

THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN NGERI-NGERI SEDAP MOVIE: SOCIOLINGUISTICS STUDY

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Abstract: This study investigates the portrayal of women in the Indonesian film “Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap” movie through a sociolinguistics study. The research aims to explore how language and dialogue in the movie reflect and reinforce societal attitudes towards women, examining the representation of female characters and their interactions within the narrative. The collected data are analyzed by applying qualitative and descriptive method. The results indicate that the portrayal of women in *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* is shaped by cultural influences and prominent themes such as 5 Gender Roles as a woman, 5 Emotional Attachment, and 10 Gender Conflict and Tension. However in the film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap by comparing woman image and man image it can be found that woman are often portrayed as inferior, weak, and marginalized, while men appear as superior, strong, and dominant. There are some symbolic resistances, but man’s power still cannot be fully seized by woman. The result come to the fact that the brothers were able to do something freely and disobey their arents because they are men, not a woman like Sarma. The film portrays women as individuals expected to obey men’s commands. Women are also portrayed as being of lower status than men. The patriarchy in this movie is also very noticeable. This portrayal reflects and potentially reinforces societal views of patriarchy and gender hierarchy in Indonesian media

Keywords: *portrayed of women; gender roles; emotional attachment; dominant; sociolinguistics*

INTRODUCTION

The representation of women in media has been a subject of extensive analysis and critique in sociolinguistics and gender studies. Gender studies, as defined by Wiesner-Hanks (2019), is an interdisciplinary field focused on analyzing gender identity and its representations. Gender is typically conceptualized as biological sex; however, it more precisely refers to the socially and culturally constructed distinctions in roles, functions, and responsibilities assigned to men and women, which are subject to change over time (Adzawla et al., 2019). Gender interpretation, as Talbot (2020) suggests, is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, political, cultural, and social factors. These dynamics influence not only the ways gender roles are constructed but also how they are perceived and represented across different media. Rooted in a tradition that examines social hierarchy and inequality, sociolinguistics is a

discipline focused on how language reflects and influences societal structures and power relations Hey& Schneider (2019). Sociolinguistics investigates how individuals utilize language in everyday contexts and how sociocultural factors, including culture, norms, and environment, influence language use. It emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between language and society, highlighting how communication varies across diverse social groups and contexts (Nasution et al., 2023; Ngongo et al., 2022). Media, particularly films, play a significant role in shaping societal perceptions and attitudes towards gender roles. Consequently, the language and interactions depicted in media frequently mirror the prevailing social hierarchies and norms of the period in which they were created (Douglas et al., 2022). This study focuses on the portrayal of women in the Indonesian film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap, examining how language and dialogue contribute

to the construction and reinforcement of gender stereotypes. By analyzing this film, the research aims to uncover the nuanced ways in which female characters are depicted and the sociolinguistic implications of these portrayals.

Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap movie, a popular film in Indonesia, offers a rich context for examining gender representation due to its diverse characters and complex narrative. The film presents various female characters who navigate different social roles and challenges, providing a valuable opportunity to explore how their experiences are linguistically framed. This study will delve into specific scenes and dialogues to understand how language reflects and shapes the identities and social positions of these women.

Sociolinguistics, the study of how language interacts with society, provides a useful framework for analyzing the portrayal of women in media. One relevant theoretical perspective is the concept of "gendered discourse" which examines how language both reflects and perpetuates gender inequalities (Sunderland, 2020). Another important framework is the idea of "performative acts" as proposed by Butler (2020), which suggests that gender is constructed through repeated social performances, including speech acts. Meyerhoff and Ehrlich (2019) further argue that gender should not be seen as a set of stable traits but rather as practices that are continually enacted, reinforcing the notion that language and gender are dynamically intertwined. These theories help to reveal the underlying linguistic patterns that contribute to gender representation in Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap movie. By applying these sociolinguistic theories and methods, this study aims to uncover how language use varies according to social factors such as gender, class, and power.

