Linguistic Markers of a Cyberbullying Communicative Situation

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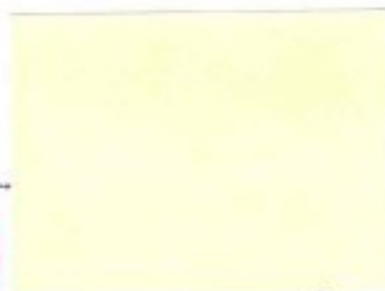
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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá lingvistickou analýzou komentářů obsahujících kyberšikanu proti ženám na sociální síti Instagram. Práce se skládá ze dvou částí, teoretické a analytické.

Teoretická část popisuje kyberšikanu a její typy. Dále se zabývá genderem v lingvistických studiích, sociologii a ideologii. Zaměřuje se také na metodologii analýzy. Praktická část spočívá v analýze komentářů obsahujících kyberšikanu, napsaných na instagramových účtech amerických žen, z jazykového hlediska.

Klíčová slova: lingvistika, kyberšikana, gender, Instagram, pragmatika

ABSTRACT

This Bachelor's thesis deals with the linguistic analysis of cyberbullying comments against women on the social network Instagram. The thesis consists of two parts, theoretical and analytical.

The theoretical part describes cyberbullying and its types. Then it also deals with gender in linguistic studies, sociology and ideology. It also focuses on the methodology of the analysis. The analytical part consists of analysing cyberbullying comments written on Instagram accounts of American women from a linguistic point of view.

Keywords: linguistics, cyberbullying, gender, Instagram, pragmatics

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

More and more people are using information and communication technologies, but the usage is not only positive. Unfortunately, more and more people are abusing communication technologies and thus harm others through cyberbullying, a new phenomenon associated with these technologies. Cyberbullying can happen through various social networks like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram or even YouTube.

Cyberbullying has been widely studied in psychology, for example, in the Czech Republic, there are studies by Černá (2013), Vašutová (2010) and Kopecký (2016), and abroad, by Hinduja and Patchin (2009), Willard (2007), Price and Dalgleish (2010) or Betts (2016). The main question these studies addressed was how much women are affected by cyberbullying comments. In 2019, Kshetri and Voas found in their research that in the U.S., 15% of girls had become targets of at least four forms of cyberbullying (and 6% of boys). Černá (2013) focused on one region of the Czech Republic, which also confirmed that there are more girls among cyberbullying victims in the country than boys. The scholar explains it by the fact that girls are subtler than boys.

Additionally, girls of any age can become victims of cyberbullying, as Nixon's (2014) research shows. Though much research addresses social factors of cyberbullying, linguistic features are studied less. Yet, I believe it is very important to track aggressive language to prevent online harassment with the help of AI.

The thesis aims to analyse the language of cyberbullying used in comments on social media from linguistic and pragmatic points of view. The comments analysed contain aggressive reactions of the users and subscribers directed against women.

Social media these days is used by around four billion people, making it an excellent place for communication and connection worldwide. One billion people use Instagram, and 72% of Instagram users are teens (Lorenz 2018). Focusing on the same age group as I am, I chose Instagram as the primary source of cyberbullying comments.

The Bachelor's thesis is divided into two parts: theoretical and analytical section. The first part of this work focuses on the concept of cyberbullying, its forms and types. I describe two social actors within the cyberbullying situation –an aggressor and a victim – highlighting the impacts for both on a social level. The second chapter compares sociology and ideology of gender, explaining the difference between sex and gender and the concept of masculinity and femininity, ending with an explanation of stereotypes.

The second part of this thesis analyses 124 cyberbullying comments addressed to women. The comments were collected from July 2019 until December 2020. The study is based on the annotation scheme of Van Hee et al. (2015). The comments have been divided into groups of threats, insults, profanity, exclusion, engagement and labelling. Insults are described in more detail in the subchapters on racism, sexism, ageism, and body-shaming.

The thesis concludes with a summary of findings and a brief discussion.

I. THEORY

1 CYBERBULLYING

Young people who are online all the time are often referred to as a generation "always-on" (Černá 2013, 21). A new trend, such as cyberbullying, emerged due to easy access to publicly available photos shared online through various social media platforms. A digital footprint that the users leave makes cyberbullying a recurrent and easily traceable phenomenon.

1.1 Definition

Cyberbullying is a type of bullying. Though there is no universal definition of "bullying", it is typically connected with aggressive behaviour. According to Dan Olweus (1994, 1171–90), three main criteria are practically applied for determining bullying cases: deliberate, aggressive behaviour seen by the victim as uncomfortable and hurtful, repeated nature of such behaviour and power imbalance a victim and an aggressor.

Cyberbullying is connected with traditional bullying; therefore, it shares its essential features and manifestations. "Cyberbullying is a collective designation of forms of bullying through electronic media such as the internet and mobile phones, which are used to aggressively and intentionally harm users of these media. Like traditional bullying, cyberbullying includes repeated behaviour and a disproportionate force between the aggressor and the victim" (Price and Dalgleish 2010, 51–59). Unlike offline bullying, the mean content is forwarded, or the humiliating video can be played again, making cyberbullying more complicated than traditional bullying (Černá 2013, 20–22). The repetition also lies in every new comment, appearing under a picture of the victim or "Likes" under an offensive message or comment on social media.

1.2 Types of cyberbullying

Like traditional bullying or other forms of aggression, cyberbullying can be divided into overt and covert (Černá 2013, 23). Overt cyberbullying refers to physical harm: e.g., personally taking pictures (even intimate ones) or videos and uploading them on the internet. Additionally, the open verbal form of bullying is an overt type: e.g., offensive, threatening e-mails or SMS and nonverbal form like sending threatening or obscene pictures. The covert type of cyberbullying contains a social form, e.g., exclusion from the online group and verbal form, releasing private conversation or information and cheating by impersonation. Impersonation in the covert type lies in a report of a victim's account by the bully, causing blocking of victims account (Černá 2013, 23).

The most common kinds of cyberbullying include the following: impersonation and password theft, exclusion, flaming, cyberstalking, harassment, slander, revelation and cheating or happy slapping (Vašutová 2010, 84–88) that will be discussed below.

1.2.1 Impersonation

Impersonation is the aggressor playing the role of the victim. The aggressor uses pictures or facts about the victim and makes a fake account. They are using this fake identity of the victim, usually in an inappropriate and hurting way. Sometimes the attacker goes further and steals the password of their victim's account on Facebook or other social media. These days it is easy for them to do because children usually entrust their passwords to their friends. The danger is that the aggressor can write to the victim's friends and destroy their relationships (Černá 2013, 25).

1.2.2 Exclusion

Exclusion is the cyberbullying that makes the victim excluded from a social group to which they want to belong to. Willard (2007, 10) claims that exclusion is considered one of the most significant punishments since prehistoric societies. Although neither violence nor aggression is involved, exclusion causes frustration since young people need to belong somewhere and be part of a group. The victims are typically excluded from a Facebook group or from an online game, which usually functions as big communities (Černá 2013, 25–26).

1.2.3 Flaming

Vašutová (2010, 85) describes flaming as a type of cyberbullying that indicates a sharp quarrel, which is happening between two or more users of a virtual communication environment, e.g., discussion forum, chat and the like. In flaming, there is a lot of swearing, assault rhetoric, insults or even threats. If this argument takes a long time, it is called a "flame war". The hassle is hard to recognize because many people on the internet are intentionally making a scene. That is why it is crucial to know the intention of the aggressor and who the object is.

1.2.4 Cyberstalking

Cyberstalking is another term that is used as a synonym for cyber harassment. However, it includes a broader range of offences: threats, aggressive and intimidating notes or even blackmailing. In indirect cyberstalking, the aggressor communicates with people who know the victim to denigrate the victim or expose them to an unsafe situation. As part of the

aggressor's threats can be a physical attack. The difference between cyber harassment and cyberstalking could be that the victims worry about their physical security (Willard 2007, 10–11).

1.2.5 Harassment

Cyber harassment indicates repeated messaging by the aggressor. The victim perceives the messages as uncomfortable. Typically, the aggressor is sending many messages whenever the victim is online. If the aggressor has a victim's telephone number, they are sending unwanted SMS or MMS. In contrast to flaming, this is a one-way communication, as the victim will try to end the contact. Sometimes cyber harassment starts from an innocent conversation with someone the victim doesn't know from the offline world. Many teenagers establish a relationship on the internet with unknown people, potentially representing a risk for them (EIGE 2017).

1.2.6 Sexting

Betts (2016, 20) includes sexting as a type of cyberbullying, saying it is the "distribution of sexually suggestive images" through messages on social media or texts. The sexts (naked images) are often sent after a break up as a mechanism of cyberbullying. These sexts can be classified as child pornography if the victim is under 18 (Betts 2016, 123). Sexting can become cyberbullying after the images of a person are publicly available, for example, to other schoolmates to mock the victim.

1.2.7 Denigration

Denigration is sharing untruthful information about others intending to harm or socially exclude the victim. Gossips are hard to avoid, especially in the online world where they spread extremely fast and live their own life. Information is posted or sent as digitally altered photos of someone to show them in a sexualized or harmful way (Kowalski 2012, 63–64).

1.2.8 Outing and trickery

Outing refers to the aggressor revealing information about their victim to people to whom this information was not meant to be sent. The data is often related to personal or intimate life and includes photos, such as, for example, pictures of homosexuals who are not open about their orientation. However, it is not unusual that the victims themselves share confidential conversations or private photos and videos with the aggressor. Trickery is part

of outing and refers to tricking someone into revealing personal information and sharing it with others (Kowalski 2012, 65).

1.2.9   Trolling

Trolling or shock trolling is also a type of cyberbullying, according to Betts. Betts (2016, 20) describes trolling as "creating offensive posts online to provoke an anger, frustration or humiliation response". Tagg (2015, 87–89) distinguishes a "troll" or an online post and a "troller", a person who posts the post. Troller's intention to publish a controversial comment is to disrupt other participants. Tagg (2015, 88) also believes the trolling can be considered harmless until it is against individuals. On the other hand, when trolling includes offensive and upsetting cases, it might escalate into cyberbullying.

1.3 Aggressors in cyberbullying

One of the main participants of cyberbullying is an aggressor. An aggressor is usually more physically fit or older, likes to flaunt, is undisciplined, ruthless, not feeling guilt (Černá 2013, 64). In cyberbullying situations, the aggressor does not have to use physical dominance as in traditional bullying. On the contrary, Vašutová (2010, 90) says that the aggressor is shy in the real world, lacks close relationship or friendship, but in electronic communication environment changes into an active and aggressive person. The aggressor creates a new identity in the internet world, which is often different from the real one, even when they remain anonymous. Anonymity on the internet means that neither the aggressor nor the victim knows each other personally (Willard 2007, 80).

