

SEXIST LANGUAGES IN “*PITCH PERFECT*” MOVIE SERIES

THESIS



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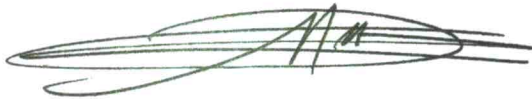
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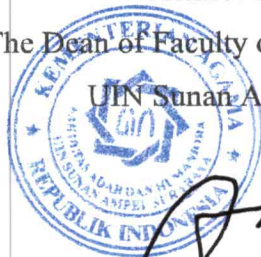
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stereotypical attitudes towards men and women. So, in principle, this study of sexist language deals with how language expresses positive and negative stereotypes for men and women. Then in practice, sexist language concentrates on how it expresses negative stereotypes to women (Holmes, 2013, p.325).

Since the 1960s, feminists have debated sexist language and have been primarily concerned with changing the language that discriminates against women and changing the way women are described in newspapers, advertisements, as well as how they are addressed and in texts and interactions. (Mills, 2008, p. 1). Therefore, sexist language is divided into categories based on Mills's theory. According to Mills, sexist language is divided into two main types. The first type is language that is clearly seen to be discriminated against between men and women, which is called Overt Sexism. The second type is the opposite of the first type, namely that there is no clear discrimination against women, which is called Indirect Sexism. This division will be discussed further in chapter two.

There have been several previous studies dealing with sexist language. A previous study on sexist language was conducted by Arfiani (2016) and Prasetyowati (2017) which has the same focus but with different data. The purpose of Arfiani's research is to expose how men perceive women in modern times, whether it is the same as the practice in the past that men always see women as weak characters and have no authority in everything, or vice versa, maybe men can see women of two things. The data used by Arfiani in her research is an article in Esquire Magazine Indonesia entitled "Women We Love."

Further research was carried out by Prasetyowati with the aim of finding the representation of Indonesian women in the Jakarta Post article. This representation is taken through the types of Indirect Sexism. However, of the two studies above that use Mills's theory, there has been little concern about another type of sexism that is Overt Sexism. They only use Indirect Sexism to convey their research. The two studies above also focus on using data from Indonesian language.

Another previous research is *Identifying Sexist Language on YouTube Comment Section* by Pratama (2018). His research aims to examine the use of sexist language in the comments column of a video uploaded on Youtube. The video contains a female patient who accuses a male nurse of sexually harassing her at a hospital in Indonesia. He examined two types of sexism: overt and indirect sexism. However, in the review of literature section, there are only a few explanations about the types of sexism. Also, this research focuses on Indonesian rather than English.

Despite previous studies used the same theory by Mills, they examined sexist language from Indonesian language data source. However, the language containing sexist language is English. According to Nneka (2012, p.5). English prioritizes the masculine gender over the feminine and throughout all of this, sociolinguists point out that English is indeed sexist. The results show that English has a special vocabulary for men and women, English contains linguistic elements that make a change in meaning when used by men or women, and

English is a language which brings understanding of how men and women are intended to behave and the characteristics they should have. Due to the lack of previous study, this research focuses on English language as the data source.

Another incomplete explanation from previous study is researchers only explained a little about the theory. He must explain more about the types of sexism and give characteristics or examples of each type of sexism. Moreover, research into the sexist language of Mills' theory can be made more complex by examining the two types of sexism. Due to the lack of prior research, this study points to the need for further investigation in this area. And to provide a new area of research, this study aims to observe types of sexist language through movie. Research on sexist language can be found through movie because movie is a picture or reflection of everyday human life. Social activities are also depicted in the movie. Movies of course contain conversations between people as in real life, so that we can examine the existence of sexist language through them.

Furthermore, this study aims to analyze "*Pitch Perfect*" movie series: *Pitch Perfect*, *Pitch Perfect 2*, and *Pitch Perfect 3* through language and sexism to show the existence of sexist language in the dialogue of the movie. "*Pitch Perfect*" movie series is an American comedy movie series produced in 2012 (*Pitch Perfect*), 2015 (*Pitch Perfect 2*), and 2017 (*Pitch Perfect 3*). *Pitch Perfect 1* started when Barden Bella, an all-female campus a capella group, appeared in the ICCA championship. The group performed so well that Aubrey, one of the members, sang solo and vomited on the stage and front seats of the audience. This

makes Barden Bella's image low when recruiting new members in the new school year. And they have to accept taunts from Treblemaker, Barden Bella's group against in the a capella competition. A new student named Beca is forced to join Barden Bella. Beca finally became an important figure in the group until they became the winner in the final after going through many problems inside and outside the group.

