

A Feminist Stylistic Analysis In Jessica Knoll's Novel *Luckiest Girl Alive*

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Abstract. This study aims to examine how the use of linguistic stylistics in describing women in a text. This study uses a feminist stylistic approach, which in this case focuses more on applying different perspectives to gender-specific women and men. The data in this study are in the form of words, phrases or sentences, and discourses that indicate gender-specific and are taken from Jessica Knoll's novel entitled *Luckiest Girl Alive*. Each of these levels describes how the gender presentation of feminism can be obtained and can also be seen as a feminist trait. The application of feminist stylistic theory proposed by Sarah Mills in this study shows that female characters are described as being so different from men, women are depicted based on their body parts, experiences, emotions, vulnerability to men, and even female characteristics in general. While men are described based on their physical strength, attitudes, personality, and also their dominance over women. This research helps the readers to reduce errors in understanding gender-specific coding in the form of words, phrases or sentences, and discourse in general or in detail.

Keywords: Feminist Stylistics, Gender-Specific, Perspective, Characteristics, Word, Sentence, Discourse

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1 Introduction

Gender issues have become one of the most popular issues that have become an interesting study for researchers from many different disciplines, especially linguistics. Discussing gender, we also talk about personal life, social life/society, and culture. Besides that gender is also a condition that is quite difficult for us to deal with, especially in the area of justice, identity, and even the survival of an individual. Gender has become a common problem that we have faced in the past so that this is no longer a taboo thing in our daily lives. At present, the problem of gender has begun to diminish because there are many thoughts that support equality over masculinity and femininity, even that support quickly spreads and is published throughout the world [1]. Gender is not viewed as a stable, pre-discursive construct residing in individuals: rather it emerges in discourse and in other semiotic practices. In other words, individuals do not simply act out a pre-existing gender; they are always actively involved in the “doing” of gender.

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This identifies that since a long time ago, every individual has carried out genderization in society. In this case, it is women who are most affected and feel the bitterness of this genderization.

At the beginning of this understanding, many feminist pioneers appeared in various bells of the world. They were not only women from the lower ranks, but also from nobles and respectable people. They are extraordinary figures who appear to fight for the rights of women as individuals, such as in terms of education, employment, careers, and freedom of opinion in various ways. And some of them even brought a big change to patriarchal thinking, so that their attachment to that woman has started to decrease. Until now, feminism is growing, although there are still many parties who oppose this for various reasons. Not only does it support their right to gender equality, but feminism also supports the development of LGBTQ (Lesbi, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning). This is one of the reasons why many may reject feminism. But the main reason is that patriarchal feel that this poses a threat to the presence of men who dominate, so they cannot be free to do things with women. Feminism's purpose to maintain the equality of women's rights to have the same privilege as men have. Women must find and fight for their ability to voice their aspirations in all aspects in areas of economic, social, educations, literature, and arts.

Stylistics is a field of linguistics that discusses in detail the individual language styles of other individuals. Stylistics is the study of language in literature. This began to place a discussion on the effects of textual and techniques on public, sharing, and foothold [2]. The meaning of the foothold that Toolan is referring to is something that is shared and established and can be checked as it is available to informed language users, who agree that she is a pronoun, herself a reflexive pronoun. In short, Toolan argues that stylistics is primarily technical focused; Traditionally, attention has been directed to the perfection of the craft in literary work, but it is clear in this that there is no intrinsic reason why it cannot be used equally in the study of craft excellence (and, conversely, mediocre craft) in other fields. such as advertising, political discourse, legal defense, and pop music lyrics. There are several aspects that influence a person's language style, namely the social position, profession, environment, and also gender.

Feminist Stylistic is a sub-branch of stylistic, where feminist stylistics discusses gender which focuses on language styles according to gender and social-gender position. In this case, we can analyze how a person is speaking based on gender and social position. Because individuals tend to accentuate themselves when making social contacts, especially gender and social-gender position. This cannot be separated from the nature of individuals, especially humans in the context of language [3]. Feminist stylistics focuses on how one expresses aspirations or something accidentally or not has highlighted his/her own gender. Mills mentioned [4] that feminist stylistic is concerned not only to analyze texts, but also to analyze the way that point of view, agency, metaphor, or transitivity are unexpectedly closely related to matters of gender, to

discover whether women's writing practices can be described. Besides that, Mills says it is also concerned to change social relations through that analysis and through other forms of action.

