

LITERARY ARTICLES & ESSAYS**Stand-up that stands out:****Analysis of gendered sequences from a Foucauldian perspective**

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This article intends to unveil the conceptualization of gender and power dynamics buried in the sequences uttered by Turkish female comedians in their stand-up performances. Investigating ten clips of staged performances, 69 gendered and 28 failed utterances are given a closer look with the help of thematic analysis under in vivo coding framework. Furthermore, the utterances are transcribed and analyzed in line with conversation analysis premises. The findings might shed light upon the content of the instances alongside discursive strategies that the comedians use to tackle gender and power issues. This defined artifact analysis attempts to put forward how the Turkish female comedians place themselves and other women with regards to power dynamics in the society under the roof of their story lines. Basing on their reactions, audiences' attitudes towards the subject matter have been analyzed. In this respect, humor functioned in many ways such as depicting others' expectations and impositions upon women, eradicating passivized roles assigned by the society, and so on. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that humor can have several dimensions, operating as reflecting on the experiences and societal perceptions in the eyes of a woman. Within the analyzed dataset, the instances seem to be unearthing certain patterns and recursive experiences found in the stories of the comedians.

**Keywords**

*Humor, gender, power, Foucault, stand-up performance, discursive function*

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**Introduction**

Previously, women were regarded as passive objects of humor, receiving public jokes with a silent smile. The wave of change in gendered domain of humor, triggered by several sociological pressing events, started from the Western societies (Kotthoff, 2006b) with the millennium. The combination of femininity and use of active humor is becoming more and more apparent in the mainstream. Such analytical methods applied to humor in a given discourse might provide novel understanding of its dialogical features better (Kotthoff, 2006b).

Gender is referred as “a system of meanings that influences access to power, status, and material sources.” (Crawford, 2003, p. 1413). In this vein, gender is thought to be open to be constructed, deconstructed or even co-constructed by using humor (Crawford, 2003). Depending on the social context, the interlocutors might use gender to perform a particular social identity or to highlight a gendered dimension (Meyerhoff & Niedzielski 1994; Meyerhoff 1996; Hay, 2000; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 2007; Cameron 2009; Holmes & Marra, 2010). In this sense, comedians might help people to have more inclusive perspective and challenge pre-set power structures (Russell, 2002; Willis, 2005) via verbal reconceptualization.

Drawing on a Foucauldian perspective, the notion of power in this paper occupies a considerable place, negotiated, and built through interactions (Foucault, 1994; Adegbebo, 2017). It can be demonstrated in various ways for several orientations such as challenging an imposed perspective. Nevertheless, Foucault (1972) discussed that “knowledge is (also) a power over others, the power to define others” (Tang, 2019, p.523). This process (i.e.; subjectification) is also observable in stand-up performance contexts, where humor is objected to identify oneself sometimes at the expense of irrationalization of others. That is why; it has the potential to be constituted as a dynamic discourse in which the individuals are not seen as passive subjects, rather as promoters of discourses for underlining their power struggles. Therefore, the aim of the present study is to investigate the usage of humor in Turkish stand-up comedy by female comedians and to demonstrate the sequences about gender by taking a perspective that is power-sensitive. By drawing on the Foucauldian underpinnings of power/ knowledge dynamics demonstrated verbally, the linguistic performances of female Turkish comedians are addressed to be the subject of analysis throughout this paper.

### **Literature Review**

When it comes to stand-up comedy, several scholars have studied it as a context where gender is re-discovered, performed, turned upside down to trim patriarchal stereotypical ideologies (see Gilbert, 2004; Cullen, 2015). It was also observed that the audience is involved in scrutinizing the imposed status of women and demonstrating their own perspective (Bing & Scheibman, 2014). Nonetheless, there are almost

always two sides of a coin, implying that there might be an act of humor that reinforces the status quo, or challenges it according to Holmes and Marra (2002). In this sense subversive humor can be distinguished as confronting “existing power relationships, whether informal or formal, explicit or implicit... through discourse strategies which create social distance with the target of the humor and may strengthen bonds with the public.” (Holmes & Marra, 2002; p. 73).

