

SEXIST LANGUAGE IN CHARACTERS' SPEECH ACTS IN THE MOVIE (ON THE BASIS OF SEX)

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Abstract: *This study aims to show the types, functions, and forms of speech acts, types of sexist language, and the perlocutionary effect of sexist language in the speech of the characters in the movie On the Basis of Sex. This study uses qualitative method and observation and note-taking technique. Based on the results of the analysis, the type of speech act found are representative, directive, expressive, and commissive types. Perlocutionary speech acts reveal non-verbal, non-verbal verbal, and verbal types. The characters' speech proves the presence of sexist language such as hostile sexism, protective paternalism, competitive gender differentiation, heterosexual hostility, complementary gender differentiation and dominative paternalism. The speech also caused negative effects on female characters such as inability to fight back, feeling helpless, decreased self-confidence, and anger.*

Keywords: *Illocutionary speech acts, Perlocutionary speech acts, Sexist language*

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan jenis, fungsi dan bentuk tindak tutur, jenis bahasa seksis, dan efek terhadap mitra tutur (perlokusi) bahasa seksis pada tuturan para tokoh dalam film On The Basis of Sex. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data dianalisis dari tuturan para tokoh menggunakan metode simak dan catat. Berdasarkan hasil analisis ditemukan 15 data tindak tutur ilokusi dengan jenis representatif, direktif, ekspresif dan komisif. Tindak tutur perlokusi menunjukkan jenis non-verbal, verbal non-verbal, verbal. Ujaran para tokoh membuktikan terdapatnya bahasa seksis seperti seksisme hostile, protective paternalism, competitive gender differentiation, heterosexual hostility, complementary gender differentiation, dan dominative paternalism. Ujaran tersebut juga menimbulkan efek negatif terhadap tokoh perempuan seperti, berdiam dan tidak bisa melawan, merasa tidak berdaya, turunnya rasa percaya diri, dan rasa marah.*

Kata kunci: *Bahasa seksis, Tindak tutur ilokusi, Tindak tutur perlokusi,*

INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who live in groups and need each other. As social creatures and living in groups in everyday life, of course, it cannot escape the name of interaction or communication. Chaer (2004:50) states that communication delivered orally is a speech act event that occurs in certain situations and places that have certain meanings in the speech. Movie is one of the most famous forms of mass communication (Dennis McQuail 1994:14). Movie is a means of entertainment that has a high enough appeal in various circles of society, from the middle economy to the upper economy, from children to adults (Victor C. Mambor 2000: 14). The definition of a movie in *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (<http://badanbahasa.kemdikbud.go.id/kbbi/>) is a play (story) of live pictures, meaning that the movie is played with scenes, place settings, and certain topics of discussion. With the existence of scenes, place settings, and certain topics of conversation that are part of the context of speech, so that it can play an important role in helping to understand the meaning of an utterance.

In the movie media, female and male characters tend to be portrayed differently to show the superiority of one gender and discriminate against the other, usually discriminating against women. This is in line with what Shapiro (2017:38) states that mass media, including movies, falsely present unequal perceptions of the roles of women and men that signify that men are the standard in life and women are unimportant or invisible. The act of discriminating against one gender that commonly occurs against women is called sexism. Sexism is the systematic and unfair treatment of women by men and society as a whole (Benokraitis & Feagin, 1995). Sexist behaviors usually stem from inter-gender stereotypes and the belief that certain genders have a better and superior position than others (Doob, 2015). Sexist behavior is still very popular and persists for a long time in modern society, even in developed countries such as Britain and America, sexism is still ingrained in their thoughts, actions and attitudes (Macionis & Gerber, 2010: 298).

