

“A Binding Contract Between the Dominant and the Submissive”: Linguistic Analysis of Gender Bias in *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015)

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ABSTRACT

Language, a significant tool for communication, is implemented to express an interlocutor's attitude. Their language choice can imply manipulation of power or discrimination between sexes, also known as sexist language. Since dialogues in movies represent real-world communication, this study aims to delve into the sexist language depicted in Fifty Shades of Grey (2015), a romantic drama film. In particular, the genre reflects the apparent discrepancy between male and female counterparts in terms of language and gender bias. The movie was then selected as the main text for the linguistic investigation of sexist language in this descriptive qualitative research. The essential framework in this research is centered extensively on Sara Mills' theory regarding language and feminism encompassing overt sexism and indirect sexism. Overt sexism is categorized into six types including generic pronouns, generic nouns, non-parallel terms, sexism in proverbs, sexism in swear word, and derivation. On the other hand, indirect sexism is categorized into six subtypes, namely humor, presupposition, conflicting message, scripts and metaphors, collocation, and androcentric perspective. The researchers observe that characters and their attitudes render sexist ideology while their utterances convey gender-related discrimination.

Keywords: Sexist language, sexism, discrimination, romantic drama movie

1. INTRODUCTION

Women in society in these days have more social roles when compared to the past. However, they are still quite often considered the second-class citizen. Such view creates discrimination and gap between men and women. Women were subjected to various sexual harassment and the violence of men against women. It is the cause of sexism that always appeared almost everywhere, whether it be movies or advertisements. As Mills (1995) gave an example in her book, Feminist Stylistic, the illustration appeared on the Sun newspaper during the Gulf crisis in 1991 which display the representation of the sexist language on advertisements by using double-meaning words that contains some sexual content such as fully equipped, frontal assault.

Feminist is a group of people aware of the difficulty of assuming that all women or all men are equal, and in particular for the past ten years this feminist organization has been interested in the analysis of forms of oppression and different forms of discrimination (Mills, 1995). Sara Mills is Emeritus Professor in Linguistics at Sheffield Hallam University, England and her major work is feminism. Therefore, we have chosen her theory which categorizes sexist language into two forms; overt sexism and indirect sexism.

Then, one of the elements that reflect sexism in modern society is the media because the media is one of the most influential factors that have influenced humans these days. According to Germaine Greer, Romance in the film has a sense of dilemma that intentionally deceives the audience by showing no recognition about how women were oppressed and treated as second-class citizens (Reid Boyd, 2017). Thus, among all movie genres, the one that influences sexism the most is Romantic genre. Most romance films portray characters as a female protagonist who has feminine side or male protagonist will with a good shape and extremely masculine which shows gender roles that men have to protect women and women needs to be protected even more clearly (Angyal, 2014).

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Language is one of the tools for communication which is strong enough to convey the meaning and intention of speakers, so linguistics can support equality between men and women but also create sexist language. Sexism means hostility in words or discourse which could devalue femininity by judging their roles or their behavior and support male-centered (Mills, 2008, p. 2). According to Mills (2008), sexist language can be separated into two types. Firstly, overt sexism contains no unambiguity whereas indirect sexism depends on messenger's pragmatics and other factors.

The study discusses issues about the topic of sexist language and the movie that is claimed as "a romantic movie." Film analysis has a potential to reflect the sexist language that appears in the media or even reality where individuals are associated and cope with social stereotypes.

Fifty Shades of Grey is considered a modern romance movie in which the relationship of the main characters is ambiguous and male-lead characters have a "dark secret": He's obsessed with BDSM which means to give or to receive suffering for pleasure (Cambridge University Press, 2021). This kind of relationship can be questioned by audience whether a movie plot falls into what is called "Modern Romance" or not. Hence, so the researchers examine the function of sexist language used by main characters to relate how language can reflect discrimination between men and women in the modern romantic movie.

Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to analyze the types of sexist language in *Fifty Shades of Grey* by using linguistic features and how it affects female characters based on Mills' theory. The study is significant as it could help people realize the importance of their language choice. While using English language, one can be cautious and avoid negative words that probably make other people feel uncomfortable through expression and utterance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chinyelu (2020) uses the theoretical framework belonging to Mills to examine sexist language in three Nollywood's movies. The study displays four types of overt sexism language that are found in the movies: generic nouns, compound words, insult terms and naming and non-parallel terms. Similarly, Fi'aunillah, (2015), studies sexist language in the movie "The Lord of the Rings" based on Mill's theory. The aim of Fi'aunillah's research is observing a type of sexist language through the dialogue by characters and how sexist language is used mostly by male characters towards females. In addition to the generic pronoun, non-parallel research, as well as Nwayenyi Chinyelu's research, the study also found a derivational form which discusses metaphor. They use the same framework theory, but in fact for each movie, there are different types of sexism language (Chinyelu 2020).

In another study, Reisya (2018) investigated sexist language in the movie "The Twilight Saga Eclipse" by using Glick and Fiske theory. The theory is categorized into two types which are ambivalent (sensitive and weak) and benevolent (women need to be protected by men) (Glick & Fiske, 2000). The researchers employed a qualitative approach to collect descriptive data from dialog script. The study revealed women and men use a different language as women language was mostly related to feelings while men relied more on logic. Thus, women may sometimes appear as weaker or unreliable from their social views.

Ayu Widayanti (2014) analyzed the male and female's linguistic features in the film's conversation by using some theory from Lakoff (1975) combined with Coates (1986) and Holmes (1992) and used the description by using qualitative and descriptive methods in the data. The researcher compared the features of a tag question between both male and female and found that it is used for the similar purpose and function.

Ågren (2013) investigated linguistic sexism in three mermaid fairy tales. The researcher gives an example of the function of language to support sexism stereotypes; the non-parallel structure, generic noun, and

reflect ideals of language usage in male and female. This data is mainly supported by McConnell-Ginet (2008), Graddol and Swann (1989), and Holmes (2003). According to this research, the inequality of the words categorizing women and men appeared to be more effective in negative ways. For instance, the words that describe men often use neutral or positive words such as sugar daddy, stud, Don Juan, et cetera. In contrast, some descriptive words could be swear words derived from animal terms, such as bitch, a female dog, is often used for women.

These findings reveal that sexist language exists in our lives and is prejudicial and this research supports the studying of the discourse by examining sexism in the movies. Gender discrimination can be seen at an initial stage of defining the Romantic genre; it was always called “Chick flick” which signified Romantic films as for women only. On the other hand, we never heard of “Dude Flick” for any movie genres. This may explain that we live in a patriarchal society. Therefore, it is not surprising to see sexism in the content of romantic films (McClanathan, 2020). According to McClanathan, romantic films are not evil and they do not harm anyone. However, the idea can be misleading as in reality romantic films themselves convey discrimination and objectification of female characters. The Romantic films are lack of diversity and misunderstanding about women and show it wrongly through films and also has troubling propensity to obscure the line between romantic relationship and sexual violence (Gaber, 2016).

3. DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS

Cambridge Dictionary defines sexism as the thought that the members of one sex especially women are lack of skills, intelligent when compared with other one (Cambridge University Press 2021). In the same way, sexism is defined as a gesture, act, words or behavior that is based on the beliefs that the group of people is subservient because of their gender (Calderwood & Sánchez 2019).

According to Mills (1995) sexism could be analyzed in two forms; overt sexism and indirect.

1. Overt sexism

Direct sexism has long been associated with the presentation of discriminating ideas about women, signaling to listeners that women are considered as a lower group in comparison to men, and can be easily identified through the use of linguistic indicators or the examination of presupposition. There are some forms of overt sexism including generic nouns, generic pronouns, sexism in proverbs, derivational, non-parallel terms, and sexism in swear words.

1.1 Generic nouns

The generic noun refers to masculinity language which is used to call a human being or unknown gender person as the entire race. The terms ‘man’ and ‘men’ are universally used to be a suffix and prefix of words; for instance, ‘man-power’ or ‘man-hours’, and also shown as suffix such as ‘policeman’, ‘fireman’, ‘postman’, and so on (Mills, 2008: 67).

1.2 Generic pronoun

Function of the generic pronoun is similar to the generic noun which is used to refer humans for both male and female in common by using the pronoun ‘he’, his’, or ‘him’ instead of neutral tones; for example, they or person (Mills, 2008: 65). This is an example from the film *The Lord of the Rings*: “A wizard is never late, Frodo Baggins, nor is he early. He arrives precisely when he means to.”