The study conducted by Lampert and Ervin-Tripp (2006) demonstrates that gender and the perceived sympathy among the interlocutors might guide the selection of humor type. In this study, the comedians and the audience are in a small room where an intimate atmosphere is targeted via eye contact, inclusive teasing, and interaction. In the study conducted by Cortés-Conde and Boxer (2010), humorous self-disclosures are examined in all-female groups and it is demonstrated that they have subverted socially constructed gender roles drawing on the intimacy within the context. In a similar vein, Kotthoff (2007) investigates the female identity construction in conversational teasing, where novel gender identities were manifested through stories. On the other hand, Holmes (2006) considers the use of subversive humor in a corporation, which has given rise to the collective use of humor. In the aforementioned study, it is observed that a particular type of clothing is parodied by women to index subversive humor.

The present study might shed light upon a marked community, who are also scarce in number, by unearthing their statements. In this sense, bringing more examples from female stand-up performances might provide a better understanding upon the patterns of conceptualizing gender and power in a Turkish context. This, in turn, might illuminate the audience on the issues that are perceived as taboos, politicized opinions, and undermining women empowerment from the female comedians’ perspective. Their perspectives can be traced through their utterances, language play and stylization practices, giving implications on their life trajectories and the way that they operate imposed social roles in their context. For this reason, conceptualization of female stand-up comedy performances might be crucial since it informs us about;

- (i) how they approach the issues of gender and power in the Turkish context,

(ii) how societal norms are read and interpreted by the female comedians in Turkey,

(iii) how their conceptualizations relate to those from similar contexts across globe.

Overall, the concept of gender is regarded as objectified in the core of performed humor determining the nature of “fun” element and it is stated as only intelligible drawing on the local context (Delap, 2016; Matwick & Matwick, 2019). In a similar context, there is a need for more studies to unfold gender-based sequences of female comedians by a recent publication of Ruiz-Gurillo and Linares-Bernabéu (2020). Although there seems to be a considerable amount of interest in humor discourse from a gender perspective across the globe (Chiaro & Baccolini, 2014; Bing & Scheibman, 2014; Coates, 2014; Crawford, 2003; Cullen, 2015; Kotthoff, 2006), to the best of the researcher’s knowledge, the issue has not been attended to in the Turkish context much. In this light, the present study has set out to investigate the following research question as main focus:

R.Q.: How do the Turkish female comedians conceptualize gender and power in their stand-up performances?

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The present research can be described as an artifact analysis, since it is argued that artifacts are “the intended and unintended residues of human activity, (which) give alternative insights into the ways in which people perceive and fashion their lives” (Hodder, 1994, p. 304). In this regard, the video clips of the stand-up performances are delineated as artifacts. Falling into the social constructivist paradigm; the study aims at unveiling the voices of a socially marked community and interpreting their conceptualizations according to the context.

### ***Data Selection and Context of the Study***

Stand-up performances, which are held in smaller places where the distance between the comedian and the audience is shorter, might inform us about how the female comedians construct their scripts by touching upon particular points so that their way of coping with the hegemonic norms might be discovered. Making up of the main data

unit of analysis, the clips have been narrowed down according to the following preferences:

- (i) The clip must be recorded under staged stand-up performance parameters,
- (ii) The performance must belong to a Turkish woman,
- (iii) The clip must be aired publicly to a global video sharing platform,
- (iv) The clip must be shared by the comedian and/or with the approval of her,
- (v) The content of the clip must refer to gender and power dynamics,
- (vi) The duration of the clip must be at least two minutes.

The keywords for searching the clips are generated as Turkish equivalent words for “women stand up” in a global video sharing platform. As a result, 22 videos are found to be abiding by the first two criteria and they are reduced to 10 videos (47 minutes 34 seconds in total) after applying all the criteria for sampling. In this vein, data is made up of a collection of ten stand-up performance video clips delivered by various female comedians based in Turkey. The video clips are selected since they constitute for an authentic platform where humorous sequences can be examined with regards to gender and power dynamics. The present study is, thus, set out to examine the way humor functions in highlighting gender, undermining the socially imposed gender roles on a stand-up stage. In this vein, as can be seen in *Table 1*, the collection under analysis consists in 69 gendered and 28 failed sequences at total. Through examining such set of sequences, the speakers’ views upon gender and power in their context and the kinds of reaction that their conception is getting from the audience could be identified.