Gender representation in media is not just a reflection of societal norms but also a powerful tool that can either challenge or reinforce these norms. Tannen's (2020) research on gender and discourse highlights how conversational styles can reinforce social hierarchies and gender roles. The way female characters speak, the roles they play, and their interactions with other characters can influence audience perceptions and attitudes towards women. Therefore, understanding the sociolinguistic aspects of gender portrayal in the film Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap is crucial for recognizing the film's potential impact on societal views and the perpetuation of gender stereotypes.

Several studies have also provided a diverse range of insights regarding women's language in

media (Wardhana et al., 2023; Yolanda & Bram, 2021; Apridaningrum & Angelina, 2020; Juanda & Simatupang, 2023; Nuringtyas & Navila, 2022; Rizki et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies emphasize the impact of media in shaping public perceptions of gender through language and offer a foundation for further investigation into how films like *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* both reflect and challenge the portrayals of women. Accordingly, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender representation in media by providing a detailed sociolinguistic analysis of Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap movie. Recent studies, such as those by Mills (2021) and Coates (2019), have demonstrated the importance of language in constructing gender identities and the power dynamics involved. By highlighting the complexities and contradictions in the portrayal of women in this film, the research aims to foster a deeper understanding of how language and media intersect to shape gender ideologies. Ultimately, this analysis will offer insights into the ways in which films can both reflect and influence the evolving dynamics of gender in contemporary society.

Sociolinguistics examines the relationship between language and society. Sociolinguistics teaches how to interact in a social environment using language as a means of communication to achieve a goal. As stated in (Holmes, 2013 in Simatupang, 2019), sociolinguistics concerns the way people communicate with each other based on social meaning with a specific purpose. Sociolinguistics has a wide scope as a learned science to find out the usefulness of language, regulate communication and relationships with other individuals and groups, and also describe one's identity with a language.

Sociolinguistic analysis examines how language use is shaped by a range of socio-cultural influences, including factors like gender, geographical region, and socio-economic status (Li et al., 2022). The sociolinguistic aspect is described in the text as an outcome of speech activity in both spoken and written forms, fulfilling communicative purposes across all types of discourse, including those related to gender (Zheltukhina et al., 2020). Furthermore, Larasati argued that sociolinguistics focuses on how language is used to communicate with different social circumstances, as proposed in (Larasati & Simatupang, 2021). Systematic gender studies enhance the growth of sociolinguistics as a linguistic field when there is an understanding of language's social nature (Baktiyarova et al., 2021).

From those theories, it can be concluded that sociolinguistics is a scientific discipline that explains the relationship between language and society. The way people speak the language they use also has diversity, depending on the speaker. An essential concept within sociolinguistics is the notion of 'register', which refers to variations in language use that are systematically associated with particular social situations. Registers are characterized by distinct lexical terms, grammatical structures, and pragmatic norms that signal the context in which they are used.

Language and gender describes how male and female languages relate to one another (Gu, 2020). Gender differences are reflected not only in the speeches given by men and women, but also in the ways that they live and think. Sociolinguistics has emerged since 1960, dealing with a variety of important topics, one of which is language and gender. The majority of studies on language and gender, in general, concentrate on three areas: gender differences in language; sexism in language; causes for gender differences and sexism in language (Li, 2022).

Women may tend to follow established social norms and use language that fosters connection and harmony, while men might choose speech strategies that emphasize authority and assertiveness (Chiknaverovala, 2021; Gerasimova & Lyutikova, 2020). Many aspects that shape the differences between men and women have been studied from various angles with different methodologies. Although the research results emphasize some differences, there are still some similarities between them another (Gu, 2020).

Gollnick & Chin (2021) stated that culture is a broad concept and covers all aspects of life. Culture is learned throughout life through participation in social and family networks (Terry & Irving, 2019). People inherently have a tendency to transmit cultural knowledge and practices from one generation to another" (Herman et al., 2023). Culture is a challenging idea. Allastair Pennycook found many meanings of culture. First, culture is a set of superior values, especially those demonstrated in works of art and shared only by a small elite group. Second, culture is an overall way of life, the informing spirit of a society. Third, culture is the way different people see their world (Yoo & Namkung, 2022).