Aggressor's motives are different for every individual, so it is hard to make a typology. One such typology we will apply is offered by Kavalír (2009, 19–21), who differentiates four types of aggressors.

1) A "revengeful angel" is an aggressor who does not feel like an attacker. Usually, these are people who experienced cyberbullying, and now they want revenge. Or they try to protect their cyberbullied friend by the victimization of others. This type needs to be helped by explaining to them that tit for tat makes the situation worse, and they are not perpetrators of good but evil.

2) A "craving for power" aggressors need to show their power to others. They want victims to do what they say and try to control them. The aggressor needs an audience. If no one reacts, they escalate their attacks. This type is usually a victim themselves in the real world, so they cyberbully on the internet.

3) A "mean girl" is typically a female online user who is bored and looks for fun by bullying other girls. The girl wants others to notice her. Sometimes the aggressor can have her group of friends or supporters with whom they plan what to do.

4) An "unintentional cyber aggressor" is an individual who does not think that he is an aggressor. This type of people usually only respond to other's messages in rage or for fun. Those aggressors are generally surprised when called bullies.

Aggressors have similar psychosomatic problems as victims: problems associated with making new friends, bad concentration, truancy and worse grades at school. The aggressors can also have an increased rate of delinquent behaviour like using addictive substances. "It is possible that cyberbullying helps to consolidate some negative behaviours, especially if it is not effectively prevented" (Černá 2013, 92–93).

1.4 The victims of cyberbullying

Another participant of cyberbullying is a victim. The victim in real life has a decent position in society; however, the online environment becomes more vulnerable (Černá 2013). Willard (2007, 65–66) found in her research that most victims are children and adults who use the internet frequently and for a long time. Victims prefer social networks for communication with others. Also, they are more prone to visiting extremist chat groups or pornographic sites, where they are more likely to meet future aggressor. The victims also increasingly share information about themselves, self-expose themselves more often than others, and share their communication or personal information. All this information then can be abused by anyone, such as a schoolmate or a random person (Vašutová 2010, 95–97).

Typically in traditional bullying, there are two main types of victims. These types can be applied to cyberbullying because sometimes victims and aggressors can know each other from the real world. The first type is a passive victim (Černá 2013, 61–64): weak and vulnerable children, teenagers, influencers,… They represent an easy target. These children and teenagers are usually unpopular, have a small number of friends, or do not have friends at all. On the other hand, they are socially accepted, but they find it hard to fit in a social world, and it is more challenging for them.

The second type of victims are victims-*provocateurs* (Černá 2013, 61–62). Their behaviour usually causes aggression, and that is how they attract the aggressor's attention. The aggressor usually thinks they deserve to be bullied.

Černá (2013, 86–87) claims that the impact on victims of cyberbullying is a scale of negative physical and psychical harms, can be immediate (short-term) or persistent (long-

term). The short-term impacts include quick response to an attack when an individual receives, e.g. a threatening message. He may feel shame, anger, sadness, or fear, but after a short time, the feeling fades away, and the victim either starts to deal with the cyberbullying situation or ignores it (Černá 2013, 86).

If cyberbullying has ended and the individual can no longer cope with it, these are long-term impacts. As a result of attacks that may have come from friends, the individual breaks personal contacts and closes into himself – often cyberbullying consequences in very low to almost no self-esteem (Černá 2013, 90–91).

Persistent impacts drive impacts of physical, emotional or behavioural changes. In this case, physical consequences can be understood as the emergence of psychosomatic problems, when psychological issues manifest themselves outwardly as physical illnesses. These psychosomatic problems include headache, abdominal pain, and insomnia. The most common emotional effects are fear and anxiety as the initial feelings of the victim. These feelings may later develop into depression. As a result of fear for safety, the individual may become paranoid (Sourander et al. 2010, 721).

1.5 The social impact

The influence of cyberbullying can affect onlookers and a broader social environment. Signs and symptoms of cyberbullying may include the following: a teenager stops using electronic devices or appears anxious when using them, has difficulty sleeping, exhibits moodiness or irritability, talks about harming themselves or others, or withdraws from usual activities (Goebert 2010, 1285).

Common feelings which cyberbullied teens and adults often experience are being overwhelmed with emotions: they feel that the situation is more than they can handle. They feel vulnerable and powerless; it is difficult to feel safe because their home was invaded through a computer or mobile phone, and they have no place to escape. The number of people that know about cyberbullying in cyberspace can lead to intense feelings of humiliation and exposure. Victims of cyberbullying doubt their worth and value. They respond to these feelings may be harming themselves in some way. For instance, if a girl is called fat, she may begin a crash diet believing that if she alters how she looks, the bullying will stop. Other times victims might try to change something about their appearance or attitude to avoid more cyberbullying (Nixon 2014, 144).

Additionally, victims lose interest in things they used to enjoy or do and spend less time with family. Loneliness leads to isolation or exclusion as a part of cyberbullying, which can

lead to more bullying. Although it is recommended to turn off a computer or mobile phone, it is tough for modern teenagers to consider those devices to be the most essential things in their lives and communication. For them, turning these devices off seems to lead to exclusion from society. Victims that aggressors constantly torture through text messages, instant messaging, social media, and others often begin to feel desperate. As a result, they sometimes think that the only way to escape the pain is through suicide (Nixon 2014, 145–46).

Hinduja and Patchin (2010) examined the association between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviour among American middle school students. Their survey examination showed that "cyberbullying victims were 1.9 times more likely, and cyberbullying offenders were 1.5 times more likely to have attempted suicide than those who were not cyberbullying victims or offenders" (Hinduja and Patchin 2010, 206–21). Litwiller and Braush (2013, 682) researched American high school students and found a partial relationship between increased substance use and physical violence and suicidal behaviour to cyberbullying. Litwiller and Brausch "conceptualized substance use and violent behaviour as coping processes that adolescents might use to address the physical and psychological pain associated with their experiences related to cyberbullying" (Litwiller and Braush 2013, 683).

Černá (2013, 94–99) describes impacts on onlookers. The onlookers can feel like the victims if they experienced cyberbullying or became part of it. They have compassion for the victims but are afraid that cyberbullying could be turned against them. The onlookers can also join the aggressor's side. Parents and the school are participating too, but their reaction to cyberbullying is usually about electronic devices' limitations. Unfortunately, these restrictions lead again to the exclusion from social life.

1.6 Gender and cyberbullying

The research results in cyberbullying by Kshetri and Voas (2019, 66) show more girls among aggressors and victims than boys. For example, in the United States, 39% of girls were reported to be victims of false rumours online than 26% of boys. Girls (29%) said that they received unwanted explicit images (compared to 20% of boys), and 15% of teen girls had become targets of four or more different forms of cyberbullying compared with 6% of boys. In India, about 90% of cyberstalking victims are women. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, women and LGBT groups are frequently targeted by cyberbullies (Kshetri and Voas 2019, 65).

Černá (2013, 69) found out in her research in the South Moravian region that 90% of cyberbullying victims were girls. She adds, it is because girls are more sensitive than boys.

Girls were also more harassed. A study by EU Kids Online observed children on the internet in the European Union. The most recent research is from the year 2020, mapping 25 101 children aged 9-16 from 19 European countries. One of the conclusions was a finding that in relatively wealthy countries with better access to the internet, gender inequalities disappear. In countries with worse access to the internet, girls are disadvantaged. Girls reported at least some harm from online bullying in all countries (except Lithuania, with a slight percentage difference among boys and girls) (Smahel et al. 2020, 57–58).

Nixon (2014, 147–48) writes about the documentation of cyberbullying among females in groups of younger and older adolescents in the United States. For example, among 10- and 11-year-olds, girls were more likely to be cyberbullying victims than boys. Similar sex-based effects are among adolescent females in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, and the same pattern was found among high school students. Also, the research shows that females are more likely to be online for social networking, while males are more likely to be online to play games. This finding indicates that females' online social networking behaviour may provide them with more cyberbullied opportunities than males.

To be fairly said, Kopecký (2016, 60–64), in his summarization, did not find differences in the U.S. in genders as in Great Britain.

2 GENDER IN SOCIAL STUDIES AND LINGUISTICS

Gender is a term used to label an individual's identity and social role regarding masculinity and femininity. Wong (2017, 250) describes gender as a decisive individual key factor influencing human behaviour. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 1–3), we think about gender as a social construct, which is a result of nurture. On the other hand, sex is a biological categorization based on reproductive organs resulting from nature. However, the distinction between gender and sex is not so clear. Male or female sex is not an obvious criterion for gender definition. The criteria for sex assignments are traditionally based on cultural beliefs such as people's understanding of themselves.

2.1 Sociology of gender

Sociology of gender examines the social role as a perception of differences between masculinity and femininity (what society expect to be typical behaviour for a man or a woman). It deals with identity, social interaction, power and oppression, interaction with race, class, culture, religion, or sexuality (Crossman, 2021).

2.1.1 Sex vs gender

Sociological studies differentiate between sex and gender. Male and female sexes are different in an anatomical and physiological way and tend to relate to biological differences, such as the levels and types of hormones and reproductive organs (Lips 2017, 179–82).

Gender differences are generally socially assigned and constructed: people often develop their gender roles in response to their environment, including family interactions, the media, peers, and education. Gender is not a fixed fact; but instead, it varies across time and place. Gender is based on one's identity, behaviour, self-presentation and is learned to satisfy society's expectations (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 5). Eckert with McConnell-Ginet use our voices as an example. Traditionally, men's vocals are longer and lower; however, women's voice pitch is higher. But children way earlier before puberty, around the age of four, learn to differentiate their voices. Boys, even unconsciously, lower their voice pitch, and girls raise them (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 5).

The World Health Organization defines gender as follows: "Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics of women and men, such as norms, roles, and relationships of and between groups of women and men. It varies from society to society and can be changed."[1]

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[1] See https://www.who.int/health-topics/gender#tab=tab_1.

Many cultures, including non-Western ones, also have a history of welcoming third-gender, non-gendered, and transgender people in society. The third gender refers to cultures that accept non-binary gender positions—one example in *nadles*, people from the Navajo community. *Nadle* is anatomically men but considered classed between male and female (Segal 2004, 3–9).

Other terms used to define non-binary genders are genderqueer, transgender, gender fluid and others. Genderqueer can also be considered as a third gender, non-gendered or non-binary. Gender non-confirming people may identify as a gender beyond a man or a woman, rejecting all gender categories, having two genders, or no gender (Risman 2018, 9).