**Table 1.** Main data unit of analysis

Clip N°	Length	Humorous Sequences	Gendered Sequences	Failed
C1	02:13	21	6	0/0
C2	03:28	12	4	2/4
C3	05:16	41	21	2/2
C4	06:32	29	8	4/7
C5	08:00	38	9	0/0
C6	08:45	9	4	3/3

**Table 1.** Main data unit of analysis

Clip N°	Length	Humorous Sequences	Gendered Sequences	Failed
C7	08:02	29	12	5/7
C8	03:52	0	0	7/7
C9	08:59	3	0	5/5
C10	02:32	17	5	0/0

*Data Analysis and Procedure*

Conversation analytic approach embraces a meticulous analysis of interaction in a particular discourse under the roof of interactional sociolinguistics. Its light onto consecutive speech acts in humor discourse is found to be efficiency in investigating the socially constructed phenomena behind joking (Norrick, 2010). The applicability of conversation analysis into humor is also commonly recognized by some scholars such as Kitzinger (2002), who argues that conversation analysis might be conducive in focusing on “the fine-grained details of women’s (and men’s) subjective, i.e., personal and political experience(s)” and unearthing socially constructed phenomenon such as power (p.56).

In this study, laughter is regarded as an identifier of a humorous sequence, following Norrick’s (1993) idea that joking, and laughter are located in the humor context as complementary fashion, establishing an adjacency pair. When interpreting the humorous sequences in the transcribed data of the stand-up performances, conversation analysis falls into the center of examining the discursive flow of interaction. To make the qualitative analysis conducive for comparison and interpretation, each humorous sequence is transcribed following the principles of Hoey and Kendrick (2017). In this regard, Schnurr and Chan (2011) demonstrate that the audience might connect with the comedian by also playing along, joking back, smiling, laughing, or giving no reaction, which might show their alignment or disalignment with the humored subject. To be able to get a more comprehensive understanding, failed humor will be given room in the analysis as a separate section.

Upon delivering the content analysis of the transcriptions, in vivo coding framework (Saldana, 2012) has been utilized to unearth how Turkish female comedians conceptualize gender and power in their own words. In this regard, the transcriptions are analyzed inductively, based on the emerging patterns that are

derived from the adjacency pair of humorous utterance + laughter, and humorous utterance + silence or considerably amount of less interaction than usual. The utterances are analyzed under lexical choice, under the description of study areas within the ‘institutionality of interaction’ put forward by Heritage (2005). The lexical choices are relevant here to demonstrate the participants’ ways of producing particular roles and identities in front of an audience. While interpreting the data; indexicality, pause, style shifting, and nonverbal communication are also taken into consideration. To assure validity of the content analysis to a certain amount, an expert holding an MA degree in English Language Teaching has been selected as an external audit and reviewed the transcribed data with codes. Via negotiation, the codes are updated to become more descriptive of the humorous sequences.