On the other hand, Values and behavioral styles, language and dialect, nonverbal communication, perspectives, worldviews, and frames of reference are some parts of culture (Bank, 2021). Culture is considered a factor that

influences the outcome of people's interactions; on the other hand, people may actively use it to improve the outcome of their interactions in terms of understanding and agreement (Busch, 2019).

Protests for gender equality in the 1960s observed that language was a tool of patriarchal dominance. Language actually perpetuated patriarchy, it also reinforced male authority over female (Abdalla, 2021). Additionally, power relations related to gender are frequently maintained through coercive means, and male dominance is often accepted or legitimized when women, as the historically oppressed gender, recognize or internalize these dynamics. Gender-biased stereotypes constitute a form of ideological and cultural oppression by assigning restrictive labels that marginalize women and undermine their societal roles and opportunities (Faqih, 1997 in Kustyarini, 2024). Social structure: The patriarchal culture that persisted in the modern world and discriminated against women was influenced by factors such as race, ethnicity, and social class (Cooke, 2020). Similarly, Rosida and Rejeki (2017) highlight that social systems, encompassing race, ethnicity, and social class, are integral components of patriarchal culture that persist in the modern era, continuing to discriminate against women. These social factors not only shape but also exacerbate gender biases, affecting women differently depending on their social positioning. Men discriminate against women from lower social classes more than they do against women from higher social classes. It can be concluded that, women face discrimination based on their gender in patriarchal societies, and this discrimination is more severe for them when their social class is lower than that of men (Delavande, 2023).

Some cultures believe that men are better suited for particular roles. There is a common belief that men should be in positions of leadership since they are more qualified for them. In addition, there are fewer women leaders in the country than men. This kind of behavior indicated a patriarchal society in which men are valued more highly than women (Arif & Farid, 2024).

Hegemony is a theory that describes the many subtle ways power operates through the commonly accepted beliefs that shape our understanding of the world and determine who is seen as deviating from these norms (Gramsci, 1992 in Alvero et al, 2024). The form of power that empowers a group or some while to weaken others is known as linguistic hegemony (Yoo & Namkung, 2022). Lears (2019) Stated that

hegemony recognize that inequalities in wealth and power exist, and they seek to show how these differences are maintained or challenged in the cultural sphere (Indrawati et al., 2019).

Meanwhile, Philosophical framework stated that hegemony examines the power relationship between dominant and minority groups, it is primarily concerned with how the dominant group or leader maintains its position (Irvanti & Erlangga, 2022).

Social class in society holds the power in gender discrimination (Cooke, 2019). The role of power in general in linguistics and specifically in the variation and spread of change (Eckert, 2020). Power is expressed in all these, everywhere, in a variety of ways. The fundamental issue in gender relations is power relations (Apostu, 2023). One important finding relates to language-based power structures in society (Abdalla, 2021). The imbalance of linguistic power can obstruct meaningful communication, establishing barriers for marginalized groups and reinforcing societal perceptions that often place men in a position of advantage over women (Saaida, 2023; Rustiyani et al., 2019).

Dwi & Simatupang (2024) Women's speech exhibits less "power" than men's speech. Power in society is related to domination. When someone has power, they can make rules and influence others so that they can dominate (Cooke, 2019).

METHOD

This research uses qualitative methods because the research is studied in more depth, as stated by Moleong (2019) in (Royadi et al., 2021) Qualitative methods try to understand the phenomenon that occurred to the research object. This study uses qualitative methods by conducting a thorough and detailed approach and observation related to the topic phenomenon in question (Abdillah, 2019). The methods used in presenting research results are descriptive methods. This study used mixed method qualitative and descriptive data to explain the form of written words (Sari & Anindita, 2020) to analyze the types and language functions. The data are collected by close reading technique. The collected data was analyzed to examine the image of women and symbolic resistance in the movie, by applying feminist literary criticism that views women as readers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data #1

Sarma: "perempuan tak boleh melawan, perempuan harus menurut."