Non-binary identities can also be found under the transgender category because many non-binary people identify themselves with a gender that is different from the sex they were born. For transgender people, biological sex does not align with their gender identity (Risman 2018, 120). Transgender is a term for people whose gender identity is the opposite of their biological sex and genderqueer. Transsexuals may sometimes undergo a sex change, with hormone therapy, changing their clothes, and names (Barkan 2011, 382–83).

2.1.2 Masculinity vs femininity

Like all social identities, gender identities involve at least two characteristics referenced against one another: "masculine" versus "feminine". Thus, women should be feminine and men masculine. As such, gender is constructed when the "masculine" is treated from the human inherited point of view by social norms, the law and other social institutions (Barkan 2011, 47–48).

Gender identities often rely on the notion of biological difference. "Natural" masculinity, for example, can be fatherhood, acting "tough," a desire for sports and competition, and hiding emotions (Connell 2005). Traditionally, Western societies support hegemonic masculinity, a practised men's dominant position in society and justify the standard male population and women's subordination. Hegemonic masculinity explains why and how men nurture dominant social roles and other gender identities over women, which are perceived as "feminine" in a given society.

In Western societies, gender power is held by white people, highly educated, from middle-class, non-disabled, heterosexual men (Connell 2005, 77–79). The hegemonic ideal of masculinity is illustrated in sports, where physical appearance is given particular cultural interest and authority and in movies that show white heterosexual heroes.

"Natural" femininity in a white, European, middle-class context contain motherhood, being nurturing, a desire for pretty clothes and the exhibition of emotions (Laurie et al. 2014, 3). Femininity is constructed through patriarchal ideas, meaning that femininity is permanently established as inferior to men. As a result, women as a group lack the same cultural power level as men. They, therefore, do not have the cultural ability for hegemonic femininity to rival hegemonic masculinity. There are, however, dominant ideals of femininity, which favour white, heterosexual, middle-class women who are sturdy. A minority group of women do not enjoy the same social privileges in comparison (Barkan 2011, 380–81). Similarly to hegemonic masculinity, "emphasized femininity" is defined based on compliance with female subordination and is oriented to accommodating men's interests and desires (Risman 2018, 365).

2.2 Gender ideology

In basic terms, an ideology is a system of beliefs and values that forms the basis for political, economic, social, or otherwise kind (Gerring 1997, 957). Gender ideology suggests that differences between men and women result from social and cultural construction and disown that the differences between men and women have natural and biological foundations. It claims that society and culture impose their respective roles on men and women, which corresponds to innate differences. Therefore because sex itself is biological, but gender identity is what a person decides to adopt, there may be several different "genders" (Davis and Greenstein 2009, 87–89).

Gender ideology, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 35) explain, is "the set of beliefs that govern people's participation in the gender order, and by which they explain and justify that participation". The scholars continue that gender ideologies differ on male and female, the justice, the origins, and the need for different aspects of the gender order. Ideologies also differ in whether the gender gap should be left as a cornerstone or whether it should be maintained without inequality. Some accept difference as the necessary result of imbalance, and some see the difference as given to support hierarchies simply because it is embedded in the convention.

In next Eckert's and McConnell-Ginet's work (2013, 35), she describes differences between men and women as the following set of oppositions: "men are strong, women are weak; men are brave, women are timid; men are aggressive, women are passive; men are sex-driven, women are relationship-driven; men are impassive, women are emotional; men are rational, women are irrational; men are direct, women are indirect; men are competitive,

women are cooperative; men are practical, women are nurturing; men are rough, women are gentle". The dominant ideology insists that male and female are not simply different. This view is referred to as essentialism.

Risman (2018, 218–19) points out two dimensions of gender ideology related to different inequality forms: gender essentialism and male primacy. Gender essentialism presents men and women as distinct but not necessarily unequal. In comparison, male primacy represents men as hierarchically superior through male privilege. Furthermore, male primacy ideologies support "vertical" forms of segregation, such as women's underrepresentation in high-prestige professions and elite universities. In contrast, gender essentialism helps "horizontal" inequalities, such as segregation between service work and manual labour. Risman (2018, 218) then uses the following example from the World Values Survey: "On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do" (gender essentialism), and "A university education is more important for a boy than a girl" (male primacy).

Dominant gender ideologies present some characteristic, such as empathy, beauty, and selflessness, which are understood to be essentially feminine. On the other hand, characteristics such as leadership, assertiveness, and strength are essentially masculine. Other ones as clothing, careers, and hobbies, are also associated with one gender. Many women and men perform these normative gender identities in their everyday interactions. There may be penalties or rewards for gender-nonconforming or conforming displays. Anyway, they help to reproduce and legitimate the gender structure (Risman 2018, 219).

2.3 Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotyping is a common cultural belief established in the culture about the nature of men and women. Stereotype involves overgeneralizing the attitudes, traits, or behaviour patterns of women or men, primarily representing the white, middle class (Risman 2018, 160). For example, women may be seen as too shy or weak to ride a car. Men are generally assumed to be better at technical, physical task, or leadership, while women should take care of children and thought to deal with feelings (Risman 2018, 162).

Gender stereotypes, according to Little (2017, 504), form the basis of sexism. Sexism refers to biases that appraise one sex over another. Even though in modern countries like Canada, discrimination is illegal, it does not mean it is not continuing in social life. Of course, in undeveloped countries of the world, women are thickly undervalued. Risman (2018, 134) adds that power is attributed to men. Again, women are associated with being

submissive, nurturing, performing the roles of mainly wives and mothers. Women are the home, and men are the public (labour). Many of these stereotypes are disappearing, but still, some are embedded in the culture. For example, TV commercials and advertising, where women exclusively promote cooking, cleaning, or taking care of a child, are still common in some countries (Little 2017, 506).

Another example is found in Verdonk (2002, 75–76) with regard to discriminatory stereotypes in the British tabloid newspaper *The Sun*. The author implies that the British tabloid depicts women in an unflattering light using phrases as "crimper Helen", "the bubbly blonde", "bitchy Narinder", or "bikini-clad babes" (Verdonk 2002, 75). All these qualifications can be only assigned to women, not to men. The stereotyping expressions are a property of the language as discourse, displaying how the language is used in British society.

The dichotomy of being male or female is set up even before birth. As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2013, 15–16) describe, firstly, parents want to know their baby's sex. Then the whole process of learning how to be a boy or a girl starts. Another example from the beginning of the baby's life is a pink cap for a girl or a blue cap for a boy provided at birth. Usually, pink or flowers are seen as "feminine". Meanwhile, vehicles and blue are "masculine". However, colours like yellow, green or white are considered non-gendered.

Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) measures masculinity and femininity as two independent dimensions to characterize a person as masculine, feminine or non-sexual (Bem 1974, 155). It provided 20 feminine and 20 masculine characteristics. Feminine characteristics, e.g., such as speaking no harsh language, being gentle, have a love for children, being loyal, or being tolerant and forgiving. Overleaf male characteristics are a good leader, being ambitious, having an athletic body, dominant position, and strong personality…One of the latest researches (Ahmed et al. 2016, 348–60) constructed a 12-item short-form BSRI of 1,995 adults aged 65 to 74. The short form of 12-item BSRI consists of 6 traditionally related masculine behaviours and six traits stereotyped as feminine behaviours. The review showed a three-factor structure of the 12 items, which accounted for 56.8% of the scores' variance. Factor 1: femininity (expressiveness) accounted for 25.94%. Factor 2, representing masculinity (instrumentality), accounted for 20.60%. And factor 3: mixed rated for 10.26% of the variance. Results also revealed differences between men and women, when femininity (expressiveness) was higher in all samples in both men (5.62) and women (5.88) against masculinity in men (4.77) compared to women (4.49).

2.4 Language and gender

Gender linguistics deals with studying the relationship between genders and language in a wide range from sociolinguistics, discursive, ethnomethodological, ethnographic, psychological or feminists approach (Attenborough 2014, 137–38). One of the main focuses is on gender hierarchies (e.g., weak women and strong men) and stereotypes described in the chapter above.

Attenborough (2014, 140) highlights that "men and women talk and interact differently" as there is a difference between their sexes and genders. He also adds that how people treat sex and gender is derived and maintained biologically and socially from birth and interaction.

The view from the traditional stereotypes look at differences in speech between males and females, women usually do most of the talking, and the topic is about nothing. Men do minimal talking. On the other hand, in mixed group conversations, they develop more "successful" topics. Contrary women that also try to bring successful topics are ignored and silence by both sexes, men and women. Men show dominance in conversation with women by interruption and are expected to be more vulgar. Women then are expected to deliver more emotions, e.g. sadness but no angriness. In their case, anger is seen as unnecessary or, in some cases, funny and cute (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003, 162–63).

Saengprang and Gadavanij (2021) decided to employ speech acts to identify the language and intentions of cyberbullying comments to talk about cyberbullying language. Speech acts measure the purpose of the comments used in cyberbullying situations on the internet. The acts can have different types as declarative to express the aggressor's beliefs through reporting, asserting or concluding the victim. Then interrogative using questions and imperative to command and make requests, force the victim to make promises, guarantees or vows. In other speech act, the author uses congratulations, excuses, complaints or likes and dislikes to express their feelings about the receiver.

Further division of speech act can be into direct and indirect speech. In direct speech, the meaning, the structure, and the function of a sentence are related. To indirect speech usually belongs to a rhetorical sentence not expecting an answer or emoticons and likes and dislikes (Saengprang and Gadavanij 2021, 348–49).

In addition, the aggressor's language is changing, flexible, vulgar, using slang and literary forms. They use slang to represent their connection to culture linked to crime, race or poverty (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003, 706).

Women's appearance is often speak about in contexts in an insulting way, but men's is not. References to females' bodies are about size and attractiveness, which can be hardly seen for males' bodies. Women are more often called *fat* and *ugly*, while this label is not associated with men on such a scale (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 210).

More specifically, insults between boys or men are interactive in a playful way expected the boys to respond quickly and cleverly, referring to sports events. However, girls exchange insults with each other also in a playful way, but sometimes they take it too seriously. The next type of insults is sexual insults, which are transgressive and often insult women (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2013, 133–34). For example, the word *bitch* in online communication has no equivalent for men. On the other hand, this word is becoming non-gendered and can apply to both sexes, but women use them far more. Women also use the nicknaming with words of similar meaning, like a *hoe, slut* or *dork*, to call each other insulting and also in a joking way (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003, 84).

3 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Cyberbullying on Instagram

Instagram is a media-based mobile social network created for sharing a photo or video. The media can be edited with filters, marked with hashtags, commented on and liked (Instagram 2021). Due to comments under images, is cyberbullying easily accessible. Of course, cyberbullying can happen in different ways. Not only commenting on pictures but also posting a humiliating photo of someone, using offensive captions or hashtags (Hosseinmardi et al. 2015, 1).

