

## Gender Differences in the Use of Emotive Language in TED Talks

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### Abstract

The emergence of the Internet brought about new modes of communication and personal expression. The precise selection of words or phrases holds significant importance, as they have the capacity to evoke a wide range of reactions, aligning the audience's feelings with the purpose of the message. This study sought to explore how male and female political figures utilise emotive language in TED Talks, examining differences in their usage and quantity of emotive language. Through a homogenous purposive sampling method, similar samples were selected and transcribed via the YouTube Transcript tool. Reference was also made to Jakobson's (1960) framework to analyse two TED Talks, *My Trials and Tribulations* and *From Enemy to Valentines*. The novelty of this study lies in its exploration of the emotional dimension within internet media discourse. Notably, it reveals that the female speaker outpaced the male speaker in articulating negative emotions to craft a compelling presentation. In essence, the study demonstrates that both genders conveyed comparable emotions stemming from traumatic experiences. This research provides valuable insights for speakers, the public, and future researchers by illustrating how gender variations in emotional expression influence the use of emotive language and communication approaches across genders.

**Keywords:** gender, emotive language, TED Talks, social media

### Introduction

The divergence in language based on gender has emerged as a prominent topic within sociolinguistics. Over the last few decades, numerous researchers have dedicated their efforts to discerning the distinctions in language usage between males and females. Weatherall (2002) asserted a strong correlation between gender and language. Gender differences in communication are explained by the different roles that men and women hold in society (Lakoff, 2004). It is recognized that men and women differ in numerous aspects, leading to the establishment of gender roles and subsequent stereotypes in our society. The different roles held by men and women in society then lead to a belief that men's and women's speech differs in form, theme, substance, purpose, and use (Erickson-Schroth, & Davis, 2021). As commonly understood, women tend to engage in more conversation than men (Amin, 2018). They find it easier to articulate their emotions and freely communicate their thoughts. Moreover, women demonstrate a higher sensitivity to their surroundings compared to men. Lakoff, renowned for her gender theory, asserts the existence of a 'women's language' style of speech. Lakoff (2004) contends that the speech patterns of women diverge from those of men due to their subordinate position within society. In her seminal work, Lakoff (2004) suggested that women commonly

exhibit several linguistic traits, including the use of specific colour terms, avoidance of harsh language, hedges, employment of empty adjectives, inclusion of tag questions, and utilization of intensifiers.

Stokoe (2018) also agreed that generally, politeness, the use of hedging, and a propensity for more talk are linked with the way women typically communicate, while directness, brevity, and a tendency to interrupt are often associated with men's communication styles. These stereotypes about gendered language tend to be reinforced and sustained through language and media, shaping our assumptions and comprehension of how women and men use language (Ellemers, 2018; Stokoe, 2018). Gender differences in language differ not only in real-world interactions but also in digital ones like TED talks which allows the presenters to express their innovative ideas to the public in a talk. TED Talk is a social platform that focuses on sharing knowledge and spreading ideas where expert speakers share on a wide variety of subjects. Most speakers in TED are experts or professionals in certain fields, their talks represented most features in academic speaking. Researchers reported TED talks as a beneficial resource for English language learning not only in listening but also in speaking (Banker & Gournelos, 2013). Examining the differences in the use of emotive language in TED talks between men and women can facilitate our understanding of the rhetorical nature of academic spoken genre and determine whether there are any noticeable patterns or discrepancies between the genders.

## **Problem Statement**

Researchers have been looking Emotive language possesses a remarkable capacity for persuasion by leveraging the rapid emotional reactions of people or audiences. In verbal communication, language and emotions mutually influence each other. According to Ekman (2021), emotional language not only differs in the quantity of words for each emotion but also in how deeply a word conveys subtleties, blends emotions, or describes the origin of an emotion. It serves as a persuasive tool, often emerging spontaneously during verbal exchanges. Rocklage et al. (2018) suggest that individuals tend to speak more eloquently and spontaneously when attempting to persuade others, and if this skill is learned, its use might become largely automatic, persisting even under cognitive strain or when emotional effectiveness is diminished. Ideally, the use of emotive language should be consistent across genders. However, Chaplin (2015) notes that women typically express their emotions more openly, particularly happiness, while internalizing negative emotions like despair compared to men. Women often face stereotypes of being emotional and can sometimes navigate social situations more freely due to these perceived emotional expressions. They also adopt a distinctive speech style, termed 'women's language,' characterized by linguistic elements that both display and perpetuate women's perceived inferior societal status (Lakoff, 1973; Chouchane, 2016). The way language conveys

emotional information is a crucial aspect of the language-emotion relationship. Lakoff views gendered language as a reflection of the unequal societal roles assigned to men and women.

