



A Sociolinguistics Analysis of Stereotypes in the Freedom Writers Movie

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Abstrak

Stereotip dipandang negatif karena menunjukkan prasangka negatif tentang orang lain. Oleh karena itu, stereotip penting untuk dipelajari karena orang mungkin tanpa sadar menggunakan stereotip tentang orang lain dalam pertemuan biasa. Stereotip juga ditemukan di banyak film, salah satunya di film "Freedom Writer". Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kategori stereotip yang ada dalam film Freedom Writer dan mengidentifikasi fungsi dari stereotipe yang diproduksi dalam film tersebut. Peneliti menggunakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian dengan pendekatan sosiolinguistik terhadap stereotype yang terjadi dalam film Freedom Writers. Datanya adalah semua ucapan dalam film. Teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan teori sosiolinguistik. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada tiga kategori stereotip yang terjadi: jenis kelamin, ras, dan sifat fisik. Karakter dalam Freedom Writers mewakili beragam ras, dan interaksi mereka yang sering memungkinkan mereka untuk dengan mudah mengamati karakteristik berbeda yang terkait dengan ras masing-masing. Akibatnya, karena setting film dalam masyarakat multikultural, berbagai stereotip tentang ras, dengan penekanan khusus pada konflik yang berkaitan dengan warna kulit, menjadi lazim. Stereotip ini dipengaruhi oleh faktor budaya dalam konteks ini.

Kata Kunci: Sosiolinguistik, Stereotipe, Film Freedom Writers

Abstract

Stereotypes are viewed negatively since they indicate negative preconceptions about others. Hence, stereotypes are important to study because people might unknowingly employ stereotypes about others in regular encounters. Stereotypes are also found in many films, one of which is in the film "Freedom writer." The aims of this study are to analyze the categories of stereotypes that existed in the film Freedom Writer and to identify the functions of the stereotypes that are produced in the film. The researcher uses descriptive qualitative research. This research is a sociolinguistic approach of stereotypes occurring in the movie entitled *Freedom Writers*. The data is all utterances in the movie. The data analysis technique is carried out by employing sociolinguistics theory. The results of this study show that there are three categories of stereotypes occur: gender, race, and physical traits. The characters in Freedom Writers represent a diverse range of races, and their frequent interactions enable them to readily observe the different characteristics associated with their respective races. Consequently, due to the film's setting in a multicultural society, various stereotypes regarding race, with a particular emphasis on conflicts related to skin color, are prevalent. These stereotypes are influenced by cultural factors within this context.

Keywords: Sociolinguistics, Stereotypes, Freedom Writers Movie

1. INTRODUCTION

As social creatures, human requires interaction among each other. When they interact, they utilize language to convey messages (Knauer et al., 2020; Lai, 2019; Torres et al., 2020). When individuals use language, any variety of variables impact the words they generate. One of these elements is culture (Jahanbakhsh et al., 2019; Kecskes, 2021; Razavi & Gilakjani, 2020). People may consider the same language differently in various cultures, even though they speak the same language. Lack of cultural knowledge in communication can lead to misconceptions that disrupt the flow of contact among parties (Abunab et al., 2017; Kanoksilapatham & Suranakkharin, 2018; Nassar, 2021). These misconceptions might take the shape of biases regarding participants, often known as stereotypes.

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In general, stereotypes are viewed negatively since they indicate negative preconceptions about others. Hence, stereotypes are important to study because People might unknowingly employ stereotypes about others in regular encounters (Duguid, M. M., & Thomas-Hunt, 2015; Lindvall-Östling et al., 2020). Moreover, if people are not conscious of stereotypes, they might lead to misconceptions that also can stymie interactions. Previous study stated that stereotyping is a generalized belief about a group of people (Abunab et al., 2017; Rice, 2021). These generalizations, which generally focus on qualities, attitudes, behaviors, and abilities, are presumed to be true for everyone in the group (Mello et al., 2019; Stevenson, 2014). Every one of the groupings has something that distinguishes them from all the others. Inequalities produce and serve as the foundation for stereotypes.

People employ stereotypes about others in a variety of contexts. This occurs since stereotypes are established on a variety of social categories (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011; FitzGerald et al., 2019). Gender, race, age, physical characteristics, language, occupations and socioeconomic position, national groupings, and other miscellaneous categories (Ellis et al., 2018; McGlone & Pfiester, 2015). Stereotypes emerge since they perform different functions for users also. Previous study propose two functions of stereotypes, they are (1) cognitive function and, (2) social function (Windels, 2016).