Then, in Pitch Perfect 2, Becca becomes the leader of Barden Bella. The story begins with Barden Bella's appearance on President Obama's birthday. Fat Amy sings while hanging as part of the performance concept. But a bad thing happened, Fat Amy turned upside down until the pants she was wearing were torn, and all the viewers saw Amy's genitals. This made national news and Barden Bella was suspended from all shows and competitions. Barden Bella was betting that they will win the world competition. Many new things they went through this time. There is a new member named Emily who wrote a song that brought them to victory. Also, do not forget that their opponents remain like Treblemaker and the dominating German group, Dash Sound Machine.

In pitch perfect 3, it is Emily's turn to become the leader of Barden Bella now. Emily invited the seniors to see Barden Bella perform, but the seniors thought they were invited to sing along for the performance. Seniors are sad because they want to sing together again. Finally, Aubrey, a senior whose father was a soldier, asked his father to register Barden Bella on a USO performance tour held in various countries, and in the final tour, the guest star was DJ Khaled.

1.3 Significance of the Study

For practical use, the researchers hope that this research can provide an understanding of sexist language through Mills's theory, open and indirect sexism, by providing definition, classification and analysis. Research using this theory has never been done before and is something new in the English Department. On the other hand, for theoretical use, this study is expected to contribute to new studies on the topic of sexism in linguistic research studies. With more specific objectives, it is hoped that it can try to enrich the topic of language studies at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Last but not least, researchers hope that this can contribute to be a useful reference for other researchers for the same topic.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research concerns the use of sexist language in the “*Pitch Perfect*” movie series based on Mills (2008) theory of language and sexism. To get to the border, the focus is limited to types of sexism, overt and indirect sexism. As the researcher mentioned in background of the study that sexist languages concentrates on how it expresses negative stereotypes to women, the researcher focused on the use of sexist language against women found in “*Pitch Perfect*” movie series: *Pitch Perfect* (2012), *Pitch Perfect 2* (2015), and *Pitch Perfect 3* (2017).

2.2.2 Processes

2.2.2.1 Transitivity

Analysis of transitivity studies ‘who does what to whom’ in the text. In many literary works, there is a tendency for female characters to be shown as being ‘followed up’ by other characters. Instead of being shown as being active and acting on others, they are often shown as recipients of other people’s actions, in an object position, not a subject position. For example, in the two articles, there is a clear difference between the way male and female tennis players are represented, with male players being represented positively in terms of their fitness and success on the court and female players being represented as people suffering from self-doubt. The different treatment of this sportsman has been institutionalized; many different sports stories use similar sexist structures and verbal choices (Mills, 2008, p.70).

2.2.2.2 Reported speech

There was a tendency for women’s speeches to be represented in news reports in indirect speech rather than direct speeches. Due to the lack of direct quotations from women, women’s statements are mediated by newspapers, which often leads to evaluative statements made through the use of reporting words such as ‘claim’ or ‘argue’. Because of this trend, women’s voices are relatively ‘inaccessible’; when they are represented, they tend not to be the professional

mediates through irony or disguises the power of verbal sexism through humor, satire, embedding sexism at the level of presupposition, or introducing a sexist statement with disclaimer or doubt. This is sexism cloaked with humor and irony, making it difficult to classify it as sexism. For example, the term sexist is now frequently used in certain television, radio programs, and newspapers, while at the same time attenuated by irony or humor characterized by, for example, a marked intonation or stress. There is evidence of indirect sexism in several contexts.

2.3.1 Humor

Sexist humor gains the power to foster expressions of prejudice against women from the ambivalence of societal attitudes towards women. People who maintain sexist attitudes usually suppress their prejudices; they cannot express these attitudes openly without risking social retribution or experiencing negative self-directed influences such as disappointment and shame. They express prejudice only when they feel free from such constraints or threats, for example in the context of sexist humor. (Ford et al., 2013, p. 64). It provides an opportunity to study these aspects of sexist attribution. Humor is ambiguous by nature; an interpreter/storyteller is often challenging to measure, especially for derogatory jokes. Hence, sexist humor forms a social situation in which perceptions of sexism varies widely. Further, individuals who are the target of sexist humor may perceive it as “just a joke” because of the thoughtless mindset it activates or may perceive it as offensive. This situation presents various levels of damage. Thus, examining the individual perceptions of those using sexist humor can provide