Hence, to discern differences between male and female speakers, it becomes imperative to scrutinize the emotive language they use in their TED Talk presentations. This study aims to uncover how men and women with political background employ emotive language uniquely during speech and persuasion. Previous research has primarily focused on the functions of emotive language and their psychological implications. These studies often assess the impact of linguistic traits on persuasiveness independently (Masi, 2020; Ta et al., 2022; MacKrell et al., 2021), neglecting the nuanced qualities of language frequently involved in real-world persuasive interactions. As a result of this, very little is known about the primary verbal aspects of persuasion or the relative impact of language elements such as emotive language on the persuasive attractiveness of a message in the context of actual social interactions in the real world. A notable research gap is evident in the limited number of studies that have examined the differential utilisation of emotive language in relation to gender. This gap in the literature significantly hinders the comprehension of how individuals of different genders within the political realm express their emotions through language within diverse communication contexts. This research presents a novel exploration into the use of emotive language within TED Talks, offering a substantial contribution by shedding light on how male and female politicians express their emotions while delivering speeches.

## **Literature Review**

### **Emotive Language**

Jakobson's language function model outlines six crucial elements or components essential for effective communication: (1) context, (2) addresser (sender), (3) addressee (receiver), (4) contact, (5) common code, and (6) message. Each element represents a distinct relationship or function that interacts between the message and the respective factor within the communication process. The six functions are: referential, emotive, conative, phatic, poetic, and metalingual. In this study, the researchers centered on the emotive function following Jakobson's theory. The emotive function, within this framework, primarily revolves around the addresser, emphasizing personal attitude, status, and emotional stance. According to Lanigan (2020), emotive function state the speaker, affect bodily comportment, and implementation of cognition. It manifests through distinctive phonic, grammatical, and lexical characteristics. Its primary objective is to convey the addresser's emotions or articulate the speaker's attitude and feelings.

The exploration of gender differences in emotional expression is not a new area of investigation especially with the emergence of new online technologies. In today's globalised world, online media has greatly expanded and have powerful influences on people's thoughts through emotive words, particularly with the recent surge in virtual communication. The Internet and social media platforms have opened avenues for Universiti Teknologi MARA, Vol. 8, No. 2, 2024

public discourse, enabling individuals to engage in discussions without intermediaries, fostering open dialogue, and facilitating the exchange of information and ideas (Absattar et al., 2022). As the social networking platforms constitute a significant component of daily interactions, Vermeulen et al. (2018) assert that these platforms contain a wealth of emotions. Hence, an examination of emotional expressions within online social media discussions, particularly focusing on gender differences, holds relevance in present society (Parkins, 2012).

Previous studies have extensively examined how men and women showed distinctive language features in social media interaction. These studies suggest that women tend to display a higher degree of overall positive emotional expression (Brody & Hall, 2010; Aljasir et al., 2017; Banikalef, & Rababah, 2018).Forgas (2006, pg. 273) argues that “emotions appear to influence what we notice, what we learn, what we remember, and ultimately the kinds of judgments and decisions we make”. According to Caschera, Grifoni, and Ferri, (2022), emotions can be understood and categorised by analysing facial expressions, vocal tones, gestures, and physiological signals. Moreover, Coates (2015) contends that people are curious about men and women's way of talk and if there are linguistic gender differences between them. Kachru, Kachru, and Sridhar (2008) suggest a fundamental distinction exists between men and women, and this distinction manifests in how they use language.

## **Discourses in TED Talks**

TED Talks, a platform aimed at imparting knowledge, represent a form of online media known for its digital communication, allowing speakers to showcase their communication styles through words, tones, and emotional expressions. According to Edwards (2021), digital communication can be considered a form of public speaking, especially when it relies on the same foundational skills as live speeches. She notes that crafting deliberate messages on socially significant topics through online forums, live monologues, or dialogues, and asynchronous messages on platforms like TED and YouTube constitutes public speaking, despite the mediated interaction between speaker and audience through technology and time.