1.3 Derivational morphemes

Derivational morphemes are adding prefixes or suffixes for changing the part of the stem in English. Adding a feminine suffix such as -ess or -ette, the feminine one is always derived from the masculine one (Mills, 2008). For example, in the film *The Lord of the Rings* the word “sorceress” combines with the word sorcerer; used in terms of male and adding suffix -ess which usually makes the noun a female counterpart.

1.4 The Non-Parallel Terms

The Non-Parallels Terms are male and female names that were originally synonymous and have frequently diverged in meaning over time (Lakoff, 1975). For example, the word Mrs, Ms-Mr in Nollywood film, only female characters who have already married were called Mrs, however, all male characters were called Mr which means it is unnecessary for women to show their married status to others and the word “Ms” should be replaced to keep up the same level, but this word also refer to women in negative ways such as extreme feminist (Mills, 2008: 64).

1.5 Sexism in proverbs

Proverb is a simple saying that reflects a perceived reality based on common sense or experience in a plain, concrete manner. The wording in proverbs is generally symbolic and formulaic. They are all part of a folklore genre. Discriminating, differentiating, and making women worry are all phrases found in English proverbs. It is difficult to update and produce new proverbs to replace the existing ones because proverbs are conventional. For example, for the proverb “A man’s home is his castle,” apparently, women are also discriminated against in this situation. It implies that the peaceful and attractive house is something that only men may have.

1.6 Sexism in swear words

According to Cambridge Dictionary, swear words are a derogatory or unpleasant word which expresses emotion. Hughes (1991) argues that when people are upset or disappointed, they tend to swear. They are also more prone to swear to convey hostility, annoyance, surprise, wrath, and shock. For example;

The word “motherfucker” can be used as a sexist swear word. This word is usually used to describe the actions and attitudes of women through linguistic and semantic discrimination (Hughes 1991: 224-225).

2. Indirect sexism

Indirect sexism can be found in a variety of forms, including humor, irony, scripts, and metaphor. It is a complicated means of establishing women as a "minority group" in jokes, for example, without assuming responsibility for their exclusion. Because the individual who tells the jokes can claim that they did not make up the joke, sexist jokes enable for the expression of generally objectionable attitudes of women (Mills, 2008:71). Mills (2008) classified indirect sexism into 6 forms which depends on intention of the utterances.

2.1 Humor

Mills stated in her book, language and sexism that for comedic purposes, often exaggerate certain characteristics related with a group or play with stereotypical knowledge through offensive jokes such as blaming sexual harassment victim. (Mills, 2008, p.140).

2.2 Presupposition

The hidden meaning in the utterances which is difficult to find out in the sentences is that there are chances for speakers to refuse that they are not using sexist language (Arfiani and Putra 2017). Hendi (2018) also gives the example for presupposition in his study in the topic “Sexism on Youtube comment section”: “Don’t be arrogant. Actually, you enjoyed it (right)?” This utterance has the sense of thought which refer that all sexual intercourse is pleasurable and this shows that the speaker does not understand the pain of being a victim of sexual harassment.

2.3 Conflicting Message

The text or words that can be counted as the avoidance of calling their utterance as sexist language as possible, but the delivered message is in conflict with each other (Arfiani & Putra, 2017).

2.4 Script and Metaphor

The text is conveyed throughout a conversation about comparing men and women by using metaphors which always display gender roles in a traditional way (Mills, 2008.)

2.5 Collocation

Using the word that follows or related another word for example “Nagging” is used to describe wife or woman and “granting” or “shrill” usually used to describe women’s voice, not men’s (Mills, 2008).

2.6 Androcentric perspective

The utterance is made from androcentric views or male-centered. For example, in the movies or even books the narrator always be male or use men’s perspective to narrate the story (Mills, 2008). Arfiani and Putra (2017) pointed out with an example “Is it a hidden code from her to challenge Esquire men readers? Find out yourself.” from a dialogue in Esquire Indonesia’s Women We Love. According to this sentence they use men’s perspective or treat men as dominant readers.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research questions are as follows:

1. How does the film *Fifty Shades of Grey* represent sexism through the dialogue in the romance genre?
2. What overt sexism is reflected in the dialogue of the movie?
3. What indirect sexism is reflected in the dialogue of the movie?

