INEQUALITY TOWARDS WOMEN IN BATTLE OF THE SEXES

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Abstract

Gender inequality mostly contributes to women having less access than men. This study explores how women are represented unequally in the movie Battle of the Sexes. The data were taken from monologues and dialogues among the characters throughout the movie. Then, we analyzed the data by using Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis (1992). To support the findings, we also categorized forms of gender inequality according to Fakih's theory (2012). The results showed that even though they occasionally can voice their concern, they still struggle to achieve equality since men have more power than them. Additional findings also show that forms of inequality are found except double burden. This study concludes that patriarchal culture holds accountable for this issue. Therefore, if gender inequality still occurs in our society, women will likely have less access to everything and eventually be left behind.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Gender Inequality; Patriarchy; Sara Mills

INTRODUCTION

Fighting for women's rights has always been an exciting topic and will remain an essential theme throughout humanity's history, especially in every thought and conception of society in the future. The problem for women in this discussion is gender inequality which essentially departs from gender differences between men and women. Socially, gender relations can be viewed as a set of rules, traditions, and reciprocal relationships in the sociocultural behavior of a society that determine masculine boundaries (characteristics that are considered male) and feminist boundaries (traits that are considered female). This means that socio-culturally, gender is understood as a determination of femininity and masculinity (Fitri & Padmi, 2018; Zahrai, 2014). Since gender inequality mostly impacts women, it contributes to their uncertainties in various fields, such as employment, education, health, and rights (Nguyen, 2021, 2022). Moreover, the constant issue of gender becomes an essential concern in social issues since it creates differences in status, responsibilities, and roles between women and men, which ultimately causes injustice toward women (Gupta et al., 2021). The problem of gender inequality is increasingly widespread and difficult to solve (Wickman et al., 2015). This problem arises due to several reasons: sexism, the influence of patriarchy and traditional culture, and the lack of education (Zhu, 2021). Gender inequality can be described as providing differing chances to individuals depending on their gender. Various forms of gender inequality are marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence (physically or non-physically), and double burden (Fakih, 2012). Unfortunately, these forms are continuously occurring in many fields in our society. The role of women is often underestimated and is considered to have little contribution compared to men. This situation is more common in countries that adhere to a patriarchal social structure, where men have the highest position in all life and are considered worthy of leading and discriminating against women. Therefore, gender equality should be realized at all levels of society, both in modern and traditional communities. To some extent, some cultures are still dominated by a patriarchal system; the status of women in society will

always be second due to male dominance. This ideology and discourse of femininity and masculinity will, of course, significantly affect the effects of gender in the social environment. Studies related to gender inequalities have broadly been discussed in many fields. Some scholars found gender inequalities in the work field (Bilodeau et al., 2020; Gauci et al., 2022; Njoki, 2021; Scarborough et al., 2019; Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015), academic field (Arceo-Gomez & Campos-Vazquez, 2022; Ayllón, 2022; de Gioannis et al., 2022), economic fields (Ali & Decker, 2015; Elveren, 2014; García-González et al., 2019), even in literary works. Akhter (2020), for instance, illustrates that numerous fictional writers addressed their concerns about gender inequality by manifesting them in books. In addition, by using what she terms as 'lenses of fiction,' writers try to solve the gender inequality they face in their life. The demonstration of gender inequality is also portrayed in movies, for example, in the work of Xu et al. (2019). Interestingly, they called this phenomenon as 'Cinderella complex. They found that thousands of movies stereotypically portrayed women; women tend to be the ones who must be the supporters of their male partner, which creates a social imbalance structure in daily life. Therefore, the construction of gender in society and gender inequality experienced by women are generally found in various fields, specifically in movies. Some depictions intend to reject the construction of gender and protest the gender inequality experienced by women, and some support this construction.

