

‘Sana All’: A Critical Discourse Analysis on its Popularity among Filipino Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the meaning and purpose of the phrase Sana all from the perspective of Generation Z. Specifically, it sought to investigate how individuals across three gender identities perceive and use the phrase in everyday communication. Using a qualitative research design and Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis, the study employed purposive sampling to select fifteen participants representing three gender identities, namely women, LGBT, and men, all of whom had knowledge and were users of the phrase. A Priori Code was used to come up with the interview questions, which served as the main instrument of the study. The audio recordings obtained from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and were subjected to cool and warm analyses. A warm analysis was conducted to categorize the key ideas and identify the final themes of the study. The transcription and the translation of the responses were validated by the researcher’s adviser. The findings revealed that for all three groups, the phrase was commonly associated with feelings of benign envy, which also served as a source of motivation. Additionally, Sana all was widely used by the Filipino Gen Zs, regardless of their gender orientation, as it has multiple roles in communication: it conveys concise information, it is easily understood, it minimizes the offensiveness of words, it promotes inclusivity by aligning with the current trends, it can conceal true feelings and intentions, and it acts as a barrier against negative connotations. As a linguistic tool, Sana all creates a sense of belongingness and effective communication among individuals of all gender orientations. The frequent use of the phrase reflects the ever-changing nature of language.

Keywords: Slang, Language Change, Critical Discourse Analysis, Gender Speech Community, Sana All

INTRODUCTION

The Philippine English (Phile) lexicon is growing; thus, understanding newly created words results in confusion in meanings. According to the Global Language Monitor, 5,400 new words are developed each year, with 1,066,095.9 new words in use today. Every 98 minutes, a new word is generated, demonstrating an individual's rapid inventiveness and construction. From that, the number of signs that we can produce is endless.

In addition, with communication as an ongoing process of exchanging or imparting information between individuals, language has always played a vital role in understanding the significant intentions inside the group of words being uttered. According to media critic and theorist Carey (2007), “Communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired and transferred.”

The process of learning a language is complicated and always changing. Gender is one of the many things that can affect this process. Numerous research and interest have been put into the question of how gender affects language development. To fully understand how gender affects language learning, speech patterns, communication styles, and how we understand language, it is necessary to know how gender affects gender identity and how we communicate.

Nowadays, it doesn't only imply certain phrases in a conversation. With the appearance of modern technology wherein almost everyone owns more than one gadget, it widens the accessibility, capability and creativity of

every individual to produce their own words. For the most part, new words are created and used by “internet warriors” which are the Gen Zs. Along with this, this generation begins with individuals who were born from 1997 onwards.

As observed, slang is a type of language which is frequently used in informal conversations wherein instead of direct words and meanings are uttered, new words are being said that are trying to make the listener think of what the real meaning or intention of the speaker (Nordquist, 2019) is based on the tone, expression and situation. Furthermore, there are a lot of slang words that have been produced since then wherein the trendiest or known slang word that is frequently and timely used until the present time is “Sana all” despite gender differences.

Unconsciously, Gen Z utters this phrase in informal conversations with family, relatives, or friends. Further, it becomes a term to indirectly share their emotions and intentions. Its appearance affects communication not only between individuals with a similar age range or generation but also with the context of the message delivered and received by different gender identities.

The available literature indicates that very few, if any, studies explored the meaning and purpose of the phrase “Sana all” regarding gender identity. Existing research has taken different populations and geographic areas as the subject of the study. In addition, the researcher wanted to gather opinions from various individuals of different gender identities to conclude answers since there are limited studies related to this present one.

The objectives of this study were to understand the meaning and purpose of the phrase “Sana all” employed by 15 participants from different gender identities such as Men, Women, and LGBTQIA+ from Isabela State University- Echague enrolled during the first semester of the academic year 2023–2024. Specifically, this study also seeks to answer the questions: what is the meaning behind the popularity of “Sana all” in the context of the identified speech communities; and what are the participants’ reasons for using “Sana all” in the context of identified gender.

This study supports SDG 5, Gender Equality, by examining how the phrase “Sana all” is used about gender identity. Understanding this usage can help address gender-related communication issues. By exploring how different gender identities use the phrase, the study creates inclusivity, which ties in with SDG 10, Reduced Inequalities. It breaks down barriers by emphasizing the importance of inclusive communication that respects all gender identities. This is important because it shows how language can promote inclusivity and respect for everyone.