As was said, Instagram is considered a "teen" app (Lorenz 2018). A 2020 survey from United Kingdom (Hackett 2020, 6) found that cyberbullying of a teen has increased by 25% compared to 2019. In 2017 cyberbullying on Instagram accounted for 42% of all social networks (Hackett 2017, 26). In the U.S. is 59% of the teen were bullied or harassed online (Anderson 2018, 1).

Instagram company has done several steps against abusive and negative comments. The actions started in 2016 by turning off comments, removing followers, or banning concrete offensive words (Vincent 2016). The following year, the company released a function when on person's account could comment only on their followers. More importantly, later that year, Instagram uploaded a new system called DeepText, using an algorithm to automatically filter offensive and harassing comments as spams (Etherington 2017). Lastly, Instagram in 2019 added a new feature of secret blocking of bullies from commenting on a person's post without the bully knowing. Plus, another feature is a service that asks 'if the person is sure about posting it' (Bryant 2019). In the thesis, I would like to look at how the policy affected cyberbullying comments and what types of comments are still found online.

3.2 Material

The analysis was performed on 124 randomly chosen comments posted on the Instagram accounts of 22 American girls/women from July 2019 until December 2020. The length of the corpus is 14 741 words.

As an adult woman in her 20s, I have chosen the accounts of females of similar age and sex group. Thus, the Instagram accounts from which the comments were collected belong to women in their 20s and 30s. I have chosen accounts with a range-wide of followers, from Kim Kardashian with 215M followers or Miley Cyrus with 128M followers to a girl with

only 1,000 followers. Of course, the number of followers influences the number of bullying comments, often related to fame.

The Instagram accounts were limited only to American users for the sake of uniformity of data. Additionally, five women's posts appeared under #cyberbullying, showing what cyberbullying comments they meet on Instagram. The women that were bullied come from different backgrounds, such as beauty business (Kim Kardashian, Caitlyn Jenner), performing art (Miley Cyrus, Kelly Marie Tran, Jennifer Garner, yvonnemkmusic, galaxy.arts31 and Suma Jane), modelling (Winnie Harlow and Hailey Bieber), social media influencer (Eva Gutowski, Suzi Cruz, Nicole Tuck, Nicole Montana, Emma Chamberlain and Christian Mulkey), fitness (Alice). There are also two ordinary women nicknamed flowersforfelicia and ohjackie. Additionally, three accounts belonged to anonymous users: a girl with her friend, a new girl on Instagram and a little girl around 13 years old. I found these three girls in an exhibition of cyberbullying comments against young girls in America on account STOMP Out Bullying. Of the women, three of Black origin, nine are of White Caucasian origin, four are of mixed-race origin, and one is of South-East Asian origin. Depending on their body type, one user has an athletic body, eleven have a thin body, four have a thick body, and the rest cannot be defined because there are no pictures of their look.

3.3 Steps of analysing corpora

Firstly, I selected the comments according to the criteria from the definition of cyberbullying, looking for exclusion, harassment, or trolling indicators. The analysis was done in two steps, the search of emotiveness in the comments using software SentiWordNet and annotation of linguistic features, in line with the procedure outlined in Van Hee et al. (2015).

Firstly the application SentiWordNet[2] was used for the analysis of emotiveness. The dictionary assigns three numerical scores to all the words in WordNet: objectivity, positivity and negativity. The range of each word is from 0 to 1, meaning the closer the score to 1 is, the more the word's polarity is (Esuli and Sebastiani 2006). For the purpose of the thesis, only content with negative connotation was taken into account to show the negativity in cyberbullying comments.

Then, following the approach of Van Hee et al. (2015), I organized the comments into categories of threat, insult, profanity (curse words), encouragement, exclusion and labelling.

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[2] The application is available at https://github.com/aesuli/sentiwordnet.

The researchers made a guideline for annotation of cyberbullying data, describing textual categories often being an essential part of cyberbullying. The types are based on forms of cyberbullying social studies such as threats, insults, encouragements, etc. Van He et al. (2015, 5) added subcategories (e.g., racism and sexism) to make the annotation scheme more detailed.

Additionally, I looked at non-verbal features of comments, namely emojis accompanying aggressive and insulting comments. The emojis were used in 17 comments of 124, meaning they were added to every 7th comment.

ANALYSIS

4 EMOTIVENESS

The aim of analysing the emotive vocabulary was to define the polarity of emotiveness, mainly the degrees of negativity. The total number of words in the corpus is 751 words. Using SentiWordNet dictionary, 227 words were labelled as emotive, from which 153 carry a negative connotation. That means every third word is negative.

Table 1. Sentiment scores of cyberbullying comments on Instagram

	Negative	**Positive**	**Total**
Nouns	59	40	99
Adjectives	59	15	74
Verbs	26	14	40
Adverbs	9	5	14

As shown in Table 1, the biggest carrier of negativity is both nouns and adjective. Of course, in general, the most significant part of the sentiment is carried by nouns, with a total number of 99 nouns out of 227 words. The most used words were abbreviations of *shit, fuck* or *ass.* Even so, the phrase *trash ass* was connotated as the most negative from all the nouns. On the other hand, surprisingly, drug-related words were denoted with a low score of negativity. Moreover, the terms *cocaine* and *slaves* were evaluated as neither negative nor positive.

Fifty-nine adjectives with negative connotations were used in cyberbullying messages. The most used adjectives with negative meanings were *skinny, poor, ugly, fucking, disgusting,* and *fat*. The highest negativity is carried by the words *worst* and *rubbish*, or *heartless*. On the contrary, the adjective *egoistic* was assessed as positive.

The third most significant group of emotive parts of speech were verbs. Out of 40 verbs, 26 verbs were negatively marked. Many of the verbs were phrasal verbs like *come back*, *mess with, go away*, and *cover up*, which the most negative was *cheat on*. Other verbs were *to use, to toss, to break* or *to lose*. The most used one was *to hate*.

The most negative adverb is *never*. Others are *away*, *back, at all* or *too.* Although SentiWordNet itself explains *anymore* as usually used with negative meaning, the software evaluated it as objective along with positive adverbs *mentally* and *physically*.

In the sections below, I will look at the context surrounding the words the software labelled as negative.

5   LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN INSTAGRAM COMMENTS

Following the annotation scheme for cyberbullying detection by Van Hee et al. (2015), the comments were grouped into threats, insults, profanity (curse), encouragement and exclusion. Labelling and emoji are described as separate categories.

5.1 Threat

A cyber threat can be any form of intimidating online material, physical or psychological. The author or aggressor tries to commit an act of violence towards the addressee, suicide or self-harm, also indicating blackmail (Williams 2015). The threat is sometimes vindicated as being a joke, figure of speech or a tactic in an argument (Yahnke 2019).

The corpus contains one comment containing the explicit threat. The most obvious threat is, e.g. I am going to kill you, but this kind of message rarely occurs because of Instagram's software detecting cyberbullying comments. Usually, the real message is hidden, like in comment (1).

(1) *Die you ugly prick, you disgust me*

The author's threat in (1) is explicit. In this case, the user *flowersforfelicia* shared a hate comment she received.

5.2 Insult

Van Hee et al. (2015, 6) describe insult as expressions that contain abusive, degrading or offensive language to offend the addressee. Authors of the research divide insult into the subcategories: general insult and discrimination.

In the corpus, I traced 28 messages containing insults. Insults were usually intended to treat the victim with disrespect in a scornful way. The insults addressed the social inequality issues, especially with model Winnie Harlow in (5), (8) and (10). Kelly Tran was insulted for her role, disease or fame of Kardashians or Miley Cyrus' look in the following:

(2) *She looks like a viral disease waiting to spread* 😷

In (2), a person under the nickname *biancandubisi* insulted Miley Cyrus by comparing her looks to a *disease.* They highlight it by using emoji with a mask. It is a reaction to the picture of Miley Cyrus in old, torn clothing with no make-up and visible bones (ribs).

(3) *#everybodywantstobenakedandfamous*

(4) *Just another Kardashian wannabe.*

Both insults (3) and (4) are from the user *1kymmie* (woman). In (3), the aggressor uses a hashtag, which connects the post to a concrete topic or theme. The hashtag also makes it

easier to find or discover posts under the same label: hashtag (Olafson 2020). By the hashtag, the aggressor says Suzi Cruz is only looking for fame by showing her naked body. Suzi travelled around the world in a van and posted a nude picture covering only her breasts with sunflowers.

In (4), the woman indicates that Suzi shows her body only to look like Kardashians. The need to look like Kardashian is seen as a negative association with showing almost everything and having plastic surgeries (Sicardi 2021).

(5) *Girl you need to come back to earth…*

(6) *what a spoiled kid*

(7) *Poor you…*

(8) *Oh, you poor thing, life must be so hard.*

(9) *You're a joke*

(10) *Sleeping in economy…must've been such hard work!! It's not like people have to do it everyday* ☹

(11) *You're so embarrassing.*

Users reacted to an Instagram picture of Winnie Harlow on a plane, complaining about using the economy class, which is degrading for her.

A woman used the idiom *come back to earth* (5), which means to return to reality. She indicates that Harlow should start to deal with life as "ordinary" people who travel by economy class do.

The irony is used in (6) when a man calls Winnie a *kid* saying she is immature, then *poor you* (7), *hard* (8) and *everyday* (10). The irony is a figure of speech that has the opposite meaning of the words used in the statement (Horn and Ward 2006, 621–22). The insulting part of irony can be seen in, e.g., calling someone very intelligent, but meaning the exact opposite, saying they are stupid. These users do not think it is important to complain about travelling by economy and mock the user, implying that such information is unimportant to share. One of the critics also used a sad emoji in (10).

(12) *She is the last person to be talking about faithfulness* ☺

In (12), singer Miley Cyrus is insulted for her motivational text she wrote under her picture, saying she is faithful for everything she has achieved in her life. The hidden meaning of *faithfulness* is that Miley should not be talking about being faithful, while there are rumours she cheated on her ex-husband.

(13) *Your family must be so ashamed of your behavior…*

Another hater of Miley Cyrus speaks about her behaviour. A woman thinks Cyrus' family must be ashamed of her behaviour (13) and showing so much of her body on the internet.

(14) *Useless character.*

(15) *Remember to keep your head down when you walk*

(16) *You're such a joke that you don't even know it* 😂😂😂

(17) *At least we don't have to see her anymore*

All four comments above are against Kelly Marie Tran, an Asian actress. She was harassed with sexist and racist comments for her leading role in a Star Wars movie. The role is the reason why the hater calls her a *useless character* (14). The users show their dissatisfaction with the character which Kelly played. The aggressor expressed a similar thought in (17), implying being happy that they will not watch the movie again. In (16), the user suggests that Kelly is useless and only there for people to make fun of her.