(Sarma: "women should not resist, women should obey.")

(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:27:05)

Sarma's statement in the data 1 "women should not resist, women should obey," encapsulates a deeply ingrained societal expectation that women should be compliant and submissive. This sentiment is echoed in the film through various interactions where female characters are depicted as yielding to male authority. For instance, in one pivotal scene, a female character initially voices her disagreement but quickly retracts her statement and acquiesces to the male character's decision. This act of submission reflects the societal pressure on women to conform to obedient roles.

The film portrays the internal conflict of female characters who struggle with the expectation to obey versus their desire for independence. This manifested in their use of indirect language and tentative speech, mirroring the power dynamics suggested by Sarma's statement. Sarma become obedient because Mak Domu, mother always tells her that women should listen and thus can talk back. Sarma was being portrayed as a woman who is educated to be a stereotype-being woman because it has been becoming their culture to be an obedient woman.

Data #2

Sarma: "kalian tak tahu rasanya jadi anak perempuan di keluarga ini."

(Sarma: "You don't know what it's like to be a daughter in this family.")

(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:27:11)

Sarma's statement, "You don't know what it's like to be a daughter in this family," encapsulates the unique pressures and expectations placed on women within a familial context. This sentiment is echoed in the film through various interactions where female characters are depicted navigating the complexities of family dynamics. For instance, in one pivotal scene, a female character expresses her frustration and sense of entrapment within the family structure. Her speech is marked by a mixture of assertiveness and vulnerability, highlighting the dual burden of meeting familial expectations while striving for personal autonomy. This statement underscores the gender-specific experiences of female characters, reflecting the societal pressures to conform to traditional roles of obedience and caretaking. The film depicts these

characters often using indirect language and tentative speech, which aligns with Lakoff's theory that women's language exhibits less power. However, these characters also articulate their unique struggles and resistances, providing a nuanced portrayal of their lived experiences.

While many aspects of the film align with Lakoff's and Sarma's perspectives on women's speech and societal roles, **Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* movie also presents instances where female characters break free from these constraints. In this data, women assert their opinions forcefully and challenge male authority, using direct and unhedged language. These moments of resistance highlight the evolving nature of gender roles and the potential for women to assert power through language. The film also reflects Sarma's insight into the unique pressures faced by daughters within a family context. However, the film also showcases the complexities and contradictions of modern gender dynamics, illustrating that women can and do use language to assert power and challenge traditional roles. This duality underscores the ongoing evolution of gender representation in media and society.

Data #3

Sarma: "kalian melawan sama bapak, aku tak pernah ribut, tak pernah protes"
(Sarma: "you fight with father, I never fight, never protested")
(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:27:22)

Sarma's statement, "You fight with father, I never fight, never protested," encapsulates the traditional expectations of female submissiveness and the internalization of these norms. This sentiment is echoed in the film through various interactions where female characters are depicted navigating the complexities of family dynamics. For instance, a pivotal scene may show a daughter who is assertive and challenges her father's authority, contrasting sharply with another female character who embodies submission and compliance.

This statement underscores the gender-specific experiences of female characters, reflecting societal pressures to conform to traditional roles of obedience and caretaking. The film depicts these characters often using indirect language and tentative speech, aligning with Lakoff's theory that women's language exhibits less power. For example, the compliant character may speak softly, use hedges, and avoid direct confrontation, thereby maintaining the power imbalance. The

data 3 may depict a daughter directly confronting her father, using strong and assertive language. This act of defiance contrasts with the more typical depictions of deferential speech, illustrating the characters' struggle for autonomy and recognition within the family. The assertive character might say something like, "I have a right to be heard," using direct language to emphasize her stance and challenge traditional power dynamics. The film also reflects Sarma's insight into the societal expectation of female obedience and the internal conflict experienced by women who conform to or challenge these norms.