## **Findings and Discussion**

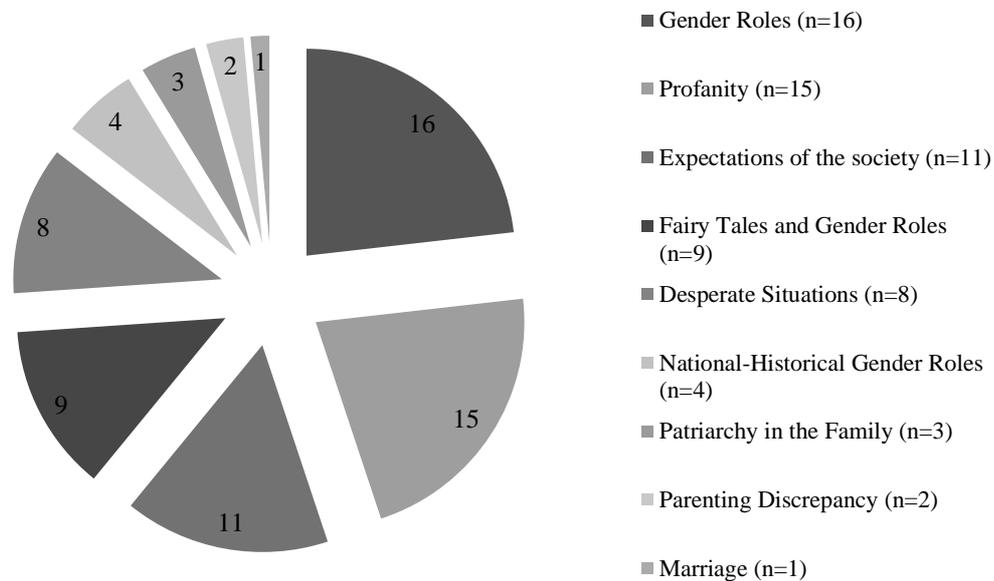
### *Quantitative Findings*

Considering the topics mentioned by Turkish female comedians, the following figures demonstrate the frequencies found in the dataset with the help of descriptive statistics. The topics emerged in the analysis can be unfolded as following:

- *Gender Roles*, denoting the outer views on womanhood assigned by the society;
- *Profanity*, highlighting the local tendency to use of specific words that belong to femininity when cursing;
- *Expectations of the Society*, indicating a set of permissible behavior that is imposed upon women by other people;
- *Fairy Tales and Gender Roles*, criticizing the stereotypical passive roles assigned to women in the fairy tales;
- *Desperate Situations*, describing the situations where women are left alone with their unpleasant experience;
- *National-Historical Gender Roles*, covering the views of society upon role of gender in the historical and national context;

- *Patriarchy in the Family*, giving insight upon the gender/power dynamics regarded in the family;
- *Parenting Discrepancy*, depicting different parenting mindsets with regards to raising a boy versus a girl;
- *Marriage*, characterizing how society regards it as women’s priority.

As can be seen in the *Figure 1*, *Gender Roles* seem to be the topic attracting the most occurrences, followed by *Profanity*, *Expectations of the Society*, *Fairy Tales* and *Gender Roles*, *Desperate Situations*, *National-Historical Gender Roles*, *Patriarch in the Family*, *Parenting Discrepancy*, and *Marriage*, respectively. The topics are mostly regarded as controversial, dealing with gender and power at some point.

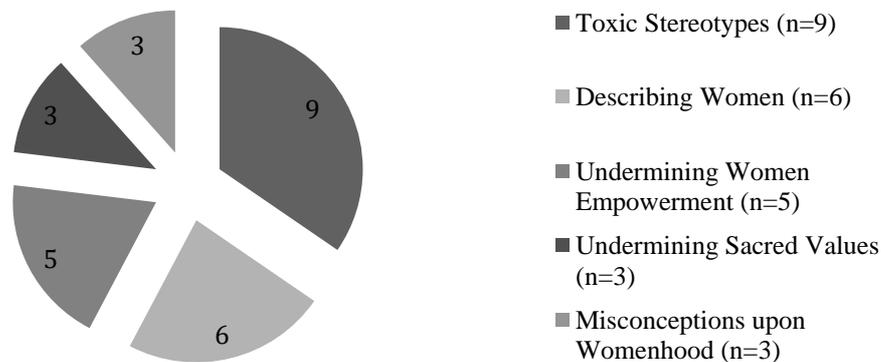


**Figure 1.** Frequency of Topics - Gendered Sequences

As mentioned earlier, the gendered sequences and failed sequences are analyzed separately, so that the instances reflecting the audience’s perceptions and opinions would surface in the analysis. Therefore, *Figure 2* shows the distribution of sentences, in which the audience stayed considerably quiet with no or lower amount of reaction while being exposed to the sentences loaded with gender and power dynamics. The topics of the sequences can be described as hereunder:

- *Toxic Stereotypes*, utilizing the cliché overgeneralizations with respect to being women and how it is viewed in Turkey as a disadvantage;

