways in which gender is negotiated in the Indonesian online poetry scene, potentially opening up new areas of inquiry for sociolinguistic and discourse analysis researchers. Finally, the study provides implications for digital literacy practices and gender equality advocacy by raising public awareness about the ways in which language and discourse analysis can be used as tools for studying and transforming society.

In a discussion on gendered language to gender as discursive practice this last fifty years, there has been a significant expansion and shift in research on language and gender. The initial studies, exemplified by Lakoff's (1975) analysis of "women's language," explored essential differences in men's and women's language use. While contributing to a better understanding of gendered language use, this approach was later abandoned because of its potential to essentialize categories of gender (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013).

The subsequent interactional and post-structuralist approaches emphasized the importance of social and interactional contexts in producing gendered language use and positioning. In particular, Butler's (1990) influential theory of gender performativity highlighted the role of language in constructing categories of gender. Overall, the findings of interactional and post-structuralist approaches demonstrated that language used in different genres and contexts contributes to the construction of categories of gender. As such, there is nothing essential or inherent in language use patterns that convey or express men's and women's gender identity; rather, these patterns need to be interpreted within a specific discourse context (Cameron, 2005; Bucholtz, 2014). At the same time, because most of this research is centered around spoken and institutional language, there is a need for further investigation into the ways in which poetic language is used in virtual spaces to negotiate gender.

In other discussion, digital communication has transformed the ways in which individuals negotiate meaning and navigate gender-specific language. Researchers argue that electronic communication involves a multiplicity of modes of information encoding and decoding (Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al., 2023). In particular, social media allows people to make meaning through language, design, and other modes peculiar to the discourse of the virtual world. Specifically, the meaning of a social media message is generated by the message's text, its design, and other accompanying design features such as emojis, hashtags, images, and videos.

The latest studies on social media practices demonstrate that platforms and their algorithms shape and guide gender expression and encourage individuals to perform their gender identities in particular ways, readable by the audiences. Androutsopoulos (2021) points out that the platforms invite users to style and brand their bodies, making their identity performance always visible and shareable. At the same time, Duffy and Pruchniewska (2017) highlight that social media tends to promote and celebrate gendered displays of emotions, thus negotiating and reinforcing certain values while marginalizing others. Both works demonstrate that gender in social media is multifaceted and complex, intersecting numerous other variables. The researchers agree that language is not the only significant discourse resource which shapes gendered positioning in the virtual world. Zhao et al. (2022) show through their study that social media gendered positioning emerges through the interaction of verbal and visual resources, demonstrating the limitations of the traditional approaches which analyze language and visual elements in isolation. Lee (2020) argues that digital discourse reflects and reproduces gender ideologies and explores the mechanisms through which they evolve, noting that analyses should adopt a more comprehensive approach better accounting for the complexity of processes occurring in the discourse community. However, the majority of the offered works analyze either ordinary social media discourse, the discourse of influencers, or political discourse, not exploring other genres such as poetry.

Digital poetry is a hybrid of literary and digital communication practices. The academic literature on social media poetry is dominated by studies investigating the role of brevity, interactivity, and platform-specific constraints (Seargeant & Tagg, 2019). However, the examination of identity-related concerns is underrepresented in the literature. Georgakopoulou's (2021) conceptualization of "small stories" allows for discussing the role of short-form digital narratives in negotiating stances and performing identities, with gender being one such aspect. Notably, gender is frequently relegated to a secondary status within the discourse on digital poetry.

The present consideration is motivated by the centrality of poetry, and particularly confessional and lyrical poetry, in the history of gendered subjectivity. Within the digital environment, questions of gender are inextricably linked to issues of visibility and reach. Therefore, the absence of gender-specific analyses in the literature on electronic poetry constitutes a significant gap in the research literature on sociolinguistic, discourse-related, and literary features of digital communication.

The lack of theoretical framework on gender in digital poetry is arguably more prominent. Research on Indonesian social media discourse indicates that there is a growing negotiation of conventional gender roles alongside more fluid and experimental gender expressions among younger generations as digital tools empower the meeting between local values and transnational identity discourses (Wijana, 2021; Nugroho & Syarief, 2022; Qodriani et.al, 2022).