Theoretical Framework

This study is supported by the theory of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis theoretical framework (1995). The three crucial parts of Fairclough's analysis are description, interpretation, and explanation.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative research design used Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis to understand the meaning and purpose of the phrase “Sana all” based on which gender identity they belong to. Critical discourse analysis, used to examine how language is utilized in social contexts, is appropriate for this study given its design. Furthermore, this method helped the researcher to understand the world by finding the deeper intentions and meaning embedded in an individual’s words. This methodology helped the researcher to gather data and analyze the meaning and purpose of the phrase “Sana all” within the three different speech communities.

This study employed purposive sampling as the researcher selected participants who embodied specific characteristics based on the criteria which were set before the gathering of the data. The researcher purposely selected the participants who used the phrase “Sana all”. The set criteria for the participants were: (1) knew the phrase “Sana all”; (2) users of the phrase “Sana all”; (3) Gen Z or anyone born from 1997 onwards (Dimock, 2019); and (4) belongs to different gender identities such as Men, Women, and LGBTQIA+. In line with the

researcher's sampling method, Patton (2002) stated that purposeful sampling is considered as the most used technique in any research. Whereby those cases focus more on gaining various information that lies on the point of interest and, thus, are selected to use limited resources successfully. Language development is a multifaceted and dynamic process influenced by numerous factors, one of which is gender. Therefore, a total of fifteen (15) participants were selected, sectioned as five (5) participants per gender identity (Men, Women, and LGBTQIA+), as these groups are likely to show the diversity of language and how it differentiates the meaning and usage of "Sana all". These participants' ages ranged from 17-26 years old, which is the most common age range for college students, thus, making them a great source of responses necessary for this study.

The interview guide containing essential questions served as the main instrument. The researcher used a Priori Code to develop the interview questions. To explore the participants' perspectives and reasons for using the phrase, the researcher provided open-ended questions that were answered by the participants.

In gathering the data needed, permission to conduct the study was requested from the office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. A copy of the letter was also given to the program chair of the Languages and Literature Department. Upon approval and to properly conduct the study, the researcher sought the participants' approval for her to have permission to conduct the survey through an in-depth interview. After the approval, the researcher asked the participants if they were willing to be interviewed face-to-face or by any means they were available. During the interview on their scheduled date and time, the researcher started by explaining the purpose of the interview and sought consent to continue. Participants were encouraged to speak freely when answering and were told that there were no correct/incorrect answers. When topics were felt to be fully explored, questioning was then moved to other areas. Interviews were concluded when all areas had been examined in detail, typically 10-15 minutes. Interviews were recorded using a mobile phone audio recorder and were then transcribed.

The audio recordings obtained from the interviews were transcribed verbatim, taking participants' responses and conversations accurately. The transcripts, along with any field notes taken during the interviews, were subjected to cool and warm analyses. Cool analyses refer to the grid analysis to surface the significant ideas while warm analyses involve empathy in analyzing the important ideas (Siagto- Wakat, 2016). Warm analysis was employed in categorizing the significant ideas and in arriving at the final themes of the study. To maintain objectivity in analyzing the data, member-data checking, which involved presenting the transcriptions, significant statements, and surfaced categories of the participants, was employed. The transcription and translation of the responses were validated by the researcher's adviser.

Every element of interview data was encrypted following the data collection process. Encryption is a process by which information is rendered unintelligible to individuals without a password or key. Encrypting sensitive files (e.g., by employing file passwords) prevents unknown individuals from reading or using them. This methodology guarantees an in-depth look into the usage, perspectives, and reasons of the participants regarding the phrase "Sana all."

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Meaning of "Sana all" in the identified speech communities

This section examines the different perspectives and interpretations of the phrase "Sana all" within the three different speech communities.

Women: From the perspective of women, saying "Sana all" means expressing their envy towards the accomplishments they usually observe in others in their social circles.

W1 generally links the phrase "Sana all" with feelings of envy, mainly when someone in her circle accomplished something she has not. Additionally, she also acknowledges its role as an expression, indicating that sometimes there is a feeling of envy. W2 states that "Sana all" serves as an expression of admiration, caused by qualities or achievements observed in others. However, she also acknowledges various emotions, including envy, inspiration, and motivation. W3 perceived "Sana all" to convey admiration and motivation,

expressing a desire to reach the achievements of others, particularly in academic excellence. The participant also talks about hope, indicating that the phrase implies a person's aspirations for similar things and accomplishments. For W4, "Sana all" serves as a tool to express feelings of envy and serves as a form of expression. W5 perceives the phrase "Sana all" as a means of following the trends. The participant sees the phrase fit in with popular expressions, emphasizing its usage as a social trend.