The ability to deliver an informed and impactful public speech is crucial in conveying political messages. Politicians commonly use speeches to communicate their perspectives to the broader public, typically disseminated through various media channels, including television and social media platforms (Ponder & Haridakis, 2015). Political speeches are crafted to convey a specific message, whether it is to inspire, persuade, inform, or mobilise the audience. They are tailored to achieve particular goals, such as garnering support, rallying for change, or outlining policy agendas. Mastering public speaking skills is widely recognised as essential, and platforms like TED Talks play a pivotal role in disseminating information and ideas, potentially inspiring innovative teaching techniques. Khanbalaeva and Antonova (2021) conducted a study demonstrating that TED Talks serve as a medium for teaching English monologue and public speaking skills

to students. Various aspects are considered by speakers before presenting in TED Talks. Studies in the literature have analysed TED Talks to explore how speakers use verbs, pronouns, ideas, discourse markers, or address large audiences to engage them emotionally. Emotive language, commonly employed in persuasive speeches, particularly in TED Talks, underscores the platform's aim to influence audience opinions and beliefs. In essence, TED Talks offer an effective platform for examining diverse linguistic elements of the English language, such as emotive language, lexical hedges, and related features, reflecting their role in shaping discourse and communication.

## **Related Studies on Gendered Language**

There have been a great number of research that examined the different language features used in social media platforms. For example, in one study, Bajri and Lashkar (2020) revealed disparities in how Saudis express emotions, with distinct patterns in which each gender uses different expressions. The study indicates a higher level of emotional expression among women compared to men. Another study by Fatin (2014) discovered differing word choices between men and women on Twitter, noting that men tended to employ more abrasive language, while women predominantly used polite expressions. In a related study, Park et al. (2016) emphasised that women discussing topics on Facebook frequently utilised adjectives typically associated with femininity, such as “beautiful,” “lovely,” and “wonderful,” to convey their emotional experiences, while men tended to focus more on logical and factual content. Research on gender-specific language in blog posts and Facebook indicates that females tend to utilise intensifiers, hedges, and employ words that express experiences, emotions, and politeness, along with frequent use of first-person pronouns (Sapuan, 2014; Park et al., 2016; Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Fung et al., 2023) compared to male bloggers who tend to be more direct, hostile, impersonal and inclined towards using profanities in their language (Park et al., 2016; Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Fung et al., 2023). These instances illustrate the usefulness of understanding gender-based emotional stereotypes in enhancing our everyday understanding of both ourselves and others.

Moreover, Sari et al. (2020) revealed that both male and female Instagram captions centered on fashion frequently incorporated intensifying features, strategically employed to advertise products, and reinforce claims aimed at persuading consumers. While these studies discussed the men and women's language in written form, Karjo and Wijaya (2020) conducted a study on language features of beauty influencers in YouTube videos. The study showed that male and female beauty influencers have shown differences in their features and characteristic of language. A more recent study by Ningrum (2023), analysed the language features used by male and female fitness influencers in TikTok videos. The findings indicated that despite working in a field typically not linked with gender stereotypes, language disparities persist between the male and female fitness influencers. The male fitness influencers typically speak with greater directness and as-

sertiveness while female fitness influencers mostly use extensive vocabulary in their rapport talk. Several studies have also explored how the language styles in TED Talks impacted their popularity and viewer ratings. Mackrill et al. (2021) compared the language styles by both academics and non-academics to identify potential differences. It was discovered that speeches employing more analytical language tended to receive fewer views, whereas talks incorporating social words, the pronoun 'I', and conveying pleasant emotions were associated with higher view counts. Additionally, Carlo (2015) examined how speakers employ pathos to persuade and establish on-the-spot connection with both live and online audiences. The researchers revealed that the success of the speech stemmed not only from the captivating topic but also from the speaker's ability to profoundly impact the listeners through compelling appeals to pathos.

Earlier studies on gendered language features in online communication mostly focused on contrasting communication styles between males and females in different social media domains like Twitter, Instagram, Facebook as well as TikTok videos. A few have explored the language in TED Talks however almost no researchers have studied the use of emotive language by men and women politicians. Thus, using Jakobson's theory (1960), this study aimed to fill the gap by identifying and analysing the characteristics of emotive language in the speeches of male and female speakers in TED Talks *My Trials and Tribulations* and *From Enemy to Valentines*.

