The Women Status in Patriarch Culture of Societies: A view of Nathanial Hawthorn in The Birth-Mark

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Received: 07 March 2022, Published: 30 June 2022

Abstract

Language stores changes in its system occur at the level of word, phrase, and discourse. It is a complete system and serves to transfer connotative and denotative meanings. There are different factors like social, cultural, and political those influence language. There is a link between power and language because it depends on who controls language. Furthermore, in modern times it shows the color of gender. There is prejudice in words and phrases. This study investigates this fact in the ‘The Birthmark by Hawthorn’ qualitatively under the theoretical framework of Mills (1995) Feminist Stylistics. The study aims to find out the semantic negative connotation against women and explores the diction used by the author at the word and phrase level. This is significant because it decodes the literary language. Similarly, the results based on the analysis show the words used for Aylmer by Hawthorn show masculinity, power, strength, skill, and experience like skillful, experience, scientist, spiritual, and my power. This shows men are logical and empirical and they have the brain to think and invent new things but the words and phrases used for women highlight her fragility, helplessness, and objectivity. The words used for women by the male author are beautiful, tears, love, deep, etc. these just show women are emotional and they are the object of beauty. They have no power. In a nutshell, there is sexism in the language system. Hence these are stored in the semantic bank of lexicons in the linguistic system in dormant form and get activated.
when coming into use. This reflects discrimination against women. The future researcher may explore this story from the angle of feminist discourse.

**Keywords**

Gender differences, Mill’s Feminist Stylistics, the birthmark.

**DOI Number:** 10.47067/jlcc.v4i2.97

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1. **Background to the Study**

In this section, the researcher introduces the topic through the construction of the background of the study. Moreover, this comprises of objective, the significance of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and last but not least rationale of the study.

Feminism refers to the societal norms those treats women and men differently based on discrimination. There exist gender differences between them. Feminism and criticism in it give rise to analytical views about language and gender studies. Moreover, literature through the medium of language based on reality reflects this aspect. So, there exist in society hegemonic boundaries and this reflects in literary writings, through the use of gender-biased language (Hangalay, 2014).

Literature depicts female pictures but it varies based on the gender of the writer. The feminist stylistics is significant in breaking the serotypes about females. Those are constructed by society and misogynist writers. Furthermore, feminist literature is writing back to the center. The literary writing by female authors is the voice of the oppressed women who are marginalized in every walk of life. Moreover, the core of feministic stylistic analysis does not deal with the superficial level of beauty of text but it dissects deep into the factors and specifies its meaning in a social scenario. McFadden opines either literature helps in the elimination of women’s oppression or highlights it.

Mills (1995) opined on the historical origin of feminist stylistics. She says the basic root of feminist stylistics is in the theories and criticism which has been done by female critics. Furthermore, this begins in US and France. The feminist criticism derives ultimately from the feminist movement to gain equal status at the social, economic, and political levels. Moreover, these three concepts are interlinked. The root cause of the feminist movement, criticism, theories, and feminist stylistics is the gender biases and misogynist attitudes towards females at all societal levels. Hence, they face discrimination based on sex as well as gender (Ufot, 2012).

Weather (1969) explored women who are facing difficulties either poor white or brown females. These include mostly Mexican, Indian, Oriental, and Black Women but the oppression of black women get double based on race and color. They are treated like commodities and can be bought or sold like a slave by white-man. So, feminist literature has been written nowadays to deconstruct these stereotypes constructed by chauvinistic society against women.
Stylistics is used to perform certain functions through language in a specific way. Mills' feminist stylistics deal with the way gender is handled in a literary text. This finds out the factors behind the words and specifies their meaning in a social context. Furthermore, Fowler (1981) discussed the link between societal structure and language. There is an influence on the language of different social, economic, and cultural factors as a consequence diversity in language arises. So, these relate directly to the language power and social stratification in society.

In the literary text, the oppression of one woman is the suppression of all women. It refers to sexism in language. It is the hate speech by a dominant group over a minor group. Mills discusses in the applicative section of feminist stylistic this gendered language aspect means sexism in language at three levels one is word-level, secondly phrase level and last the phrase level. Hence, she discusses gender biases at three levels in the language (Takemaru, 2011).