This research method takes a descriptive qualitative approach. Descriptive qualitative is a method used to expose a phenomenon in society. Descriptive research is a type of study which focuses on a condition, an object, a system of thought, human groups or a class of events at the present time. The source of the data is the film *Fifty Shades of Grey* by Sam Taylor-Johnson which was released on February 12, 2015. The film lasts 129 minutes. The particular issue of the data is the English language used in the movie’s dialogue spoken by all characters. The main apparatus is also observation of the language are character’s dialogues and sexist expressions of characters.

These are the collective methods that the researchers applied to analyze sexist language in dialogues.

1. Select the film which is *Fifty Shades of Grey* by Sam Taylor-Johnson and the topic that the researchers would like to analyze.
2. Search and reading the relevant research study to enhance comprehension.
3. Watch the film and collecting the sexist language which appears in the dialogues from subtitles to avoid mistakes.

The researchers have used a theoretical framework from Sara Mills (2008) that categorized sexist language into two main types: overt sexism and indirect sexism, and each type has six sub-categories. There are six subtypes of overt sexism including generic nouns, generic pronouns, non-parallel terms, sexism in swear words, derivational, and sexism in proverb. Another type is indirect sexism, which includes six subtypes: humor, conflicting message, presupposition, collocation, scripts and metaphor and androcentric perspective. Tabulating the sentences that consist of sexist language into this pattern as follows:

- GN = Generic noun
- GP = Generic pronoun
- D = Derivational
- NP = Non-parallel terms
- SP = Sexism in proverbs
- SS = sexism in swear words
- H = Humor
- P = Presupposition
- CM = Conflicting message
- SM = Scripts and metaphors
- C = Collocation
- AP = Androcentric perspective

Examples	Types					Overt sexism					Indirect sexism				
	words	phrases	sentence	GN	GP	D	NP	SP	SS	H	P	CM	SM	C	AP
Mrs.	/			/											
sorceress	/					/									
“Don’t be arrogant. Actually, you enjoyed it (right)?			/								/				

The result of analysis will be displayed in forms of two main types and separated into six subtypes, described by levels of linguistic constituents (word, phrase and clause). Furthermore, we will also identify sexist language in dialogue in words, phrases or clauses. The meaning will be explained along with the dialogues.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The studied dialogue script in *Fifty Shades of Grey* by Sam Taylor-Johnson which was released on February 12, 2015 has revealed interesting results that will be illustrated in two groups: overt sexism and indirect sexism.

5.1 Analysis of indirect sexism

Based on indirect sexism by Mill's theory, the current study found only three major types of sexist language, namely Scripts and Metaphors, Presupposition, and Conflicting Message.

5.1.1 Scripts and Metaphors

According to the movie, the female protagonist, Anastasia Steele studies English literature, so the literature and its author are likely to have a great influence on her characteristics. Such a background portrays a stereotype of women.

Example 1

Christian Grey: You said you're in English major? Tell me was its Charlotte Brontë, Jane Austen or Thomas Hardy, who first made you fall in love with literature?

Anastasia Steele: Hardy.

Christian Grey: I would've guessed Jane Austen.

In the scene, Mr. Grey predicts Anastasia's favorite author wrongly because he uses the social stereotype that women always love romantic novel style, but Anastasia actually loves tragedy. Thomas Hardy style focuses on humanity's struggle and using tragic vision. Jane Austin, on the other hand, reflects satire society and women portrayal in her literature. Therefore, his behavior and attitude infer Mr. Grey's belief that most women are detail-oriented and love irony content.

Example 2

Anastasia Steele: So you're a control freak?

Christian Grey: Oh, I exercise control in all things, Miss Steele.

In this situation, Mr. Grey said that he exercised control in all things, Miss Steele reflects the dominant power of male by using the word "control" to emphasize the gender role of society. In brief, this sentence refers to women who have to be under patriarchal society.

Example 3

Kate: Cab's early. Let's go. Ana, there's a package for you.

[Kate reads the note on the package]

Kate: "Why didn't you tell me there was danger? Why didn't you warn me? Ladies know what to guard against because..."

Kate, Ana: ...they read novels that tell them of these tricks."