Data #4

Sarma: "abang tahu kenapa aku putus sama Nuel?"
(Sarma: "Do you know why I broke up with Nuel?")
Sarma: "karena bapak akhirnya tahu dia orang Jawa, bang."
(Sarma: "because our father finally found out that Nuel is Javanese, bang.")
(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:27:53)

Sarma's initial question, "Do you know why I broke up with Nuel?" employs a direct approach, asking for information and sharing personal experience. The directness of the question itself is somewhat assertive. However, the content of the question opens a dialogue about a personal and emotional decision, which is a characteristic of women's speech as it often involves emotional and relational topics. This aligns with Lakoff's observation that women tend to discuss personal relationships and feelings more frequently than men. In her follow-up statement, "Because our father finally found out that Nuel is Javanese, bang," Sarma provides an explanation for her breakup. The use of "bang" (a term of respect for an older brother) indicates a deferential tone, reflecting cultural norms of respect within familial relationships. This use of respectful address mirrors Lakoff's theory that women's language often contains elements of politeness and deference.

This statement also reflects the social and cultural pressures influencing Sarma's decisions. The reference to her father's disapproval based on ethnic background highlights external control over her personal life, aligning with societal expectations and traditional power structures. Sarma's speech here can be seen as less powerful because it acknowledges the influence of patriarchal authority over her personal choices. Sarma's dialogue highlights the intersection of gender, culture, and power in her speech. Her direct yet respectful communication style

illustrates the balance she must maintain between asserting her own experiences and conforming to societal expectations of female behavior. The context of her statements reveals the external pressures from her family, particularly her father, and how these pressures shape her language and decisions. The portrayal of women in the film *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* largely supports Lakoff's (theory that women's speech exhibits less power through the use of polite and deferential language. Sarma's statements—"Do you know why I broke up with Nuel?" and "Because our father finally found out that Nuel is Javanese, bang". These interactions highlight the complex interplay between personal agency and societal expectations.

Data #5

Sarma: "abang pernah bilang ke aku,"

(Sarma: "abang once told me,")

Sarma: "jangan lupa kau pikirkan dirimu sendiri". Begitu, 'kan, bang?"

(Sarma: "don't forget to think of yourself". Isn't that right, bang?"

(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:28:49)

In the film Sarma statement, "abang once told me," serves to reference advice given by her brother. This preamble sets up the context for a piece of wisdom that she holds in high regard. This speech act shows respect and deference to her brother's guidance, aligning with Lakoff's observation that women's language often includes elements of deference and acknowledgment of others' input. In her follow-up statement, "don't forget to think of yourself. Isn't that right, bang?" Sarma reiterates her brother's advice and uses a tag question, "Isn't that right, bang?" This tag question is significant in several ways.

According to Lakoff, tag questions are a common feature of women's speech that can serve to soften a statement, seek confirmation, or create a sense of solidarity. Sarma's dialogue highlights the intersection of gender, culture, and power in her speech. Her use of a tag question and respectful address ("bang") underscores the complex interplay between asserting her own perspective and maintaining respect for familial hierarchy. This interaction reflects the broader societal expectations placed on women to balance assertiveness with deference. Sarma's statements—"abang once told me," and "don't forget to think of yourself. Isn't that right, bang?" the data is shown as assertiveness with respectfulness and the use of a tag question.

Sarma: "kalau aku pikirkan diriku sendiri,"

(Sarma: "If I think of myself,")

Sarma: "yang memikirkan bapak dan mamak siapa?"

(Sarma: "Who's thinking about father and mother?"

(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:29:08)

Sarma's statement, "If I think of myself," sets up a conditional scenario where she considers prioritizing her own needs and desires. This hypothetical reflection indicates her awareness of the potential conflict between self-interest and familial responsibilities. The use of "if" introduces a conditional and somewhat tentative tone, which can be seen as aligning with Lakoff's idea that women's speech often includes hedging to soften the impact of assertive statements. In the data above "Who's thinking about father and mother?" Sarma poses a rhetorical question that underscores her sense of duty and responsibility towards her parents. This question highlights the societal expectation for women, especially daughters, to take on caregiving roles within the family. The rhetorical nature of the question implies that she believes no one else will fulfill this role if she does not. This statement also serves to indirectly challenge the advice given to her by her brother to "think of herself." By questioning who will care for their parents if she focuses on herself, Sarma highlights the inherent conflict between individual desires and familial obligations, particularly for women.