Sexism in language refers to the representation of genders in language gratuitously at the level of word, phrase, and then discourse. This refers to such words in a language as representing only one sex. Furthermore, she gives some examples of sexist language like chairmen, waiters, waitresses, actresses, and hostesses. There is derogation at a semantic level in pairs like lord/lady and master/mistress. In all these mentioned pairs there is an element of negative connotation with each second word. Hence, there should be used gender-free language and does not refers to only one sex.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The language used in literature is sexist. This is based on the gender differences ground. The words, nouns, pronouns, and phrases are gender-biased. The semantic connotations at the word level depict the negative meaning, especially for women. So, the marginalized meanings are encoded in a system of man-made language and activate the language in use.

1.3. Objectives

The researcher aims to find outs the gender biases at the linguistic level encoded in language. The applicative section of Mills' feminist analysis at the word level deciphers the words used for females but carry a negative connotation. Thus, this decodes the dormant sexist meaning in words and phrases when they are used practically in literature. This literature linguistics transfers the image of the female in language and society.

1.4. Research Questions

A researcher investigates the following interrogative sentences:

1. What are the generic noun, pronouns, and phrases in selected literary language?
2. What are the semantic differences at the word level?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This study is significant because this reveals the implicit underlying system of language and preserves the biased connotation for females for a long period. This paper dissects the language of literature and reveals the passive picture of women and the status of women even in language. Thus, this shows the way language is controlled by men to control women.
1.6. Rationale of Study

The logical argument to justify the validity of this research paper investigations of this feminist theory has taken this from different angles like sexism and language, the applicative section, and feminist discourse perspectives. Similarly, the selected story is also analyzed from the perspective of feminism and transitivity analysis. But this short fiction’s language does not analyze under the word level applicative section of the feminist model of Sra Mills. So, the researcher takes this paper in the direction to investigate the gender-biased language in the literary artistic piece of work by Hawthorne.

2. Literature Review

The researcher takes into account the previous work in this area. This section reviewed the literature in detail and find out the significant ideas related to the theory of Feminist Stylistics by Mills (1995). This part reveals the current research on the theory and digs out research gaps for the chosen topic.

There is male dominancy in society as well as in literature because of the use of sexist language especially construct stereotypes against women. There is a relation between language with power and power in the hands of a chauvinistic society. They take benefits from this and use literary writings as a tool to communicate misogynist views against the peripheral sex. Furthermore, Mills in her work reflected either the literary work helps in the elimination of the discrimination against women or perpetuates them in culture. Moreover, there has been conducted research on Hemmingway’s short fiction named Cat in the Rain. This portrays the image of women in American culture through the sexism approach under the feminist paradigm. This dissects those linguistic features in literary writing and represents the dark picture of females. Hence, this shows there is an influence of culture and social factors in the construction of artistic pieces of works (Almnaseer, 2018).

The comparative feminist stylistics analysis of the language of two online texts reports the news. This shows the power relation with language and this represents the social and cultural aspects behind the words, phrases, and discourse. Hence, both texts represent equality at the level of gender through the proper use of words (Sukaesih, 2017).

This paper investigates the colonial nature based on gender. This explains the relation of spatial in the colonial background. Furthermore, it discovers there are four different kinds of actors and actions in the colonial context. Hence, this gives the theoretical elements about gender (Mills, 1996).

This study suggests a new outline of the feminist text. This is such a sort of text and accounts for the changes in the post-colonial theories, criticism, and language. Furthermore, the literary text after the colonialism should be giving answers to all the discriminations and stereotypes as are prevalent in the culture. Hence, these are perpetuated through the use of sexist language. Thus, post-colonial feminist literature challenges all these hegemonies by writing back to the center (Mills, 1998).

The critical view of feminist texts like ‘Still I Rise by Maya Angelou explains the language the author uses to discuss the problem faced by women in the male dominant society. Furthermore, these literary texts are the voice of oppressed women. They raise their voices through writing.
They assert their identity. These are like autobiographical notes those portray a picture of the marginalized they have to spend due to male dominancy and gender inequality. Hence, feminist stylistics aims to represent the color of gender in literary text and dig out the main reasons behind the literary text which stimulates the author to create such type of literary writing (Hama, 2017).

There is a link between the linguistic structure of a literary text and the social connotations associated with the words, phrases, and discourse. Mill’s feminist model also reveals the way ideologies exert power on the social feminine being. Hence, this model is significant because it aids the author to convey meaning through literary text (Ghayadh, 2016).