Another common form of sexism is sexist language. Language use that creates stereotypes and language inequality between men and women is called sexist language (Bandel, 2006). Sexist language usually presents stereotypes about men and women that sometimes disadvantage both but more often disadvantage women (Thomas and Warein, 2007:106). Sexist language is the use of language that discriminates against women that may occur in various media such as newspapers, advertisements, magazines, etc., either overtly or indirectly (Mills, 2008). Such as the use of the pronoun "man" for the word "mankind", "coachman" to describe an occupation or humans in general. Words that have the same form as "coachman" and contain other male pronouns to refer to something that is not gendered are called masculine generics (Weatherall, 2002:14). Although grammatically correct, the word is still a specific generic masculine word and can be interpreted as excluding women. Men and women should be treated equally, but in the English lexicon, the word "man" has a higher status than other humans (He G, 2010).

According to Levinson (1983:9) speech act is one of the elements of pragmatics that is interconnected between language and its context which is formulated in the structure of the language involving the speaker, listener, and reader being discussed. Chaer (2010) states that, speech act is the speech of someone who is psychological and which is seen from the meaning of action in his speech. Speech act is also a manifestation of language function. Behind an utterance there is a language function that is reflected in the purpose of the utterance. The movie used in this study is titled *On The Basis of Sex* (2018). It is about the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg from 1956, and the obstacles she faced as she progressed in her legal career. In particular, the movie focuses on the prejudice and sexism she faced, despite the fact that she was a talented lawyer.

The movie focuses on the beginning of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's career in law. At the start of the movie, she is a student at Harvard Law School, and studies alongside her husband Martin, who is diagnosed with cancer. Ruth takes over both of their classes until her husband is then in remission. Afterward, her husband is hired by a law firm, while Ruth is unable to find a job in the legal field because she is a woman. Instead, she worked as a professor teaching law. Sexism in *On The Basis Of Sex* (2018) is characterized by gender

discrimination in the speech of all characters. There is a treatment or labeling where one gender is superior to the other, especially men feel that they are far superior to women.

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the type of research used is a type of qualitative research in which the researcher focuses on describing the data found and analyzed in the research corpus, namely the dialogue of the characters in the film "On The Basis of Sex" (2018) without involving statistical data. The data in the form of speech is obtained by observing every utterance and scene that contains illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts in the dialog of the characters in the movie On The Basis of Sex (2018). The research contained in the dialogue of the film was obtained from the www.softsub.net website. The second data source was obtained from several research journals, books, and theses to complement the theory that will be used by researchers. The population in this study reflected sexist language through speech acts. The sample chosen is the style of language reflected in the speech acts of the character in On The Basis of Sex.

RESULTS AND DISCUSS

Based on the movie On The Basis of Sex is about the figure of a woman in the middle of a 'sea' of men in the Harvard University law department, 1956. It tells the life story of a real character, Ruth Ginsburg, a judge and a Harvard University graduate student. Before becoming a judge, Ruth had to experience an extraordinary life journey. Ruth was required to live a harsh and discriminatory life as a mother and wife who was considered a dissident for breaking tradition.

Data 1 (03.55 – 04.21).

Dialog:

Erwin Griswold: *"Consider what does it mean to be a Harvard man? A Harvard man is intelligent, of course, but he is also tenacious. He is a leader devoted to the rule of law. He is mindful of his country, loyal to tradition, and he is respectful and protective of our institutions."*

In the speech above, "A Harvard man is intelligent, of course, but he is also tenacious." is a type of representative speech act with the function of stating. Professor Griswold in his speech stated that being a Harvard student is a smart student and also tenacious. The form of speech acts in the dialog above is literal and direct speech acts because the intent and mode spoken by the speaker are the same, namely to tell the new students to be able to maintain the good name of the university. The perlocutionary effect that arises in this context is that the speech partner turns her head to the right and left to see other female students and then faces back to the speaker with a disappointed look on her face.

The above speech contains sexist language of the hostile sexism type in the sentence "A Harvard man is intelligent, of course, but he is also tenacious." In this context, Ruth and other female students are discriminated against through Professor Griswold's speech because

he only uses generic male pronouns, such as "He" and "Man" to refer to all students. The pronoun "He" can be sexist language because in the media, it is often overly camouflaged with male imagery. According to Mills (65-66, 1995) generic pronouns are often sexist for stereotyping women and men about professions.