Contradictory messages were indicated by the phrases ‘very challenging’, ‘not normal for women’, and ‘why not accept it?’. The first two phrases are combined using “and” as a conjunction. This type of conjunction is used to combine two substances with the same characteristics. Here, the phrase ‘challenging and abnormal for women’ has a negative meaning where the work is not aimed at women. However, the conjunction ‘but’ is used to combine other phrases. This conjunction serves to express contradiction. In the addition of the next phrase that uses ‘but’ as a conjunction for ‘but why not take it’, the sentence becomes complex where the phrase is contradicted by the previous phrase.

2.3.4 Scripts and Metaphors

Mills (2008, p.148) states that it is very interesting to study the types of narratives or scripts that are included in reporting about men and women in the community space. In an article entitled “Jilted Clara looking for applicants, French preferred” on the Guardian Business page about Clara Furse, chief executive of the London Stock Exchange, the author chooses to use an extended metaphor of a failed relationship. This is an example of institutionalized indirect sexism, where romantic texts or sexual scenarios refer women to positions of institutional power.

2.3.5 Collocation

Collocations related to companies are saved with words. There are a number of words in the media that do not appear to be sexist, but are combined or associated with a series of negative connotations and the lexical field of negative terms (Mills, 2008, p.148). Nayef and El-Nashar (2015, p.168) provide examples of collocation in their data analysis. This is taken from the reference to 'women' associated with the phrase 'protected' from 'being exposed to harassment'. The sentence where the word appears sexist because the mention of women here has a negative connotation. Women are represented as weak in the sense that they need protection (from men) from being exposed to harassment. This quote gives us the idea that neutral words are considered sexist whenever they are combined with words that have a negative meaning or contain negative collocations.

2.3.6 Androcentric Perspective

Androcentric Perspective displays a masculine perspective to see things as if there were no other views about the subject. In this type, everything is made according to a men's perspective. This term refers to a male-centred world view that does not always explicitly present negative views of women and girls but positions men and men as representatives of human conditions or experiences and women and girls as deviations from the human condition. It is a complex, subtle, and often unrecognized form of sexism, which sits on a continuum that includes misogyny and patriarchy, but is also informed by a patriarchal culture in which

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|---|
| D | Dictionaries | Words in the dictionary that have definitions for women (<i>cosmetics</i>) |
| Gpn | Generic pronouns and nouns | The using of <i>he, him, his, himself</i> which refers to the unknown gender. <i>Men</i> refers to whole thing (<i>All men must die</i>) |
| Itw | Insult terms for women | Words meant to demean women (<i>bitch, ho, pimp,</i>) |
| Sd | Semantic derogation | Where words have experienced shift in meaning (<i>aggressive woman, easy woman, old women, old maid, don't be such a girl</i>) |
| Fst | First name, surname, titles | The use of name that depend on men (<i>Mrs. Jono, to called Jono's wife</i>) |
| T | Transitivity | Women are often represented as recipients of others instead of being active represented and acting on others. |
| Rs | Reported speech | Women's statements are mediated by newspaper (<i>claims, argued</i>) |
| J | Jokes | Jokes that discriminate against women |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------------|----|---|---|
| 3. | | Generic pronouns and nouns | - | - | - |
| 4. | | Insult terms for women | 11 | 4 | 6 |
| 5. | | Semantic derogation | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| 6. | | First name, surname, titles | - | 2 | 1 |
| 7. | | Transitivity | 2 | 4 | - |
| 8. | | Reported speech | - | 1 | - |
| 9. | | Jokes | 4 | 3 | 2 |

Table 4.1 The amount of data on indirect sexism

| No. | Classification of sexist language | | 1 st movie | 2 nd movie | 3 rd movie |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Indirect sexism | Humor | - | 1 | 1 |
| 2. | | Presupposition | 3 | 1 | - |
| 3. | | Conflicting messages | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| 4. | | Scripts and metaphors | - | - | - |
| 5. | | Collocation | - | - | - |
| 6. | | Androcentric perspectives | 1 | 2 | - |
| Total | | | 30 | 31 | 20 |

The data (24) shows the humorous sexist language used by Emily, one of Barden Bella's junior members. Emily said that Amy has a lovely vagina with compliments and a happy expression. But behind that, Emily said this to bring up the incident when Fat Amy experienced an embarrassment while performing at the American president's birthday. Amy performs using a cloth hanging from the top, she sings until her body is upside down and her legs are open. Her pants were torn so that all the audience could see Amy's genitals clearly because it was facing the audience. The embarrassing incident experienced by Amy was used as humor for several people, including Emily.