Analysis with a feminist stylistic approach focuses on language or linguistic analysis to analyze text. Therefore, to conduct this analysis the researcher used *Luckiest Girl Alive* as the data. The novel is a novel genre of mystery published in 2015 was the work of Jessica Knoll and became one of the novel best-sellers. This novel has a gender-focused theme, so it is very suitable to be analyzed using a feminist stylistic approach. This novel analysis will discuss starting from the level of words, phrases/ sentences, and discourse. As Mills states in her book that most feminists hold a belief that women as a group are treated oppressively and differently from men and that they are subject to personal and institutional discrimination. *Luckiest Girl Alive* is a novel that focuses on a young woman who has tried to rediscover her true self after experiencing a series of gruesome events in her teens. The reason why the writer analyzes Jessica Knoll's novel entitled "*Luckiest Girl Alive*". There are many details of the emphasis on women contained in the text of that novel. Gender specification becomes the main point of this research that makes it easy to find and understand the feminist/gender specification points in the novel or the other subject by the reader. The feminist stylistic approach is used in this research, because it was compatible to identify the gender-specification in that novel, especially in femininity.

2 Methods

The qualitative method puts emphasis on the quality of entities, processes, and meanings that were experimentally examined or measured. Qualitative techniques analysis was carried out by pulling the words, phrases, and discourse from various data selectively, then being compared and differentiated based on the data regularity and then the data was conceptualized cumulatively [8]. The data of this research were presented in the form of words, phrases/sentences, and discourse in the form of categorization. This study was classified as qualitative research since the data was taken from a novel entitled '*Luckiest Girl Alive*' by Jessica Knoll. This method was also called analytical research which was done based on documents and it analyzed the projection in the data. It referred to find out how the delivery of women in the context of the words, phrases/sentences, or discourse by feminist stylistics analysis. The procedures of the data collection were preparing, reading, marking and re-writing the data from the novel then categorize each word, sentence and discourse which contain gender-specific into several forms. The data analysed based on interactive model proposed by [8] with three phases of data analysis which is consist of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification.

3 Results and Discussion

This study shows how gender presentation can be identified in the novel *Luckiest Girl Alive* by Jessica Knoll at different levels in text, such as words, sentences/phrases, and discourses. This research is racing on the analysis of stylistic models and feminist practices that will certainly pay attention to changes in the structure of a word or sentence and also the way of thinking (one's view) towards gender-specific. This is what makes everyone's perspective different and these differences can make a text become a controversial thing. So it is known that the purpose of this study is to find out how the gender differences in the text. In this case, the findings from the analysis of feminist stylistics relate to the presentation of gender-specific in linguistic studies, especially language style.

In many ways, the language used by a person can affect their perception of everything in the world. Where in some cases there are many words that even have a different meaning from the actual meaning, especially in various cases related to gender or sex. So that the word has a different meaning depending on who uses or against what (who) the word or sentence is used and of course it can show gender bias as a whole. For a variety of reasons, language in the form of sexism or gender-specific in a novel can be analyzed in relative isolation, so as to elicit a more precise variety of perspectives. Overall, the study aims to show how gender-specific women in the novel then show their true meaning in that regard.

3.1 Gender-Specific at the Level of Word

At this presentation, gender-specific at the word level that used in *Luckiest Girl Alive* there are found 68 (sixty-eight) words, such as “husband” (p, 1), “wife” (p, 42), “son” (p, 248), “daughter” (p, 29), “fiance” (p, 1), “fiancee” (p, 193), and so on. The next term used in the novel is the generic pronoun. The generic pronoun ‘he’ and ‘his’ are used for identifying the male characters in the novel, for example, it is found in the word “cashier” (p, 135). In other cases, the use of ‘he’ or ‘she’ can also indicate the opposite gender, as mentioned in the following excerpt.

Chauncey was a prime example. Even though **she** pissed on the **student president’s** hand, **she** generally had a **boyfriend**, and therefore didn’t seem to be judge harshly. (Knolls, 2015;57)

The next is generic nouns, there are 48 (forty-eight) generic nouns found in the novel. The example of generic nouns that refers to male, such as “police” (p, 252), “detective” (p, 254), and “lawyer” (p, 257). The example of generic nouns that refers to female, such as “secretaries” (p, 20), “bartender” (p, 154), and “boss” (p, 4). The following example is referred to both male and female or uncategorized gender, “baby” (p, 11), “neighbors” (p, 5), “kids” (p, 13), “people” (p, 18), “customer” (p, 134), and so-on.