Anastasia Steele: That's a quote from Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

This dialogue is about Mr. Grey sending the book "Tess of the d'Urbervilles" to Miss Steele. This literature is about a girl who was raped by the master's son. Mr. Grey also attached the quote "Why didn't you tell me there was danger? Why didn't you warn me? ..." It reflects sexist language that the word 'danger' refers to men in the book. The sentence "Ladies know what to guard against because..." refers to women having to defend themselves from those men. Therefore, women are underpowered when compared to men and need to be protected.

Example 4

Christian Grey: [voice over] *the following are the terms of a binding contract between the dominant and the submissive. The fundamental purpose of this contract. Is to allow the submissive to explore her sensuality and her limits safely. The dominant and the submissive agree and acknowledge that all that occurs under the terms of this contract will be consensual, confidential and subject to the agreed limits and safety procedures set out in this contract. The submissive will agree to any sexual activity deemed fit and pleasurable by the dominant, accepting those activities, outlined in hard limits.*

As we have mentioned, Mr. Grey has a dark secret that he likes BDSM, and he needs to make contact with Anastasia, and she has no other option but to be a submissive and be under his control. The key words ‘dominant’ and ‘submissive’ in the dialogue have a sense of sexist language that discriminates between the roles of men and women prominently.

Example 5

Christian Grey: [voice over] *The submissive shall always conduct herself in a respectful manner to the dominant, and she'll address him only as Sir, Mr. Grey, or such other title as a dominant may direct.*

In this quote, the language shows dominance and submissiveness. For example, Mr. Grey requires Miss Steele to call him by using only the dominant pronoun as Sir, Mr. Grey. The language shows women are inferiors to society.

5.1.2 Presupposition

Example 1

Christian Grey: Roll your eyes at me again and I will take you across my knee.

The utterance can be referred to as an invitation of sexual intercourse obscurely and also show the power of men or gender roles in society and the word gives a sense of abusive or seductive. Mr. Grey uses an imperative sentence to command Anastasia, challenging her and seducing her at the same time.

Example 2

Christian Grey: I gotta go take a shower.

[Christian walks to the bathroom]

Anastasia Steele: Why am I here, Christian?

[Christian stands by the bathroom doorway]

Christian Grey: You're here because I'm incapable of leaving you alone.

The situation in this utterance is Anastasia was drunk and was flirted by Jose, her male friend. Then Christian took her to his bedroom, and Anastasia asked him why she had been here before Christian replied, “You’re here because I’m incapable of leaving you alone.” The utterance reflects Anastasia as fragile and in need of a protection. It also emphasizes gender role and discrimination that women need men to help her out or they cannot protect themselves.

Example 3

[as they go to cross the street Ana is almost hit by a biker when suddenly Christian pulls her out of the way]

Christian Grey: Watch it!

[he holds onto Ana and touches her face tenderly]

Christian Grey: I'm not the man for you. You should steer clear of me. I have to let you go. [Ana clearly looks hurt]

Anastasia Steele: Goodbye, Mr. Grey.

This scene is similar to the previous example because Christian tried to protect Anastasia from the road accident, but he used the sentence “I'm not the man for you. You should steer clear of me.” to refer that “the man” for Anastasia has to be a protective man and he is a man who she should not be involved with because he is too dangerous which means the role of men is the protector or savior, however, women is under protect by male and this issue relate to patriarchal society also.

Example 4

[the room is filled with BDSM stuff like ropes, chains, whips and floggers]
 [Ana touches one of the floggers]
 Christian Grey: It's called a flogger.
 [Ana walks silently to touch another item]
 Christian Grey: Say something, please.
 Anastasia Steele: Do women do this to you or do you...?
 Christian Grey: I do this to women. With women. Women who want me to.
 Anastasia Steele: You're a sadist?
 Christian Grey: I'm a dominant.

The definition of the word ‘sadist’ is a person who is satisfied to see others hurt, especially, in sexual pleasure (Oxford university press dictionary (2021) and the other word is ‘dominant’, dominant means empower, controlling, and dominate someone (Merriam-Webster dictionaries, 2021). In addition, the tone of both words is completely different as ‘sadist’ is more negative than ‘dominant’, so Mr. Grey desires to change the tone of the words to a positive one to avoid his guilt. The words also represent how males can command females in sex pleasure along with general activities in their daily life.