The next data is the sexist humor that is in the last scene in the Pitch Perfect 3 or at the end of this movie series. Data (25) happened when John and Gail broadcast the last show of the USO Tour in The South of France in France, starring the famous DJ, DJ Khalid. In this last tour Beca was chosen to appear at the opening ceremony. When the event was over, Gail asked whether John had recorded the whole program well, and at that time John replied with the phrase **“This is confusing technology for a woman. It's child's play for a man”**. The sentence above includes indirect sexism because John said a sentence that discriminates against women. That technology is considered a tool that can only be understood and used in a professional manner by men. Women are considered unable to use technology well.

Data to (28) is data obtained from Pitch Perfect 1 in the final scene when Barden Bella won the a capella competition. As reporters, John and Gail delivered the news of Barden Bella's victory with sentences that included conflicting messages. At the beginning of the sentence John expressed his amazement at the performance delivered by Barden Bella by saying **"What a show!"**. But after saying that, John also said, "And from an all-female group, Gail. I could never have called this one." which means John would never actually want to bet his winnings on a group that only contained women.

Then, the data (29) is the data obtained from Pitch Perfect 2 in the initial scene when Barden Bella performs at the birthday of the American President. John and Gail as anchors are broadcasting the ongoing program live. John started saying **"Boy, these girls have broken down every single barrier in their path, haven't they, Gail?"** to praise Barden Bella for winning so many a capella competitions despite the many odds they faced. Gail also responded by mentioning the victories Barden Bella had won. But after that John responded back with a sentence that was very contrary to his original sentence, he answered with the sentence **"Wow! What an inspiration to girls all over the country who are too ugly to be cheerleaders."** John's words seemed to tell the whole world that Barden Bella is an inspiration that girls out there can do well in a capella competitions. However, Barden Bella is inspiration for too ugly girls who do not qualify for cheerleaders. The implicit message conveyed is that Barden Bella is a group of a capella groups consisting of ugly girls who have won many competitions.

data source, which means that it can be concluded that sexism is still widely found in life. The difference in the percentage between the most types found in Pratama and those found in this study could be due to differences in data sources. Pratama took the data source from comments on Youtube, which contained videos of patient abuse by nurses in hospitals in Indonesia. Meanwhile, this study draws on movies from America.

As Mills (2008, p.1), feminist activists and theorists' main concern is changing the language that discriminates against women or belittles women in everyday life, but after analyzing the overall data, as much as 55% comes from women themselves. There was more sexism in women's speech, the most common being the Insult Terms for Women type. So, discrimination against women is not always carried out by the opposite gender (by men) but is also perpetrated by the women themselves. Even in these movies, the percentage is mostly done by women.

Based on Caldas-Coulthard quoted in Mills (2008, p.71), she argues that there is a tendency for women's voices to be presented in the form of indirect sentences rather than direct sentences in the reported speech and it is characterized by the words 'claim' or 'argue'. Because of this tendency, she views women's voices as relatively "inaccessible". As explained in the findings session, although it was reported in an indirect sentence, the TV channel also displayed a clarifying video from Fat Amy. So, in this case, not all reports submitted using indirect sentences are included in the sexist language category.

For indirect sexism, of the six types of indirect sexism, researchers have four types: Humor, Presupposition, Conflicting Messages, and Androcentric Perspectives. Two that were not found were Scripts and Metaphor and Collocation. There are 19 data found, and the most are from the type of Conflicting Messages, totaling 10. Overall, the researcher found that direct sexism or overt sexism was more prevalent than indirect sexism. This also proves the correctness of Mills's theory of types of sexism. Besides, the large amount of data found on various types of sexism also shows that discrimination against women still exists and in various types.

5.2 Suggestion

This chapter presents the suggestion to future research in the field of sociolinguistics, especially on sexist language. Future researchers could conduct field-based research on sexist language with several people who are chatting to obtain maximum results. With that, the research results will be more real without a scenario like in a movie. The future researcher can also examine sexist language in newspapers or reporting on other social media, is there still discrimination against gender. Thus, the researcher expects this present study to contribute to future researchers on related studies by these suggestions. Also, the researcher hopes this study will be a useful reference for the readers and learners.

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