

FEMINIST NARRATIVE AND STYLISTICS ANALYSIS IN THE DETECTIVE GENRE: *ENOLA HOLMES 2*

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Abstract

This research described the feminist stylistic and gender specifications in *Enola Holmes 2* movie. The method used in this research is a qualitative method and the theory applied is feminist stylistics theory by Sarah Mills. The researchers analysed the collected data based on the level of words, phrases or sentences, and discourses. The objectives of this research are some words, sentences and discourses in the *Enola Holmes 2* Movie's Script that refers to the feminist stylistics, such as the diction, language used, figurative language and how the style affects the feminist value in *Enola Holmes 2* movie. The result found in this research is the different styles in presenting female and male by the script writer. Females are represented with feminine words and mostly represented by their physical appearances, feminine stereotypes, and beauty behaviours. Meanwhile, males are represented with masculine words and mostly represented by their strong characteristics. Also, masculine stereotypes and many occupation titles or jobs refer to men rather than women. It proved that the script writer shows men involved more in the professional world than women, especially in investigating professions like detective.

Keywords: *Feminist Stylistics, Qualitative, Gender Specification, Enola Holmes*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a means of communication between two or more people (Andy & Ambalegin, 2019). Language is used not just in everyday life but also in literary works. A film is among the instances. The fact that movies exist is regarded as a kind of information and enjoyment as well as an

audio-visual communication tool for spreading a message according to (Erdayani & Ambalegin, 2022). The film depicts the lives of regular people, but in a visual format that blends dialogue and action. Films are not just entertainment reflecting society; they are powerful tools that shape and amplify movements including the feminist movement,

challenge gender norms, and redefine women's roles on-screen and beyond.

According to (Mohajan & Kumar 2022), feminism is a social and political movement advocating for the rights of women on the grounds of political, social, and economic equality to men. In film, feminism plays a role in examining how women are represented and how patriarchal norms are maintained or challenged through narrative and visuals. Feminist analysis in film focuses on how women are represented in on-screen stories and how films reflect or challenge these patriarchal social norms.

In understanding how a film shapes gender perceptions, films can be analyzed using a stylistic approach. Cited from (Candriana, 2019), stylistics is one of the approaches in literary criticism that uses basic linguistic studies. This approach analyses using the levels of linguistic analysis including words, phrases, sentences, and discourse of each characters' dialogues in the film. The stylistic approach in film analysis focuses on the use of language styles to understand the meaning and effects produced in a literary work.

One interesting movie to analyse using feminist stylistics is *Enola Holmes 2* released in 2022. This movie features a female character, Enola Holmes the sister of Sherlock Holmes, who wants to be a professional detective like her brother but underestimated by the folks her because of her gender. They did not trust her to solve cases. However, there is one child who believed her, and this is the beginning of her struggle to prove that she can be a professional detective. The researchers were interested in picking this movie because of the unique story. How Enola solved her main case to prove her ability to become a good detective like his brother is the main plot line of feminist movement in this movie.

The researchers used several previous studies that examined the representation of women in literary works using a feminist stylistic approach. For example, research by (Pamungkas & Nugroho, 2023) examines how feminism is portrayed in *Enola Holmes 2* using the perspective of feminist theory, where Enola challenges patriarchal society by demonstrating that women can become detectives and learn martial arts, among other talents. (Hutasuhut & Rangkuti, 2022) examines a novel entitled "*Luckiest Girl Alive*" by Jessica Knoll, showing a contrast in gender representation, where women are more often depicted through physical aspects, while men through masculine characteristics. And (Tarigan et al., 2023) analysed gender representation in Bella Poarch's song "*Build A Bitch*" using Sara Mills' three-level theory. The results show that women are often objectified in the story. And (Siregar et al., 2020), as demonstrated by Rupi Kaur's poetry, which highlights female identity through gender-specific terminology and deliberate style choices, earlier research on feminist stylistics highlights how linguistic structures influence gender portrayal. From these studies, no research discusses how detective genre films in the 1880s represented women through the language style used in *Enola Holmes 2* movies using Sara Mill's concept of feminism.

