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Original Research

Investigating Engagement Resources in Male vs. Female Restaurant Reviews on Google and TripAdvisor Platforms: An Appraisal-based Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study examines linguistic patterns and expressions used by male and female reviewers on Google Maps and TripAdvisor when evaluating restaurants. A total of 9,364 reviews, comprising 4,682 from each gender, were collected from Google Maps and TripAdvisor. Google Maps data was extracted using Apify, and TripAdvisor data was collected manually. The Engagement System of the Appraisal framework, as defined by Martin and White (2005), served as the analytical tool for this study. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were applied, with MAXQDA 24 supporting data analysis. The results indicate minor differences in the use of the engagement system between male and female reviewers in restaurant reviews. Female reviewers are more likely to promote restaurants with greater enthusiasm. In contrast, male reviewers more frequently employ the Entertain and Distance strategies, often using language that is justified. These findings suggest that gendered communication styles in consumer-generated texts may influence how information is presented and perceived.

Keywords: Appraisal Framework; Engagement System; Male and Female; Restaurant Reviewers.

1. Introduction

Online restaurant evaluations have become a significant research focus due to their influence on consumer preferences and the way language is used in digital spaces. The primary argument is that online reviews play a significant role in shaping both consumer behavior and public perception within the restaurant industry. Prior studies (Chaves et al., 2014; Oh, 2019) explored consumer-generated content, such as online restaurant reviews, from various perspectives, including economic motivations for improving services, consumer satisfaction, and linguistic analysis. As more decisions now happen on platforms like Google, these online reviews have become vital in guiding consumer choices (Luca, 2011). Through their dual function as sources of information and as unique forms of user-generated content (UGC) (Moran & Muzellec, 2017), these reviews build consumer trust and inform decisions (Basuroy et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, more attention needs to be paid to how men and women express their opinions about restaurants in this public domain. This study examines gender differences by analyzing language in restaurant reviews written by men and women on Google and Trip Advisor. It specifically focuses on their meaningful engagement with readers through the lens of Appraisal Theory (Martin & White, 2005), particularly the Engagement System. The Appraisal Framework (Martin & White, 2005), a model in Systemic Functional Linguistics, describes how language conveys attitudes and stance, serving as the basis for examining reviewers' evaluative decisions. To deepen this exploration, it is useful to turn to one of the framework's most significant components, the Engagement system. The Engagement system studies how authors acknowledge, endorse, or distance themselves from alternative views, identifying methods such as entertaining and distancing in reviews. These include disclaiming, entertaining, attributing, and proclaiming, which shift the dialogic space between writer and audience (Martin & White, 2005, p. 117).

However, this research aims to comprehend how male and female reviewers utilize their restaurant critiques to effectively engage with readers by employing distinct accents and expressions about beliefs. Additionally, this study aims to compare how men and women utilize the engagement resources to express their point of view regarding the restaurant. The findings will enhance linguistic research on gendered communication and may inform firms seeking to interpret variations in consumer feedback.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Restaurant Review Studies

Research on restaurant reviews has yet to address language differences between male and female reviewers. For example, Chaves et al. (2014) analyzed 503 TripAdvisor reviews from Lisbon and found that food quality was the main focus, with limited emotive responses indicating a preference for impartiality. However, this study treats reviewers as a single group, leaving it unclear whether men use a neutral tone and women use more affective language, a crucial distinction for understanding gendered speech.

Building on prior studies, Oh (2019) analyzed fine-dining reviews and identified ambience, service, and food quality as key criteria, with happiness as the primary emotion expressed. Yet, gender was not considered again. A more detailed analysis might have revealed that women emphasize positive emotions and relational aspects more often, while men may focus on tangible elements, such as food presentation or cost. Thus, without this distinction, the findings offer only a partial view of evaluation practices in online reviews.