However, the majority of the body of research has focused on conversations, memes or political talk, while largely overlooking the role of poetry and other literary genres in social media. This lack of attention is particularly problematic given the existence of multiple language variants and vibrant online poetry communities in the region which contribute to the limited understanding of

gendered meaning-making in both local and global contexts of poetic discourse.

Considering the initial research details, there are three primary aspects that can be underlined as gaps in the research. Firstly, while the works exploring the relationship between gender and language are numerous, they do not consider digital poetry as a separate genre. Secondly, the scholars analyzing social media trends tend to ignore the importance of literary discourse as a tool for projecting one's identity through various means of expression, including multimodal resources. Thirdly, the studies recognizing and analyzing non-binary and gender-diverse expressions are limited to a binary perspective.

By bridging these gaps, the current research will combine the perspective of gender performativity and multimodal discourse analysis to investigate how viral online poems on Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter) engage in constructing public discourse. Furthermore, the present work will aim to include the voices of non-binary poets expressing their gender through language, metaphors, and other digital means of expression.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative multimodal discourse analysis to investigate gender construction and negotiation in online social media poetry. Qualitative studies are appropriate to understand how individuals create meaning, perform their identities, and use resources in symbolic interaction and social reality construction (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The current research uses multimodal and digital semiotic approaches to analyze the discourse's verbal and non-verbal elements.

A set of methods was applied, including language and gender analysis and multimodal discourse analysis. The analysis embraces a close inspection of gendered meanings, language categories, metaphor analysis, and digital tools and resources (Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al., 2023). Combining different methodological traditions allows deeper insights into discourse's verbal and visual layers and their connections and interactions.

2. Data Search & Corpus Selection

The study's corpus consists of 319 viral poems retrieved from three online social media platforms, including Instagram (113), TikTok (101), and X, formerly Twitter (105). The current social media platforms were selected due to their distinct genres, with Instagram being more image-oriented, TikTok – sound and video-based, and X – concentrating on text-based communication. These platforms were also popular among the target population, providing much material for investigation. The analyzed corpus was created using content published between January 2023 and December 2024.

The data were gathered using hashtags and keywords, including #poetry, #digitalpoetry, #puisindo, #spokenword, and #puisi, and interaction numbers, such as likes, shares, comments, and views, to ensure the poems' virality and centricity. The current research focuses on viral content because of its increased significance in social media discourse, impacting human interactions, culture, and identities (Androutsopoulos, 2021; Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017).

Researchers applied the required hashtags and keywords to find the target content and ensure the quantity and quality of the dataset. Additionally, the data were gathered in a particular timeframe to secure the representativity of the sample and minimize possible biases related to seasonal factors.

3. Gender Identification & Ethical Consideration

Investigating gender categories in online social media is complicated by the fact that users may identify themselves differently, and their online and offline identities may interact and transform (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2013; Bucholtz, 2014). Thus, this study employed several criteria to identify users'

genders. First, the investigators analyzed the users' profile information to identify how they identified themselves.

Further, the visual components of the examined content, including photographs and videos, were investigated to see if they could provide any clues about the author's gender identity. Finally, the researchers analyzed how the target audience perceived the content, including how they reacted to the content and interacted with the authors.

Using the described strategy, the investigators grouped the poems according to the genders they depicted. Using the described strategy, the current study found that approximately 60% of the analyzed poems were created by females (191), 35% – by males (112), and 5% – by non-binary or other gender identities (16). All data gathered from social media were publicly available, and no private and sensitive content was examined. Additionally, no identifying information about the users was used, complying with the prominent ethical standards and guidelines for internet research (Markham & Buchanan, 2012).

4. Analytical Framework

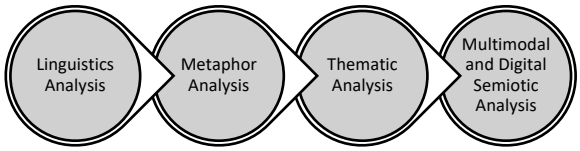


Figure 1. Analytical Framework Design

The data analysis was based on the four-step approach that involved multiple stages:

a. Linguistic Analysis

The poetic corpus was examined for lexicon, pronouns, syntax, modality, and evaluative devices. The method employed established approaches in the language and gender field while avoiding essentialist temptations (Cameron, 2005).