While the primary interpretation revolves around envy, women participants also emphasized the positive use of "Sana all." For some, it motivates, encouraging personal growth and striving for similar achievements. This dual nature of the phrase reflects how adaptable it is and how it can be used in different situations. W3 interprets "Sana all" as a tool for conveying admiration and motivation, expressing a desire to achieve the same success as others, particularly in academic excellence.

Overall, W1, W3, and W5 perceive "Sana all" positively, using it to acknowledge and appreciate others' accomplishments and use it as their inspiration. However, W2 perceives the phrase negatively, where "Sana all" can lead to self-degradation and blame, especially when goals are unmet, as observed in her statement. W4 also emphasizes the negative connotations associated with the phrase when used negatively. This negativity shows when comparing oneself to another, leading to unfavorable thoughts.

Individual interpretations revealed several meanings associated with "Sana All," including expressions of admiration, motivation, envy, trend following, and trends. This means that women tend to associate the phrase "Sana all" with expressing their desire to own something, as most participants interpret it as a sign of envy. Participants generally use the phrase with positive intentions despite occasional negative connotations.

LGBT: Participants from the LGBT community predominantly associate "Sana all" with feelings of envy or jealousy, paralleling the sentiments of the women participants, followed by feelings of inspiration and motivation.

In the statement of LGBT1, the dual nature of "Sana all" as both jealousy and inspiration is evident. The participant often used the phrase when envying something they wanted, making it a form of motivation that encourages them to do what others have accomplished. The interpretation of "Sana all" by LGBT2 revolves around the emotion of envy since they commonly use the phrase to express how jealous they are of someone. For LGBT3 and LGBT4, "Sana all" serves as a means of expressing both admiration and jealousy. They use the phrase to show appreciation, to acknowledge, and to praise the achievements of others. The word becomes motivation, encouraging individuals to attain similar accomplishments. LGBT5 expressed the same sentiment. However, they used "Sana all" to complement and express envy.

In the LGBT community, "Sana all" is perceived as an expression of envy. However, the positive connotations of "Sana all" are more defined, with some saying that their usage of the phrase can also serve as a source of inspiration, motivating them to achieve similar accomplishments.

Their statements indicate that, despite the phrase's association with envy, the LGBT community consistently perceives "Sana all" positively. The phrase becomes a tool to express admiration, congratulate, and encourage someone to attain their goals. The participants perceive "Sana all" not just as an expression of envy but also as a tool to support and encourage one another.

The LGBT speech community's positive interpretation of "Sana all" supports the idea that, even when expressing desires for what others have, the primary intention is to promote an atmosphere where encouragement is a practice and gain inspiration from the achievements of others. The positive connotations associated with "Sana all" in the LGBT community indicate the phrase's role as a tool to express admiration and encouragement in their social circle.

Men: Similar to the women and LGBT participants, most men interpret "Sana all" as an expression of jealousy or envy. This corresponds with the idea that the phrase is often used to praise others' accomplishments. Additionally, men perceive the phrase to express themselves and as a tool to show their admiration or amazement. M1 and M5 specifically state that they use the phrase in situations that make them feel envious and when expressing their desire to have or experience the same thing.

Meanwhile, M5 associates the phrase with when others are experiencing positive happenings in their lives, which made him utter an envious response. Two participants, M2 and M4, perceive "Sana all" to express themselves and to tease someone within their social circles. M2 stated that he uses the phrase playfully by teasing his friends when he notices them being happy. M4, on the other hand, considers it a form of expression, admiration, and occasionally a touch of jealousy.

Even though the phrase is often associated with jealousy, male participants also emphasized the positive aspects of "Sana all," emphasizing its role as a person's source of inspiration and motivation.

M1 expresses a positive perspective. In this case, the phrase is seen as a source of inspiration that motivates the participant to attain similar accomplishments. This idea is supported by M2, emphasizing the positive connotation of "Sana all". In this context, the phrase becomes a way to express their pride in others' achievements, converting jealousy into admiration and acknowledgment. M3 further emphasizes the positive aspect, where "Sana all" serves as a driving force to achieve personal goals and to improve oneself. This positive perspective is supported by M5, which perceives the phrase as a challenge. The phrase becomes a motivational tool, encouraging the individual to attain a similar level of success.

Using "sana all" motivates them, pushing them to work for similar achievements. Some men use the phrase as a playful banter or compliment, illustrating its adaptability. This phrase illustrates that despite its initial association with envy, men consistently used "Sana all" positively.