(18) *You're kissing a ear wax eater*

(19) *Worst pic ever*

The reactions to Kim Kardashian's picture with her husband Kanye West insult both of them for their looks. The *ear wax eater* term (18) comes from a rumour about Kanye West; the hater insults him and now also Kim for kissing someone who does that. The author also forgot to write the correct article.

(20) *Jennifer is boring. Imagine being married to her* 😕

(21) *Wastage* 😑😑😑😑

The comments are a reaction to Jennifer Garner, who posted a selfie. The aggressors say Garner, or rather her picture is *boring* (20) and cannot imagine marrying her. They call her a *wastage* (21), meaning she is not worth wasting time on or giving her attention.

(22) *And I hope you make no new friends at your new school.*

This insult (22) is addressed to a young girl posting a picture with her friend. The comment is also a wish: the unknown aggressor writes, *I hope* the girl will not find new friends.

(23) *LOL why would you post this*

(24) *this is sad*

Another set of insults (23) and (24) is meant to be for a new girl on Instagram. She was bullied for a few hours after creating an account. The next author is laughing at this girl's post (23) using *LOL*, which is an abbreviation for "laughing out loud".

(25) *Are you gonna cry now little baby*

(26) *Why should I stop loser*

In the case of (25) and (26), the comments are directed at a girl of about 13 years of age. Both sentences have a form of questions written without a question mark, asking if she *will cry* because the aggressors are mean to her (25). Then they ask her why they should stop bullying (26) if she cannot do anything about it. Moreover, they call her a *loser* who is at the bottom of the social ladder (Urbandictionary 2021).

(27) *You are rubbish*

In this way, people reacted (27) to a girl's post from her vacation (Emma Chamberlain). This comment seems to be the result of envy, too, so they call her *rubbish* (27). By *rubbish,* the aggressor means cheap or of no value.

(28) *heartless monster*

(29) *sick of you*

Lastly, a set of insults was meant for a you-tuber named Eva Gutowski. Though the insults appear under her picture, the visual image itself is not relevant. The verbal aggression is directed to her success in (28) and (29).

5.2.1 Discrimination

According to Myers and Twenge (2019, 239), discrimination is unwarranted behaviour toward the victim or recipient. It is a negative behaviour usually, with no intended harm. As Myers and Twenge (2019) explain, it is favouring people like oneself. Discriminative behaviour springs from prejudiced or negative attitudes. These attitudes and behaviour are often linked.

Four main types of discrimination are discussed here: racism, sexism, ageism and body shaming.

5.2.1.1 *Racism*

Racism aims at the victim's race and ethnic features such as colour, country, culture, faith and religion (Tan Hua 2019, 93–94). Myers continues (2019, 239) describing racism as a person's prejudicial attitude and discriminatory behaviour toward a race to subdue people of a given race.

In the corpus, racist comments account for 2.4% of all comments. Two comments were directed against the Asian race and one against the Black race. The comment against the user of Asian origin are:

(30) *Ching Chong*

(31) *Why are the ugliest Asian chicks slaves to white guys*

Both comments (30) and (31) were under the post of Kelly Marie Tran, an American actress born in the U.S. whose parents emigrated from Vietnam. She played in the Star Wars sequel trilogy, which caused some racist and sexist comments (Sun 2021).

Comment (30) *Ching Chong* is a racist pejorative to mock mainly the Chinese (people and language) or people of East or Southeast Asian origin (Urbandictionary 2021). As it is said, this label is principally reserved for people perceived as Chinese, which shows the hater did not even look up the origin of Kelly.

In (31), the person implies that Kelly, as an Asian, plays in the movie with most white actors. Also, the movie is produced by Hollywood, considered to be "still white", meaning that films are not diverse enough. In 2019, only 37 movies out of 100 were played by a non-white person in a starring or co-starring role (Alcorn 2020). The phrase *the ugliest Asian chicks* is an insult, offending the actress for not being beautiful enough to play in a movie. Word *chick* is a slang word for a young, attractive woman or girl, in this case, used in a derogatory way. *White guys* then refer to the stereotype of submissiveness of women of colour as sexual slaves by white men (Holder, 1897).

(32) *I understand black lives are more important than white feelings*

A white woman uses this sentence (32) during online fighting with a Black girl called *ohjackie*. The black girl wrote about the #BLM movement in an Instagram post to educate others. The white woman claims that black lives are more important in a sarcastic way, stereotyping that the white race is superior.

5.2.1.2 Sexism

Sexism involves insults of sexuality and often targets females. The harasser might talk about the victim's sex organs or express relations to them by using slang. However, slang itself is not evidence of sexual harassment (Tan Hua 2019, 94). Sexism also contains references to prostitution, body parts or an offer or denial of sex.

There were seven sexist jokes in the corpus. The haters use words like *tats* indicating nipples, *slut* or *slut bag*, which is another name for a prostitute or offer sex, for example in (34) and (38).

(33) *Your tats look like shiiiiit*

In this case (33), the aggressor talks about Miley's breasts implying that they do not like her breasts. *Tats* is a slang synonym for tits, another word for women's breasts (Urbandictionary, 2021).

(34) @ *IS REALLY A SLUT!! SHE SUPPORTS NUDITY AND IS ACTUALLY PROUD
OF THIS NUDITY!!!*

Comment (34) is from a profile of a girl named *galaxy.arts31*. She had an Instagram
account about her paintings, but she used it to gossip about another Instagram account, which
was also about painting. The girl uses one of the most known insults *slut*, a person known to
have sex many times with different individuals (Urbandictionary 2021). *Galaxy.arts31* also
points out that the other girl supports nudity, saying it is not okay and stereotyped.

(35) *Now you are ready to suc mine*

A man, *Mas_bir_iki_ouch*, comments on Kim Kardashian (35). The comment has
nothing to do with what has been written under a picture that Kim posted. It is just a random
comment from a man offering or demanding sex. He alludes to an act of cunnilingus using
it as an insult. He uses the slang word *suc* [sic] to refer to this.

(36) *He's definitely not going down on her now*

A woman commented (36) on Nicole Tuck's childbirth announcement. *Not going down
on her* means that Nicole's husband, DJ Khaled, will not make love with her because her
body has changed.

(37) *And you a slut bag.*

This comment (37) appeared under a picture of a young girl with her friend. *Slut bag* is
another slang phrase for a promiscuous woman (Urbandictionary 2021). This nominal
sentence reflects the form of an interjection in the form of an insult.

(38) *And a nasty ass fucker.*

Comments from the aggressor continue in (38). Again, *ass fucker* is another term for a
prostitute, and *nasty* is a negative expression for being mean, unkind and causing disgust
(Urbandictionary 2021). Even in this sentence, a predicate *you are* is missing.

(39) *You And (friend) can suck my dick*

The (39) is another sentence from the same person as in (37) and (38). Comment (39)
also refers to the girl's friend, using a sexual phrase from example (35). But this time, they
are incorrectly using capital letters, writing *And* with a capital letter as a second word in the
sentence.

5.2.1.3 *Ageism*

Ageism, also called age discrimination, is when someone mistreats you because of your age.
The people's perception of older people lacks the ability of kindness and has elements of
condescending behaviour. Sometimes, this unpleasant behaviour leads to less capable and

competent feelings of those who are a few years older than the aggressors (Myers and Twenge 2019, 238).

Ageistic remarks are found in three comments. The word *old* is the most common in the examples (40) and (41).

(40) *She's sooo old covered up wrinkles too much foundation* 😊👎

(41) *You're old!*

A woman called *cannalifeincanada_* discriminates an actress Jennifer Garner because people can see Garner's wrinkles (40) in the video she posted. The user *cannalifeincanada_* also does not use commas to split this long sentence and to make sense.

Another type of comment acquires a bullying character due to the "vomiting" emoji added at the end.

(42) *You are not 20 anymore* 🤮

An aggressor discriminates against another woman named Christian Mulkey by saying she is more *than 20* (42). Both authors' names are unknown because Christian herself shared these cyberbullying comments with her subscribers.

5.2.1.4 Body shaming

Discrimination, apart from sexuality, relates also to body appearances such as visage, hairstyle or physique, often directed at certain parts, height and weight (Berne et al. 2014, 530). To this description belongs fat-shaming and body shaming (Tan Hua 2019, 94). Weight discrimination can be the origin of child bullying, continuing with difficulties during adulthood (Myers and Twenge 2019, 238).

Apart from fat-shaming, the body's shape (fat or thinness) can be mocked for its masculinity or lack of femininity, e.g., when women have broad shoulders and other qualities associated with men. Then are the victims bullied for attractiveness or unattractiveness. Others can emphasize social inequality and social values.

There are five comments that shame thinness:

(43) *Found your way to look like a skeleton*

The example (43) was written by a man nicknamed *jeffrrey24* accusing and blaming Miley Cyrus of losing too much weight. *Skeleton* implies that Miley is too thin, and her bones are visible.

(44) *way too skinny she looks ill*

A woman, *shoniejen*, also commented on Miley's thinness (44). She even added that Miley could be ill, guessing from her pale look.

(45) *Tooo skinny!!!!*

(46) *We can almost see through you!*

Another two comments (45) and (46) about Miley's weight emphasize how thin Miley is by using an adverb *too* with more o's and a lot of exclamation marks (45). In (46), a man implies Miley is so slim she is transparent.

(47) *She's too skinny to throw shade at anyone.*

A woman wrote another comment (47) to Miley. The commentary says Miley is so thin that there will be no shadow when the sun shines.

Fat-shaming appears in fourteen comments, using the word *fat* four times and adjective *chubby* two times:

(48) *Chubby?*

A woman wrote the comment (48) under the post of Kim Kardashian. The comment is not relative to Kim's picture, just a statement asking if Kim has not gained weight.

(49) *should be getting a trainer and a dietitian*

In this case (49), a woman is body shaming Nicole Tuck, a publicly known DJ Khaled's wife. This woman reacts to a picture of Nicole and her new-born baby. The body-shaming addresses the fact that Nicole gained weight, and she should do something about it.

(50) *You're marrying a fat ugly whale don't be angry*

Another reaction to Nicole's postpartum weight (50) comes from an Instagram account, *interiordesign_Idn*, which is some business' official account. This account is acting very unprofessional, addressing Tuck's husband and implying that he marries a whale, a thick woman.

(51) *You are the *biggest* talent ever !*

(52) *Looks like yew lost weight. What are yew now, 5,000 pounds?*

(53) *i'm traumatized. please get a gym membership*

(54) *FAT*

All the above comments are under a video posted on Instagram by a girl showing how she can sing. The statement (51) is sarcastic. By *biggest,* the aggressor means not a fantastic talent for singing, but they are saying the girl is overweight.