Sarma's dialogue highlights the intersection of gender, culture, and power in her speech. Her use of a conditional statement followed by a rhetorical question illustrates the complex interplay between asserting her own perspective and acknowledging familial responsibilities. This interaction reflects the broader societal expectations placed on women to balance assertiveness with deference and caregiving.

Data #6

Bapak: "bagaimana pekerjaanmu?"

(Father: "how is your job?"

(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:40:52)

Sarma: "tak kulanjut, pak."

(Sarma: "I won't continue, pak)

(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:40:54)

In the film *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap* movie a pertinent example is the interaction between a father and his daughter Sarma. When the father asks, "how is your job?" (1:40:52), Sarma responds with "tak kulanjut, pak" ("I won't continue, pak"). This interaction reveals several layers of sociolinguistic dynamics. Sarma's

statement, "I won't continue, pak," reflects a direct and assertive response that can be seen as diverging from Lakoff's theory to some extent. However, the use of "pak" (a respectful term for addressing a father or an older male) indicates deference and respect, aligning with the cultural expectation of politeness and submission to male authority. This duality in Sarma's speech—asserting her decision while maintaining respect—highlights the complex interplay between personal agency and societal norms.

This response shows that while Sarma is making a definitive and assertive statement about her career decision, she still frames it within the bounds of respectful and polite language. This respectfulness can be interpreted as a way to mitigate the assertiveness of her statement, thereby aligning with Lakoff's assertion that women's speech often incorporates elements that soften the impact of their words. Sarma's statement also reflects the societal pressures and familial expectations placed on women. By saying "I won't continue," she is making a significant decision about her career, a decision that carries implications for her independence and identity. Sarma's response to her father's question—"I won't continue, pak"—illustrates this dynamic by combining assertiveness with respectfulness

Data #7

Sarma: "aku di sini saja, ya di rumah menemani orangtua."

(Sarma: "I'll stay here with our parents")

(Source: *Ngeri-Ngeri Sedap*, 1:40:55)

Sarma's statement, "I'll stay here with our parents," demonstrates her decision to prioritize family obligations over personal ambitions. This declaration can be analyzed through the lens of Lakoff's theory in several ways. The decision to stay and take care of her parents reflects a traditional and deferential role often assigned to women. This aligns with societal expectations for women to be caregivers, a role that can be seen as less powerful in comparison to pursuing personal or professional goals. Although the statement itself is direct, the use of "I'll stay here" is polite and non-confrontational. It communicates her decision in a way that is likely to be acceptable and non-threatening to her family, reflecting the politeness strategies Lakoff describes.

The data shows that Self-Sacrifice the content of the statement indicates a level of self-sacrifice, prioritizing the needs of her parents over her own. This is a common expectation placed on women,

particularly in traditional societies, where familial duties often take precedence over individual desires. Her decision to stay with her parents is reflective of the broader societal expectations placed on women to fulfill caregiving roles. This interaction demonstrates how women's speech and decisions are often influenced by traditional gender roles that prioritize family over personal autonomy. While this interaction supports Lakoff's theory, showcasing how women's speech can reflect traditional roles and self-sacrifice.

CONCLUSION

The data show that there are 5 Gender Roles as a woman, 5 Emotional Attachment, 10 Gender Conflict and Tension and 15 Cultural Influences. The dominant is affected by Cultural Influences. This movie portrayed women as a being who has to obey everything a man said. They are also being portrayed as person whose level is below men. Sarma, the only daughter in the family, told her brother that she feels trapped. She is the portrayal of a daughter in Batak family who has to obey everything her parents said and thus cannot talk back nor do something freely. She cannot enjoy her life truly because she has to be an understanding person in the family.

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