By using a feminist stylistic approach, this research aims to fill the gap. It reveals how words, sentences, and discourses are used to represent feminism and gender specification in the *Enola Holmes 2* movie through a stylistic perspective. Thus, the theoretical goal of this research is to further stylistics research and enhance knowledge of how language styles are used in literature and other media. Practically speaking, this

study seeks to change people's perceptions that women may work professionally in traditionally male-dominated sectors, which should promote the development of gender equality in the workplace. It contains messages of patriarchal treatment and the feminist movement. Therefore, this research is essential in highlighting feminist action in the *Enola Holmes 2* movie through the language style.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Stylistics

Stylistics is a linguistics study or sometimes known as 'literary linguistics', is the study and analysis of texts, with a focus on literary works. Stylistics originated in the ancient classical culture, specifically in rhetoric and poetics. In ancient rhetoric, the third of the five canons is crucial for stylistic analysis. This is a specific application of language knowledge, similar to sociolinguistics (the study of language in social contexts) and psycholinguistics (the psychology of language). According to (Giovanelli, 2021) stylistics focuses on the style of both spoken and written language. The concept of lexical choices and syntactic structure underpins our use of language, both consciously and unconsciously. Stylistics is the study of how authors use language to create and interpret effects.

2.2 Feminist Stylistics

Mills 1995 cited on (Burke, 2014) describes that feminist stylistics is a subfield of stylistics that examines how gender concerns are linguistically embedded in texts, drawing on stylistic analysis frameworks and models. focused on how gender issues are reflected in language, using the tools and methods of stylistic analysis to explore how gender is encoded in both literary and non-literary texts. The concept of

"gender concerns" is varied and changeable, with feminist stylistics providing one viewpoint that sees gender as malleable rather than bound to a binary male/female distinction. The field investigates both literary and non-literary texts, examining linguistic characteristics such as syntax, vocabulary, discourse, and even nonverbal aspects like images. There are three aspects to analyse the object in Stylistics Theory by Mills.

2.2.1. Word level Analysis

According to Mills 1995, feminist stylistics focuses on specific word choices that communicate gendered implications. This entails investigating how specific phrases can perpetuate stereotypes or reinforce gender roles. Language, for example, can represent systemic sexism by using pejorative phrases or gendered descriptions to lower women's position. According to feminist theorists, language not only reflects but also shapes cultural perceptions. By altering language at this base level, feminists hope to question and modify society's established views of gender.

2.2.2 Phrase or Sentence Level Analysis

The examination goes deeper into how language shapes gender narratives. This includes examining language form, phrasing, and the depiction of characters' thoughts and feelings in texts. Feminist research frequently emphasizes how narratives can be gender-specific, highlighting biases in how male and female experiences are represented. This level of analysis emphasizes the significance of recognizing how language influences our understanding of gender dynamics in storytelling.

2.2.3 Discourse Level Analysis

According to Mills (1995), the analysis looks beyond individual sentences to identify wider patterns in communication and social interaction. It examines how language is employed in context to convey power relations, ideologies, and cultural conventions around gender. This level analyses how texts can perpetuate or challenge preconceptions by depicting characters and their relationships. For example, feminist discourse analysis might look into how specific narratives perpetuate or subvert traditional roles by putting women in positions of power or agency. The emphasis here is on understanding how rhetoric reflects larger social realities and shapes gender perspectives.

Mills (1995) cited on (Burke, 2014) contends that combining stylistic and feminist concepts can produce beneficial outcomes, despite differing interpretations of both domains. She believes that evaluating how gender is linguistically encoded in texts using stylistic elements such as point of view, agency, metaphor, and transitivity can provide useful insights. However, Mills underlines that relying solely on text production is insufficient to completely comprehend how gender meanings are produced. It's also important to understand how readers interpret these meanings, as they may not always critically analyse the information they see, often missing potentially oppressive or damaging concepts.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes qualitative research methods to analyse feminist elements in *Enola Holmes 2* by examining the film's language at the word, sentence, and discourse levels. According to Sugiyono (2010), qualitative research emphasizes descriptive, verbal information over

numerical data. Guided by Sarah Mills' Feminist Stylistics Theory (1995), the research explores how language can reflect and sustain gender roles, focusing on how linguistic features such as word choice, sentence structure, and figurative expressions shape representations of gender and feminism.