Gender differences in review writing remain underexplored in tourism discourse. Similarly, Chaves et al. (2014) conducted a comprehensive study of 1,100 reviewers in Portuguese tourism areas, which further improved understanding of evaluative categories and engagement strategies. Nevertheless, the study did not examine whether male and female reviewers take different approaches. Sociolinguistic research indicates women often employ politeness and emotive language to mitigate criticism, whereas men tend to express dissatisfaction more directly (Holmes, 2013). These tendencies could significantly affect how complaints and praise are expressed in restaurant reviews, yet this issue remains unexamined.

Further reinforcing the importance of studying this gap, research highlights additional relevant findings. For example, Zhang and Vásquez (2014) found that reviewers frequently use narrative and stance-taking, while Vásquez (2011) noted the use of affective intensifiers in online complaints. Despite these findings, it remains unclear whether both male and female reviewers employ these features similarly. Thus, although the literature defines evaluative themes well, it consistently overlooks the role of gender in shaping evaluative language.

2.2. Gender-Based Studies

Given these gaps, it is useful to draw on findings from other fields that document differences between males and females. For instance, Khadafi and Santosa (2020) found male film critics focused on technical elements, while female critics emphasized emotional depth and character development. This aligns with sociolinguistic research, which shows that men tend to use more technical, detached language, while women tend to highlight affective and relational aspects (Coates, 2004; Tannen, 1990). In restaurant critiques, this may imply men focus on efficiency, portion size, or food quality, while women may value service interactions and ambience.

Building on these interdisciplinary findings, Solihah (2020) also observed that female university students used more attitudinal language, particularly related to affect and appreciation, while male students favored positive evaluations of behavior. Additionally, women's writing showed greater interpersonal engagement, while men's writing remained more evaluatively detached. Although the study involved a small academic sample, these findings reinforce the idea that gender influences both the type and frequency of evaluative language.

These distinctions receive further support from traditional sociolinguistic research. Coates (2004) notes that women often use affective language and signals of solidarity, while men tend to be more aggressive and impersonal. Holmes (2013) similarly finds that women use politeness and mitigating techniques more frequently. When applied to restaurant reviews, this body of research suggests that women may use gentler, more relational language to describe service or ambience. At the same time, men may take a more direct approach to value, quality, or efficiency. However, these differences have not been examined in online reviews, highlighting a gap this study aims to address.

A significant limitation in restaurant review research is the insufficient attention given to gender as a key variable. For example, while Chaves et al. (2014) and Oh (2019) provide valuable insights into customer perceptions of meal quality, service, and ambience, they do not examine whether men and women describe experiences differently. This gap is especially notable, as sociolinguistic studies indicate that men and women frequently employ distinct language styles, particularly when expressing emotions and opinions. Omitting gender as a factor restricts understanding of its influence on online reviews.

A related issue is that research from other disciplines on gender differences has not been extensively integrated into restaurant review studies. For example, Khadafi and Santosa (2020) examined film reviews, and Solihah (2020) investigated how university students construct arguments. Both found that men and women utilize different types of evaluative language. However, these findings have seldom been applied to restaurant reviews. Thus, incorporating such research could reveal whether men and women emphasize different aspects, such as food, service, or atmosphere, and whether they express sentiments differently. Bridging these areas would enhance understanding of how gender influences online reviews and how demographic factors shape review content. Therefore, this study seeks to answer these main and sub-research questions:

Main research question:

- 1- To what extent are there differences between male and female use of engagement resources in their reviews about restaurants on the Google and TripAdvisor platforms?

Sub-research questions:

- 1- How do male and female reviews on the Google and TripAdvisor platforms differ regarding engagement resources used when leaving a restaurant review?
- 2- What engagement strategies (e.g., disclaim, entertain) do male reviewers choose more frequently than females in restaurant reviews?
- 3- How do males and females differ in using positive or negative language in their restaurant reviews?

2.3. Analytical Framework

This study adopts Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal framework, focusing on the Engagement system to examine how authors position themselves and their audience in relation to different perspectives.

The Engagement system, a crucial aspect of Appraisal Theory, serves as an effective tool for managing agreement, disagreement, or neutrality in communication. This study examines the utilization of language to articulate thoughts, feelings, and relationships concerning a subject, particularly how individuals convey their attitudes towards the knowledge and viewpoints of others. The emphasis lies in the manner of presenting information as fact or recognizing the existence of alternative perspectives. This system is crucial in diverse communication contexts, including writing reviews, delivering speeches, composing academic papers, or articulating political opinions.