A movie, as one of the audio-visual media, is an effective medium to convey messages. This is because the film is a medium whose message is delivered by the senses of hearing and sight so that the message conveyed is easier to understand rather than using newspapers, podcasts, or so. As a reconstruction of social reality, movies describe how the world we live in is packaged in a more creative and aesthetic form so that it attracts the audience to watch it. This makes films often used to insert certain ideologies because they will unconsciously be accepted by the audience and may change their perspective (Kubrak, 2020).

One of the movies with a compelling message that can be studied is the message of gender equality displayed in the dialogues in a biographical sports film titled Battle of The Sexes by Valerie Faris and Jonathan Dayton. The movie is based on the story of the 1973 tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs. This film portrays gender inequality because there are dialogues that represent men's views toward women that are mostly degraded.Based on the elaboration, the aim of this study was twofold. First, to explore the representation of gender inequality based on Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (e.g., subject-object position and the audience position). Second, to discover the forms of gender inequality portrayed in Battle of the Sexes movie. and forms of gender inequality according to Fakih (e.g., marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence, and double burden).

The evolution of gender distinctions between men and women has been lengthy. Gender inequality is the absence of equality in the depiction of men and women in essential aspects of life in society(Young et al., 1994). Generally, gender inequality arises when there are differences in equal access to various factors, including cultural tradition (Hiller, 2014), religion (Page & Yip, 2017), and social construction (Siddiqi, 2021) influence the establishment of gender bias. In this case, women are the ones who have to suffer from this bias. In realization, gender inequality is viewed as men who have more advantages than women (England et al., 2020). In some cultures, gender inequality can not be avoided (Kinias & Kim, 2012). This means that people's lives have been structured by a sociocultural value system or tradition that regulates gender as a social construction. The gender's social construction also supports this.

According to the social construction of gender, men must be aggressive and forceful. Men must be trained, socialized, and encouraged to attain the societally defined gender characteristics of being physically stronger and larger. Meanwhile, educating children and managing or preserving the cleanliness and beauty of the home are regarded as women's "nature." This is a product of social and cultural creation that women are shaped to. Unconsciously, society

constructs this view by expressing disagreement if some woman equally has access to various aspects (Sultana, 2012).

Like discussions in the context of race or ethnicity, gender inequality is a social category that significantly influences the lifestyle and participation of both genders in social and economic life. However, note that not all communities are exposed to or encounter discrimination. Some communities face gender-based discrimination through gaps and discrepancies at various levels. Occasionally, it is justice like this that continues to generate controversy (Larasati & Ayu, 2020).

Fakih (2012) elaborates on five forms of gender inequality: marginalization, subordination, stereotype, violence, and double burden. Marginalization deals with women who cannot contribute to a certain aspect or field of work because of certain stereotypes attached to women for a long time. For example, some institutions may not allow women to apply for security guard jobs because their physical appearance tends to be judged as weak. Women rarely work on building sites because the institution is afraid they will not work as well as men. Subordination, familiarly called discrimination, is an act of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity, religion, or race. For instance, women are constructed to be able to cook, serve their male partner, or not even allowed to have equal access to education. Fakih also found stereotypes as another form of gender inequality. It deals with what women face due to their societal role. For instance, people see women as the ones who only have to deal with homework while men are the other ones who have to fulfill the family's needs by doing all the work. Fakih also found violence as another kind of gender inequality. Accordingly, Alkan et al. (2022) divided violence into psychological and verbal. Lastly, Fakih argued that married women who have an opportunity to have a job while caring for their partner or children at home are called double burdens.