## **Methodology**

This research sits within a qualitative research design, adopting the content analysis method to examine and identify the different types of emotive language used by the speakers in TED Talks. Content analysis is useful in determining whether gender differences align with the expected gender stereotypes in the use of emotive language. Additionally, in this study, a homogenous purposive sampling technique was used to select the TED Talks by influential male and female political speakers in which they were uploaded to YouTube platform under the TED Talks account. The method of purposive sampling, which is frequently referred to as judgement sampling (Etikan et al., 2016), is attributed to the researchers' ease of assessing the TED speeches online (similar issues and concepts).

The TED talks, *My Trials and Tribulations* and *From Enemy to Valentines* were sourced and transcribed from the official TEDx Talks YouTube channel. These transcripts were then analysed and categorised systematically to identify instances of emotive language. Despite each TED Talk having its transcription, the researcher also utilised YouTube Transcript, a software assisting in transcribing YouTube videos. Besides, the researchers consistently cross-referenced the TED Talk videos to ensure higher accuracy in the data.

## Coding Guideline

For this research, manual human analysis or coding was chosen due to its perceived higher accuracy (Bengtsson, 2016) than automated tools. Alan Bryman's (2012) four stages of analysis was adapted and used as the main coding guideline. This instrument is useful in providing a logical and well-organised progression of stages for locating the data. Table 1 presents the different stages and steps involved in the coding of the data.

**Table 1: Coding Guidelines for Coders**

STAGES	STEPS
Stage 1: Viewing TED Talk videos	TED Talk videos were viewed to get a general understanding of the context
Stage 2: Selecting and transcribing speeches	The specific speeches in TED Talk videos were selected and transcribed
Stage 3: Identifying emotive language	The selected transcription was read through to identify the emotive language used by the speakers.
Stage 4: Coding the text	The emotive words were colour coded to distinguish the different types of emotive words.
Stage 5: Relating theoretical ideas to the text	Related theoretical ideas were applied to the data to compare the types of emotive language used by both speakers.

To facilitate the data analysis process, all gathered information was compiled into a straightforward document using Google Docs, following Jakobson's coding scheme (as shown in Table 1). Finally, the data comprising various forms of emotive language from the sample were extracted and organised. To streamline the research focus and align it with the available samples, the researchers opted to concentrate on four of the Jakobson's (1960) seventeen types of emotive language namely, dissatisfaction, pleasure, gratitude, and hope as these were found to be more noticeable in the speeches of the two speakers. The analysis involved examining both the commonalities and distinctions in the emotive language utilised by the male and female speakers. Additionally, it delved into the frequency and types of emotive language employed by the speakers, drawing from the previously established coding system.

## Findings and Discussion

This section presents results of the use of emotive language by male and female TED talk speakers. The TED talks delivered by Anwar Ibrahim and Nurul Izzah largely centered on their involvement in protests and rallies against the government, alongside significant and poignant life events. Both individuals, Anwar Ibrahim and Nurul Izzah, are established political activists deeply engaged in Malaysian politics. They are

renowned for their staunch commitment to democracy and human rights, consistently voicing opposition against corruption and authoritarianism. Both Anwar and Nurul Izzah have played pivotal roles in the Reformasi movement, which seeks to instigate democratic reforms in Malaysia in recent times.

Table 2 illustrates the frequency of emotive language that occurred in the speakers' TED Talk. The table shows that there is a difference in the amount of emotive language employed by the male and female speakers. Although both speakers were found using emotive language in their speeches, there were more instances of emotive language (42 instances) in the female speaker's talk compared to a total of 28 instances found in the male speaker's TED talk. The data indicates that female speaker generally uses more emotive language than the male speaker in which the emotive language, dissatisfaction, pleasure, and hope were predominantly employed. The subsequent section illustrates some examples of emotive language present in the speeches of the male and female speakers.

**Table 2: Frequency of emotive language by male and female TED talk speakers**

<b>Types of Emotive Language</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Dissatisfaction	8	12
Pleasure	7	12
Gratitude	7	5
Hope	6	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>

### **Emotive language in *My Trials and Tribulations* by Anwar Ibrahim**

The following excerpts demonstrate some of the examples of emotive language identified in the male speaker's TED talk. The excerpts were directly quoted from the video transcription.

#### ***Emotive language expressing dissatisfaction***

##### **Excerpt 1**

I was then detained under the **notorious** internal security act like the sedition laws, introduced by the then colonial English rule that still applied.