5.1.3 Conflicting Message

Example 1

Anastasia Steele: Okay. Rope, tape, cable ties. You're the complete serial killer.
 Christian Grey: Not today.
 Anastasia Steele: Anything else?
 Christian Grey: What would you recommend?
 Anastasia Steele: For a do-it-yourselfer? Um, maybe coveralls so you protect your clothes?
 Christian Grey: I could just take all my clothes off.

In this situation, Mr. Grey buys equipment for sexual stuff and Anastasia teases that he is a serial killer and she recommends him about purchasing coveralls clothes for home working, but he refuses and says I could just take all my clothes off. The utterance reflects conflicting messages that are ambiguous in the way of sexuality or not. Besides taking clothes off when working, it also refers to taking cloth off while making love.

Example 2

Anastasia Steele: Thank you, but you didn't have to do that.
 Christian Grey: Yes, I did. Yours were covered in vomit. You shouldn't get drunk like that. I'm all for testing the limits, but you put yourself at risk last night.
 Anastasia Steele: I know.
 [Christian takes off his t-shirt]
 Christian Grey: If you were mine you wouldn't be able to sit down for a week.
 [Christian goes over to her and sits opposite her on the bed]
 Anastasia Steele: What?

In this situation, Anastasia, was drunk and requested that Mr. Grey takes her away from the night club. In the morning she wakes up and is grateful to him and he tells her to take better care of herself. Suddenly, he removed his shirt and said that “If you were mine you wouldn't be able to sit down for a week.” to refer that the phrase “were mine” can be related to sexual intercourse, so there is an ambiguous meaning in the phrase, and there is a hint of pretentiousness in his utterance which attempts to make Anastasia be his couple. It also illustrates that women are things of men or his object. Moreover, the phrase “wouldn't be able to sit down for a week” can be understood in two meanings as cannot sit down because of general activity or meaning of sexual activity indirectly.

5.2 Analysis of overt sexism

Based on indirect sexism by Mill’s theory, the study found only three major types of sexist language, namely overt sexism including generic nouns, derivational, and the non-parallel terms. The data can be seen in literature review.

5.2.1 Generic noun

This refers to a compound word that includes overt sexism. It is a way of word building by combining two words and showing the power of patriarchy by using the suffix -man.

Example 1

Anastasia Steele: Um, we have two inch and one inch. But the truly self-respecting handyman will have both in his tool box.

Christian Grey: Of course, he will.

From the word “handyman” is a compound word created by combining handy (adj) and man (n), has the meaning of being capable of fixing and fabricating items both within and outside the home, and who does so for a living or as a job. Handyman is often used in general terms for this profession, but the word man refers to only men who have the necessary skills and qualifications to work in this field.

Example 2

Christian Grey: What happened to calling before dropping by?

Mrs. Grey: Oh, and have your henchman give me the run around? No, thank you. I'll take my chances. Well, I was in the neighborhood and I thought perhaps we could have lunch.

From the word “henchman” is a compound word created by combining hench (adj) + man (n) has the meaning of a person who is loyal to and works for someone in a position of authority, and is willing to support that person even if it means causing harm to others or committing crimes. Man is a masculine word which refers to only men. In fact, we can use the word in a neutral tone for example, ‘person’ instead of ‘man.’

Example 3

Christian Grey: Later, baby.

[Christian leaves]

According to the Oxford university press dictionary (2021), the meaning of baby is a person who acts like a kid and is stubborn and used for calling couples and partners to represent love but it seems disrespectful to women. Moreover, this word also refers to girls and women (Merriam-Webster dictionaries, 2021). Based on both dictionaries, it can be mentioned that the word ‘baby’ shows the negative perspective towards women; for instance, men think that women are self-centered like a child.

5.2.2 Derivational Morphemes

Example 1

Kate: You're a goddess, this is perfect.

The overt sexism word “goddess” is derivational. The word is derived by combining the male term god and adding suffix -ess to be female term, demonstrating women’s reliance on men, and the neutral term of this word does not appear and the root of the word is also in male forms.

5.2.3 The Non-Parallel Terms

The final type of overt sexism is the non-parallel term which appeared in *Fifty Shades of Grey* is Mr and Miss.

Example 1

Receptionist #1: Miss Kavanagh? May I take your coat?