Monoglossic and heteroglossic represent the two primary categories of engagement systems. These two categories facilitate the presentation of our information in two distinct ways. The initial method is monoglossic statements, which are direct, factual assertions wherein the speaker conveys information without recognizing any alternative viewpoints. For instance, when an individual asserts, "This is the truth, the correct course of action," without allowing for discussion. Also, if someone states, "The water boils at 100 degrees Celsius," this is a monologic assertion presented as an indisputable truth. The second method is heteroglossic statements, which acknowledge the existence of alternative perspectives or possibilities. They facilitate dialogue, indicating the speaker's recognition of alternative viewpoints.

Heteroglossic statements are categorized into two types: Augmenting and Diminishing Engagement. When we use expanding engagement, we make room for other ideas or perspectives. It is about being open to different views and inviting discussion. Here are two main ways to expand engagement: Entertain: This occurs when someone suggests there may be alternative ways of thinking about something. They may employ terms such as 'maybe,' 'might,' or 'perhaps' to indicate uncertainty and receptiveness. The phrase "It seems that this solution could work" suggests the individual is receptive to alternative options. Attribution: This refers to the act of acknowledging another individual or source for an opinion. They may assert, "Scientists indicate that climate change is a reality." By ascribing the opinion to another

individual, the speaker indicates that it is not inherently their perspective but rather a notion originating from an external source.

A contracting engagement occurs when the speaker restricts considerations of alternative viewpoints or terminates the dialogue. They assert their perspective as more definitive or accurate. There are two methods to establish engagement. To disclaim is to express disagreement with another perspective or to reject its legitimacy. The statement “this solution is not going to work, but it works well” indicates the speaker's dismissal of an alternative perspective. The alternative is Proclaim. It is invoked when individuals assert that their statement must be precise or readily verifiable by others. The inclusion of phrases like ‘of course,’ ‘obviously,’ or ‘undoubtedly’ guarantees that the assertion appears unequivocal and without dispute. The phrase “Of course, walking is beneficial for your health” demonstrates the speaker's assurance in their assertion.

Nevertheless, the Engagement system is not confined to a particular mode of communication. This is seen across several forms of discourse, including academic writing, journalism, political speeches, and everyday conversation. The methods individuals employ to persuade others, acquire confidence, or exhibit dominance become evident when we comprehend their usage.

This is a helpful way to learn how people influence their opinions and form friendships through language. When it comes to persuasion, coalition-making, and juxtaposing views/theories, you can detect where they can expand space for other views or scrimmage and how they help respond to others. This system employs several forms of communication: language is utilized to express solidarity, assert authority, and navigate social dynamics (Martin & White, 2005).