Patriarchy is a system of interpersonal interactions, opinions, and principles that is embedded in political, social, and economic systems that creates gender disparities between men and women (Nash, 2020). Moreover, according to Walby (1990) The theory of the patriarchal system is primarily founded on the paternalist perspective, which holds that the existence of a father or man in a social system determines the realization of a functionalist family structure in general (Sultana, 2012). Patriarchy creates masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society, enhancing unfair and unjust dominance relations between men and women (Rawat, 2014). This perspective gives rise to a gender impression that men and women have different features, such that men have the upper hand in gaining and maintaining respect and authority. Women must be able to the division of home responsibilities and preserve the display of affection for men to retain their emotional and psychological conditions and patriarchal capacities. In essence, the perception of patriarchy among adherents of a social system gives men a crucial role in enhancing the dignity of women. The discourse analysis of the Sara Mills model focuses more on the discourse about women and how women are shown in texts, novels, pictures, photos, or news. This discourse approach is often referred to as the Sara Mills perspective. The focus of the feminist discourse perspective is to show how texts can present women. Women tend to be shown in the text as the wrong, opposite side compared to men. Sara Mills' analytical methodology focuses on how the actors' positions are depicted in the text. These subject-object placements in the story ultimately decide how the text form and significance are utilized in the text. Furthermore, she considers the manner in which readers and authors (in the context of this study, directors and audiences) are depicted in the text (Mills, 1992). This critical discourse approach is often referred to as a stylistic feminist. The first concept is oriented to how the positions of various social actors are presented in a text. This position then determines the form of the text in the audience. In addition, a position also determines the building of text elements; parties with a high position to define a reality will display events or other groups in the form of specific discourse structures presented to the

audience. Generally, women in the text are always shown as objects, not subjects. This is because women only occupy the position of the object of representation, which causes them to always experience "definition," become story material, and cannot present themselves.The second concept deals with how the reader's position is displayed in the text. According to Mills, the text results from negotiations between the writer and the reader. The reader is not considered an entity that "receives" the text but also has an involvement in the text. The reader's position is seen in how the author places and positions the reader in a particular subject of the text.

METHOD

The data used in this study were in the form of dialogues spoken by the actors in the film the Battle of the sexes. Wethoroughly watched the movie using English subtitles in the data collection process. Accordingly, the research method used in this research is a qualitative descriptive method using a critical discourse analysis approach by Sara Mills. Moreover, a note-taking technique was conducted while watching the movie, and then dialogues that were presumably interpreted as forms of gender inequality were written down. Furthermore, the monologues and dialogue were analyzed by categorizing them into the subject-object position and the reader (audience) position. Therefore, the Sara Mills model discourse analysis is suitable for use, although with a few adjustments, since her analysis is usually conducted in printed media. In addition, Wecategorized the data by using Fakih's (2012) theory related to forms of gender inequality to support the findings.

As previously stated, the data for this study were in the form of monologue and dialogue from the movie Battle of the Sexes. Each monologue and dialogue contained were coded according to the subject/object position and the audience position (SP for subject position, OP for object position) and to the types of gender inequality (SUB for subordination, STE for stereotype, VIO for violence, MAR for marginalization).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The dialogues mostly begin with the conversations between Billie Jean King, the female athletes, and the male actors in various fields (e.g., announcer and tennis committee). The results of this study are divided into three sections: the subject position, the object position, and the audience position. Then, Wealso mention the kinds of gender inequality that women face in the movie in each of the positions.

Subject Position

Sara Mills emphasizes the subject position as higher since women can represent themselves. This position eventually leads them to the way they convey the issues. In addition, the position gives women the freedom to speak out against injustice, and the results of their perception of the situation are then used to construct the meaning communicated to the other party. Specifically, Wefound several dialogues where the actress Billie Jean King stood up for herself and women athletes in the movie by saying that equal payment in tennis tournaments should be realized.

> (1) Dialogue 1 (Subordination)
> Bob: "People come to see men play. They're the draw.
> Billie : Eight times more of a draw?
> Bob   : Sorry?

