



A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SEXISM IN “BRAVE” MOVIE

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Abstract This study focused on describing the sexist language and social structure through movie “BRAVE” (2012). This article is the result of research qualitative with a descriptive approach of the model Teun-A-Van-Dijk. The results of the study can be formulated that there are two types of sexist language, namely the types of sexist language that are open or direct, namely: naming, dictionary, common pronouns and nouns. Film discourse alone is not enough to rely on text, because it consists of different structures and levels. The structures are macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. The macrostructure contains the subject structure, the super contains structure the structure schema, and the rest is contained in the microstructure. The two structural elements are true that this film. The film's narrative and language reinforce traditional gender roles and social structures, as shown through the use of Sara Mills and Van Dijk's theories. The research focused the analysis main characters and expressing sexism on “Brave” movie.

Keywords: Sexist language, descriptive approach, Van-Dijk, Sara Mills.

Introduction

Language as a tool for communication can inadvertently discriminate based on gender, leading to sexist language. Sexist language is a set of discursive practices and stereotypes that evolve over time and can exclude, denigrate, or trivialize either women or men. It perpetuates gender stereotypes and can unfairly treat individuals based on their sex. (Chinyelu, 2020).

In literature, sexism is a belief in male supremacy that implies women are less intelligent and psychologically developed than men. According to (Mills, 2008) It is often used to discriminate against women who are already marginalized. Men and women speak different languages, with different words and usage for titles and nouns, perpetuating a patriarchal culture.

Sexism is a judgment supported by the gender gap, leading to positive and negative assumptions about its existence in daily life. It is relevant to human rights, where there should be no unequal treatment between males and females. The holy Qur'an (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13) also emphasizes the equality between male and female in spiritual and social activities, including professional careers.

Sexist language often negatively affects women, who are often treated differently and considered inferior. This discrimination can be found in literature, including movies, which can deliver certain ideas and stereotypes, including gender. Movies can be a powerful medium to deliver ideas and shape beliefs, including gender stereotypes and performativity. (fi'aunillah,2015)

Movies, as a form of literature and entertainment, can influence people and deliver certain ideas, including sexism and gender stereotypes. in film *The Simpsons*, for example, depicts the condition of living as middle-class Americans in a satirical way and can deliver certain thoughts and stereotypes, including gender. Gender stereotyping limits women's movements in personal traits, domestic behaviors, physical appearance, and occupations. These inequalities can trigger conflicts, especially in movies with dominant female characters and conflicts.

Using movie to deliver the alienation of a person for acting differently with her/his sex, gender stereotypes and performativity then can be found in a lot of movies these days, including the one, which is analyzed in this study, *Brave* movie. In fact, gender should be seen as fluid kind of thing, which can reformunder circumstances like time and situations. People then have freedoms to behave differently, as opposed to what sex they have been assigned since birth. therefore, the researcher tries to explore the elements of discrimination experienced by the characters through linguistic elements that are displayed by the characters in the movie.

In the research using critical discourse analysis (CDA) at the microstructure level. CDA explains the meaning of a text for a specific purpose, dividing discourse into macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure levels. The research focuses on the microstructure level, which examines the small meaning structure of a text through semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetoric. (Eriyanto, 2012),

This research reveals critical aspects of movie "Brave" (2012) that contain patriarchal beliefs. The movie packages these values with attractive features, often captivating audiences and leading them to forget the power driving the creators' beliefs and values. The results show that the ideology of feminism is wrapped in humanitarian and heroic values in the movie, leading society into hegemony.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Literature review is a description of the results of research conducted by other researchers or experts. with this literature review, one's research can be known to be original. the literature review will be reviewed through a review of the literature related to this research.

Some previous studies discuss the topic of sexism that are relevant to this research one of them is Elvira Aimmatun Nahdiah (2014), a student of English Literature, The State Islamic University of Malang, discusses about the content of funny *tweet* in the *@autocorrect* account of twitter are considered gender biased and promote a gender discrimination through the practice of sexist language. It can be found that the sexist language of those *tweets* is classified into general types, they are sexism in semantic, sexism in word, sexism in proverb, and sexism in swear word.