This paper finds out the basis of feminist stylistics and feminist critical theories. These give the basis of feminist stylistics. The prominent function of Mill’s model is to present the counter-image of women in society through literary language. Furthermore, this shows the applicative section in which she suggests gender-free language. Moreover, this distinguishes the male writings from the female ones. Hence, it deals with the view and the writing style, themes, and language of both sexes as are different from one another. This in brief is called the gendered style (Arıkan, 2016).

Feminist stylistics tries to decode the meaning behind the symbolic representation of women in literature. Like Mazari becomes the object and subject in her speech represented through ‘I’ and the object is also women. Hence, the woman is represented as an object of no importance and men in the power position (Putridiatmiko, 2020).

The transitivity approach and the male hegemony is an aspect under the paradigm of the feminist approach. This shows the men as active actors while women as the passive character of society. Furthermore, i.e. in the literary work “Lady Chatterley’s Lover” by Lawrence represents the men in this fiction are active in every walk of life and like to make relations and the female protagonist is passive and object. Hence, this shows the feminine objectivity and masculine subjectivity (Kang, 2015).

Women become the possession of their husbands in the 19th century in the marriage institution. This shows the picture of women in the mind of men is like a slave. Hence, there comes a sense of possession along with marriage. This comes to an extent and becomes dangerous for his wife. Thus, this shows the social, psychological, and context of literature (Kuntzman, 2015).

This short fiction’s main character is obsessed with science. This man idolizes science and is overpowered by the self-conscious fear of sexuality. So, he pursued science and tries to seek perfection in her wife, and in this process, his wife lost her life (Tritt, 2008).

Hawthorne’s fictions portray women as significant figures for men because he represents them as a spiritual partner of males. He does not consider them a threatening Eve for men but intellectual support for them. Furthermore, he discusses both types of women those who are strong and independent, and the others who are dependent on men and weak. So, the gender relations and exploitation of women are discussed by him through literary fiction. In the selected short story the selfishness and excessive possession of her husband destroy this lady (Mehdi, 2014).
2.2. Research Gap

The researcher has gone through significant investigative papers in the area of feminist stylistics and the selected short fiction by Hawthorne. Sara Mills’ theory has been taken from different angles like sexist language, gender difference, and the generic pronouns in text, phrases, and discourse feminist analysis. There has also been found the power and language relation, the influence of culture as the main trigger behind the production of such types of texts those distort the image of women in society. The language used against them has a negative connotation. Furthermore, Mills’ Feminist Stylistics suggests producing such sort of text those represents the voice of women and writes back to the center. Moreover, the selected story is taken from the angle of the scientific experiment of the male protagonist upon his wife, the man’s obsession with science, and over possession in the institution of marriage. But the researcher has found out the story has not been searched out from the angle of feminist stylistics to analyze the language of the text on the word and phrase level. The generic noun and pronouns like which sorts of nouns and pronouns are used for male and female. Hence, the investigator has analyzed the language of this selected story under Mills feminist model at the word or phrase level.

2.3. Overview/Plot of the Story

‘The Birthmark’ by Hawthorn is published in 1843. This story deals with human sins and inequality on the grounds of gender. He reflects dark romanticism in his literary writing. Thus, the plot story is as follows.

Aylmer is the male protagonist in the story. He is a scientist but he is alone. He leaves his scientific experimentation and marries a beautiful woman named Georgiana. She is very beautiful but there is a red birthmark on her cheek. Furthermore, her husband wants perfection in her wife’s beauty. He thinks to remove this mark from her face. As they both become obsessed with the mark as their lives become difficult. Moreover, one night his wife tells him this mark is in her heart and it must be taken out. He also dreamt about the mark. He recalls the surgical treatment of the birthmark led to the death of his wife. Thus, his wife says to him to remove this surgically. He gets ready at once to do a surgical operation on her wife.

He takes his wife with him to the lab. She gets faint in the lab and an assistant helps her. Georgiana finds herself in a room where her husband shows her some of his inventions. Moreover, there he represents before her magical dust and tries to produce her picture but her image becomes blurry but the birthmark appears prominent. He gets angry and put this image in a chemical. In addition, he comes to his wife and tells her as he is doing experiments to produce the elixir of life a potion to attain immortality, and also try to convert metals to gold. Similarly, he shows her powerful cosmetics to achieve perfect beauty.