Data for this study were gathered using observational approach by Sudaryanto (2015). This study used a non-participatory approach since the researchers did not include any participants. The researchers conducted a detailed viewing of the film, selecting character dialogues that highlight feminist expressions. In line with Mills' framework, the collected data were categorized into words which were further divided into those referring to male and female characters, then the level of sentences, and broader discourse. These elements were then analysed to uncover stylistic patterns and determine how feminist messages are conveyed through language. The primary data for this study consist of the spoken words, sentences, and dialogues of the film's characters.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Word Level

Table 1. The Male and Female's Terms in *Enola Holmes 2*

No.	Male	Female
1.	Sir (15.08)	Girl (06.33)
2.	Brother (23.21)	Mother (03.14)
3.	Man (04.04)	Her (03.26)
4.	Him (03.44)	Sister (05.49)
5.	Lord (03.47)	She (06.15)
6.	Suitor (08.11)	Soft (07.10)
7.	He (04.22)	Pretty (07.19)
8.	Mister (09.29)	Dress (07.51)
9.	His (09.29)	Herself (07.59)
10.	Foreman (09.29)	Make Up (08.10)
11.	Father (15.31)	Miss (09.54)

12.	Gent (20.58)	Neckerchief (10.28)
13.	Bloke (21.25)	Ladies (15.30)
14.	Boy (23.01)	Actress (20.41)
15.	Weapon (43.15)	Flowers (21.02)
16.	Inspector (35.55)	Missy (36.45)
17.	Policeman (43.22)	Elegant (49.31)
18.	Son (46.59)	Ma'am (49.51)
19.	Politician (48.05)	Woman (50.55)
20.	Gentleman (48.50)	Secretary (53.16)
21.	Uncle (57.29)	Wife (01.03.33)
22.	Constable (01.04.20)	Female (01.08.40)
23.	Master (01.05.06)	
24.	Superintendent Grail (01.07.37)	
25.	Sergeant (01.09.12)	

Word level of gender specification in this movie is represented by the table above. The movie uses some categories of words in presenting men and women. The script author used male and female specific terms, such as generic pronouns, like “*He*” (04.22), “*His*” (09.29), “*Him*” (03.44), for men and “*She*”, “*Her*”, for women. Then, the author used honorific pronouns, like “*Miss*” (09.54), “*Missy*” (36.45), “*Ma’am*” (49.51), “*Ladies*” (15.30), for respecting women and used “*Lord*” (03.47), “*Mr.*” (09.29), “*Sir*” (15.08), “*Master*” (01.05.06), “*Gentleman*” (48.50), and “*Gent*” (20.58) for respecting men.

Then, the author also used feminine and masculine word’s stereotypes in presenting men and women. The words “*Soft*” (07.10), “*Pretty*” (07.19), “*Dress*” (07.51), “*Makeup*” (08.10), “*Neckerchief*” (10.28), “*Flowers*” (21.02), “*Elegant*” (49.31) are culturally associated with women. These words are also connected to women’s physical appearance and beauty. As well as men who were described by using masculine

stereotypes’ words, like “*Weapon*” (43.15), which shows men’s protector characteristics.

In gender specification of word level, the author used more occupation terms to represent men than women. It is proven based on the data above, there are only a few jobs associated with women in this film, like “*Mother*” (03.14), “*Actress*” (20.41), “*Secretary*” (53.16), and “*Wife*” (01.03.33). From the data, the researchers found the occupations are related to the female traditional gender roles, like being a mother and a wife. Also, professional occupations that support men, such as secretaries who help men with their duties as the leader, or actresses who support men's roles as actors. The occupations that support men or being a supporting role are seen as a weakness in the society. Meanwhile there are more occupation terms for men, like “*Suitor*” (08.11), “*Foreman*” (09.29), “*Policeman*” (43.22), “*Inspector*” (35.55), “*Politician*” (48.05), “*Constable*” (01.04.20), “*Superintendent*” (01.07.37), “*Sergeant*” (01.09.12). Most of those occupations are related to investigation. Therefore, the use of those terms shows that men are more trusted than women to have a challenging job, especially related to investigation and case.