Billie: You're offering the men's winner eight times that of the women. They (the committee) sold the exact same number of tickets to the women's final today as the men's. Isn't that right, Jack?
Jack: Today, yeah, Wesuppose so.
Gladys: Same sales, same prize money. Seems fair to me.
Jack: Be reasonable. There's no way we can afford that."
(BOTS/00:04:48/SP/SUB)

(2) Dialogue 2 (Stereotype)
Jack: "The men are simply more exciting to watch. They're faster, and stronger, and more competitive. It's not your fault, it's just, biology.
Billie: That's not my point. We sell the same amount of tickets.
Jack: I'm sorry, it's not going to happen.
Billie: Well, if that's the way it is, we'll boycott the tournament.
Jack: Well, now, we'll sure miss your pretty faces, but go right ahead.
Billie : Not only will we boycott, we'll set up our own tournament. At the exact same time as the pacific southwest.
Jack: Be sure and send me tickets."
(BOTS/00:05:26/SP/STE)

Another example of women holding the subject position in this movie is shown in the following dialogue.

(3) Dialogue 3 (Subordination)
Jack: "I'm here to ask you girls not to do anything hasty.
Billie: So what are you offering?
Jack: I'm offering to keep you in the United States lawn tennis association.
Billie: You're kicking us out.
Jack: You do this, you're becoming our rivals. We have no option.
Billie: I'll sure miss your pretty face, Jack, but you go right ahead.
Jack: If you're not in the USLTA, you can't play the grand slams. No Wimbledon, no nothing.
Billie: I get it. But what are your grand slams without the greatest women players in the world? They're not so great."
(BOTS/00:16:05/SP/SUB)

Object-Position
Other individuals display the object's position, so it cannot present itself because it is merely a representation. In this position, the following dialogues show how women have become objects from the men's perspective.

(4) Monologue 4 (Violence)
Bobby: "So, officially, Bobby Riggs is the number one ladies player in the world. And any ladies out there want to challenge for the crown, you know where to find me. And since I have just proven here today, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that men are the superior animal, tell you what I'm gonna do: I'm gonna triple the bet! $100,000 to any woman who can beat Bobby Riggs. I ask myself, is she out there, and does she have the nerve?"
(BOTS/01:05:22/OP/VIO)

(5) Monologue 5 (Subordination)
Bobby: "Now, don't get me wrong, Welove women, in the bedroom and in the kitchen. But these days, they want to be everywhere! They want to be doing everything. Where is it gonna end? Pretty soon us fellas won't be able to go to a ballgame, we won't be able to go fishing. And that's what this whole women's lib thing is about. And it's got to stop! And Bobby Riggs

is the man to stop it. Ladies and gentlemen, this is custer's last stand. This is the lobber versus the libber!"
(BOTS/01:15:09/OP/SUB)

(6) Monologue 6 (Marginalization)
Bobby: "I'm not saying women don't belong in court. I mean, heck, who would pick up the balls otherwise?"
(BOTS/01:17:10/OP/MAR)

(7) Monologue 7 (Violence)
Bobby: "I'm this old guy, trying to make ends meet on the senior circuit, getting paid peanuts. But if I can beat the ladies and get equal prize money, thank you very much, well, then all the girls can just head back in the kitchen where they belong."
(BOTS/01:17:29/OP/VIO)

Audience-Position
In the discourse analysis of Sara Mills, the text is viewed as the result of a negotiation between the author and the reader. The reader is placed not just as a recipient of the text but also as a participant in the transactions described in the text. Similarly, in film, we might observe how the director presents a certain character to the audience.
The directors of Battle of the Sexes cast Billie as the lead role. Consequently, the audience identifies with Billie, the film's main character. In the movie, the directors portrayed Billie and other female athletes as the ones who have to survive gender inequality. From this, the audience is invited to feel how irritated they are by the men's behaviors and the dialogues they utter. Throughout the movie, the directors put their side to the women's side. This can be proven by how in some scenes, the male actors continuously degraded women by expressing their disagreement toward equal payment.