Women as the marked form is a form that makes any difference between male and female. A suffix is a form that marked the female in a text. The suffix ‘woman’ was used in the novel which refers to women as the marked form, for example, the term “saleswoman” (p, 23) has the suffix ‘-women’ that referred to female sales in a store that TifAni and her mother wanted to buy a scarf. The other suffix which found in the novel is ‘-esse’, this following word is used the suffix ‘-ess’ is “waitresses” (p, 273) and “hostess” (p, 3). In addition to suffixes, there are also affixes that are used as the marked term of women in the novel, for example, the word "lady" (p, 13) wherein this novel is followed by the word ‘dermatologist’, so it is easy to indicate that the dermatologist is a woman. The following example is a form that refers to men, such as “salesman” (p, 1), “freshman” (p, 42), and “bogeyman” (p, 134) these terms are using the suffix “-man”.

This term is related to identifying specific gender tends to be derogatory towards men and override women. In this case, the term refers to both man and woman as a pair of words that become gendered terms.

Table 1 The Male and Female Terms in *Luckiest Girl Alive*

Male	Female
Fiance (p, 1)	Fiancee (p, 193)
Husband (p, 1)	Wife (p, 42)
Salesman (p, 1)	Saleswoman (p, 23)
Man (p, 13)	Woman (p, 3)
Boys (p, 133)	Girls (p, 3)
Father (p, 42)	Mother (p, 1)
Dad (p, 23)	Mom (p, 3)
Boyfriend (p, 43)	Girlfriend (p, 16)
Uncle (p, 132)	Aunt (p, 29)
Son (p, 284)	Daughter (p, 29)
Groomsmen (p, 46)	Bridesmaid (p, 4)
Brother (p, 46)	Sister (p, 128)

The other words which found in the novel that refers to women only and seem to have no male equivalent, the example of this case is “petite” (p, 1), “elegant” (p, 1), “graceful” (p, 1), “pretty” (p, 131), “glamorous” (p, 128), and “chubby” (p, 283).

Endearments and diminutives is a term that is used to describe males or females that have positive and negative connotations. For example, the connotations that refer to women, TifAni’s mom and dad called her “sweetie” (p, 139), “sweetie-pie” (p, 272), and “sweetheart” (p, 241). And Luke, her boyfriend also calls her “babe” (p, 40). That example was the vocatives that use

for both males and females. The negative connotations which found in the novel refer to the female are “bitch” (p, 9), these connotations refer to TifAny herself, in this case, she was a little bit drunk and she talk without thinking about it before. The other connotations are “the pussy girl” (p, 71), “pussy” (p, 34), and “cocksucker” (p, 34), that connotation refers to TifAni’s friend. In this case, the male is also mentioned in some negative way, such as “fuck you” (p, 190) that refers to a man who cut the line when TifAni is in the bar and she is mad with that man. The other connotations are “bitchly” (p, 9) and “tard” (p, 34) or ‘bastard’.

3.2 Gender-Specific at the Level of Phrase/Sentence

There are 20 (twenty) phrases or sentences that indicate gender-specific at the level of phrase/sentence in the novel. The first is the ready-made phrase, this term is quite interesting because there is a preconstruction structure that makes it more difficult to argue with, without having to take any kind of approach to see it as gender-specific. For example, there are some descriptions that talk about women’s problems, especially in their sex, relationship, lifestyle, and also to show that women are strong. It can be seen in the following sentences.

1. *...There is no way that woman can ever get hurt.* (p, 288)
2. ... the one bridesmaid, premed, who at twenty-three years old had boldly declared that if she didn’t have a kid by the time she was thirty, she was freezing her eggs. (p, 41)
3. “Don’t mess it up, Tiff. You’ll never get anyone as good as him again.” (p, 142)
4. The fake diamonds were dull ... (p, 279)

After showing the women’s problems, the following sentences show the phrase or sentences that talk about men.

1. . . . “Men don’t want a baby every time they fuck either.” (p, 11)
2. “Experts say men are more receptive when they don’t feel as though they’re being challenged head-on . . . literally.” (p, 19)

Generally, the term presupposition and inference is found in ads. But in this novel there is found a sentence is included in the form of gender presupposition and inference stereotype, this is because it is a technique to attract their female customers to buy their products. It can be seen in the following sentence.

It was that same throaty purr that she Bloomingdales’s saleswoman used to convince her to buy a cashmere scarf she couldn’t afford: “It looks rich on you.” “Rich.” The magic word. (Knoll, 2015;23)

The following sentences show the metaphor in the novel is used to describe TifAni as the main character in various situations.