The data shows a high frequency of male-specific terms, many of which are associated with authority, power, and dominance. Meanwhile, female-specific terms when present, are frequently linked to traditional gender roles, beauty, weakness, and subordination.

This result implies a gender bias in the depiction of occupational roles, where men are portrayed as dominant figures entrusted with public, authoritative responsibilities, while women are confined to private, supportive, and secondary roles. Such representation reflects the persistence of

patriarchal values that position men as leaders and women as subordinates.

The portrayal suggests that feminism, as a movement challenging traditional gender role, is either absent or not fully realized within the context of this film. It mirrors a society in which traditional gender norms are still prevalent. Judging from the film's occupation choices and gender representation, the depiction is influenced by mid-20th century Western societal values, a period where feminism had not yet achieved widespread influence in reshaping gender expectations in the workforce.

4.2 Sentence / Phrase Level

In this level, most of the sentences describe how the male and female are represented by society and how men underestimate women's capability. There are several statements that are uttered by using literal words and figurative languages.

"She's a force of nature, a law unto herself." (01.11.35)

This sentence is an example of how a woman is represented in a different way. Here, the author used figurative language. "*Force of nature*" is a metaphor that suggests she is dynamic, unstoppable, or breathtaking by equating her with a strong, uncontrollable natural occurrence. "*A law unto herself*" is another metaphor that suggests she does not follow other people's norms or expectations and instead follows her own laws. Also, the woman is described as a strong abstract element which means a woman is powerful, independent, and rules her own life.

"... You're a bloody good detective Enola Holmes" (01.38.45)

Here the woman is validated as a very good detective. In this sentence Enola and Sarah had a conversation, Sarah said that she approves that Enola is

a good detective. As we know that detective is a profession which was dominated by male at the time. Therefore, this sentence represents feminism that women can also handle crime investigation well. The validation or description towards women here is uttered by using an expression that emphasizes the woman's exceptional skills in solving mysteries or understanding complex situations. Therefore, the woman is described through her ability and work here.

"...I hear he is a good man and a great reformer..." (01.26.27)

Here is an example of how man is described. In contrast with how a woman is illustrated (by her physical appearance), a man is defined by his character, his work, and his reputation.

"Without power, we women must rely on our wits for our fortune, because our chances are short." (00.54.21)

The author used figurative language in this sentence. The statement "*rely on our wits for our fortune*" contains metaphor. It implies that rather than depending on outside forces like luck or inheritance, women should use their knowledge and ingenuity ("*wits*") to generate their own success or riches ("*fortune*"). Here, the term "*fortune*" refers to achievement or well-being rather than actual wealth.

"... But you're a girl..." (00.02.26)

This is the sentence that indicates the underestimation towards women. Here the person disparaged the woman's ability bluntly by using literal sentences. This line refers to a guy who approached Enola's detective agency and asked her to solve his case, but Enola was turned down since she is a girl and her brother, Sherlock Holmes, is a more well-known and experienced detective than she is. Detective is a profession that is commonly dominated by men, who is the cause why Enola who started her own

detective agency was underrated because she was not a man, and she was young.

“Did I ask for your advice? Or did I simply tell you to get it done?” (00.15.10)

A man is being sarcastic when he said this to a woman in *Enola Holmes 2*. Instead of emphasizing a request, the sentence's style stresses a command, which could indicate an attempt at control or authority. The man here was playing a more dominant role in the discussion by raising doubts about whether the woman should have contributed or should have just done what she was told. Without any room for compromise or reciprocal participation, the rhetorical question suggests that the woman was expected to submit to the man's wishes.

Therefore, from these two data, women were blocked from many opportunities. Their abilities and knowledge were low respected because they were women.

“...Leave it with me” “... no it's mine!!!” (00.43.55)

This part is written by using literal words. Here, Sherlock Holmes asked Enola to give the case to him because their case was the same, but Enola refused because she was responsible to handle it. The statement, *“Leave it with me”* from Sherlock implies that he wanted to exert control over the circumstance or the case. This may suggest a conventional patriarchal dynamic in which men are frequently expected to assume leadership roles or claim responsibility. Enola's reaction, *“No, it's mine!!!,”* contradicts this claim and can be interpreted as a form of resistance. Her declaration can be interpreted as a reclaiming of her space and power, as feminism frequently draws attention to the ways in which women's autonomy has been compromised.