Another one is Komaruddin (2014), an English Language and Letter student of Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University, Malang. His findings show that the hidden ideology of Hillary that deliver in her speech was expressed by using semantic macrostructural analysis according to Teun A. Van Dijk. Moreover, in this research there are found three levels of Critical Discourse Analysis in investigating the meanings.

Then, 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.

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. Sexism is discrimination based on sex, often arising from gender stereotypes. The term became widely known during the Women Liberation Movement in the 1960s. Sexist language, a form of sexism, expresses bias and treats one sex in a discriminatory manner, often favoring men over women. It can be overt or covert.

Overt sexist language is direct and intentional, often using linguistic markers to signal inferiority of a sex. Covert sexist language is masked by humor and irony, making it difficult to classify as sexism. It includes humour, presupposition, and scripts and metaphor. (Mills, 2008)

According to (Mills, 2008) Humour often exaggerates features associated with a group or draws on stereotypical knowledge for comic effect. Presupposition gives the speaker a chance to deny any intended sexism. Scripts and metaphor in society can also be indirectly sexist.

According to (Teun A Van Dijk, 2015) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a multidisciplinary discourse studies movement focusing on the discursive reproduction of power abuse, such as sexism. CDA not only relates discourse structures to social structures but does so through a sociocognitive interface.

Microstructure is a discourse meaning seen in the smallest components of a text. This research uses the microstructure level of Teun A. Van Dijk's CDA model, focusing on semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetoric. (Malini, 2016)

Brave is a Pixar animated film about Merida, a skilled archer from Dunbroch, Scotland, who refuses to marry the three eldest sons of the main chieftain as per royal tradition. She challenges them to an archery competition, leading to a fight with her mother and her transformation into a bear.

Merida and her mother return to the witch's hut but the witch is gone. They begin to improve their relationship while trying to reverse the spell. The story ends with the spell reversed, bloodshed avoided, and the family reunited.

RESEARCH METHOD

this research uses a descriptive qualitative research design will be used, which produces data in words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Findings will be discussed and analyzed in terms of words, phrases, utterances, and sentences, without applying

statistical data analysis. This approach focuses on the process rather than the result, allowing for detailed and accurate investigation.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Finding

Overt Sexist Language, this is defined as the use of language that is discriminatory or prejudiced based on a person's gender. Examples include abusive words, harassment, demeaning statements, and gender stereotypes. In the film "Brave," overt sexist language can be identified through statements concerning traditional gender roles, gender stereotypes, gender discrimination, and derogatory language. An example is when Queen Elinor says, "Merida, a princess shouldn't spend her time with a bow and arrow."

1. Sexist Language - Types:

a) Overt Sexist Language

Overt sexist language is easily discernible as discriminatory behavior based on sex and frequently contravenes the values of equality and respect for gender diversity. In "Brave," overt sexist language can be identified in dialogue between characters, narratives that describe characteristics or behaviors that are perceived as gender stereotypes, or in the use of epithets or terms that degrade or differentiate a person's gender. Instances of overt sexist language in "Brave" include statements concerning traditional gender roles, gender stereotypes, gender discrimination, and derogatory language.

1. Here are some conversation scenes from the movie of 'Brave' that lead to the explanation of Merida's attitude and character as brave, independent, adventurous, rebellious, and skilled:

- (a) **Brave**, This scene takes place when Merida fights Mor'du. *Merida: 'I will not run away from this. I will fight Mor'du and protect my family'. King Fergus: 'That is true courage, Merida. You are brave indeed'.* Merida is a brave princess who faces danger without fear.

The scene in question occurs at approximately the 70-80 minute mark of Brave movie. The dialogue suggests that it occurs near the end of the film, likely in the final act, where Merida confronts Mor'du in order to protect her family.

Sara Mills' analysis reveals that the praise of Merida's bravery is shown with the word "brave," but the addition of the word "princess" can balance this praise with traditional gender identity. The title 'princess' often carries connotations of softness and submissiveness, which can lessen the impact of praise for her bravery (Mills 2008).