b. Metaphor Analysis

The study also identified and thematized conceptual metaphors using the resources of metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The analysis was concerned with metaphorical themes and domains (such as nature, body, confrontations, and technology) and their distribution across gender categories.

c. Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis of the poetic corpus was conducted to explore recurring topics and issues associated with emotion, identity, interpersonal relationships, criticism of social norms, and self-reflective strategies. The analysis followed an iterative strategy that prioritized emergent coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

d. Multimodal and Digital Semiotic Analysis

The study applied multimodal and digital semiotics to examine the extent to which emojis, hashtags, typography, line spacing, and visual framing contribute to the construction of gender meaning. The analysis drew upon frameworks of multimodal discourse analysis (Kress, 2010; Jewitt et al., 2023).

5. Data Analysis

The data analysis followed an iterative approach that involved multiple rounds of independent and joint coding to ensure analytical accuracy. An initial exploration utilized a sample of 15% of the poetic corpus to develop a preliminary coding scheme. Following intercoder conferences, the team negotiated a uniform coding framework and applied it to the whole dataset.

Moreover, the study implemented triangulation at the level of linguistic, metaphorical, thematic, and multimodal analyses to ensure that the results were consistent across different methodological approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

6. Methodological Limitations

The current project is limited by the fact that the poetic corpus represents only the most popular content on the given platforms and, thus, only a fraction of all social media poetry. Indeed, the findings reflect the prevalence or otherwise of certain themes in viral content; however, this might not

represent the overall state of poetic art on social media. Moreover, the analysis uses gender categories that are fluid in the digital sphere; thus, the analysis might conflate people's online and offline identities.

The analysis is further limited by the fact that many social media users employ anonymity and performative names to post content; thus, gender categories cannot be applied to these users' content, strictly speaking. It should be noted that the project tackles these limitations at the level of statistical representativeness, interpretive bias, and philosophical commitment as discussed in the concluding section. However, the general issue of identity misrepresentation that fuels the phenomenon of disinformation campaigns on social media platforms remains a concern for the current project.

Results and Discussion

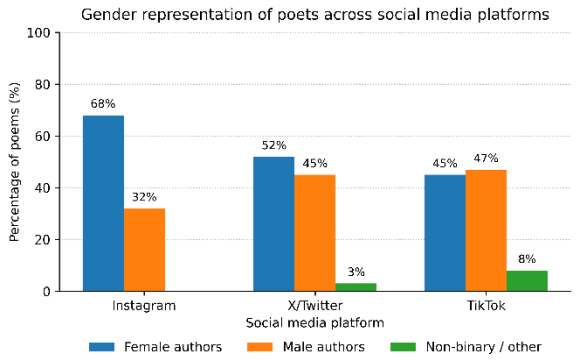


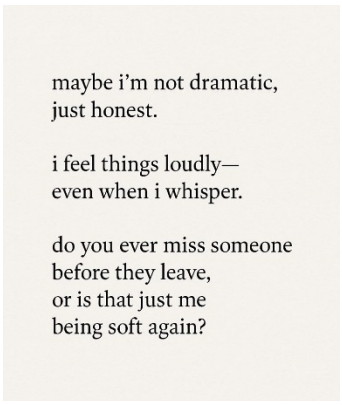
Figure 2. Gender representation across social media platforms

The analysis revealed interesting trends in terms of the popularity of the social media platforms among the poets. To begin with, Instagram was clearly the favorite platform among female poets, as 68% of all Instagram poems were created by women (see Figure 2). The engagement was slightly lower for the alternative social media, X/Twitter, where 52% of tweets were written by women and 45% by men (3% – other gender). Surprisingly, the video-based platform TikTok appeared to be the most popular among younger people and the highest percentage of non-binary identified poets (8%), compared to the other two platforms.

The tendency illustrates the researchers' hypotheses about the role of social media in democratizing opportunities for self-promotion, while still favoring some gender categories (Bucher, 2018; Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017). In general, the preferred content distribution methods seem to affect the level of engagement. In particular, the use of emotional and visual tools appeals to a broader audience and attracts users' attention, thus increasing the visibility of specific tweets or Instagram stories.