##### **Excerpt 2**

Now, then, of course came the dreadful incident of September 1998 because I was clamouring for reform and change within the system that introduced some major changes into the anti-corruption laws. I naturally had to face the **wrath** of the very corrupt in the country.

In the first excerpt, the speaker (Anwar Ibrahim), recounted his personal encounter being detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA), as a result of his involvement in mass demonstration. His use of the term 'noto-

rious' falls within the realm of emotive language known as 'Dissatisfaction,' indicating his negative sentiment connected with the event. According to Jakobson (1960, as cited in Cook, 1989, p.27), people express dissatisfaction when they are not happy with something or when something does not align with their needs. Presumably, the speaker expressed dissatisfaction using the word, 'notorious' connecting it with the Internal Security Act, a law allowing detention without trial or formal charges. Therefore, in this instance, the experience was unsatisfactory, as he was unable to advocate for his rights and freedom. Excerpt 2 presents another instance where Anwar Ibrahim used the term 'wrath' to express his deep discontent and dissatisfaction. His encounter with corruption and its adverse impact on Malaysians—leading to poverty, inequality, and restricted opportunities—strengthens his belief that corruption hinders Malaysia's advancement, a situation he endeavors to change.

### *Emotive language expressing pleasure*

#### Excerpt 3

Azizah and the children were not only **supportive** but **fully committed** to the ideas of the struggle and more importantly, I owe it to the Malaysians.

#### Excerpt 4

It's **great** to be back here at Georgetown University.

In the above excerpt (Excerpt 3), Anwar Ibrahim expressed his satisfaction with his family's conduct by describing them as 'supportive' and 'fully committed' throughout the struggle for reformation. While discussing his decision to return and continue advocating for reformation, he highlighted his family's unwavering support and dedication to the cause. These sentiments depict the speaker's contentment with his support system, falling into the emotive category labeled as 'pleasure'. According to Jakobson (1960, as cited in Cook, 1989, p.27), the emotive 'Pleasure' is employed to evoke feelings of enjoyment and contentment, serving as an expression reflecting the speaker's personal sense of satisfaction or happiness. In Excerpt 4, the speaker described his experience at Georgetown University as 'great', conveying his sense of satisfaction revisiting a familiar place after a prolonged absence. This utterance is linked to Jakobson's theory as it encompasses a feeling of enjoyment or emotion stemming from the speaker's state.

### *Emotive language expressing gratitude*

#### Excerpt 5

This was actually the close-up of the picture after five days of being assaulted to near death lethal by then the inspector general of police and the response by the then prime minister was “Well Anwar is a showman, he’s self-inflicted” but **thanks to the support** of the international media, civil society organisation, amnesty international, human rights watch and many other similar organisations of society and also international support from friends.

#### Excerpt 6

How do I explain to my young friends, children to continue the struggle for reform, for justice, for Malays, Chinese, Indians, the indigenous people of Sabah, Sarawak if I opt for an easier route and leaving them to continue with the struggle? So I have to return and I am **blessed** with the great family.

In Excerpt 5, the speaker conveyed his appreciation for the support he received by saying ‘thanks to the support’. Anwar Ibrahim expressed gratitude to various organisations for aiding the reformation cause. This phrase, ‘thanks for the support,’ reflects the speaker's thankfulness, falling under the emotive language category known as 'gratitude'. According to the theory (Jacobson, 1960), expressions of gratitude often arise spontaneously in unpredictable moments. Despite facing disparagement from individuals in positions of power, Anwar regained his confidence through the support extended by the international media, civil organisations, and other groups that assembled to demonstrate their support for him. Likewise, in Excerpt 6, Anwar Ibrahim used the term ‘blessed’ to convey his deep gratitude towards his family for their unwavering support amid political challenges. He highly values their role in his political pursuits, acknowledging their substantial support as a significant factor in his current position, alongside the backing from his supporters and the public.

### *Emotive language expressing hope*

#### Excerpt 7

I remain **optimistic**. I mean the case will be decided in no matter days or weeks. If the federal court or somebody decide the date then I have to return immediately today, tomorrow I don't know but I'm **optimistic**.

#### Excerpt 8

The Christians, Buddhists, the Hindus, and the Malaysian youth council talking about reform, social justice and freedom believe that Malaysia as a developing country, must mature as a democracy, ... and then I joined the government **believing seriously** in the need for reform within the system of governance.