Another comment (52) is also sarcastic. Though the person first writes about the girl losing weight, the following sentence negates the positive message. The commentator uses hyperbole by saying she is still 5,000 lbs (around 2, 268 kg), meaning she is still overweight. The word *yew* is a slang word for *you* (InternetSlang 2021).

The author of (53) does not use capital letters at the beginning of the sentence, making a comment a little bit hard to read. In this case, the person shames the girl by begging her to go to a gym to lose weight.

The comment (54) is simply offensive. The person just labelled her as *fat*.

(55) *You'd be so pretty if you lost weight*

(56) *The chubby girl*

(57) *You are like Goliath, fat and tall*

(58) *You shouldn't wear a bikini, you are too big and your stomach has to many scars. Cover up*

(59) *You have that extra fat roll on your stomach*

These five comments (55), (56), (57), (58) and (59) are addressed to a woman Christian Mulkey. As I have mentioned in the subsection on ageism, she made a post about all the negative and cyberbullying comments she has been receiving. All these comments say Christian is fat or gained weight and suggests that she lose weight (55).

The (57) comment about *Goliath* is an allusion to a Philistine giant in the biblical Book of Samuel (Nelson 2000, 519). As the author writes, being like Goliath means being thick and tall.

The author of (58) restricts Christian to wear a bikini, saying she should cover herself. The phrase *has to many scars* signifies she has scars after the C-section, which is not something she should be ashamed of. The *o* omitted from *too* is the mistake of the aggressor.

(60) *She ate all the girls her ex cheated on her with.*

(61) *oink oink* 🐗

Both comments (60) and (61) are addressed to a girl who posted a video making fun of her ex-boyfriend. Besides, both statements are from boys. A boy in (60) makes fun of her weight by suggesting the girl must have eaten other people. Another boy compares this girl to a pig by using interjection and an emoji of a pig (61).

A user called Alice was bullied in six comments for having men's characteristics:

(62) *That's a man* 😆

(63) *looks too manly*

(64) *Her or him?*

(65) *I thought it was a man in bikini.*

(66) *Female head in male body.*

(67) *She got testosterone, thats not a female body…*

All of these comments (62), (63), (64), (65), (66), and (67) were a reaction to Alice, a fitness woman, who posted a picture on an American Instagram account about fitness. The comments were so harsh that the account deleted the image later. All the statements suggest the woman looks like a man because she is too masculine and has small breasts.

All the aggressors are women except (66). The man uses the wrong preposition *in* instead of *on*, showing bad grammar. And in (67), the woman is not using an apostrophe to indicate the omission in *that's*. These changes in grammar and spelling may indicate one of the following: lack of attention while typing quickly, the origin of the commentators that influences the communication, or they may not have a good education.

Lack of physical attractiveness was also addressed in six comments, of these four are shaming Miley Cyrus:

(68) *this was skanky, gee.*

This reaction appeared on account of Suzi Cruz, who is travelling in a van. Cruz posted a naked picture of herself covering her breasts with flowers, as it has been mentioned above. The word *skanky* (68) means looking cheap, dirty and nasty (Urbandictionary 2021). *Gee* expressed displeasure and is used instead of Jesus or Oh My God.

(69) *yikes*

(70) *Miley- u ain't attractive. You lost a hot man!!!*

The last body-shaming comments about Miley, (69) and (70), are from women. The woman writes about Miley being no longer attractive because she lost weight. We can also say that this woman thinks Cyrus broke up with her boyfriend because of her weight. The word *ain't* is a contraction of *are not* in certain dialects. The statement (69) uses exclamation of disgust.

(71) *You're gross*

Then the hater continues with calling Miley *gross* (71) and saying, in other words, that Tran should not show her face in public. *Gross* means something or someone is disgusting (Urbandictionary 2021).

(72) *You look like a cheap date, but we're not messing with you.*☺

The first comment (72) calls Cyrus *cheap*, ugly or having an inexpensive look, and the person hidden behind this comment is laughing at her, expressing the laugh through emoji.

(73) *You are so ugly and stupid*

A woman is cyberbullying a girl's picture with her friend (73), calling her ugly and stupid. It is not precisely body shaming, but she is still commenting on her outward beauty, and inside, insulting her knowledge.

The following seventeen examples are also comments on physical appearance or personality using mostly verb *look (like)*, adjectives *awful, horrible, disgusting* or noun *trash*:

(74) *she looks very unhealthy*

(75) *Miley looks like a homeless community's only toothpick. Used by many, never cleaned and tossed wet* 🤢🤢🤢

Blou_obrian (a woman) described Miley's condition in great detail (75). The woman with this nickname calls Miley *a homeless toothpick*, implying she is overly thin like a toothpick and poorly dressed as a homeless person (Urbandictionary 2021). The user also says that Cyrus slept with a lot of men using the phrase *used by many*. And in (74), the author thinks Miley is ill because, according to them, she looks *unhealthy*.

(76) *She looks like she could use a shower*

(77) *Those captions can "slide away".* 😣

The author of the comment (76) thinks Miley looks messy and needs a *shower*. Similar thought implies the author of (77). It is not so important what Miley writes in the caption because the author means by words *sliding away* that Miley looks greasy.

(78) *have you seen yourself dude??? Oh you can't , the mirror breaks every time you stare at it*

Nicole Montana posted a harmful comment (78) she had received for her picture. The comment is very offensive, insulting Nicole's look, which can, according to the author, even break the mirror. The word *dude* is used by American men to address each other, but it can also suggest that Montana looks like a man.

(79) *all the money and they look like airport grunge.*

The aggressor in (79) highlights that this married couple is billionaires, but they still wear sweatpants at home. The meaning of *grunge* is stain or dirt (Urbandictionary 2021).

(80) *Awful*

(81) *Horrible look*

(82) *Looks awful*

(83) *Her hair is a mess and she needs to tone her blonde.*

Women insult Jennifer Garner in the comments above (80), (81), (82) and (83). Mainly they do not like her look, calling her or her look *awful* (80), (82) and *horrible* (81). Then they talk about her hair (83) and the wrong colour of her hair.

(84) *Not nice at all* 🤮

(85) *Horrible*

The sentences (84) and (85) are reactions to a fitness woman's body called Alice. These are selected ones of many. Both disagree with Alice's look, saying she does not look well. They use emoji (84) to make the statement more insulting.

(86) *so disgusting*

(87) *you look in this pic like you didn't shower for 2 months*

(88) *only plastic surgeries, ugly!*

The aggressors shame the look of Youtuber Eva. A woman says Eva has *only plastic surgeries* (88), which is an exaggeration since Eva has just one minor plastic surgery. Also, they call her again *disgusting* (86) and suggest it has been a while since she had a shower (87).

(89) *Trash ass*

Another shaming from an anonymous user (89) is against the actress Kelly Marie Tran. The phrase *trash ass* is either insulting a bum of Kelly literally or saying she is a trashy person, having no class and purpose in life (Urbandictionary 2021).

(90) *Ur trash*

The comment (90) is addressed to Emma Chamberlain. Word *trash* refers to someone useless, and *ur* is an abbreviation for *you are* (Urbandictionary 2021).

There were five examples of shaming someone's mental capacity, calling someone *stupid* or using synonyms and slangisms for an *idiot*, for example:

(91) *#stupidgirl* 😂

A user *absolutmono* (a woman) called a model Winnie Harlow *stupid* (91) by using a hashtag. This is an example of shaming mental capacities.

(92) *She's physically and mentally sick girl*

(93) *She's a wreck !*

All of the above comments were written by women as a reaction to Miley Cyrus' picture. Both (92) and (93) suggest she looks ill and unhealthy physically and mentally. In (92) *wreck*, Cyrus is called damaged and destroyed in bad physical or mental conditions.

(94) *what a spaz*

The word's *spaz* (94) means acting like an idiot or being an annoying person (Urbandictionary 2021). By this sentence, the cyberbully demonstrates that all the girl's efforts were useless. She created a new account on Instagram, but the aggressors started immediately with bullying.

(95) *You are a clown*

Another reaction to Emma Chamberlain for being on vacation uses the word *clown* (95) in other words, an idiot or someone who is not taken seriously.

5.3 Profanity

Profanity is used as an attack wherein bullies use highly offensive language that typically includes foul, lewd, vulgar language in addition to swearing and cursing words (Kasture 2015).

Nine comments contain swear words, which include f**ck (96) and (99), s**t (98), dope and other derivatives. For example:

(96) *Lol, i don't give a f*ck* 💀🤣

Here in (96), a woman uses the curse word *fuck*. She used a multiplication symbol to prevent Instagram's software from marking this comment as cyberbullying and block her. She also used emojis of a skull and a laughing one to emphasize her unconcern for Hailey Bieber.

(97) *you're full of bull* 💩*. Bye.*

The (97) is another example of using symbols instead of writing the curse word for not to be banned. It was a reaction to Nicole Tuck's post.

(98) *What the hell is wrong with you and this picture.? You look like shit.*

The first sentence (98) is an insult. The aggressor does not like the way a young girl looks in it. The second sentence uses a curse word, comparing the girls look to a poop, implying her being ugly.

(99) *That's fucking disgusting*

The cyberbullying example (99) is a reaction from a man to a fitness woman (Alice) for being too masculine.

(100)   *SHUT UP!*

(101)   *You bitch*

(102)   *I am not an egoistic bitch so I don't travel*

The aggressors used the examples (100), (101) and (102) of curse words as a reaction to a girl who travelled during lockdown times. In (100), a man wrote, *shut up*, because he does not want to hear excuses for travelling. And in (102), a woman calls her *egoistic* because others stayed at home.

(103)   *clearly money means money, when you are capable to wear this shit*

In (103), a woman shows she does not like the clothing of an American you tuber Eva and calls her clothing *shit* for looking poorly.

(104)   *Big talentless dope*

A man commented like that (104) about a look of Caitlyn Jenner, calling her having no talent. *Dope* is a curse word for an idiot, not a clever person (Urbandictionary 2021). The man implies that Caitlyn's work now is to make videos about make-up, and this work does not require any talent or cleverness.

5.3.1   Hate

Among profanities, hate is also expected to be used by society to be better accepted into it (Myers and Twenge 2019, 251). In this case, the users use the direct nomination *hate* to express the emotion of disliking, and it is the opposite of love.

In the corpus, the hate is expressed mainly as a way to show dislike of a concrete person, for example (105), (106), (107) or (108), or part of them, e.g., hair (109).