Discussion
This study aimed to provide more insight into the representation of gender inequality toward women and what forms of such. Nevertheless, the results provide limited evidence to support the idea since the double burden is not represented in the movie. We did find that gender inequality is realized in terms of subordination, marginalization, stereotypes, and violence. The first dialogue demonstrates that income disparities exist between men and women. Billie requests that the tennis committee should give women athletes the same amount of money as men. The committee, which men portray, vehemently disagrees with this notion, arguing that men are more interested in being watched than women. Nevertheless, despite their status as subjects, women continue to face subordination, as different rewards are awarded to men and women who play tennis on the same field. Generally, gender bias in terms of equal payment naturally causes women to earn less than men (Cuberes & Teignier, 2014; Langdon & Klomegah, 2013; Sterling et al., 2020). Interestingly, the second dialogue shows that despite women being a subject, they still face stereotypes regarding their physical appearance. The second dialogue focuses on the stereotypes of women uttered by Jack. He thought that since women are slower, weaker, and less competitive in the sport, those factors caused them to have less equal respect from the committee. According to Tabassum and Nayak (2021), gender inequality is significantly influenced by individual preferences and abilities, which may reflect biological differences. Therefore, Billie tried against the stereotype by claiming that she would boycott the tournament and create their tournament instead. A certain form of stereotype is based on a gender perspective. So many wrongs are committed against the sexes due to the preconceptions associated with them.

The relationship between gender differences and social connection leads women to have fewer job opportunities than men (2020). This is portrayed when Billie, among her team, is being interviewed on the radio about their promotion to a tennis tournament that they specifically made for themselves since the tennis committee kicked them out. Here, the dialogue focuses on Billie, who stated that she and her team are ready to do a self-funded tournament despite not having much prize money. They do this not because they necessarily want to play for pleasure but to prove that they can stand up for themselves without men's involvement. Therefore, they were against the notion that women should accept the gap payment and decided to boycott the tournament instead. However, the committee decided to block all women athletes from performing. Heilman (2012) states that once women become more successful than men, establishing acceptable behavior norms that elicit displeasure and social consequences when they are strongly disregarded or perceived to be violated will raise the issue of gender inequality. Furthermore, the sixth monologue can be categorized as marginalization since Bobby stated that instead of men having the same occupation as tennis players as women, he claimed that women should be the ones who pick up the ball instead. This leads to an imbalance since, in the patriarchal system, men always receive more benefits than women (2012). The fourth and seventh monologues can be categorized as verbal violence since, in the monologue, Bobby humiliates female athletes after he beats one who goes by his challenge. In his monologue, Bobby stated that he was ready to compete with every female athlete because he thought men did not belong equally to women. His statement is also strengthened by his offering more prize money to the women. It is a form of humiliation toward women in general. Verbal violence makes the other party feel humiliated and angry, which is caused by verbal violence (Derdar, 2017).

CONCLUSION

The representation of gender inequality is realized in the movie entitled Battle of the Sexes. Throughout the movie, the issue of gender inequality is constantly shown when the female actor, along with her companies, persistently fights for their rights to get an equal monetary prize. However, the male antagonists unsurprisingly denied the grant by saying that women do not belong equally to the same level as men. Ironically, the male antagonists stated that women should belong in the kitchen instead of having the same hobby as men. This was worsened by stereotypes that women have to face. The movie also shows how Billie and her team fight against gender inequality caused by a mostly patriarchal system. The patriarchal culture indeed caused women to experience less access to everything. Specifically, in this movie, Billie does not simply accept the offer for the prize money, but it is much more than that. She accepted the challenge to break gender inequality, stereotypes, and discrimination toward women. She tried to prove that women also deserve to be taken into account. This concludes that whenever women try to create their way, there will always be men trying to interrupt them. Therefore, the importance of gender equality should be realized for people to raise awareness of this issue. Gender equality acknowledges that men and women are distinct but stresses that women should have the same advantages as men. Due to the limitation of the data, Wecannot find double burdens as of the forms of gender inequality. Therefore, it is an interesting topic for future research to be discussed.

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