Data 2 (04:30 – 04:44)

Dialog:

Ruth: *"Which one makes me look more like a Harvard man?"*

Martin: *"I'm thrilled to report that you look nothing like a Harvard man."*

In the above data, "Which one makes me look more like a Harvard man?" is included in the directive speech act with the function of asking for advice. In order to give a good impression to Professor Griswold, Ruth asks Martin for advice on the dress she will wear. The form of speech acts in this dialog is literal and direct speech acts because the purpose and mode of the sentence are the same, namely asking for advice. The perlocutionary effect that appears in this context is a non-verbal verbal speech act, namely, "I'm thrilled to report that you look nothing like a Harvard man." as a verbal form and non-verbal form, Martin Ginsburg moves his hand while patting his son's buttocks lightly.

The above speech is hostile sexist language. This is shown by her use of the word Harvardman in her sentence. In this context, Ruth is worried about the dress she will wear to dinner with Professor Griswold. The use of Harvardman as a label used to refer to all students is an example of sexist language. In this scene, the use of gender-neutral labels was very rare because in the 1950s men were dominant over women and it was very strange to see women with higher social status.

Data 3 (05:40 – 05:44)

Dialog:

Harriet (The Dean's Wife): *"Ladies and gentlemen, please join us in the dining room as dinner is served. And, professors, please escort the ladies in."*

In the above data, "And, professors, please escort the ladies in." is a directive speech act with a commanding function. Harriet asked the lecturer to escort the female students to enter the dinner room. The form of speech act in this utterance is literal and direct speech act because the purpose and mode of the sentence are the same, namely to command. The perlocutionary effect in this context is non-verbal verbal in which the male student asks Ruth Ginsburg "May I?" while raising his hand to be linked by Ruth Ginsburg.

The above utterance is benevolent sexism of the protective paternalism type. In this context Harriet asks male students to hold female students, which can be interpreted that Harriet believes in the stereotype that women are creatures that must be protected by men. This stereotype is a form of gender discrimination because it harms and encourages the subordination of women. As said by Shastri (2014:27) who said that gender discrimination or

inequality is used for women because they are considered the lowest and weakest part of our society.

Data 4 (1:00:30 – 1:00:33)

Dialog:

Construction worker: *"Hey, we'll keep you warm if you're getting wet."*

Jane Ginsburg: *"Oh, yeah? Real nice! Do you kiss your mother with that mouth, as*hole?"*

In the speech above, "Hey, we'll keep you warm if you're getting wet." is a commissive speech act with the function of promising. The construction workers promise that they will keep Ruth and Jane "warm". The form of speech act is non-literal and direct speech act because actually the speaker does not want to make them warm but wants to invite sexual activity with them. The perlocutionary effects found in this context are verbal and non-verbal perlocutionary speech acts. The verbal form is "Oh, yeah? Real nice! Do you kiss your mother with that mouth, as*hole?" and the non-verbal form is the speech partner approaching the speaker while pointing his index finger at their faces.

The utterance above is a sexist heterosexual hostility utterance. In this context, the contractor workers utter an utterance that views Ruth and Jane as sexual objects. This is contained in the utterance "Hey, we'll keep you warm if you're getting wet" the meaning of this utterance is that the construction workers want to engage in sexual activity with Ruth and Jane. Because Ruth and Jane were previously ignored, the construction workers shouted back with the utterance because they felt superior and thought that women deserved to be objectified and did not have the power to refuse the invitation. This can be categorized as verbal sexual harassment. Another factor that makes them say such words is subjectification to discriminate against women in public because they consider women inferior to men

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the above research, it can be concluded that there is sexist language reflected in the speech of the characters in the movie "On The Basis of Sex". Through the speech of the characters in this movie, it explains how women are discriminated against just because of their gender. From the data obtained, it can also be concluded that sexist language utterances have many negative effects, namely women are only silent and cannot fight back, reduce women's self-confidence, feel helpless, and angry.

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