1. Linguistic Features by Gender

The analysis revealed significant differences in the use of words by the poets of different genders. Compared to men, women used more emotional words or words that described feelings and senses. In addition, women used more words that expressed a sense of self, or reflections about themselves. Furthermore, female poems had a more concrete description of things, events, and actions. Overall, women used more questions and statements directed to the readers and included more softening words and phrases than men.


maybe i'm not dramatic,
just honest.

i feel things loudly—
even when i whisper.

do you ever miss someone
before they leave,
or is that just me
being soft again?

Figure 3. Sample excerpt of a viral poem by a female poet

Unlike those of female poets, male poets' work was dominated by abstract and philosophical language, the frequent use of the third-person viewpoint, and generalizations. Their poems contained more metaphysical and conceptual words, declarative statements, and few expressions of doubt or vulnerability.

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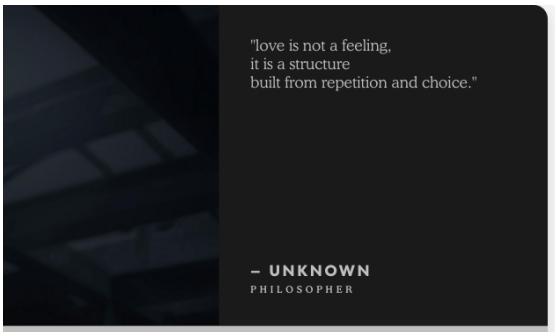


Figure 4. Sample excerpt of a viral poem by a male poet

The works of non-binary and gender-diverse poets were characterized by a use of hybrid linguistic constructs that drew from a combination of gender-specific patterns, as well as new approaches to pronouns and gendered language. Their works also tended to have more meta-commentary on gender, experimentation with syntax and morphology, and a greater blending of digital and traditional forms.



Figure 5. Sample excerpt of a viral poem by a non-binary poet

The results of the study demonstrate how the features of digital poetry reflect gender identity by implementing particular language patterns. The poetic works of female authors contain more emotional words and address the reader directly, while male poems have more philosophical and dominating diction. Non-binary poetry is characterized by the use of a wide range of experimental language techniques and the expression of ideas related to the fluidity of gender. Therefore, one can suggest that the poetic prose of various genders shows the specific tendencies of language patterns that reflect and construct social notions of gender.

2. Metaphorical Patterns by Gender

The metaphor analysis revealed significant differences in how poets of different genders conceptualized experiences:

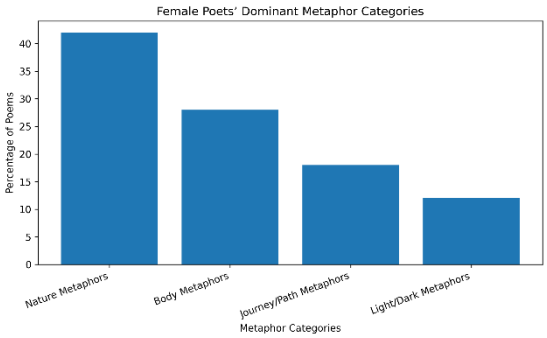


Figure 6. Female poets' dominant categories

The female poets most commonly used nature metaphors (42%) to convey their feelings in their poems. These writers used natural elements such as water, earth, sky, and plants to communicate their emotions. In addition, the second most common type of metaphors used by the female poets was the body metaphors (28%). The female poets used body metaphors to symbolize their emotions and feelings. Moreover, the third most common metaphors were journey and path metaphors (18%). Fourthly, the least common metaphors used by the female poets were light/dark metaphors (12%).

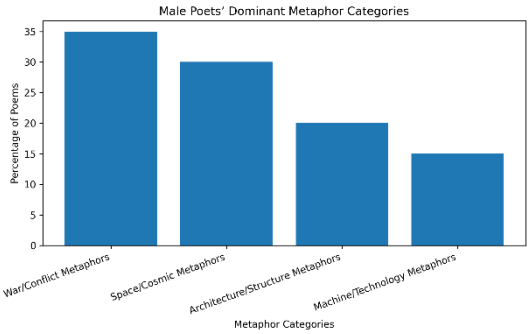


Figure 7: Male poets' dominant categories

The most common metaphors for male poets are war and conflict (35%), with space and cosmic metaphors coming second (30%), followed by architecture and structure (20%)

and machine and technology metaphors (15%). The same ranking applies to female poets, but their scores are distributed differently: nature metaphors are represented by 48%, space and cosmic – 32%, architecture and structure – 12%, and machine and technology – 8%. Female poets used nature metaphors as a means of emotional expression since, for them, social media is a place where human relationships develop, nurturing, healing, and emotional support are critical. Male poets used more often war and conflict metaphors (35% vs. 48%); therefore, for them, social media is a place to express the idea of their identity through abstract conceptualization, which is consistent with essentialist understandings of masculinity.