(105)   *I just hate hailey why the f*** she comes in between Jelena* 😑😑😤😤

(106)   *I hate hailey* 😤😤😤😤😤

The hate comments (105) and (106) are addressed to Hailey Bieber, the wife of Justin Bieber. Their marriage caused a wave of displeasure. *Jelena* (105) is a syllabic abbreviation formed from Selena Gomez and Justin Bieber, who had been dating before Hailey. Both women haters use emojis expressing anger to show their feelings.

Interestingly, hate appears to be directed against a person rather than something that the speaker finds unpleasant about this person. For example:

(107)   *I hate you so much*

This message (107) was sent to a 13-year old girl to express heavy displeasure. This example is from an Instagram account, STOMP Out Bullying, about cyberbullying in the United States. They wanted to show anonymous cyberbullying comments that adolescents receive.

Hate speech is also part of gender discrimination. When a speaker finds someone who does not fit the cultural or nurtured gender roles, the speaker allows oneself to express a strong feeling against this person:

(108)   *I hate her*

An aggressor calling herself *melissa_786x* wrote this comment (108) under the Instagram post of Caitlyn Jenner, formerly known as Bruce Jenner. Caitlyn is also a publicly known celebrity, mainly because she underwent a sex-change operation and is now a transgender woman.

Only one comment in the corpus was directed against the elements of the physical appearance of the person addressed:

(109)   *Hate her hair in this*

A woman nicknamed *taylorashlynn1* expressed her dislike of Jennifer Garner's hair (109). Even though it is not precisely hate against Jennifer herself, the woman still hates a part of Jen.

5.4 Encouragement

Encouragement is an expression of support but in a sarcastic or harmful way. Van Hee et al. (2018, 8) describes encouragement as verbal support of the harasser. In the corpus, the aggressors are not directly responding to others haters. The comments are phrased as encouragements, but they present aggressive criticism.

The comments address the issues of suicide (110), eating disorders (111) or mental issues (112).

(110)   *this i [sic] why people do suicide!!!!!!!*

The (110) comment is from a person using the nickname *fastquakegaming* reacting to a video of a singing girl nicknamed *yvonnemkmusic*. The comments below the video addressed the issue of girl's weight rather than singing skills. The *fastquakegaming* suggests it would be better if the girl committed suicide. The sentence shows strong emotion as the author of the hate had not even checked the spelling writing *i* instead of *is*. *Do suicide* is the wrong phrase. The correct one is the idiomatic phrase *commit suicide.*

(111)   *Jesus eat some meat will ya*

The reaction (111) of a woman nicknamed *choliee_098* encourages Miley Cyrus to eat because Miley looks skinny in the picture. The comment is verbally shaped as an imperative form and tag question. It sounds patronizing through a colloquial tag, *will ya.* Word *ya* is a non-standard spelling of the pronoun *you* (Urbandictionary 2021). The modal verb *could* is missing in the sentence. Also, interjection *Jesus* has become part of modern English.

(112)   *She needs mental help*

American_patriot1 encourages (112) Miley to get help from a psychologist. Writing like this, the author suggests Miley is not mentally healthy. Again, a modal verb she *should get mental help* is missing.

5.5 Exclusion

Exclusion refers to keeping someone out of a social group or society or a wish to remove the victim from a social group or a conversation (Van Hee 2018, 8).

Two comments exclude the women to *go away* (116) and (114) and encourage them to leave. Some messages use indefinite pronouns to exclude the victim from the group. For instance:

(113)   *Nobody cares.*

In (113), a woman shows Miley Cyrus that society does not care about her or her posts. On the other hand, this sentence contradicts the lack of interest by writing a comment about it.

Using 3rd person of personal pronouns talking about the victim highlights the exclusion even more, for example, the following:

(114)   *Can she just go away?*

The woman's reaction to Kim Kardashian Instagram post (114) manifests an exclusion again, wishing Kim to disappear.

Several comments also directly address the victims through the usage of negation:

(115)   *NO YOU* 😠

This time (115), man reacts to Nicole Truck's announcement of giving birth. On the one hand, this reaction can be *no* "Nicole again" just in general or to another baby. He amplifies his anger more by using an angry emoji.

Direct command to leave or disappear is used in the following examples:

(116)   *Go away*

Another reaction to Nicole (116) comes from a woman, wishing Nicole again to disappear.

(117)   *Go back under the rock you crawled out from under. No one wants to see this!*

This comment (117) was addressed to a new girl on Instagram when by saying *go back,* the aggressor orders her to delete the account. Again, the pronoun usage *no one* extends the lack of interest to all people using social media.

5.6 Labelling

People label themselves and others based on their identities. Label's aim is to define the social world to compare ourselves with similar or different tags. Verbal labels help to classify and describe others for what they do and set them into categories. Unfortunately, labelling can misreport the whole classes of people and cause controversy (Moncrieffe 2007, 1–3).

In this corpus, verbal labels for drug users and transgender people were used in seven comments. For example, the aggressors label the victims as drug users or even drug addicts because of their look (e.g., weight loss, poor skin tone or dirty clothing): see (118) and (119).

(118) *Cocaine is a hell of a drug.*

(119) *Drug addict*

Both comment (118) and (119) imply that Miley Cyrus looks like she is a drug addict. The association comes from dirty clothes, torn shorts, messy hair and a pale look.

Another label used refers to transgender people. This label is used when a female body acquires some of the characteristics of a male body, such as small breasts or big hands and broad shoulders. This label was used to bully a fitness woman Alice, who posted a picture in a bikini, which shows her small breasts and an athlete body. For example:

(120) *Is she trans?*

The comment is shaped like a question. Again, the 3rd person singular pronoun is used to make the insult more disrespectful. A woman in (120) reacted to Alice being too masculine.

A separate group of comments projects masculine characteristics through:

(a) The use of the male characters' names to label a woman:

(121) *Tarzan*

In this case (121), a woman calls another woman Tarzan because the latter has worked out her body so much she does not have a typical female hour-glass shaped body. This reference is a colloquialism, a commonplace expression using literary devices, geographic or historical words connecting to the character (Horn and Ward 2006, 14). Tarzan symbolizes a masculine man living with apes in the jungle.

(122) *Are you a real alien i think you are*

Even though gender in aliens is debatable, the cinematic industry traditionally depicts their bodies as more male-looking than female (e.g., ET, Alien, and others). Comment (122) appears under an image of a plump girl, *yvonnemkmusic* showing how she can sing. An anonymous user tries to say she looks like *aliens*, not pretty. Despite not using any punctuation marks, the user asks a question and immediately answers it with confirmation.

(b) The use of ritualistic names for men:

(123) *A buddy for a beer company, not a bed company…*

(124) *No one wants to date this dude anyways*

The comments ascribe masculine characteristics to women whose bodies do not fit the stereotype. These comments have a pragmatic aim of body shaming through labelling. In

this case, the criticism is directed at Alice, a fitness woman with an athletic body type (123) and Miley Cyrus, who lost weight but is still too thick, according to some (124).

5.7 Emoticons

To make the emotion stronger or explain how the comment should be read, the users add emojis to the messages. Emoji is a colourful symbol, pictogram, character image and smileys on digital keyboards. Emoji are used in electronic messages and communication to express feelings, ideas or thoughts that cannot be fully manifest in typed conversation (Evans 2017, 22). They are often used as substitutes for information and voice quality in oral communication.

🙄😂🖓😁🤢🤮🤧😑💀😡😖🤮😣😡💩🐷☝

Figure 1. Emoji used in corpus

Figure 1 shows all emojis used in the corpus. The most used emoji in this analysis was the "smiling" one used six times. It is used to laugh at women or to make fun of them. The second one was the "vomiting" emoji, used two times. Additionally, the "vomiting" emoji was used the most on its own when the aggressors comment only writing emojis. The reason why the "vomiting" one is so overused is that it is a synonym for ugly or gross. The "poop" and the "pig" emojis are also expressions of ugliness. Using emoji is a quicker way of responding instead of writing the whole word.

CONCLUSION

The Bachelor's thesis aimed to analyse and describe cyberbullying comments addressed to women on Instagram. The messages were examined at a pragmatic and linguistic level through verbal and non-verbal (emoji) tokens. One hundred twenty-four randomly selected Instagram comments collected from July 2019 until December 2020 were analysed.

The first step of the analysis was an examination of the use of emotive vocabulary. Sentiment Analysis was applied to the corpus to determine especially negatively loaded words using an emotive dictionary SentiWordNet. The SentiWordNet software was used to determine if a comment has a neutral, positive, or negative emotional connotation. The closer the score to 1, the more the word's polarity; I have chosen words over 0.125 to count negatively or positively. The selection was from 751 words in the corpus, 227 emotive words have been singled out, from which 153 carried a negative connotation and 74 were positively connotated. Almost the double amount of phrases with negative connotations compared to positive ones makes the corpus negatively connotated as expected.

The emotive words were categorized into parts of speech. The parts of speech carrying connotative information were nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs. The most negatively connotated words were the nouns. Their total number is 99, and 59 of them were connotated negatively. Positive connotations of nouns were found in 40 cases. The most used nouns were abbreviations of curse words like *shit* or *fuck*. The category of adjectives also had 59 negatively connotated words but 25 fewer positive words than nouns. The verbs were less numerous – only 40, in total – and 26 verbs had a negative connotation, while 14 had positive connotations. The most used verb was *to hate,* and the most negative one was *to cheat on*. The last category of 14 adverbs consisted of 9 negatively connotated words and five positively connotated adverbs.

The negative vocabulary in cyberbullying has the most impact on the victims. If it is against children, their grades worsen, they have problems with building new friendships or keeping the existing ones, or they have trust issues. Celebrities are believed to be used to dealing with negative comments, but they also suffer from lower self-esteem, depression, or abuse of alcohol or drugs (Saengprang and Gadavanij 2021, 347). Negative vocabulary is used through negation, e.g., *No one* (wants to date this dude anyways), *Nobody* (cares) or *NO* (YOU) as part of exclusion to highlight the person is unwanted. Other words that have negative associations in society, e.g., *stupid, fat, ugly, chubby* or *slut,* also contribute to the

negative self-perception. These descriptions then make others accept them as true, leading to depression, loss of self-confidence, or even suicides in the worst scenarios.

Next, the research has shown that the most common targets of aggression against women are their looks and bodies. The comments addressing those issues had forms of threats, insults, profanity, exclusion, engagement or labelling.

The insults were the most common type of cyberbullying comments. They also had a discriminatory character based on race, age, sex and body. The analysis showed that the body characteristics were the most attacked, with around 50 examples of insults, followed by sexist insults and a group of labels. Bodyweight was a common target of the aggressors: they called women *fat, chubby* or the opposite *skinny*. Stereotypically, through comparing a woman to a man, the dominance of male characteristics is considered *ugly.* The projection of male characteristics as part of negative comments is connected with typically male labels *dude*, *buddy* or absence of distinct gender: *transgender.* Associations with *cocaine* and *drug addict* or *aliens* also appeared in labelling.