Throughout consideration of several of the concerns raised above, the researcher is interested in studying two elements of stereotypes, especially stereotype categories and stereotype functions. The focus of the researcher's examination in this study is Freedom Writers movie. The film depicts living in a heterogeneous society and contains several stereotypes expressed by the actors. This is also inspired on a genuine story that demonstrates the existence of stereotypes in reality. "Freedom Writers" highlights the themes of tolerance, understanding, and the transformative power of education. It emphasizes the importance of empathy and breaking down barriers between people from different backgrounds (Centeno, 2020; Hidayati, 2017). The film showcases the impact a dedicated teacher can have on the lives of their students, and it serves as a reminder of the potential for positive change when individuals come together.

The objective of this article is to analyze the stereotypes in Freedom Writer movie divided into two question, (1) what are the categories of stereotypes that existed in the film Freedom Writer, (2) what are the functions of the stereotypes that are produced in the film. In this way, the reader will get information and knowledge about the types of stereotypes in society.

2. METHOD

The methodology of this research was descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive qualitative research is a methodological approach used in social sciences and other fields to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon, event, or experience. It involves exploring and describing the characteristics, meanings, and contexts of a subject of study, aiming to provide a detailed account of the research topic (Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Vaismoradi et al., 2016). The researcher utilizes descriptive qualitative research to identify all occurrences discovered in the film Freedom Writers that are connected to stereotypes.

Data collections are including the film's narrative structure, character development, visual elements, sound design, or thematic motifs. Collect data through various means, such as watching the film multiple times, taking notes, transcribing dialogues, and capturing screenshots or frames. In this study the data is all utterances in the movie.

The technique of data analysis is carried out by applying sociolinguistics theory. Analyze the collected data using analytical framework. Look for patterns, themes, motifs, and connections within the film(s). Identify recurring visual or narrative techniques, cultural

references, and symbolic elements. Interpretation and argumentation is based on analysis in order to develop interpretation and argument. Support with evidence from the film(s) and relevant scholarly sources. They discuss the findings contribute to existing knowledge or challenge prevailing theories within film studies.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The movie does not include all categories of stereotypes. The researcher discovers three major categories of stereotypes: gender, race, and physical traits. In terms of the role of stereotypes, the data indicate that both functions present in the movie. Some examples of data findings are presented in this study to provide an overview of the stereotype phenomenon in the film *Freedom Writers*. The following dialogues show one of the gender stereotypes found in films that serve a social function. The dialogue below illustrates one of the film's gender stereotypes as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Dialogue Illustrates Gender Stereotypes

Characters	Dialogue
Erin	“He likes you. He just doesn't...”
Scott	“He just doesn't think I'm good enough for you, which is fine. That's what fathers do. I'm sure I'll be that way someday.”

Based on Table 1, it is known that before going to bed, Erin and Scott talked for a bit. Scott consoles Erin because he believes he has let his father down. Scott plays on assumptions about fathers who are constantly overprotective of their daughters while amusing Erin. In the instance of Steve and Erin, the stereotype holds true since Steve admits to being always concerned about Erin. This implies that Scott is categorizing groups in which he is not yet a member. This indicates that females are incapable of making sound decisions and defending themselves, as seen by Erin's father's uncontrolled concern. Moreover, the usage of the plural noun father in the dialogue validates gender stereotypes by implying that all dads treat their daughters in the same way. Gender stereotypes in Scott's utterances provide a social role by assisting Scott in identifying himself as a potential father.

In addition, there are an example dialogue illustrates one of the film's race stereotypes.

Table 2. Dialogue Illustrates Race Stereotypes

Characters	Dialogue
Erin	“All right, you know what? I want you all to move to this side of the room. You in the back, up here. Sindy and all of you, move to the back. Come on. Let's go. Now!”
Scott	“Get your ass back to China, all of y'all.”

Based on Table 2, show the dialogue of an example of racial acting as the basis for stereotypes. It performs cognitive functions. Erin instructed her pupils to relocate and swap positions. When a black teenager, Jamal, addressed the Cambodian learners, he implored them to flee to China, indicating that he took advantage of the racial stereotype that most

every Asian is a Chinese. Jamal became concerned. He identifies Asians as a category only when Asians are actually a mix of ethnic groupings. Furthermore, he uses terms like everyone, all of you, and China, reinforcing his preconception of Cambodian pupils. The stereotype of Asians primarily Chinese is such a well whom most people currently maintain. This stereotype is not only untrue, but it may also be insulting. Jamal may have brought up the misconception since, in his opinion, Cambodian pupils do not look different from Chinese people. He didn't know where they originated from, so he labeled them as Chinese to make them simpler to identify. This is another one of racial stereotypes discovered in the film. Throughout classroom, the conversation below takes place show in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Other Dialogue Illustrates Race Stereotypes

Characters	Dialogue
Eva	“White people always wanting their respect like they deserve it for free.”
Erin	“Get your ass back to China, all of y'all.”