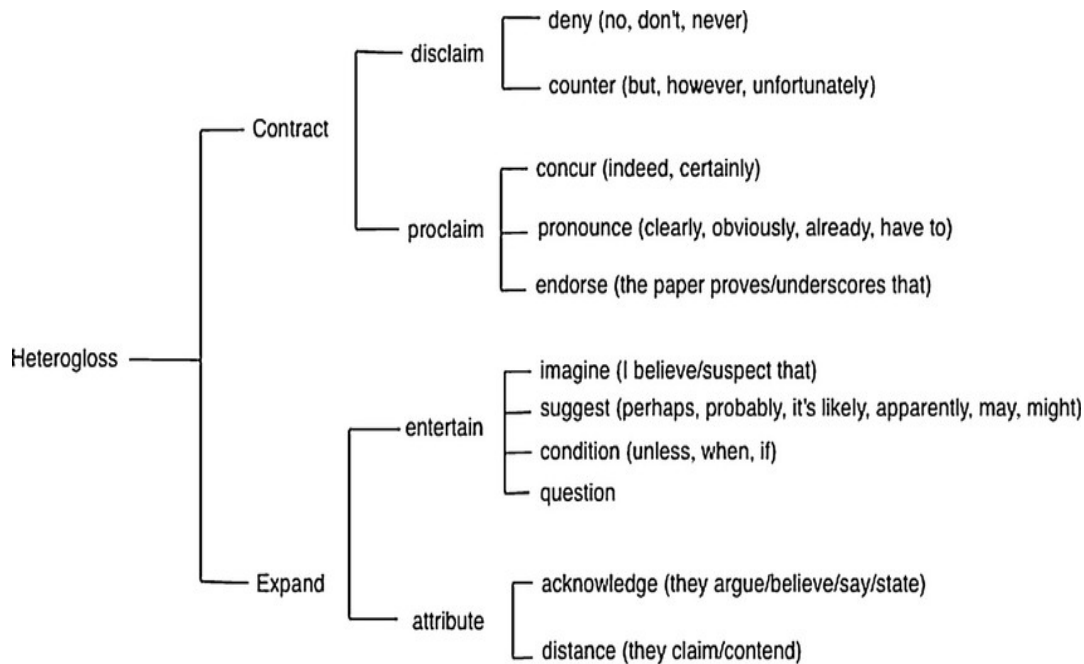


Figure 1. Engagement System (Martin & White, 2005).

This figure shows the heteroglossic system, which belongs to the Engagement subsystem in Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. The Engagement subsystem looks at how reviewers handle different perspectives or voices in their writing. It has two main categories: Contract and Expand.

In the Contract category, people take a strong stance and limit other views. Contract has two types. Proclaim strengthens commitment, using concurrence (like yes or certainly), pronouncement (like plainly or obviously), or endorsement (like the paper proves that). Disclaim means rejecting or challenging other viewpoints, with words like no, do not, but, or nonetheless.

The Expand category enables writers to integrate multiple perspectives and promote dialogue. Expand encompasses Attribute, which introduces external viewpoints either neutrally (for example, they argue or say) or with

evaluative distance (for example, they claim or contend). It also includes Entertain, which employs modal or epistemic expressions (for example, 'perhaps,' 'may,' or 'I believe') to signal uncertainty or possibility. Collectively, these categories illustrate how linguistic choices position the author relative to alternative viewpoints.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study follows a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies to examine engagement patterns in restaurant reviews. Martin and Rose (2008) highlighted the importance of generalizations based on quantitative statistical research and underscored the value of qualitative assessments of specific, unique cases that enhance understanding of textual data (Sari & Alyousef, 2024). Therefore, both methodologies are applied to collect statistical and descriptive data, supporting more precise and reliable results.

3.2. Data Collection

Data were collected from the Google platform using the Apify extraction tool, which enabled efficient and comprehensive retrieval of restaurant reviews. Challenges arose in distinguishing between male and female names due to cultural variations and the use of nicknames or non-traditional identifiers. To address this, Google's image search engine was utilized to verify names, thereby facilitating the accurate gender categorization of each review. Male and female reviews were then separated for subsequent analysis. The TripAdvisor platform was also utilized to manually date the data, ensuring the study incorporated multiple sources and increased data diversity. To improve the accuracy of the findings, reviews were gathered from various regions across the United States, including the North, South, Central, and Western areas. An equal number of words was collected from reviews by each gender to support the reliability of the results, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Data Distribution*

Data Set	Words Number
Males' Restaurants' reviews	4682
Females' Restaurants' reviews	4682
Total	9364

3.3. Analytical Procedure

The research illustrates the differences and similarities between male and female restaurant reviews, using the Engagement System of Appraisal Theory as the analytical framework applied in the study to identify different linguistic markers that represent reviewers' stances and emotions toward an entity. Data was divided into two databases, one for males' restaurant reviews and the other for females' restaurant reviews.

MAXQDA 24 was chosen for this study because of its functionalities that align effectively with the Engagement System of Appraisal Theory. Each engagement item was initially inserted manually and subsequently verified against the uploaded text to confirm its alignment with the appropriate subtype. The software then automatically annotated and categorized them by sub-category. This guaranteed precision and uniformity in coding. Furthermore, MAXQDA produced frequency counts and thematic interpretations that facilitated quantitative comparisons between male and female reviewers, with a qualitative examination of the contextual implementation of the engagement system.