Meanwhile, analysis through Van Dijk's perspective reveals that the word 'brave' carries positive connotations and shows recognition of leadership qualities and courage. However, the use of the word 'princess' ties her identity to traditional gender roles. This sentence structure reinforces gender identity while praising characteristics that are usually considered masculine (Van Dijk 1997).

- (b) **Independent.** This scene occurs when Merida rejects the arranged marriage and says that she will decide her own path in life. *Merida: 'I will not marry someone I do not know or love. I will decide my own fate'. Queen Elinor: 'Merida, you must understand your responsibility'. Merida: 'I understand, Mother, but I also want to have the freedom to choose my own path in life'.* Merida values her independence and refuses to conform to traditional expectations.

The scene in question occurs at the minute mark of 20-25. In the film Brave, the scene where Merida rejects the arranged marriage and asserts her desire to choose her own path is pivotal. The arranged marriage is a central plot point introduced early in the film, and Merida's defiance against tradition aligns with the first half of the film, where she clashes with her mother over following societal norms.

Sara Mills' analysis reveals that the use of the word 'independence' reflects respect for Merida's independence. The phrase 'refuses to conform to traditional expectations' shows a rejection of traditional gender norms, reflecting a feminist view (Mills 2008).

Meanwhile, analysis through Van Dijk's perspective reveals that the word 'independence' denotes a quality that is often considered a positive attribute for male characters, but here it is applied to Merida. This sentence

structure reinforces the idea that Merida refuses to be limited by traditional gender roles, showing resistance to sexist ideologies (Van Dijk 1997).

- (c) **Adventurous.** This scene takes place when Merida is practising archery and horse riding in the forest. *Merida: 'Whenever I hold a bow and ride in the forest, I feel free. Adventure is part of me'. King Fergus: 'You're always looking for adventure, Merida. That's what makes you special'.* Merida's adventurous spirit leads her to explore the world beyond her kingdom.

The scene in Brave where Merida practices archery and horse riding in the forest is likely to have taken place in the early minutes of the film. The scene in question occurs at the minute mark of 5-10. The film typically establishes Merida's character and interests at an early stage. Her love for archery and riding is introduced before the plot involving the arranged marriages or the curse, and King Fergus acknowledging her adventurous spirit aligns with the beginning stages of their relationship, before major conflicts arise.

Sara Mills' analysis reveals that 'Adventurous spirit' carries positive connotations and emphasises curiosity and courage. However, in the context of a princess, it could be considered a violation of traditional gender norms that expect women to stay close to home and family (Mills 2008).

Meanwhile, analysis through Van Dijk's perspective reveals that the word 'adventurous' is usually associated with traits that are considered masculine. This sentence structure suggests that Merida's adventurous nature is an integral part of her character, challenging traditional gender stereotypes (Van Dijk 1997).

- (d) **Rebellious.** This scene takes place when Merida is changing arrows in an archery competition. *Merida: 'I will compete for my hand'. Queen Elinor: 'Merida, this is unacceptable!'. Merida: 'I don't care! I refuse to follow unfair rules.'* As a rebellious princess, Merida challenges the customs and traditions of her society.

The scene in which Merida challenges the arranged marriage by declaring her intention to compete for her hand is likely to occur at the minute mark of 35-40. The film introduces the arranged marriage suitors at an earlier

point, and Merida's defiance against them is likely to occur after the suitors have been presented. This scene represents a significant turning point in the film. It is a moment of high tension and rebellion, suggesting that it would not occur at the beginning of the film. Merida's defiance directly clashes with Queen Elinor's wishes, making it a scene that is likely to occur after the established conflict between the two women throughout the first half of the film.

Sara Mills' analysis reveals that the word 'rebellious' indicates a rejection of authority and existing norms. In the context of a princess, reinforces the contrast between traditional expectations and Merida's actions (Mills 2008).

Meanwhile, analysis through Van Dijk's perspective reveals that the word 'rebellious' often has a negative connotation, but here it is used to show Merida's courage in challenging the status quo. This sentence structure reinforces Merida's gender identity while emphasizing her rebellious actions (Van Dijk 1997).