Since there were only three females of another origin, the racist commentaries against Black and Asian women were few. In sexism comments, the word *slut* or sexual suggestions appeared repeatedly. Women use similar abbreviations a lot and usually show envy of the looks of other women.

Threats had only one example and were about death. The aggressor wished the victim to die because they did not like the other person. There is only one example because the Instagram software can delete or detect offensive comments, so threats like *die* or *I kill you* are successfully and quickly deleted.

Since cyberbullying is associated with verbal aggression, curse words *fuck,* and *shit* alongside the verb *hate* were used to express hatred towards women. Also, slang (*chick, yew, slut bag*), hashtags (*#stupidgirl*), and non-verbal elements like emoticons contributed to verbal aggression.

The exclusion was about expelling some women from at least Instagram; with the help of such comments, the haters demanded the users go away, e.g., by using the phrase as a question addressed to the other followers. Also, 3rd person of personal pronouns, s well as pronouns *nobody* and *no one* were used to imply exclusion from the social group.

Emoticons were used to explain and support the aggressor's sentence. Smiling emoji was the most common emoji that contributed to understanding that the hater is making fun of the victims or that the victims are just for laughs. The "vomiting" emoji was also used on its own to show disgust and displeasure.

The type of aggressor that appeared the most was probably a "mean girl" who looks for fun by writing hurtful comments. This type can be traced in comments under celebrities' posts; being jealous of their success and needing to boost their own confidence, "mean girls" insulted the looks of the stars.

The authors of the cyberbullying comments, which were identified, were 18 men and 56 women. I recognised them by the profile picture, the name, or information about them in their profile. The result confirms that more women write insulting or cyberbullying comments than men, in my corpus, three times more.

To summarize, despite the strict Instagram policy against cyberbullying, people can still encounter it. Cyberbullying can be done through messages and comments under picture or video, meaning that a lot of cyberbullying escapes the software for this specific problem. The more public the women are, the more is the probability of cyberbullying comments under their pictures. At the same time, the messages from bullies are less visible if the comments are dense. To deal with cyberbullying, I could recommend not respond because the aggressor is usually looking for attention. Another thing a victim can do is report them; reporting helps social media improve the tools of online safety. The last step is to block the aggressor, so this behaviour will not be repeated.

Further research could focus on the racial aspect of cyberbullying, such as comparison with Asian accounts, which are known for harsher approach and attitude to body and beauty.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

U.S. United States

BLM Black Lives Matter

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

APPENDIX

Kim Kardashian:

1. You're kissing a ear wax eater (September 29, 2019)

2. all the money and they look like airport grunge. (September 29, 2019)

3. Worst pic ever (September 29, 2019)

4. Now you are ready to suc mine (September 29, 2019)

5. Chubby? (September 29, 2019)

6. Can she just go away? (September 29, 2019)

Miley Cyrus:

7. She looks like a viral disease waiting to spread 😬 (October 22, 2019)

8. Yikes (October 22, 2019)

9. she looks very unhealthy (October 22, 2019)

10. She's physically and mentally sick girl (October 22, 2019)

11. Miley looks like a homeless community's only toothpick. Used by many, never cleaned and tossed wet 🤢🤢🤢 (October 22, 2019)

12. She's a wreck ! (October 22, 2019)

13. She is the last person to be talking about faithfulness 🙂 (October 22, 2019)

14. She looks like she could use a shower (October 22, 2019)

15. Those captions can "slide away". 😭 (October 22, 2019)

16. Your family must be so ashamed of your behavior… (October 22, 2019)

17. Your tats look like shiiiiit (October 22, 2019)

18. Found your way to look like a skeleton (October 22, 2019)

19. way too skinny she looks ill (October 22, 2019)

20. Tooo skinny!!!! (October 22, 2019)

21. We can almost see through you! (October 22, 2019)

22. She's too skinny to throw shade at anyone. (October 22, 2019)

23. Miley- u ain't attractive. You lost a hot man!!! (October 22, 2019)

24. Jesus eat some meat will ya (October 22, 2019)

25. She needs mental help (October 22, 2019)

26. Nobody cares. (October 22, 2019)

27. Cocaine is a hell of a drug. (October 22, 2019)

28. Drug addict (October 22, 2019)

29. No one wants to date this dude anyways (October 22, 2019)

Hailey Bieber:

    30. Lol, i don't give a f*ck 💀🤸 (October 14, 2020)

    31. I just hate hailey why the f*** she comes in between Jelena 😑😑😭😭 (October 14, 2020)

    32. I hate hailey 😭😭😭😭😭 (October 14, 2020)

Caitlyn Jenner:

    33. Big talentless dope (December 5, 2020)

    34. I hate her (December 5, 2020)

Jennifer Garner:

    35. Jennifer is boring. Imagine being married to her 😒 (January 16, 2020)

    36. Wastage 😑😑😑😑 (January 16, 2020)

    37. Awful (January 16, 2020)

    38. Horrible look (January 16, 2020)

    39. Looks awful (January 16, 2020)

    40. Her hair is a mess and she needs to tone her blonde. (January 16, 2020)

    41. She's sooo old covered up wrinkles too much foundation 😂👎 (January 16, 2020)

    42. Hate her hair in this (January 16, 2020)

Winnie Harlow:

    43. #stupidgirl 😊 (September 20, 2019)

    44. Girl you need to come back to earth… (September 20, 2019)

    45. what a spoiled kid (September 20, 2019)

    46. Poor you… (September 20, 2019)

    47. Oh, you poor thing, life must be so hard. (September 20, 2019)

    48. You're a joke (September 20, 2019)

    49. Sleeping in economy…must've been such hard work!! It's not like people have to do it everyday 😕 (September 20, 2019)

    50. You're so embarrassing. (September 20, 2019)

Fitness woman Alice:

    51. Not nice at all 🤮 (April 29, 2020)

    52. Horrible (April 29, 2020)

    53. That's a man 😊 (April 29, 2020)

    54. looks too manly (April 29, 2020)

55. Her or him? (April 29, 2020)

56. I thought it was a man in bikini. (April 29, 2020)

57. Female head in male body. (April 29, 2020)

58. She got testosterone, thats not a female body… (April 29, 2020)

59. That's fucking disgusting (April 29, 2020)

60. Is she trans? (April 29, 2020)

61. Tarzan (April 29, 2020)

62. A buddy for a beer company, not a bed company… (April 29, 2020)

Eva Gutowski:

63. so disgusting (November 15, 2020)

64. you look in this pic like you didn't shower for 2 months (November 15, 2020)

65. heartless monster (November 15, 2020)

66. sick of you (November 15, 2020)

67. only plastic surgeries, ugly! (November 15, 2020)

68. clearly money means money, when you are capable to wear this shit (November 15, 2020)

Emma chamberlain:

69. Ur trash (December 14, 2020)

70. You are a clown (December 14, 2020)

71. You are rubbish (December 14, 2020)

72. SHUT UP! (December 14, 2020)

73. You bitch (December 14, 2020)

74. I am not an egoistic bitch so I don't travel (December 14, 2020)

Suzi Cruz:

75. this was skanky, gee. (July 21, 2019)

76. #everybodywantstobenakedandfamous (July 21, 2019)

77. Just another Kardashian wannabe. (July 21, 2019)

Christian Mulkey:

78. You're old! (January 27, 2020)

79. You are not 20 anymore 🤮 (January 27, 2020)

80. You'd be so pretty if you lost weight (January 27, 2020)

81. The chubby girl (January 27, 2020)

82. You are like Goliath, fat and tall (January 27, 2020)

83. You shouldn't wear a bikini, you are too big and your stomach has to many scars. Cover up (January 27, 2020)

84. You have that extra fat roll on your stomach (January 27, 2020)

Nicole Tuck:

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86. should be getting a trainer and a dietitian (January 21, 2020)

87. You're marrying a fat ugly whale don't be angry (January 21, 2020)

88. you're full of bull 💩. Bye. (January 21, 2020)

89. NO YOU 😣 (January 21, 2020)

90. Go away (January 21, 2020)

Galaxy.arts31:

91. @ IS REALLY A SLUT!! SHE SUPPORTS NUDITY AND IS ACTUALLY PROUD OF THIS NUDITY!!! (January 22, 2020)

Girl yvonnemkmusic:

92. this i why people do suicide!!!!!!! (October 4, 2019)

93. You are the *biggest* talent ever ! (October 4, 2019)

94. Looks like yew lost weight. What are yew now, 5,000 pounds? (October 4, 2019)

95. i'm traumatized. please get a gym membership (October 4, 2019)

96. FAT (October 4, 2019)

97. Are you a real alien i think you are (October 4, 2019)

Flowersforfelicia:

98. Die you ugly prick, you disgust me (December 6, 2019)

Nicole Montana:

99. You look like a cheap date, but we're not messing with you.😊 (December 10, 2019)

100. have you seen yourself dude??? Oh you can't , the mirror breaks every time you stare at it (December 10, 2019)

Kelly Tran:

101. Useless character. (August 21, 2019)

102. You're gross (August 21, 2019)

103. Remember to keep your head down when you walk (August 21, 2019)

104. You're such a joke that you don't even know it 😂😂😂 (August 21, 2019)

105. At least we don't have to see her anymore (August 21, 2019)

106. Ching Chong (August 21, 2019)

107. Why are the ugliest Asian chicks slaves to white guys (August 21, 2019)

108. Trash ass (August 21, 2019)

Girl with her friend:

109. And I hope you make no new friends at your new school. (January 24, 2020)

110. And you a slut bag. (January 24, 2020)

111. And a nasty ass fucker. (January 24, 2020)

112. You And (friend) can suck my dick (January 24, 2020)

113. You are so ugly and stupid (January 24, 2020)

114. What the hell is wrong with you and this picture.? You look like shit. (January 24, 2020)

New girl on Instagram:

115. Go back under the rock you crawled out from under. No one wants to see this! (November 2, 2020)

116. LOL why would you post this (November 2, 2020)

117. what a spaz (November 2, 2020)

118. this is sad (November 2, 2020)

Girl, 13 years old:

119. Are you gonna cry now little baby (November 5, 2020)

120. Why should I stop loser (November 5, 2020)

121. I hate you so much (November 5, 2020)

Black girl ohjackie:

122. I understand black lives are more important than white feelings (November 5, 2020)

Girl posting video about her ex-boyfriend Suma Jane:

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124. oink oink 🐽 (February 11, 2020)