Then I climbed the toilet seat, silent as Spider-Man, pushed open the door to the bathroom, and walked briskly down the hallway and out the back entrance. (p, 163-164)

“You are the most beautiful girl I’ve ever seen and you are going to be the most beautiful bride. One more cheeseburger isn’t going to change that. A million cheeseburgers couldn’t change that.” (p, 320)

3.3 Gender-Specific at the Level of Discourse

In this level, the identification of gender-specific it would be seen from whole structures in the novel. There are 11 (eleven) discourses that indicate the gender-specific that are found in the novel. Characterization is one of the terms to identify gender-specific at the level of discourse. Both male and female characters are described in different ways, where females are usually described by their body parts, such as “hair”, “eyes”, and also their “skin color”. While the male character mostly described by their overall appearance. The following excerpt shows the text that indicates the gender-specific.

“I like your pants.” The compliment turned me around. A girl who was at once extramerely bizzare looking and attractive nodded at my orange cargo pants which I already couldn’t wait to never wear again. She had strawberry blond hair that was so uniform in color it couldn’t be natural, large brown eyes somehow devoid of eyelashes, and skin the color of a girl who had a pool in her backyard and no summer job. (Knoll, 2015;34)

Mr. Larson didn’t look fat to me, but when we got to his apartment and I was able to trace the perimeter of the living room, studying the pictures on his walls, the blanket he’d given me loosening around my shoulders, I was that he used to have that same slim, muscular build that Liam and Dean had. (Knoll, 2015;137)

In the novel Luckiest Girl Alive, the fragmentation of women is depicted with various parts of their bodies and even their overall body shape. Here is a depiction of the woman in this novel based on the following excerpt, ‘his hand’, ‘my back’, ‘my hand’, ‘his arms’, ‘my waist’, and ‘my hair’. Based on the whole discourse is refers to men.

“They wouldn’t seat until we’re all here.” Luke pressed the palm of his hand into the naked small of my back and guided me further into the restaurant. That was a chill, right? That was us, still electrified by each other? (Knoll, 2015;82)

“Whoa.” I laughed. A real laugh, at first. It was all in good fun. “Easy.” I put my hand--- the one weighed down by the emerald---on Luke’s shoulders. He strapped his arms around my waist and pulled me into him. “I love you so fucking much,” he said into my hair. (Knoll, 2015;110)

The term of focalization is to provide a means of identifying the consciousness through which fictional events are presented in a text. This term is shown in the following excerpt.

Nell taught me that I'd been playing it all wrong: Pretty girls had to appear as though they weren't trying to be pretty, which I had made the fatal mistake of doing in Bready. There were times Nell went out in her father's polo, nasty old Uggs, and sweatpants, no makeup, just to prove her loyalty resided with her own gender. Pretty girls also had to have a self-deprecating sense of humor and point out when they had a blistering pimple and talk about their explosive diarrhea to assure other girls that they weren't interested in the role of man-eating mix. Because if the others sensed any level of deliberate prowess, they'd end you, and you could forget about the guy you wanted. The snarling force of a pack of girls could wither the most screaming boner. (Knoll, 2015;43)

In the novel *Luckiest Girl Alive*, TifAni as the main character in this novel also serves as a focalizer. In the above excerpt, TifAni tells about the struggle of a pretty girl to keep their popularity or positive vibes in their community where not everyone knows that.

4 Conclusion

There are three fields that include linguistic units, namely word level, sentence/phrase, and discourse. These three fields are used to identify gender-specific in a text. Each of these levels describes how the gender presentation of feminism can be obtained and can also be seen as a feminist trait. In this novel, female characters are described as being so different from men, women are depicted based on their body parts, experiences, emotions, vulnerability to men, and even female characteristics in general. While men are described based on their physical strength, attitudes, personality, and also their dominance over women. The most prominent thing in this novel that shows the presentation of gender is the sensuality and physicality (body parts) of the characters used to describe women and men. The following are important points from the findings of gender-specific presentations on word, phrase/sentence, and discourse level in the *Luckiest Girl Alive* novel. (1) At the word level, there are several terms that describe both men and women, such as "chubby", "boobs", and "breast" refers to women. The other terms to describe the gender-specific is based on their lifestyle or what they wear as the usual term of gender, such as, "glamorous", "elegant", "gown", and "necklace" it refers to women. (2) At the sentence/phrase level, there is a term of marketing technique that pretend to women and included in the form of gender presupposition and inference stereotype, this is because it is a technique to attract customers to buy their products. For example, "It looks rich on you" (refers to women). (3) The last is at the discourse level, men and women are described by their body parts (mostly women), domination in sensual attraction, and physical strength (mostly men). For example, "muscular build" (refers to men), "tiny finger" (refers to women), "blond hair" (refers to women), "she waved at me, her nails painted the color of gangrene" (refers to women), "Luke

pressed the palm of his hand into the naked small of my back. He strapped his arms around my waist and pulled me into him.” (domination of men).

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