Anastasia Steele: Oh, yeah

[Ana takes off her coat to give to the receptionist]

Anastasia Steele: Um, Uh... Okay.

Receptionist #2: Mr. Grey will see you now

Mr. can be used to both married and unmarried men. In contrast, women can divide to Miss and Mrs. which means women have to show their status, indicating the unequal between men and women.

From the analysis of the dialogue in the film *Fifty Shades of Grey*, we have now seen that indirect sexism is the most prominent aspect in the film dialogue and this effect probably comes from the behavior or characteristic of the characters. For example, in one of the scenes, Anastasia, an English literature student, discussed her favorite novel genre with Mr. Grey. He clearly stated that she, as a woman, should be interested in ironic literary work by Jane Austen, not in that by Thomas Hardy who is known for the tragedy genre. In this case, Mr. Grey, who has a cunning personality with high social status, shows an indirect sexism toward women as we have already mentioned in example 1 in a conflicting message which illustrates his personality as a cunning person.

As we can see from the data, assigning gender roles is one way to discriminate against both genders, which corresponds to what Mills (2008) maintains. The roles inevitably lead to the use of sexist language. The major genre of the movie *Fifty Shades of Grey* is romantic, which in general would represent love through gender roles and romance themes. The movie under study has also represented the romance ideals. For instance, when Christian said “You’re here because I’m incapable of leaving you alone.” It can be interpreted that the male protagonist often uses a flirting method which are conflict sentences to flirt with women. Anastasia’s point of view towards love is related to “an ideal” love that appears in the literature she read. Nevertheless, Christian has a different perspective because he sees Anastasia as a naïve girl or sex object and not interested in love, so their juxtaposed relation is the form of violent hierarchy that even puts a stronger emphasis on the female protagonist as weaker, emotional, and less intelligent. In summary, the romantic film has an effect to make sexist language even clearer, but in this film the male protagonist characteristic with alpha male personality and his taste also intensifies how language is used in the film. For instance, in example 2 (script and metaphor), Mr. Grey said that he “exercised control in all things” when he talked to Ms. Steele. This dialogue reveals his “dominant” personality perfectly (Alison Flood, 2016).

6. CONCLUSION

The film *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015) by Sam Taylor-Johnson is categorized in the “Modern Romantic” genre which represents different aspects of the romantic genre and the dialogue conveys sexist language.

The research is based on Sara Mills theory by focusing on two types of sexism; direct and indirect sexism. The researchers found that indirect language is the most prominent in the character’s dialogue. There are three out of six types including script and metaphor, presupposition and conflicting messages. The other types as also found in the conversation is overt sexism which categorizes into three out of six shown as; generic noun, derivational, and the non-parallel terms. As we have mentioned earlier, this movie (romantic drama movie) affects the language that male characters used in the movie can be counted as sexism, so this might oppress other people during the conversation.

The previous research study on sexist language in “The Lord of the Rings “ was written by Fi’auhillah (2015) using Mill’s theory for observing sexist language and the effect toward female protagonists in this film. This study found that human’s behavior is related to language. Therefore, the usage of sexist language in English has an impact on the social perspective and sexist perceptions of speakers. However, Reisya (2018) dealt language usage in The Twilight Saga film by using Glick and Fiske (2000) theory in their qualitative research that emphasize on the intention of the words and separate it into two subtypes including hostile and benevolent sexism, then collect the amount of each subtypes that they found in the dialogue of the movie. In summary, this finding portrays what is sexist language and gives more knowledge about sexist language, the same as our research. Consequently, both previous research studies aim to suggest the need to avoid sexist language in order to maintain the relationship between people in the society.

Moreover, the usage of sexism language should be avoided by all speakers because sexism language leads to social issues or inequality such as discrimination between genders. For instance, when Mr. Grey clearly addressed that he exercised control in all things, he indirectly illustrates the power of masculinity to women. The behavior leads to discrimination towards the gender, which corresponds to Script and Metaphor type of Mills theory.

Overall, sexist language can be shown through conversation in the creative media or authentic conversation in our society.

We have learned so far that language can portray human’s attitudes and we would state our study’s implication that a speaker should be more careful about their language choice and avoid negative words or sexist language and promote gender equality in our society.

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BIO-DATA

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