3. Digital Symbol Usage and Gender

To ensure analytical consistency, digital symbols were quantified using frequency-based encoding. Emoji occurrences, hashtag use, and formatting affordances were quantified using the average amount per poem among genders. Descriptors such as 'higher frequency' indicate observed differences within the analyzed data set, not subjective impressions. The analysis of digital elements in poetry demonstrates how poets leverage platform affordances to express gender.

Regarding formatting and presentation, female poets showed higher use of decorative formatting, line breaks for emotional pacing, and aesthetics. Male poets preferred more conventional formatting, dense blocks of text, and minimal visual embellishments. Non-binary poets experimented with mixed languages and symbolic visual poetry.

Hashtag strategies also differed by group. Female poets used community-oriented hashtags (#womenwhowrite, #poetrycommunity) and emotional themes (#heartbreak, #healing). Male poets utilized content-focused hashtags (#philosophy, #existential, #society). Non-binary poets used identity-associated hashtags (#poetry, #beautifulwords) and deconstructive themes.

Beyond verbal language, gender is constructed through multimodal semiotic resources. Female poets exhibit higher use of emojis, decorative formatting, and aesthetic spacing compared to male poets who prefer minimal visual embellishments. Non-binary poets demonstrate the most experimental use of emojis and formatting to resist stable gender indexing.

These findings align with multimodal discourse studies that examine meaning-making beyond text (Jewitt et al., 2023; Kress, 2010). Emojis and hashtags do not decorate poems but act as indexical signs that position poets within gendered communities and affective publics (Zappavigna, 2012).

4. Thematic Analysis by Gender

The thematic analysis revealed distinct patterns in content across gender categories:

Table 1. Female Poets' Dominant Themes

Personal relationships and emotional intimacy	38%
Self-reflection and personal growth	27%
Nature and environmental connection	18%
Social justice and gender equality	12%
Spiritual or transcendental experiences	5%

Table 2. Male Poets' Dominant Themes

Existential and philosophical questions	32%
Social critique and political commentary	28%
Technology and digital society	20%
Abstract concepts and intellectual exploration	15%
Personal relationships	5%

Table 3. Non-binary/Other Poets' Dominant Themes

Gender identity and expression	35%
Deconstruction of social norms	25%
Hybrid identities and belonging	20%
Digital existence and virtual reality	15%
Community and connection	5%

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Thematic analysis revealed gendered patterns in the poetry produced. Female poets were more likely to write about interpersonal, introspective, healing, and relational topics. Male poets were more inclined to write about ontological, socio-political, technological, and critical issues. The non-binary category explored themes of gender fluidity and challenged status quo.

These findings do not indicate essentialist differences between the genders but rather reflect negotiated meanings informed by societal expectations and the affordances of each platform. Thus, the popularity of the poetry on social media is determined by complex negotiations of meaning taking place between writers and their audiences (Androutsopoulos, 2021). However, the circulation of viral content is governed by the logic of affective visibility, which prioritizes emotional resonance and visibility within the constraints of algorithms (Papacharissi, 2015; Dobson et al., 2023).

5. Platform-Specific Patterns

The analysis also unveiled several patterns specific to the platforms in terms of genre and gender. The Instagram poetry had the highest percentage of visual content in the form of photos and graphics alongside the poetry. It also had the largest variance in the levels of gender fluidity in the visual content. Overall, the female poets dominated on Instagram, which was also evident in the number of engagement features on the posts. TikTok allows the incorporation of performance into the poetry in the form of videos. It had the largest portion of the youngest poets and had the highest amount of experimentation with gender presentation. The popularity of TikTok was also evident in the number of trends and challenges which influenced the production of poetry by users. Finally, the poetry found on Twitter/X had the highest rate of pure textual content with little or no multimedia components. It also had the fastest rate of virality and response from the audiences. X/Twitter had a slightly higher representation of male than female poets and focused more on socio-political issues than the other two platforms.