4. Findings

As previously discussed in the engagement framework section, the engagement system comprises two main types: monoglossic language, which conveys information directly and accurately, free from personal beliefs or bias, and heteroglossic statements, which accommodate alternative ideas and diverse perspectives. Building on this framework, this study identifies heteroglossia, which encompasses contact and expansion, as discussed in Table 2, as a key focus. Table 2 presents the frequency of contact and the corresponding expansion percentage in the current study's data.

Table 2. *Frequency of Engagement System Branches: Contract vs. Expansion in Male and Female Restaurants' Reviews*

Engagement System	Male	Female	Total
Expand	4.20%	0.50%	2.30%
Contract	99.50%	99.50%	97.70%

The dataset indicates that two main engagement systems exist in the reviews of both male and female restaurants: expansion and contraction. These are systems that indicate the openness of reviewers to diverse perspectives. Expand statements are more inclusive and suggestive of diversity, whereas contract statements are more radical and definitive in their expression.

Male reviewers have a considerable disparity in their use of expand statements, applying them ten times more frequently than female reviewers (4.20% vs. 0.50%). Although the proportion of male users who expand statements is low, the difference between males and females is considerable. This suggests that men are more likely to consider alternative perspectives in their evaluations.

Female reviewers show a slightly greater tendency to utilize Contract statements compared to male reviewers (95.80% versus 99.50%). Consequently, women may exhibit greater confidence in expressing definitive, strong viewpoints in their evaluations. Ultimately, reviewers enjoy the 'Contract' assertions score of 97.70%. Both the male and female reviewers enjoy using contractive statements. Restaurant reviews on platforms such as Google and TripAdvisor typically manifest as definitive and assertive opinions rather than as open-ended expressions.

Table 3. *Frequency of Engagement Resources: Contract Branches in Male and Female Restaurants' Reviews*

Contract Branches	Male	Female	Total
Proclaim	38.90%	43.50%	41.30%
Disclaim	56.80%	56.00%	56.40%

For the Proclaim, the data show that female reviewers are more direct than male reviewers when sharing their opinions. It suggests that female reviewers aim to reinforce their statements, build credibility, or clarify their points. These findings align with other research, showing that women often provide context or explanations to make their opinions appear more confident. However, the remaining predicates are 'announce,' 'assume,' 'believe,' 'be fearful,' 'reason,' and 'report.' They are not factive because they do not presuppose the truth of the complement.

The data on disclaimers shows that male and female reviewers express their opinions differently, which may affect how readers view and engage with restaurant reviews. The data suggest that male reviewers use disclaimers a bit more than females, with 56.8% of men showing a slightly higher tendency to keep their opinions flexible. This style of men can be used to gain readers' trust, whether it's customers or restaurant managers, to convince them of their opinions about the restaurants.

Nonetheless, female reviewers employed disclaimers nearly as frequently as their male counterparts (56%), showing a typical inclination towards moderated assertions. Given that females utilize more Proclaim statements, their employment of disclaimers may function as a counterbalance, mitigating the otherwise aggressive tone prevalent in evaluations rich in Proclaim statements.

Table 4. *Frequency of Engagement Resources: Disclaim Branches: Deny Vs Counter in Male and Female Restaurants' Reviews*

Disclaim Branches	Male	Female	Total
Deny	54.70%	55.40%	55.10%
Counter	28.70%	34.00%	31.30%

4.1. Deny

The Deny will be evaluated first. Male reviewers use denial expressions 54.70% of the time, while female reviewers employed them slightly more often, at 55.40%. The total utilization of 'Deny' expressions among both genders is 55.10%. The 'Deny' category likely encompasses language that refutes or contradicts prior assertions or expected viewpoints. The minor disparity between male and female reviewers indicates a comparable inclination towards negation, albeit with slightly greater frequency among female reviewers.