The common ground in the perception of "Sana all" among women, the LGBT community, and men is that they all associate it with envy or jealousy. The study's results validate the findings of Pontillas et al. (2020), who stated in one of their conclusions that "Sana all" is one of the indirect ways to express envy about something or be hopeful that the person is also in the same situation.

Participants in all three groups commonly use the phrase to express envy and a desire for something that someone else has or has accomplished. It suggests that, regardless of their gender orientation, "Sana all" is often used to express that they also want or admire the accomplishments or possessions of others.

The interpretation of "Sana all" in the discussion above is parallel with the study of Saffa (2022), which found that gender does not influence slang word usage, suggesting that "Sana all" is used similarly across the different speech communities. It implies that the interpretation of specific slang phrases might not be significantly influenced by gender. In the case of "Sana all," its association with envy or desire for something someone else has appeared consistent across the different speech communities. The common understanding of the expression across all genders supports the idea that certain slang phrases may be used and interpreted similarly by people of other genders.

While envy is prevalent, all three groups (women, the LGBT community, and men) share a common ground in recognizing the positive aspect of the phrase, associating "Sana all" with motivation, celebrating other's achievements, and as a source of encouragement. Researchers, Foster et al. (1972) and Frank (2001), have found and pointed out that envy can have a positive side, in which envy can sometimes be regarded as a motivational force that makes people work harder to obtain what others already have. In this case, "Sana all" is interpreted by these three groups as envy with a positive connotation validating the study conducted by Rosa (2018) where there are commonalities in the connotations attached to certain slang terms that different genders use. However, this contrasts with the statement of Lucillo (2021), that there is a negative connotation to "Sana all" every time you use it when there is a positive event in someone's life.

Reasons for using "Sana all" in the context of identified gender

This presents and interprets the data gathered from interviews with participants from different speech communities: Women (W), LGBTQ, and Men (M). The focus is on understanding the reasons behind the participants' usage of the phrase "Sana all" within their respective speech communities.

Women: Participants consistently mentioned "Sana all" due to its conciseness and straightforwardness. W1 and W2 expressed that the words allow for concise and clear communication of thoughts without requiring lengthy

explanations. W2 particularly highlighted the efficiency of “Sana all” in conveying a message without redundancy.

W1 emphasized that the phrase allows for immediate understanding without being interpreted negatively. W3 highlighted using “Sana all” to emphasize a general thought or sentiment without delving into specific details. This generalization supports conveying the overall idea without the need for elaborate explanations about a particular situation. W4 pointed out that “Sana all” carries a hidden meaning, allowing individuals to express themselves indirectly without explicitly expressing their emotions. This indirect expression is perceived to conform to societal trends and avoid overwhelming others with personal details. W5 pointed out the societal trends influencing the use of “Sana all.” This phrase is viewed as a trend in contemporary communication, allowing individuals to express envy or longing without causing significant harm. W5 also emphasized the importance of minimizing potential hurtful impacts on others using “Sana all.”

The popularity of “Sana all” among women can be attributed to its valued conciseness and efficiency, with participants like W1 and W2 appreciating its ability to convey thoughts directly without the need for lengthy explanations. The emphasis on immediate understanding, as highlighted by participants, creates clear and straightforward communication, minimizing the risk of negative interpretations. Moreover, as women such as W4 have observed, “Sana all” enables indirect communication, allowing the individuals to adapt to societal trends and convey emotions without publicly exposing personal intentions. In addition, W5 emphasizes the popularity of “Sana all” as a popular form of communication that allows one to convey envy or longing in a socially acceptable manner without upsetting others.

LGBT: LGBT1 stated that “Sana all” has become an accepted expression that is less offensive to many, thus becoming embedded in their vocabularies. They noted that the phrase desensitizes the offensive nature of certain words or expressions, making it a socially acceptable way to convey sentiments without causing discomfort.

For LGBT2, “Sana all” is associated with social popularity. By adopting a widely recognized phrase, individuals feel a sense of belonging and inclusion within a social group. Using the words becomes a way to establish connection and camaraderie, reinforcing the notion that it is a shared expression within their community.

LGBT3 emphasized the impact of modernity on linguistic usage, implying that incorporating “Sana all” is consistent with current communication trends. They used the phrase “Sana all” to avoid exaggerated terms; instead, they prefer to use this since it corresponds to the changing nature of language.

For LGBT4 and LGBT5, this phrase becomes an everyday means of communication since it is more straightforward to say without any need for lengthy explanations. Its convenience made this phrase a good option for the participants to express their thoughts.