6. Temporal Trends

The study conducted in 2023 and 2024 has detected several trends related to poetry. Firstly, there was the shift towards greater gender fluidity, as seen in an increasing number of poets that expressed a non-binary gender identity on TikTok. Secondly, the study has detected the tendency towards convergence, as different platforms' users began to adopt similar styles due to cross-posting. Thirdly, there is a rise in politically charged content and poetry related to gender and its impact on the elections. Lastly, while not explicitly linked to gender, the study has found that poetry was becoming more commercialized and more professional.

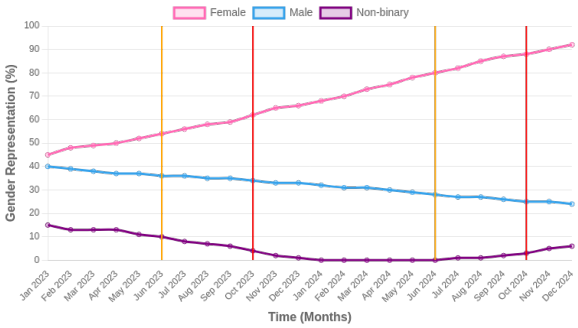


Figure 8. Temporal trends in online poetry gender representation

The research conducted among poets between 2023 and 2024 revealed three common trends. Firstly, the poetry community is witnessing a rise in gender fluidity, especially among young people on TikTok. Secondly, there is an observable shift towards a homogenization of styles facilitated by the repost culture and the emergence of influential voices. Thirdly, the poetry market is becoming more commercialized, which threatens to prioritize specific gender styles in which poetry is presented. All in all, the trends suggest that the digital space provides new opportunities to explore gender fluidity in poetry. However, the attention economy may also lead to the reinforcement of certain gender roles due to their higher degree of commercial viability (Gill & Orgad, 2018).

7. Gendered Language as Digital Performance

The results of the research have revealed that gendered language used in the online space is not merely a reflection of gendered discourse elsewhere but is actively negotiated and positioned within the online environment. Female authors use emotion-laden words and perceptions and first-person pronouns more frequently than men, which may be explained by Lakoff's (1975) view of woman's discourse. Yet, in the online space, the features of women's discourse are deliberately used to attract audiences' attention and to increase participation and engagement fueled by the platforms' algorithms.

Male writers leaned towards abstracts and used metaphysical constructions more frequently, which may be explained by the link between masculinity and stoicism, coolness, and rationality since metaphysics has long been associated with male-dominated spheres of life. Yet, in the online environment, the same techniques are used to fulfill the role of expression of gender identity negotiated and performed by the writers for their audiences. Such a choice is explained by the characteristics of the platforms where writers publish their poems: in online spaces, people actively participate in the creation of their discourse, which is different from traditional media. Therefore, the results of the research may be linked to the findings of Butler (1990), who stated that gender is a social construct formed through performative acts.

8. Digital Affordances and the Reconfiguration of Gender Norms

This study demonstrates the connection between specific aspects of online platforms and gender expression. Using emojis, formatting, hashtags, and multimedia, female participants explored gendered semantics, reflecting both writing practices and their gendered associations. Female poets utilized emoticons as a means of emotional expression, and their prevalence highlights the importance of aesthetics and sentiment in social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. In comparison, male participants incorporated fewer emojis into their writing. Furthermore, males favored large blocks of text, which reflects the association between text length and masculinity. Overall, the differences in the use of digital tools by male and female participants support the claim by Androutsopoulos (2021) that social media discourse is informed by both sociolinguistic and technological phenomena.

The strategies used by non-binary participants to embrace their gender identities show how technology can be used to transform a person's understanding of their gender. Non-binary poets adopted hybrid approaches to linguistics and semantics in their attempt to fit their gender expressionism within an androgynous framework. Their tendency to use a wide spectrum of pictorial and linguistic devices illustrates the capacity of technology to enable individuals to negotiate their gender perceptions. As demonstrated by Motschenbacher (2020) and Jones (2023), such phenomena as non-binary discourse contribute to the development of alternative epistemologies in a variety of areas, including sociology and feminism. In particular, Zhao et al. (2022) and Tagg et al. (2023) highlight the tendency of critical discourse analysts to embrace mixed methods in studies related to gender and power.