4.2. Counter

The male reviewers employed counter formulations 28.7% of the time, whilst female reviewers utilized it more frequently, at 34.0%. The cumulative utilization for all genders is 31.3%. In this study, counter refers to the reviewer expressing disagreement or presenting an alternative perspective, thereby potentially contesting another viewpoint.

The increased propensity for women to employ counter formulations indicates a greater likelihood of expressing dissent or criticism in their reviews. This may be perceived as women's more assertive or corrective actions aimed at achieving balance or enhancing transparency. Conversely, although male reviewers employ counter formulations, they do so less frequently, potentially indicating a marginally less aggressive tone overall. Below are samples of Disclaim resources from both datasets:

Deny:

- Losing its luster specifically on concert nights. Change in menu offering not [Heteroglossic: contract: disclaim: deny] appreciated (Male data, Pos. 7).
- Best pasta dish that I have ever [Heteroglossic: contract: disclaim: deny] had in the US! It was really surprise me that this dish was so delicious (Female data, Pos. 121).

Counter:

- One of my favorite restaurants.... always fresh, hot food, generous portions, and great service. A little off the beaten path, but ever [Heteroglossic: contract: disclaim: concur] well worth the stop! (Male data, Pos. 137).
- Not only was she incredibly [Heteroglossic: contract: disclaim: concur] knowledgeable about the menu, but she was also just a lovely person who you could tell took great pride in her work (Female data, Pos. 105).

Table 5. *Frequency of Engagement Resources: Proclaim Branches in Male and Female Restaurants' Reviews*

Contract Branches	Male	Female	Total
Concur	2.50%	0.50%	1.30%
Pronounce	14.70%	12.20%	13.50%
Justify	6.00%	10.20%	8.10%
Endorse	0%	0.70%	0.30%

4.3. Concur

The second one is Concur. Data indicates that male reviewers utilize Concur expressions at a rate of 2.10%, whereas female reviewers employed them significantly less, at 0.50%. The aggregate rate for Concur expressions across both genders is 1.30%.

The lower Concur usage, particularly among female reviewers, may suggest that both genders employed affirming or agreeing language less frequently, with female reviewers being significantly less predisposed to utilize it. The data shows an insignificant difference in percentage points between male and female reviewers about their tendency to dispute or negate rather than agree. These data provide insights into the communication techniques or strategies used to establish the credibility of influencers and reviewers.

- The restaurant is beautiful. It has a really nice ambiance. However, we came here for the food and...this was not IT. This is clearly [Heteroglossic: contract: proclaim: counter] an "interpretation" by people who studied the food. What's missing (Male data, Pos. 46).
- I was lucky enough to be a guest of some friends and on our way home from their ranch house, we had the chance to stop in. Not only was the atmosphere incredibly welcoming but the staff were warm and kind. We were lucky enough to get Vik as our server and if you have the chance...ASK for her section. Not only was she incredibly knowledgeable about the menu, but she was also just a lovely person who you could tell took great pride in her work. We will for sure be back [Heteroglossic: contract: proclaim: counter]! (female data, Pos.105).

4.4. Pronounce

Males use Pronounce statements slightly more than females (14.7% vs. 12.2%). Pronouncing means making a clear, assertive statement, often without extra details. This pattern suggests that male reviewers are slightly more likely

to make straightforward, direct statements. They use these to emphasize their points more effectively. Examples are provided below:

- I didn't appreciate the fact that [Heteroglossic: contract: proclaim: pronounce] they have a forced 5% living wage + default tip of 20% added without you having any say even for a party of two. (Male data, Pos.32).
- Absolutely loved the brunch options. We ordered mussels and French toast and both options were delicious. Would definitely [Heteroglossic: contract: proclaim: pronounce] come again. (female data, Pos.25).

4.5. Endorsement

Endorsement, where a reviewer explicitly agrees with a point or perspective, is rarely used by either gender, but there is a slight difference: females use it at a rate of 0.7%, while males do not use it at all. Although it is a minor detail, this might suggest that female reviewers are more willing to agree with other opinions than male reviewers.

- Always busy which shows [Heteroglossic: contract: proclaim: endorsement] how good it is! (female data, Pos. 122).