- (e) **Skilled.** This scene takes place when Merida is practising archery. *King Fergus: 'You are the best archer I have ever seen, Merida. Your skill is marvellous'. Merida: 'I practice every day. Archery is part of who I am.* Merida is highly skilled in archery, surpassing even the best warriors in her kingdom.

The scene in which King Fergus commends Merida's proficiency in archery is likely to occur in the initial minutes of the film. The scene in question commences at the minute mark of 5-10. It is a common cinematic technique to introduce a character's strengths and interests at an early stage. Merida's exemplary archery would be showcased before the plotline concerning the arranged marriages or the curse assumes prominence. King Fergus' admiration for Merida's skill reflects the positive relationship between them. Such a scene would likely be placed before major conflicts arise between them. Merida's archery being "part of who she is" establishes a thematic element of her identity tied to freedom and independence. This is something the film explores from the beginning.

Sara Mills' analysis reveals that the praise of Merida's skill in archery shows recognition of abilities that are usually considered masculine. It challenges sexist views that underestimate women's abilities in fields that are considered masculine (Mills 2008).

Meanwhile, analysis through Van Dijk's perspective reveals that the word 'skilled' and the phrase 'surpassing even the best warriors' show that Merida has exceptional qualities and exceeds traditional expectations for a woman. This sentence structure shows appreciation of Merida's skills regardless of her gender (Van Dijk 1997).

In the dictionaries' description of Merida's character, some sentences describe her traits as brave, independent, adventurous, rebellious, and skillful. Analysis based on Sara Mills and Van Dijk's theory shows that while there is praise for Merida's positive characteristics, the use of words like 'princess' can balance this praise with traditional gender identities. However, many of these descriptions also challenge sexist views by recognizing and valuing traits that are usually considered masculine. The sentence structure and word choice in these descriptions help to highlight how language can be used to maintain or challenge gender norms in society.

2. Generic Pronouns and Nouns: The pronoun 'she' is used to refer to Queen Elinor by Merida, and to Merida by Queen Elinor. Here, the word 'she' is used to show the expectations and views that Queen Elinor and Merida have towards each other. In terms of gender connotations, these sentences show the conflict between the traditional expectations held by Queen Elinor and Merida's desire to determine her path in life. The use of 'she' shows their identity as women who are bound by gender norms, but have different views and expectations.
3. Non-Parallel Terms: The use of non-parallel terms or unequal words is another form of sexist language. In "Brave," the word 'miss' is used to refer to Merida in a way that diminishes the value of her skills. This suggests that Merida's courage and skill in archery are not taken seriously because she is a girl. The use of the word 'miss' also suggests that women's gender roles are limited by traditional expectations such as being married. This reinforces the stereotype that women should adhere to traditional roles and not be taken seriously in non-traditional contexts.

b) Covert Sexist Language

Covert sexist language is defined as the use of language or expressions that indirectly or subtly imply discrimination or prejudice against someone's gender. For instance, the

utilization of words or phrases that indirectly assume traditional gender roles or reinforce disparate expectations for men and women in terms of certain abilities or behaviors. Furthermore, covert sexist language may manifest in the form of subtle double standards, whereby disparate standards are applied to individuals based on their gender, without their awareness. The utilization of language that evinces such double standards can serve to reinforce and perpetuate gender inequality in a manner that is indirect but has a profound impact on individuals' perceptions and opportunities within society.

- 1) Presupposition: In the sentence, "A princess must learn the customs," there are several presuppositions. It contains the presupposition that all princesses must learn certain customs. It also contains the assumption that Merida, as a princess, has not fully learned or mastered these customs. This sentence reinforces gender stereotypes about how princesses (and women) should behave. These stereotypes imply that women who do not fulfill these traits are not fulfilling social expectations of their gender roles.
- 2) Metaphor: The metaphor in the sentence, "My destiny is to determine my path in life," asserts Merida's desire to have complete control over her life. This is a rejection of traditional gender roles that often limit women's freedom to make their own choices. It is a form of resistance to sexist language that expects women to adhere to traditional gender norms. Merida teaches the value of independence and the right to self-determination, as opposed to sexist values that limit women's freedom.