9. Metaphor, Embodiment, and Gendered Conceptual Worlds

The metaphorical patterns identified in this research demonstrate that gender differences in online poetry are manifested in both conceptual and linguistic ways. Female authors were more likely to use nature- and body-based metaphors to convey vulnerability, interpersonal connections, and human experience, whereas male writers relied on war-, architecture- and cosmos-related metaphors to describe experiences, actions, and behaviors as purposeful, controlling, or transcendent.

Hybrid strategies that combined "female" and "male" metaphors were used predominantly by non-binary authors, which demonstrates how the digital poetry

community actively engages in deconstructing established associations between gender and metaphorical meaning. This conclusion aligns with recent scholarship that questions essentialized connections between gender and linguistics and supports a post-structuralist perspective of metaphorical meaning as a socially constructed phenomenon.

10. Platform Cultures and Gender Visibility

Different platforms have different tendencies in terms of gendered language due to their unique characteristics. The preference for visual media in Instagram makes it more feminine, while TikTok's focus on performance makes it more androgynous and better at embracing non-binary identities. X/Twitter, in turn, is skewed towards more philosophical and textual debates.

The platforms' differences in the representation of gender have also affected the choice of material for analysis. Non-binary themed poetry is more common for TikTok, which can be seen as a safer ground for non-binary and female-specific topics and themes. Thus, the present analysis also complies with the findings of the previous study, which stated that technological progress, and especially the rise of new media, has contributed to the change in gender perception, particularly in younger people.

11. Implications for Gender Equality and Digital Literacy

Looking more broadly at the results, it can be concluded that the tendency of gender hierarchies in language exists; however, there is also observed potential for change. Non-binary poets employ strategies that utilize the opportunities provided by the digital environment, which are conducive to experimentation with gendered discourse.

While digital poetry environments seem to provide greater opportunities for gender fluidity, the algorithms of platforms might reinforce certain affective styles associated with visibility. The affective vulnerability, aestheticism, and confessional approaches are programmed to be rewarding. As such, they might reproduce the stereotypes about femininity in the digital space. Likewise, intellectualism and restrained emotionality might be recognized as distinctive traits of masculinity in the sphere of online literature. It can be asserted that the online environment should be seen both as a space of creative resistance and a site of commerce.

Conclusion

This study aims to demonstrate how the language of viral online poems posted on Instagram, TikTok, and X/Twitter contributes to gender stereotypes and dissidence in 2023-2024. The work analyzes 319 poems and demonstrates how the discourse of this genre replicates and actively deconstructs gender roles in the digital environment through specific lexical and metaphorical resources, as well as attention to key semiotic features.

The results of the research highlight a number of differences between the poetic discourse of female and male authors, as well as a tendency for the genre to move away from binary thinking. Female authors predominantly used descriptive and interpersonal strategies, referring to nature and the female body. Male authors relied more on abstract and conceptual metaphors, emphasizing the oppositional and expansive nature of gender. At the same time, the analysis shows that such differences are relative and can be overcome in specific digital contexts. The increasing representativeness of non-binary genders in the sample indicates the ability of the poetic message to resist binary thinking.

A wide range of poetic devices and media-specific tools used in the analyzed works allows for transforming and qualifying gender stereotypes, as well as developing more inclusive concepts of gender. This study contributes to gender and language research by examining the phenomenon of gender through the lens of innovative electronic literature. Moreover, the article confirms the importance of considering distribution channels in the study of discourse, since poetic texts adapt to different audiences, using available tools and stylistic resources. The

practical significance of the research is justified by the need to educate modern Internet users, especially young people, in understanding gender dissidence.

The study also has some limitations that need to be considered. The sample comprises only those works that have received a high profile on the platforms under study. More research is needed to examine the phenomenon in the broader population. Moreover, the topic of gender itself is complex and multifaceted, and the question of its interpretation in discourse requires more attention. Therefore, further research should focus on examining works in different sociocultural contexts and developing a more detailed dynamic model of discourse analysis.

Thus, this study examines the representation and transformation of gender roles in the discourse of online poetry. Particular attention is paid to the linguistic, metaphorical, and semiotic tools that digital poems use to communicate gender equality, as well as to identify dissident phenomena in gender discourse. The results of the research allow us to better understand the importance of poetic texts in modern society for gender studies and related social issues.

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