4.6. Justify

Female reviewers use justification more than males (10.2% vs. 6.0%). When people justify their opinions, they provide reasons to support their views. This higher use by females suggests that women may prefer to explain why they hold particular views, adding context to their statements. This might make their reviews feel more thorough or convincing because they back up their opinions with explanations. These are some examples:

- My dining partner ordered the jumbo and was similarly unimpressed. I want to love this place because [Heteroglossic: contract: disclaim: justify] I miss NOLA, but this is a miss. (male data, Pos. 10).
- We came here with a reservation for about 9 and therefore were placed at a high-top table across from the bar. This meant one of our guests couldn't join because [Heteroglossic: contract: disclaim: justify] their son was 18 and needed to be 21. (female data, Pos. 22).

In summary, females are more likely to give reasons and consider other views. Males are slightly more likely to make strong, definitive statements. Both genders rarely agree outright with others' views in these reviews. These small differences suggest that female reviewers tend to employ a fair and supportive style, whereas male reviewers may sound more forceful.

Table 6. *Frequency of Engagement Resources: Expand Branches in Male and Female Restaurants' Reviews*

Expand Branches	Male	Female	Total
Attribute - Distance	1.30%	0%	0.70%
Attribute - Acknowledge	0%	0%	0%
Entertain	4.00%	0.70%	2.40%

4.7. Distance

Male reviewers employed language that establishes a slight detachment from their opinions 1.3% of the time, but female reviewers do not utilize this technique. When guys 'distance' themselves, they express their viewpoint with an air of uncertainty or detachment, as in, "Perhaps it is merely my perspective, but..." In contrast, females do not exhibit this behavior in their reviews, resulting in more definitive judgements.

4.8. Acknowledge

Neither males nor females use 'acknowledge' statements in the reviews. This type of statement would be akin to directly acknowledging other views, such as saying, "I know some people think..." However, neither group tends to use this approach.

4.9. Entertain

Males use Entertain statements more often (4.0%) than females (0.7%). This type of statement shows that they are open to other possibilities, such as saying, "It could be that..." or "Maybe..." It shows flexibility and openness to different viewpoints. Females do not often use this language, suggesting they prefer a more assertive tone.

In summary, male reviewers tend to maintain flexible perspectives or allow for alternative interpretations, whereas female reviewers provide more direct and definitive assertions. Male reviews often appear more ambiguous, but female ones tend to be more definitive and straightforward. Examples will be provided below:

- Great food and looks of this place. But it's quite loud on a Sunday evening which is probably [Heteroglossic: Expand: Entertain] expected from a popular place. (male data), Pos. 57.
- This is a MUST STOP [Heteroglossic: Expand: Entertain] I've been going here since I was little! Delicious food in a historic building. Can't go wrong! (female data, Pos. 98).

5. Discussion

Based on the above findings, the research questions will be discussed in order in this section. The main question is: To what extent do discrepancies exist between male and female utilization of engagement resources in their restaurant evaluations on the Google and TripAdvisor platforms?

The investigation revealed that both men and women employ the Engagement System in roughly similar ways, utilizing strategies such as Entertain, Distance, Deny, Counter, and Endorse. Nevertheless, the findings reveal small but significant differences in the implementation of these strategies, with gender influencing both the frequency and the way of their use.

The initial sub-research question examined the ways that reviews on the Google and TripAdvisor platforms differ concerning the engagement resources utilized while composing a restaurant review. The results indicate that male reviewers often employed Entertain strategies, such as hedges and modal expressions like 'might' or 'seems,' in combination with Distance techniques. Female reviewers more frequently used Endorse strategies to demonstrate confidence and certainty in their evaluations, especially when highlighting positive experiences.

The second sub-research question examined which engagement methods (e.g., disclaim, entertain) male reviewers employ more frequently than female reviewers in restaurant evaluations. The findings demonstrate that men employed Entertain and Distance more frequently than women, leading them to adopt a more cautious and distant attitude. In contrast, women had a higher inclination for direct endorsement, particularly when praising aspects such as food, service, and atmosphere.