4.3 Discourse Level

To understand the feminist movement in this film, there are more extensive samples of analysis. Researchers have found several discourses that point to the feminist movement here and how women are described in the movie.

“Oh. Sarah likes to leave cheese out for 'em”

“She's soft. What does she look like, Sarah?”

“About this tall. Pretty.”

“Very pretty.”

“Green eyes, red hair, freckles”

“Red hair?”... (00.07.04)

These sentences are examples of how a woman is represented by her physical appearances and her feminine characteristics. All the sentences use literal words. The word “soft” refers to women's generosity in caring for animals (mouse in her house). Then, she herself as a woman is described through her physical appearances, such as “pretty”, “green eyes”, “red hair”, and “freckles”, rather than describing woman through her intelligence and contribution in society.

“I take advantage? What were my advantages? Treated like a common servant when I have twice the mind of yours. Any of yours. Why shouldn't I have a sharp of your ill-begotten riches and punish you at the same time? Why shouldn't I be rewarded for what I can do? Where is my place in this... society? I am a woman. I cannot join clubs, I cannot own shares, I cannot advance myself as they can. So...I found my own way. And it was fun.” (01.50.10)

In this discourse, a woman expressed her feeling of being a woman. She used the sentences “Treated like a common servant when I have twice the mind of yours. Any of yours” to voice that woman can be smarter than man. The words “twice the mind of yours”

even though does not state directly that she was smarter than any other people whom she talked to at the scene but implied strongly that nobody was as clever as she was. Besides that, the figurative language is also found in the sentence “*Why shouldn't I have a sharp of your ill-begotten riches and punish you at the same time*”. Here the woman asked for her right that was not satisfied because she was not a man. Then in the sentence “*Why shouldn't I be rewarded for what I can do?*” The woman made it apparent that she should be acknowledged and appreciated for her effort, but since she was a woman, she did not receive the respect she was due. Then the woman questioned her existence in the sentences “Where is my place in this... society? I am a woman. I cannot join clubs, I cannot own shares, I cannot advance myself as they can.” Here, the sentences are literal and directly imply their meanings. The woman asking and comparing her rights as a woman with the man’s rights. She stated directly through those dialogues and this is the sign of the feminist movement which is fighting for equality between woman and man as explained by (Hutasuhut & Rangkuti, 2022) that the goal of feminism is to uphold women's equality and their right to enjoy the same privileges as men. In all spheres of life—economic, social, literary, artistic, and educational—women must discover and battle for the right to express their desires.

“*My name is Enola Holmes. You may remember me. After solving my first case, I started a business. A detective agency. Open and ready for my first clients. I was going to join the pantheon of great Victorian detectives., And best of all, I would be joining my brother. I would be his equal. A detective in my own right, worthy of the Holmes name.*” (00.01.14)

The next discourse, the researcher found that literal words are also used to represent feminism. Enola, the main character of this movie herself declared in the beginning part that she desired to be her brother’s equal. Therefore, in the discourse level, the movie contains both indirect and literal styles to represent the feminist movement. Most of those sentences describe the woman’s endeavour to be as equal as man in getting rights in society and state the woman’s intelligence which can be more than man’s.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the *Enola Holmes 2* film script depicts male and female characters with distinct differences. At the word level, feminine and masculine stereotypes emerge through the use of pronouns and occupational terms; at the sentence level, metaphors are employed; and at the discourse level, both literal and metaphorical expressions are present. Women are portrayed primarily through their physical appearance and beauty-related behaviours, whereas men are portrayed through their reputations, occupations, and masculine characteristics, emphasizing traditional gender expectations.

During the research, several limitations were encountered. The analysis focused only on the script without considering the movie’s visual and audio elements, which could have provided deeper insights. For future studies, it is recommended to incorporate multiple forms of data, such as visuals and dialogues, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of gender representation. Future researchers might also explore different movie genres or periods to see how gender roles are portrayed and how feminist stylistics develop over time.

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