2. Self-Representation in Brave

The movie Brave features various characters who use self-representation strategies to express their identity, personality, and views. Merida, King Fergus, and Queen Elinor are three such characters with distinct traits.

- a) Merida is a brave, independent, adventurous, rebellious, and skilled character. She defies social norms and traditions that limit her freedom, demonstrating her courage, independence, and rebellious nature. Merida's skill in archery reflects her dedication and hard work, and her adventurous spirit is evident in her explorations of nature and seeking new challenges.
- b) King Fergus is a brave, protective, affectionate, humorous, and resilient character. His bravery is seen in his battles against Mor'du, and his protectiveness towards his

family and kingdom is evident in his actions. King Fergus' affectionate side is shown in his interactions with his family, and his humor is used to lighten the mood. His resilience is seen in his ability to bounce back from adversity, such as losing his leg in battle.

- c) Queen Elinor is a regal, traditional, protective, diplomatic, and loving character. Her elegance and authoritative demeanor reflect her role as queen, and her belief in tradition is seen in her efforts to maintain peace and political alliances. Queen Elinor's protectiveness towards her family is evident in her attempts to teach Merida about her responsibilities. Her diplomatic skills are used to maintain peace between clans, and her compassion is seen in her efforts to teach Merida about her role as a princess.

Overall, the characters in Brave use self-representation strategies to convey their complex traits, teaching important values such as independence, courage, resilience, protectiveness, diplomacy, and family love.

B. Discussion

"Brave" is a Disney-Pixar animated film directed by Mark Andrews and Brenda Chapman, set in ancient Scotland. It follows Princess Merida, a gifted archer and daughter of King Fergus and Queen Elinor, as she defies tradition and avoids an arranged marriage. After seeking help from a witch, Queen Elinor is turned into a bear, and Merida must learn to understand and repair her relationship with her mother.

The movie explores themes of freedom, independence, and mother-daughter relationships, conveying the importance of understanding and appreciating differences, as well as the power of love and forgiveness. The main characters include Merida, Queen Elinor, King Fergus, and a mysterious witch.

Despite positive reception, "Brave" has been criticized for gender stereotypes and sexist language. Merida is portrayed as strong and independent, but other female characters adhere to traditional roles, reinforcing gender norms. The use of certain nicknames and terms, such as "fiery princess," can also perpetuate sexist views that assertive and passionate women are often considered "problematic" or "difficult to control." In addition, dialogue that emphasizes the importance of women's traditional roles can contain sexist bias. For example, Queen Elinor says to Merida, 'Merida, a princess must learn the customs. You must be polite, gentle, and graceful.' This statement

implies that the value of a princess, and more broadly, a woman, is measured by their ability to be polite, gentle, and graceful, reflecting a traditional and sexist view.

Sara Mills' narrative analysis and van Dijk's theory on social power provide insight into these issues. The narrative often emphasizes the conflict between Merida and traditional expectations, while dialogue reinforces the importance of women's traditional roles. The use of epithets and dialog can reproduce social structures that place women in certain roles.

Although, "Brave" contains elements of sexist language, analyzed through Sara Mills' and Van Dijk's theories. The film's microstructure level reveals how language reproduces unequal social structures, emphasizing the need for continued study and critique of gender representation in media.

Conclusion and Sugestion

The study draws the following conclusions based on the analysis of overt and covert sexist language in the Disney film "Brave": overt sexist language is found in the forms of character naming, descriptive terms, pronouns/nouns, and non-parallel terms, while covert sexist language is observed through presuppositions and metaphors that reinforce traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Although "Brave" has positive themes of independence and family, the film's narrative and language still reflect conventional gender representations, as analyzed through the theories of Sara Mills and van Dijk. The study provides the following suggestions: for further research, a larger-scale analysis across more animated films, using an interdisciplinary approach, can provide deeper insights, and comparative studies examining changes over time or between different cultural contexts are also recommended; for readers, a critical approach to media consumption and engaging in discussions about gender portrayal, especially with children, can help promote more equitable and inclusive perspectives, and readers can also support films that challenge gender stereotypes. The findings highlight the need for more accurate and progressive gender representation in animated media to align with evolving societal values.

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