The third sub-research question examined how males and females differ in using positive or negative language in their restaurant reviews. The findings revealed that women demonstrated a higher tendency to utilize overtly positive sentiment, often employing expressions such as "highly recommend" or "absolutely loved." Men often utilized justificatory language, contrasting good and negative elements within a single evaluation; for example, "Although the service was slow, the food was excellent."

In summary, while both genders utilize the Engagement System to express their restaurant reviews, minor differences emerge: women tend to emphasize clear positive endorsements, while men adopt a more cautious and balanced approach through hedging, distancing, and justification.

By addressing a significant weakness noted in past studies, such as those by Chaves et al. (2014) and Oh (2019), which focused on restaurant service and ambience but ignored gender as a sociolinguistic issue, the current study's findings build upon earlier research. This study shows that gender influences the expression of evaluation and position when comparing the use of heteroglossic engagement resources on TripAdvisor and Google by male and female reviewers. A propensity for pragmatic and situational framing, where reviews are defended, reasoned, or justified (for example, using modal language or balanced appraisals), is shown by the fact that male reviewers tended to use Entertain and Distance resources. The language used by female reviewers, on the other hand, was more promotional and positively aligned, frequently emphasizing persuasive or affective factors that 'advertise' the dining experience.

These findings support and extend the work by Solihah (2020) and Khadafi and Santosa (2020), who showed that men and women use evaluative language differently in argumentative and film-review contexts. This study extends those gender-based differences to restaurant reviews, a genre rarely examined from this perspective. Gender shapes how reviewers create dialogic posture and interpersonal alignment. For example, women often show endorsement and positive polarity, while men favor justification. This research connects online review analysis under the Appraisal framework with

sociolinguistic gender studies. It provides a more detailed understanding of gendered expression in digital consumer discourse.

6. Conclusions

Overall, minor differences are observed in how men and women utilize engagement resources in their restaurant reviews. For instance, the most used strategies in the male-dominated reviews are 'Entertain' and 'Distance,' which focus on entertainment aspects and logistical factors, respectively. On the other hand, the restaurant was explicitly promoted in the case of female domination. The female reviewers are more inclined to positive polarity, whereas the male ones use more 'Justify' resources to balance their reviews.

Nevertheless, when examining the use of the engagement system on both Google and TripAdvisor, it becomes evident that males and females utilize these resources almost equally when sharing their restaurant experiences. In addition, both genders engage equally in discussing similar aspects of their reviews, such as service quality, food, and ambiance, which shape their experiences. Thus, this suggests that engagement remains crucial to how people share restaurant experiences, regardless of gender.

This study contributes to heteroglossic engagement theory by clarifying that male reviewers primarily use Entertain and Distance resources, which encourage dialogic expansion and help maintain interpersonal distance. In contrast, female reviewers favor positive and promotional language, indicating stronger engagement. According to Martin and White (2005), Entertain resources reflect subjectivity and openness. In contrast, Proclaim and Endorse resources limit dialogic space by promoting reader alignment and reinforcing the author's stance.

These findings support the idea that gender affects evaluative language in digital consumer discourse. Specifically, male reviewers often use justification strategies, while female reviewers prefer endorsements and positive language. This demonstrates that gender influences both engagement strategies and dialogic positioning. These results align with earlier research by Khadafi and Santosa (2020) and Solihah (2020). By combining the Appraisal framework with sociolinguistic gender research, this study deepens our understanding of gendered language online.

6.1. Limitations and Recommendations

To build upon these findings, further study is recommended to investigate the noticeable parallels in the utilization of engagement options by males and females, as this may uncover fundamental social or cultural influences on online communication. Since this study concentrated on a narrow dimension of the Engagement system, subsequent research should more accurately establish the presence of gender-based differences by investigating additional engagement resources and associated systems, such as Attitude and Graduation.

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Generative AI Use Statement

The authors used generative AI tools solely for language polishing and formatting assistance, and all content, analysis, and conclusions presented in this article remain the authors' own original work.

Conflict of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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