Upon reading several books about her husband she comes to know his experiments fail to achieve perfection. Her husband gets angry and to ease him she says to him she is ready to take anything he wants. On hearing this person becomes happy. Furthermore, he offers her liquid to drink and after some moment spot on her cheek disappears but she dies. Hence, another experiment to achieve the perfection of Aylmer failed.
3. Research Methodology

The researcher uses the qualitative method to analyze the structure of ‘The Birthmark’ by Hawthorne under the theoretical framework of Mills Feminist Stylistics (1995). Data has been collected from sentences through the purposive sampling technique which is a type of non-probability sampling. Investigator finds out the generic nouns, pronouns, and phrases in literary language at the word level through the applicative section of theory. Thus, results are provided at the end based on analysis.

3.3. Theoretical Framework

Mills (1995) proposed sexism in language does not refer to the identification of the gendered lexical items and suggests its alternatives but it deals with the structure of language. This linguistic structure is linked to gender and produces specific sorts of meaning at the semantic level. Furthermore, this structure of a language determines different connotation-related terms whose links to female is not explicit. Hence, Mills dig out the underlying structure of language. Meanings are considered neutral but they are complex because meaning in the English language seems to work differently for both sexes. It does not mean there are fixed meanings for each word. It is possible and there are different meanings of a single word but there must be a dominant one. Moreover, meaning is associated with culture. There is a complete process in a language and it determines meanings on a peripheral basis. This system is encoded in language. Hence, these meanings encoded in language influence the cognitive process about the role of gender in society.

Mills' main proposition is to find out the role of words in promoting the male-dominant culture. Cameron (1990) opined there is sexism in language because every single name in the language is full of meaning. Spender (1980) argued language support men and is shaped by the male. Furthermore, there are names related to the female body parts, as their names change with marriage. This shows women are used by men and she has no right to their body this suggests the system of language. Even intimate relations are expressed from a male point of view, not from a female perspective. Thus, there are inappropriate terms in language good for females because of the negative connotations.

Cameron (1990) opined there is the semantic and systematic structure of many languages and they propose a negative meaning for females opposite to males. This shows hegemony is mingled in the structure of language. This is the structure of language and shows the distinctive behavior towards females but those are responsible for this who constructs the structure of language. So, male dominancy is present in the language.

The words for a male like a courtier, or governor have positive connotations but those words for females like a hostess, governess, mistress, etc. carry negative connotations. Furthermore, they are full of erotic meaning. These relate to the hierarchies in society. Moreover, there are terms based on the gender differences like sir, madam, lord, lady, etc. These refer to the differences on the biological grounds. Hence, the connotations associated with a female are fragile, weak, and tearful but the meaning associated with a male such as they are dominant, strong, and prominent as compared to females. There is discrimination even in the field of religion.
There are binary terms in the English language and they came from a very long time before. This refers to the contradictory terms like Mr, Mrs, man, women, wife, and husband. The masculine terms come first as compared to the female-associated words. Furthermore, the terms used for sexual relations for women carry negative meanings as compared to males like slut and stud for females and Casanova, gigolo shows the men's power in intimate relationships. Hence, language encoded the history of male dominancy in the systematic sense. This exerts power as this has been used by human beings. then this sexism in a language gets activated.

4. Data Analysis

Researcher in this section analyses the selected words from the short story ‘The Birthmark’ by Hawthorn under Mills' feminist Stylistics at the word and phrase level. Thus, the analysis is as follows.

4.1. Themes Emerge from This Analysis

The main themes based on the analysis are as follows:

- Objectification of Women
- Hollow Diction
- Women and Cognition
- Binary terms

4.2. Report the Findings

Language has an implicit structure and encodes the gender-biased meaning at the word and phrase-level in dormant form but it gets activated when language comes into use (Mills, 2002). The researcher has found out the author uses different adjectives, verbs, adverbs, and modifiers like more, skillful, experienced, and spiritual at the word level. This reveals the language has been used by the author to highlight the cognitive ability and skill of the men. The use of the word experience shows the practical approach of the man in the story to life. Furthermore, the use of the word spiritual shows the sacredness and high spirit of man to experiment. Thus, the words used for women are just related to their physical appearance like beautiful this highlights the physical beauty of females but the words used for men systematically in the language of literature are directly associated with the mind, skill, practice, experiment, intelligence and in every way highlights the cognitive ability of man.