Base on [Table 3](#), when Eva, a Latin student, begins using Erin's ethnicity to show her hate of white people, a fight between Erin and her pupils flares up. Eva asserts emphatically that white people constantly want to acquire whatever they want as if everything is easy and that other races do not deserve what they desire. Eva expresses her racist stereotypes about white people. She disregards Erin's distinct characteristics and assumes that she is unique among white people. The usage of the plural noun people and the adjective white confirm Eva's stereotype.

Additionally, the dialog in the next section contains instances of stereotypes according to physical characteristics that carry out the cognitive function as show in [Table 4](#).

Table 4. Dialogue Illustrate Stereotypes in Physical Characteristics

Characters	Dialogue
Marcus	“Ms. G sent our letters all the way to Amsterdam to Miep Gies, herself. When Ms. G made up her mind about something, there was no stopping her, man, for real. And after we raised the money to bring her to Long Beach, there she was. But damn, I didn't expect her to be so small.”

Base on [Table 4](#), Marcus admired Miep Gies for her heroic gesture of assisting Anne Frank and her family. He viewed her as a hero and wanted to accompany her to Woodrow Wilson High School as soon as she arrived. Marcus remarked on Miep Gies' body when she came. Miep Gies was much smaller than he expected. It was most probably due to Marcus' belief that when he thought of Miep Gies' courage, he must have a tall and huge body, which was proven incorrect after seeing Miep Gies in front of his eyes. Marcus' use of small words, and did not expect, demonstrates the usage of physical stereotypes in his utterances.

Discussion

Base on the result those three categories are utilized as the basis for the stereotypes that appears in the film Freedom Writers: gender, race, and physical characteristics. As show in dialogue indicates that females are incapable of making sound decisions and defending themselves, as seen by Erin's father's uncontrolled concern. Moreover, the usage of the plural noun father in the dialogue validates gender stereotypes by implying that all dads treat their

daughters in the same way. Gender stereotypes in Scott's utterances provide a social role by assisting Scott in identifying himself as a potential father. Then race stereotype is shown in Eva asserting emphatically that white people constantly want to acquire whatever they want as if everything is easy and that other races do not deserve what they desire. Eva expresses her racist stereotypes about white people. Then stereotype in physical characteristic is shown in the dialogue of Marcus talking about Miep Gies's body.

The result is in line with previous study that kind of sociolinguistic study which aims at revealing the categories and the functions of stereotypes occurring in *Freedom Writers* movie (Fitriani, 2017). The results of the research obtained from the qualitative and quantitative investigation are stated as follows. Five categories of stereotypes are found in the utterances of the characters, namely gender, race, age, physical features and occupations and socioeconomic status (Koedel et al., 2017; Oktaviani & Arimbi, 2015). Race gets the highest number of occurrences, whereas the lowest one is equally occupied by gender and physical features. Furthermore, all three functions of stereotypes are identified in the movie, namely cognitive economy, ego protection, and social function (Nur'aini et al., 2021; Rifai & Prasetyaningrum, 2016; Silaban & Afriana, 2020). The findings reveal that cognitive economy is the most frequently used function. In contrast, social function is the least frequent function used by the characters throughout the movie.

Then the other study that analyzes appraisal analysis in *Freedom Writers* movie (Hidayati, 2017). The movie from the realization of the appraisal and narrative structure as well as to describe the use of the appraisal system to express LaGravenese's (a) Attitudes, (b) Engagement & (c) Graduation towards the main characters in *Freedom Writers* movie screenplay. The result from the Appraisal Devices realizing (a) Attitudes reveals that LaGravenese likes to express characters' negative emotion explicitly than implicitly (Hasbi, 2013; Salifu, 2010). (b) Engagement used in the screenplay describes that he emphasizes more on characters' denial towards each other's opinion and existence with the use of more Disclaim Heterogloss in the screenplay. (c) Graduation used in the screenplay describes that the use of more Sharpening Focus indicates he emphasizes on characters' category boundary more than scaling of intensity.

The implications of this research provide insight into the way stereotypes appear in everyday language and communication. This can help us understand how stereotypes are affected by social context and how they influence relations between groups in society. Analysis of a single film such as *The Freedom Writers* may have limitations in terms of generalizability to a wider social context. The stereotypes and representations in these films may be unique to the story and characters depicted, and may not fully reflect broader social realities.

4. CONCLUSION

The data above lead to the conclusion that three categories are utilized as the basis for the stereotypes that appear in the film *Freedom Writers*: gender, race, and physical characteristics. People of diverse races make up the characters of *Freedom Writers*. They see each other practically every day, allowing them to quickly see the various distinctions between their races. As a result, because the tales in the film take place in a mixed society, there are numerous stereotypes in race, particularly fights over skin color. Stereotypes are given a cultural component in this situation.

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