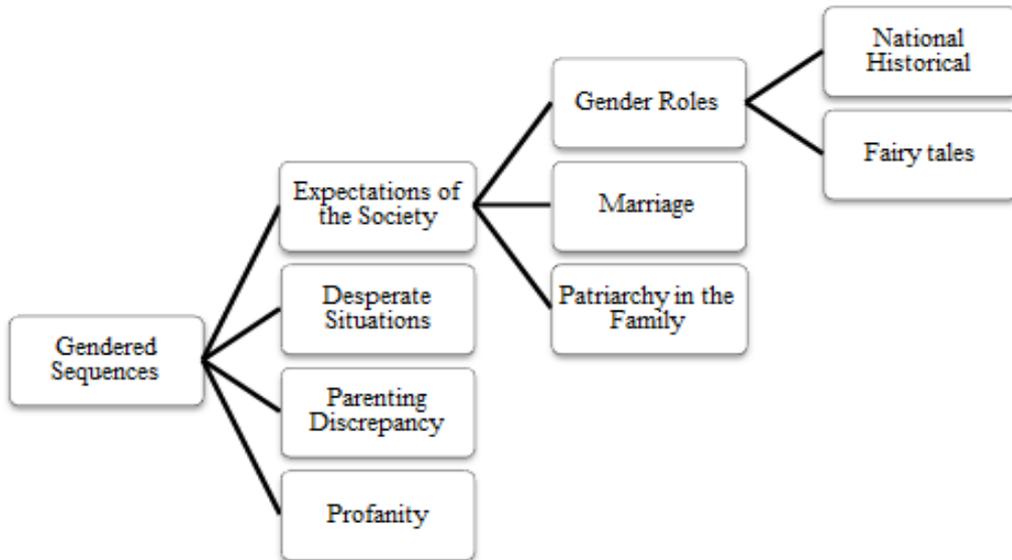
- *Describing Women*, presenting themselves with certain negative attributions or attaching loaded definitions to being women;
- *Undermining Women Empowerment*, performing a self-disgrace with respect to women;
- *Undermining Sacred Values*, blunting the sharp edges of the societal values such as motherhood through a humorous sequence;
- *Misconceptions upon Womanhood*, sharing unpleasant experiences resulted from false or no information upon womanhood when becoming an adolescent.



**Figure 2.** Frequency of Topics - Failed Sequences

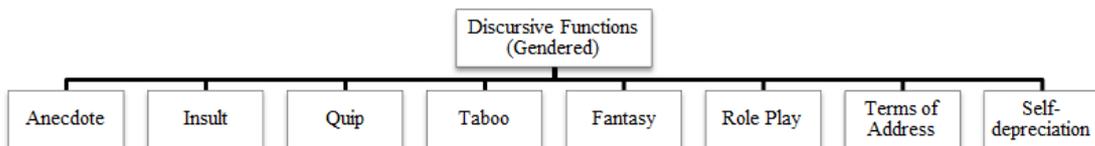
### ***Qualitative Findings***

As a result of in vivo coding framework (Saldana, 2012), the gendered sequences are categorized in a hierarchical order, as depicted in *Figure 3*. It can be examined that *Expectations of the Society* holds the majority of the weight since it is attached to other themes such as *Marriage*, *Patriarchy in the Family*, *Gender Roles*; which sets the roof for *National-Historical Gender Roles* and *Fairy Tales*. On the other hand; themes labeled as *Desperate Situations*, *Parenting Discrepancy*, and *Profanity* stands with a near hierarchy that of *Expectations of the Society*.



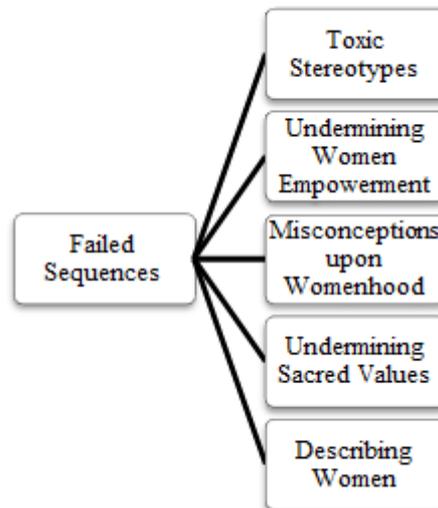
**Figure 3.** Hierarchical Distribution of Gendered Sequences' Themes

The analysis is further elaborated on by having a closer look to the discursive functions, which the comedians use for dealing with the topics regarding gender and power in their stand-up performances. The gendered sequences are performed using discursive strategies (see *Figure 4*) such as telling an anecdote, insulting certain concept, delivering a wise comment, unfolding taboo subject matters, using particular words that ring a bell in the mind of the audience, and perform in a way that puts the comedian down in a sarcastic way.