There have been used different phrases in the language of literature like the phrase used by men shows him as an actor and women at the object position of no importance who have no mind. Like a verb phrase i.e. asked beautiful women. This is the verb phrase used by men and he is an actor here. He is ordering like a lord who needs an object to play and the inference of the story shows that he uses Georgiana to experiment on her. He uses her as a specimen in his lab. Furthermore, the use of the word for women by men is the adjective e.g. beautiful this shows man only sees women from the perspective of physical attraction. They are taking women from the physical angle, not from the point of their ability. In addition, there is another phrase like infinitive phrase e.g. to become his wife. This reveals the man is in the position to give the order. There is no will of females to marry the men. Women have no mind, will, or
personality according to men. They treat them just like an object. Furthermore, the only thing matter to men is the perfection and beauty of female. Thus, this shows the language has implicit structure and meaning and it is biased against women. Man is all in all even in conveying the meaning of their interest even in literary language.

At the level of word and phrase, there are binary terms specifies sex and gender also (Mills, 2002). There are words used by Aylmer like no, dear, perfect, earthly, imperfect, and perfect. Furthermore, these words show those used by a man for his wife. This shows he has a sense of superiority. He considers his wife his property. He wants everything perfect and belongs to him. Moreover, the verb shock used by Aylmer shows he does not bear a little fault in his wife. His use of noun defect shows only her physical beauty is important to him. Thus, her feelings and thoughts are of no importance to him.

There are different phrases used by him in a short story like the propositional phrase on another face. This shows a sense of possession of Aylmer. This represents and he can bear it on somebody else but not her face. Furthermore, there is coordinate conjunction used in the sentence. This gives a sense of negativity. There are some words of negation in the story like no, but both give the meaning of negation. Moreover, the use of husband and wife are binary terms in the language. Those are used in the story. There is an adjective like earthly represents man’s obsession to achieve perfection beyond nature. Thus this unveils the man’s intention to take control of everything. This is prevalent in the language of man. He is using authoritative words in short fiction.

On the other hand, the words and phrases used by the male author for females reveal the weakness and powerlessness of females. Those are like verbs cried. This shows the helplessness of female and men does not care for female. Furthermore, the selfishness of men is reflected through the language used by men. The adverb phrase like deeply hurt shows the language used for a female is sentimental and fragile. The sentimental and irrational lexicons are associated with females in the short fiction. Thus, the word and phrases used in language for females through the mouth of the male are gender-biased. This shows the power of men and the powerlessness of females.

Researchers find out and there has been used binary words by an author like those words specifies the differences between sex. There are words like wife and dearest. There does not present the definite article with the superlative degree of adjective. Furthermore, the language man uses to achieve his aim. The use of intransitive verbs like cry by Aylmer represents he does not even need any object to convey his meaning. He like a master gives the order to others. Hence, Aylmer plays on words i.e. puns to persuade his wife. So and she becomes a specimen for his lab experiment.

Aylmer uses a possessive pronoun for himself e.g. my with object power. This shows and this is at his feet. Power is in his possession. This is his property. He tries to assert and he is in an authoritative position. Furthermore, the use of the verb kiss by man but this verb is used with the word right cheek. This cheek is without a birthmark. Hence, this represents this man’s love for perfection. He only admires her beauty. So and he kisses only the cheek on which there is no birthmark. The use of the word right is significant because it shows he is obsessed with perfection.
5. Conclusion

In a nutshell, it is concluded and there has been used sexist language at the word and phrase level in the literary short story ‘The Birthmark by Hawthorn’. Feminist stylistics show and the language used for men in the story by the male author represents men is at the status of power. He is intellectual, rational, and empirical. He loves to achieve perfection. There are words in the story like my, power, shock, skill, and experience for males. Furthermore, the words used by Hawthorn women show fragility, object, and weakness like beautiful, tears, beauty, and submissive words. Hence, the system of language contains gender-biased words and the author portrays the powerless picture of a female who has no brain.

6. Implication

This paper investigates this short fiction from the angle of sexist language at the word level like nouns, pronouns, and phrases. This digs out the background meanings of the words and stands against female and support men at the social, cultural, and political level. Thus, in the future, this story can be analyzed from the angle of the feminist discourse analysis and gender biases at the phrase level. So, there can be conducted a comparative study of both males and females in this short fiction.

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