In Excerpt 7, the speaker used the emotive language of hope in his speech to convey optimism. He used the term 'optimistic' to signify his belief in persisting with the struggle for reformation, justice, and equality for the Malaysian people. According to Jakobson (1960, as cited in Cook, 1989, p.27), the emotive language, 'hope' is employed to express the anticipation of something positive occurring, reflecting individuals' desires. In this context, Anwar Ibrahim's optimism reveals his confidence that favorable changes will eventually occur. In the subsequent excerpt (Excerpt 8), Anwar Ibrahim expressed his belief in effecting change in the country when he engaged with the government. The phrase 'believing seriously' underscores his unwavering determination to enact comprehensive reforms in Malaysia.

### **Emotive language in *From Enemy to Valentines* by Nurul Izzah**

The following (Excerpts 9-16) are examples of emotive language identified in the female speaker's TED talk.

#### ***Emotive language expressing dissatisfaction***

##### **Excerpt 9**

I remember the feeling of being **so powerless**. That was the most **powerless** moment in my life and I remember not wanting to feel that way ever again.

##### **Excerpt 10**

You know for me it was very important because if the second most powerful man in the country could be treated **so unjustly**.

In Excerpt 9, Nurul Izzah, the female speaker, revealed her profound disappointment regarding a distressing incident in her life. The term 'powerless' signifies a feeling of vulnerability, indicating her incapacity to prevent the armed commandos from taking her father, Anwar Ibrahim, away. Her expression reflects her discontent with the situation, emphasizing her strong dislike for reliving a similar experience. In a separate situation (Excerpt 10), Nurul Izzah again expressed her dismay regarding her father's treatment using the term 'unjustly'. In both cases, the speaker's use of emotive language emerged from her anger towards those who mistreated her father.

### *Emotive language expressing pleasure*

#### Excerpt 11

I've never had attended any demonstration before and let me tell you this, hundreds of thousands of people in one particular setting. It was just **phenomenal**, and of course they were demanding Mahathir resignation and they called for reforms in a country they felt that was dominated and controlled by one man.

#### Excerpt 12

So it was **exciting, an exciting** day. I was seen with my chequered shirt, you know all unassuming, felt very encouraged but later that night, our lives changed forever.

The female speaker expressed her delight and satisfaction using the word 'phenomenal' in Excerpt 11. She was amazed by the experience she encountered during the largest protest rally. It was her first rally participation, and she was astonished by the massive turnout demanding Mahathir's resignation. The term 'phenomenal' falls under the emotive language category of 'pleasure,' signifying the speaker's deep satisfaction about an event. She was deeply impressed by the thousands attending the rally, seeing it as a critical moment for reform, especially considering Mahathir's significant influence in the country. Nurul Izzah was thrilled to participate in a large demonstration gathering thousands of people advocating for reform in the country. Her excitement is evident in her expression 'exciting, an exciting' (Excerpt 12).

### *Emotive language expressing gratitude*

#### Excerpt 13

You know it was really a **sense of empowerment** because people entrusted you with such an important role to be their representative in the parliament.

#### Excerpt 14

I eventually was able to continue my studies at UNITEN but I wanted to tell you that I was actually denied from International Islamic University. **It is good** because you can empathise with the plight of many others and of course I shied away from a formal political rule for myself for as long as I could.

The female speaker in Excerpt 13 expressed her gratitude to the people for granting her a platform to advocate for change. By using the term 'sense of empowerment,' she conveyed her appreciation, indicating that the people had entrusted her as a significant representative in the parliament. This phrase falls under the emotive language of 'gratitude,' portraying the emotion of thankfulness conveyed by the speaker. The trust

bestowed upon Nurul Izzah not only gave her the confidence to serve as a representative but also assured her of the support she would receive in her pursuit of instigating change. In Excerpt 14, the speaker again, expressed her appreciation using the phrase 'it is good' for the opportunity to continue her studies at UNITEN after her involvement in politics had prevented her from studying at the International Islamic University.

### ***Emotive language expressing hope***

#### **Excerpt 15**

If a retired ophthalmologist and an 18-year-old together with a group of non-political stakeholders can power an entire reform movement, imagine what thousands of Malaysian University students can do if they get engaged and if I could confront my deepest fears, regret and sadness to forgive and engage with a former dictator after he has decided to embrace reforms, imagine what Malaysia can be? We can really **truly overcome** anything.