Reasons like the phrase’s contribution to desensitizing offensive words, its importance in promoting a sense of inclusivity, its impact on language’s modernity, its convenience, and its nature as being widely understood without the need for lengthy explanations contribute to its prevalence in the LGBT community.

Men: Using “Sana all” makes anyone align with the current trends and social influences. This suggests a desire to stay relevant and connected with the current linguistic and cultural landscape.

Some participants often use the phrase “Sana all” as a tool for concealing true emotions. This implies a protective function, allowing individuals to hide their genuine sentiments behind the popular phrase “sana all.” Certain male participants, such as M4, indicated that they use “Sana all” as an intellectual way to avoid hurting others’ feelings. It serves as a defense mechanism, preventing misinterpretations and offensive reactions from others. The male participant, M5, highlighted the spontaneity and wit associated with using “sana all.” This indicates that the phrase is not only a linguistic trend, but he also believes it adds a touch of humor to communication, making it more modern and engaging.

The prevalence of “Sana all” among men is influenced by a combination of factors that reveal its distinct role in communication. Firstly, the alignment with linguistic and cultural trends, as expressed by participants like M1, underscores a desire to stay current and connected within the evolving nature of language. Additionally, using “Sana all” to conceal genuine emotions, as observed in participants M1, M2, and M3, indicates a protective function, allowing individuals to shield their genuine sentiments behind a widely accepted and popular expression. Meanwhile, M4 emphasizes its function as a defense mechanism to prevent misunderstandings. M5, on the other hand, stated that “Sana all” contributes to its engaging nature by communicating with a great sense of humor.

It is evident that the phrase “Sana all” is universal and has many functions in communicating. Women’s usage of “Sana all” is because it gives concise information and is easily understood without needing lengthy explanations. This is in connection with the study of Dumas & Lighter (1978) who stated that slang serves as a protection of the language user from any negative feeling associated with providing lengthy explanations. From the perspective of the LGBT community, their reasons for their usage of the phrase “Sana all” is because this phrase helps in minimizing the offensiveness of a word, and it also promotes a sense of inclusivity since it follows current trends in their community. This is in connection with the study of Sabbagh (2018) who argues that slang can express modernity. While in the perspective of men, the usage of the phrase “Sana all” allows them to hide their true feelings and intentions and they also consider it as a barrier for any negative reactions and connotations.

This implies that “Sana all” is not just a linguistic trend but it also helps individuals to create effective communication and avoid complicated communication among the different speech communities. According to Sirbu (2015), common language is significant in a community since everyone understands it. Slang is considered a common language within a community. Therefore, using everyday language, such as slang, increases cooperation and communication within a community.

CONCLUSION

Language is dynamic, meaning it adapts to the changing nature of society by adding new words or even old words with a new meaning and the creation of slang terms. “Sana all” is one of the slang terms that emerged because of the modernization and innovation of language. Language helps us express our thoughts, feelings, and needs. “Sana all” serves as a linguistic tool for everyone, regardless of gender orientation, to promote a sense of belongingness and practical communication among individuals nowadays, as this term conveys almost all their feelings. “Sana all” can be used in many different situations an individual is engaged in, whether in acknowledgment and appreciation of accomplishments, expression of envy, or admiration, and it can also serve as an inspiration that motivates individuals to attain their aspirations. Participants of this study, regardless of their gender orientation, used “Sana all” to express their envy, which is benign, expresses their aspirations, and serves as an expression of admiration. Sana all's characteristic in making anything less offensive and lighter and its indirect nature made the participants use this phrase frequently. The evolution of language is reflected in the frequent usage of the phrase “Sana all”. This phrase has been created to express an individual’s feeling of admiration, envy, and aspiration indirectly and is less offensive. All things considered; this phenomenon is evidence of the ever-changing nature of language.

“Sana all” will not be the last phrase coined by this generation. Therefore, the researcher suggests being alert about upcoming new words and making sure that the context can fit the meanings that people are trying to convey; the researcher suggests to being careful with words and being aware of the situation when using casual language in a conversation so that other people don't get the wrong idea; if the words used are hard for other people to understand, the researcher suggests to try expressing the intentions more directly so that those listening can better understand and provide help with the things they want to achieve or have. Since social media is primarily where new words are created, the researchers advise anyone unsure to ask for clarification or context. This is especially important for people who don't use social media. This generation is more creative and playful, so they opt to form trendy and entertaining expressions instead of ones that are awkward, dull, or too formal.

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