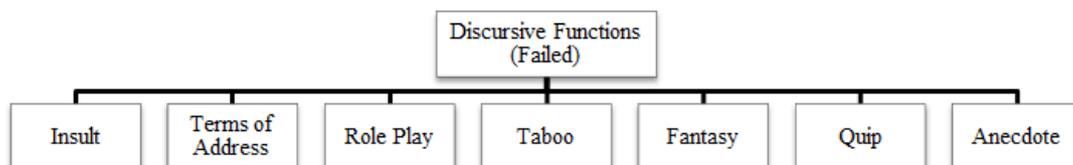
**Figure 4.** Discursive Functions of Gendered Sequences

When it comes to the other side of the coin, indicating the things that the audience keeps the distance to react to; failed sequences seem to be in the order displayed in *Figure 5*. Therefore, categories labeled as *Toxic Stereotypes*, *Undermining Women Empowerment*, *Misconceptions upon Womanhood*, *Undermining Sacred Values*, and *Describing Women* stand next to one another.



**Figure 5.** Hierarchical Distribution of Failed Sequences' Themes

Regarding the discursive strategies that are utilized in the course of failed instances (see *Figure 6*); there are certain functions which are undermining women empowerment through assigning negative labels to women, generalizing values of women with particular addressee words, mimicking a passive-dependent women, unearthing taboo subjects that are not normally spoken in public, creating a hypothetical scenario where women fails with abiding by the expectations of the society, verbalizing a personal observation upon how women is perceived by men, sharing a memory in which a woman is treated unfairly.



**Figure 6.** Discursive Functions of Failed Sequences

In the dataset, the exposure of certain mindsets clarifying the boundaries of womanhood seems to start at early ages in the family. The family is also viewed as the place where the little girls meet with men for the first time. They tend to conceptualize the concept of men through the closest male relatives such as father, uncle, or brother. It is also implied that meeting other men outside the family is frowned upon for a long time before it becomes permissible. In this light, the verbatim extract belonging to the category of Patriarchy in the Family is stated as following:

C1: Kız çocuklarının erkek figürleriyle karşılaştığı İLK yer, ailesindeki erkekler. Amcanı, abini, dayımı görüyorsun erkek diye. Uzun süre biz başka bir erkek görmüyoruz .hh (Audience laughs) (Anecdote)

Alongside growing up with a mindset limiting the actions of women, the comedians indicate some scenarios where they get no support when they face unpleasant situations. Let alone talk about it publicly, they cannot tell it even to their life partners. Instead, they are forced to feel indignity for having such experience, no matter what the underlying reason might be. It is depicted in the following extract from the *Desperate Situations*:

C3: Cevap verebileceğin hiçbir şey yok. (Audience laughs)  
Ve eşine sevgiline anlatabileceğin bir şey değil yani. Eve gidip şöyle diyemiyosun=(Audience laughs)Seda şimdi ERKEKLİK GURURU GEREĞİ (.) hani ben böyle bir şeyi- senin bana bunu bu şekilde anlatman= yani erkeklik gururu gereği ben böyle bir şeyi duyamam. (Audience laughs)  
Tamam °ben duyuram° şakin ol sinirlenme! (Audience laughs) (Role play)

Such unsupportive approach is reinforced with unanswered questions that are not allowed to be mingled with. Then, further in the same performance, the comedian shares an anecdote, in which her mother warns her about what is inappropriate regarding menstruation without any reasoning. The reason why the audience stays silent here might be that they take a pause to feel the weight of reality since the events are quite personal and also perceived as taboo. The extract hereunder belongs to the category of *Expectations of the Society*:

C7: Çünkü bize hiçbir şey anlatılmadı, tabular vardı:. X kromozomlular olarak özellikle tabular DAHA FAZLAYDI. (Audience gets silent) (Quip)  
Adet dedikleri[sanki adetlerimizden törelerimizdenmiş gibi]aslında regl denilen şey hayatıma girme öncesinde^... °Regl olursan sankin bunlardan kullanma!° (Her mother warned her not to use a tampon) (Audience gets silent) (Taboo, Anecdote)

The unsupportive and blurry environment, in which the female comedians grow up is intertwined with double standards brought up by the parenting practices valuing boys over girls. Pampering boys while providing no solid scaffold for girls, the parents are observed as creating a sense of overselling for boys, which boosts self-esteem of the boys in an unequal manner. The comedian underlines this inequality with a witty comment and indicates that it also calls for more effort to meet on a similar ground. In this vein, the following verbatim extract is labeled under *Parenting Discrepancy*:

- C7: *DİĞER bir kulvardan yetiştirilmiş erkek cinsiyle (.) konu[ortak]ortada buluşmaya çalışıyoruz aslında ama ↑ onlar FARKLI yetiştirilmişler (Audience gets silent)*  
*Onlar EN çabuk sen bitirirsin, hadi çocuğum BİRİNCİ sensin, AF:erin benim oğluma, en hızlı SEN yapıyorsun=°konu hız DEĞİL ki° (Audience laughs)*  
*Hız (.) felakettir ↓ (Audience laughs) (Role Play, Quip)*

The desperate situations are further observed in the usage of the profanity lexicon, denoting offensive or obscene words, which are prevalently used with feminine words by mostly males in a vulgar manner. The comedian brings up the disturbance caused by this prevalent usage offending women as individually and offers an impersonalized version of it by generating a male counterpart of such profanity words to even the odds. However, her attempts are mostly discouraged in that it cannot be regarded as a true counterpart in how it feels, sounds, etc. It can be examined in the following extract labeled under *Profanity*:

- C3: ANONİM bi \*\* olsun orda: (Audience laughs)  
 Çünkü kesinlikle üzerimize almıyoruz (Audience laughs)  
 Lafın: gelişi koyuyoruz kızım yani (Audience gets silent) (Taboo, Quip)

As for the gender roles assigned in the society, the role of women in the governance is highlighted with a quip. The reaction against such faded role is indicated alongside getting no reaction from the audience. It might imply a thoughtful pause, which the audience takes a break from humor and thinks about the weight of reality it holds. Further, this break is broken by another quip that a women governor would be criticized by the looks all the time, demonstrated in the following excerpt of *Gender Roles*:

- C4: Çok kadın hükümdar olmadığı için bilmiyoruz ama (Audience gets silent)  
 Ben buna kadın hükümdar farkı derim hh (Audience laughs; a male audience says "Bravo!" here.)  
 Erkek hükümdarlardan bir farkı da kilo aldığıında hamile sanılması (h) (Audience laughs) (Quip)

The roles assigned to genders are further verified by instances that imply the societal expectations of women. It is, therefore, viewed as uncommon to be a female comedian in this context, given that the expectations go against such extroversion of opinions. On the other hand, regarding the following extract; it is supported by the audience that women can be outgoing and active user of humor with a strong applause.

Moreover, societal expectations are commented on by self-depreciation in that the comedian thinks that she looks old enough to have kids and admits it before commented on. In this vein, the following extract is a member of *Expectations of the Society*:

C4: Stand up yapıyorum. Cumartesi günü çocuklarıyla evde oturmak yerine Sarıyer'den kalkıp Kadıköy'e gelmekte SAKINCA görmeyen en komik 500 kadın komedyeninden biriyim (Audience laughs and applauds)  
°İki çocuk° annesiyim ben=evet biliyorum gösteriyorum (Audience laughs) (Quip, Self-depreciation)

Passivized women in the fairy tales are subverted so that gender roles would overrun the expectations of the society. In the following excerpt, it is criticized and questioned deeply how the princes in the fairy tales so shallow and why the princesses do not take any action to save themselves other than waiting for the prince. The excerpt, thus, belongs to *Fairy Tales*:

C7: Herif kızın °suratını hatırlamıyo° (Audience laughs)  
Ayakkabıdan kızını arıyo (Audience laughs)  
Abi (.) nereye baktın sen bütün gece benle dans ederken? (Audience laughs)  
İKİNİZ nasıl çıkacaksınız abi oradan? (Audience laughs)  
Herif yine o=saçtan inebilir, kız YİNE kaldı orda (Audience laughs)  
Abla biraz saksıyı çalıştırsana-onu ke:s biyere bağla:, >herifi beklemek zorunda kalma daha erken bas git< (Audience laughs) (Quip)

Upon analyzing the gender and power dynamics in female stand up performances, it seems to be worth noticing that three clips out of the whole dataset are staged in a nation-wide talent contest aired on television. Before starting their performances, the comedians are mostly discouraged in that labeling their show as “stand-up” would set the expectations so high that they might not meet. The utterances are usually not paired with laughter, the audience only shows reaction when it is called for applause, the comedian gets rejected, or leaves the show. In the following instances, there seems to be stereotypes such as women caring too much about the looks, being over-dramatic, overgeneralized across nations, etc. They are categorized under *Describing Women* and *Toxic Stereotypes*:

C8: Kızları bir görebilir miyim HANIMLARI? (expecting an applause gesture)  
Umarım GÜNÜNÜZDESİNİZDİR (mumbling from audience) TEK derdim (.) ne giyicem.  
Nasıl görünüyorum? (expecting an applause gesture) (Terms of address)  
C9: (Mimics her husband) Canım(.) gelirken içerden bana çay getirir misin?  
Eyvahlar olsun bu kadına ELLİ ŞIRINGA botoks yemiş etkisi yaratır... NEE? BENDEN?  
(Audience gets silent)  
İşte KLASİK Türk kadını ... Maalesef öyle DEĞİL. Bir sürü kadın biliyorum hepsi böyle:  
(Audience gets silent) (Role Play)

### Concluding Remarks

In the present study, ten clips of stand-up performances belonging to Turkish female comedians are stretched out to unfold the sequences that index gender and power, which has been shaped by the perspective provided by Foucault. To this end, the humorous and failed sequences are transcribed and analyzed using in vivo coding framework (Saldana, 2012). For analysis purposes, the sequences are further put into transcription using the conventions of Hoey and Kendrick (2017). The findings are summarized into tables displaying the frequency distribution and the scope of the content regarding gendered (i.e., humorous sequences that are adjacent to laughter of the audience and failed sequences). Whereas the themes humorous sequences are ranked as *Gender Roles*, *Profanity*, *Expectations of the Society*, *Fairy Tales and Gender Roles*, *Desperate Situations*, *National-Historical Gender Roles*, *Patriarchy in the Family*, *Parenting Discrepancy*, *Marriage*; failed sequences are emerged as *Toxic Stereotypes*, *Describing Women*, *Undermining Women Empowerment*, *Undermining Sacred Values*, *Misconceptions upon Womanhood* in the data that is analyzed. As for the discursive functions utilized by the comedians to tackle the issues with gender and power in their performances, diverse strategies are found to be in use such as anecdote, quip, insult, taboo, role play, terms of address, fantasy, and self-depreciation.

Considering the research conducted on a global scale, Ruiz-Gurillo and Linares-Bernabéu (2020), in which the subversion of heteronormative societal norms is analyzed in terms of two female comedians, the results seem to be on the same ground with respect to using humor as a tool for reflecting upon stereotypical gender roles attached to women by the society. In this regard, the humor is observed to be a functioning tool that can act as a mirror depicting the society's views, impositions, and perceptions on womanhood; thus, it might help realizing how those affect themselves as women. It is also used as a platform where the comedians can unburden themselves from the faded roles assigned to women in the fairy tales, and the history. Additionally, it is used as a way to share their experiences upon the parenting discrepancy they are up against and how it affects their life trajectories in the long run. Considering the sequences labeled as failed, it has been found out that the audience has kept their distance with the utterances in the cases where they are loaded with

overused distortions upon how women is placed, described, limited by the society. It is also observed as failed sequences with respect to putting down women empowerment via insertion of belittling lexicon in the instances. Interestingly, the audience neutralize their reactions when it comes to the exchange of unpleasant personal experiences upon womanhood, the journey where they feel left alone to experience and be hold responsible for their and even others' actions. In a similar vein, in the instances where the comedians try to touch upon the values such as motherhood through humor, the audience opts for not reacting.

Overall, the stand-up performances have evidence that humor can be utilized as a multi-purpose gadget, which function as establishing a sincere platform for sharing experiences and perceptions in the eyes of a woman. Although limited to the very boundaries of the selected data that is analyzed, the utterances seem to be revealing deeper stories and experiences unfolding in the speech of the comedians. Such analyses might be beneficial in spotting the ways that empower, undermine, and identify women in a particular context, allowing for comparison alongside. In this regard, further research might take upon analyzing instances of the stand-up performances specified in gender and power dynamics uttered by female comedians from diverse contexts or male comedians. Doing so might reveal how women are regarded in that context, along with the comedians' perspective upon how gender and power is identified locally.

### **Notes on the contributor**

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