#### **Excerpt 16**

**I was driven** because I didn't want to just be a passive follower, I wanted to be an active participant.

In Excerpt 15, the speaker expressed her hopefulness regarding the prospect of overcoming a significant reform movement that stemmed from a collective effort involving various demographics such as youth, seniors, and individuals unassociated with politics. Through the phrase 'truly overcome,' the speaker, Nurul Izzah, harbored hope for crafting a renewed Malaysia with the backing of numerous university students. Recent initiatives like UNDI18, allowing Malaysian youths to participate in general elections, validate the eligibility of 18-year-olds in political engagement, emphasizing their potential to contribute significantly to future political shifts. The speaker also expressed hope in in Excerpt 16, in which Nurul Izzah used the term 'driven' to express her resolute determination to shape the nation's future through political involvement. Furthermore, she expressed her eagerness to demonstrate her abilities beyond the confines of being Anwar Ibrahim's daughter, motivating herself to accomplish more than mere familial recognition.

## **Discussion**

Gender stereotypes play a significant role in shaping how emotions are expressed differently between men and women. This study delves into the analysis of emotive language employed by speakers of different genders in TED Talks, offering valuable insights into the emotive language utilised by male and female speakers during their TED Talk speeches. The study's findings imply a clear distinction in the usage of emotive language, which arises from the various emotive language (dissatisfaction, pleasure, gratitude, hope) through which speakers convey their emotions. These differences in emotional experiences and expressions between

males and females are evident and open to observation. For years, political figures have employed language as a powerful tool to evoke emotions. In today's political landscape, each spoken or written word carries significant weight, capable of swaying the opinions of millions of people. According to Marcus et al. (2000), political figures who adeptly wield language are often able to tap into deep-seated emotions among voters, bolstering support for their campaigns or policy initiatives. The female speaker in this study, demonstrated higher expressiveness through emotive language in her TED Talk compared to the male speaker. Nurul Izzah's speech reflects her optimism for instigating change, articulate disappointments faced due to adversities, and express gratitude towards supporters and opportunities encountered in her political journey. This supports Hooks' scholarly work (2017), as cited by Craciun and Moore (2019), which suggests the prevailing belief that women generally exhibit greater emotional expressiveness than men. In addition, women frequently face stereotypes that portray them as more inclined towards emotions than their male counterparts.

In contrast to Coates's (2016) claim regarding the inclusion of harsh language in men's speech, this study found that the male speaker, despite being a prominent political figure, did not employ any harsh words in his speech except for expressing some negative emotions. This absence of harsh language could be attributed to the speaker's cautiousness in word selection, given his influential position, and the public scrutiny he faces. This study also affirms that while there are differences in the frequency of using emotive language between both genders, these variances are not particularly substantial. Both speakers, sharing a parallel political background and societal influence, chose to employ a similarly polite language while delivering their speeches on social media, despite the gender distinctions emphasised in literature (Bustan & Alakrash, 2020; Fung et al., 2023).

Our key findings revealed that although some differences exist between the speakers in the use of emotive language, both regardless of their gender, used emotive language in their speeches to connect with audience, and drive societal transformation. The emotive words, tone, and personal anecdotes employed by these political figures aim to leave a lasting impact, fostering a sense of unity, inspiring societal changes, and cultivating a shared purpose among the audience. By examining the use of emotive language in TED Talks by male and female political figures in Malaysia, one can gain insights into the emotional depth of their messages, the resonance of their experiences, and the effectiveness of their appeals in mobilising individuals towards collective action and reform.

## **Conclusion**

The current research aimed to investigate the use of emotive language in two TED talks delivered by male and female political leaders. However, it is important to acknowledge a limitation in this study. The analysis is confined to just two TED talks, meaning that the findings solely represent the expressions of these speak-

ers. To address this limitation, future researchers could employ a more extensive purposive sampling method, incorporating multiple speakers addressing diverse topics to capture a broader spectrum of emotive language. Additionally, the study recommends exploring how speakers employ emotive language across various cultural regions and on different social media platforms. To further understand the gender differences in the use of emotive language in TED Talks by Malaysian political figures, future research should consider conducting qualitative interviews or surveys with both male and female politicians to gain insights into their motivation for using emotive language, as well as the reactions of the audience to such language. Such an exploration has the potential to unveil new insights and findings in this field.

## Author contributions

Ideas, conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, and original draft preparation, Najiha binti Mohd Taib; supervision, writing—review and editing, Puspala C Suppiah. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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