A FEMINIST STYLISTIC ANALYSIS: WOMEN LEADERSHIP OF LITTLE MIX FEAT NICKI MINAJ'S LYRICS SONG *WOMEN LIKE ME*

ANALISIS STILISTIKA FEMINIS: KEPEMIMPINAN WANITA PADA LIRIK LAGU *WOMEN LIKE ME* OLEH LITTLE MIX FEAT NICKI MINAJ

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Abstract

This study utilized a feminist approach, specifically feminist stylistics based on Mills's theory, to describing how women leadership presented in song lyrics. The researchers analysed the lyrics of the song Women Like Me by Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj as the primary source of the study. The data were descriptive qualitative using techniques such as data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. The findings of the study focused on stylistic analysis at the word level, at the phrase and sentence level, and at the discourse level. The research identified women leadership tendencies in language use, where certain words or phrase were exclusively associated with women. Actually, women were more commonly described based on their overall appearance. This study suggests further exploration of feminist stylistics to better understand the impact of feminism on individuals' live.
Keywords: *Feminist stylistic, Women Leadership, Lyric, Women Like Me Song*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan feminis, khususnya stilistika feminis berdasarkan teori Mills, untuk untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana kepemimpinan perempuan dihadirkan dalam lirik lagu. Peneliti menganalisis lirik lagu Women Like Me karya Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj sebagai sumber utama penelitian. Data yang digunakan bersifat deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan teknik reduksi data, display data, dan penarikan kesimpulan atau verifikasi. Temuan penelitian ini terfokus pada analisis stilistika pada tataran kata, tataran frasa dan kalimat, serta tataran wacana. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi kecenderungan kepemimpinan wanita dalam penggunaan bahasa, di mana kata atau frasa tertentu secara eksklusif diasosiasikan dengan perempuan. Dikarenakan, perempuan lebih sering digambarkan berdasarkan penampilan mereka secara keseluruhan. Studi ini menyarankan eksplorasi lebih lanjut mengenai stilistika feminis untuk lebih memahami dampak feminisme terhadap kehidupan individu.
Kata kunci: *Kepemimpinan Wanita, Lagu Women Like Me, Lirik, Stilistika feminis*

Introduction

Women's leadership is something that is rarely heard of in all aspects of human life. Society values traits like virility and logic, which are often associated with men, leading to the belief that men are the superior gender. In fact, women's leadership has been widely discussed throughout the world. This discrimination against women dates back to discussions about gender roles and stereotypes. Language discrimination refers to a social or cultural context in which language is utilized. It implies that language serves a purpose beyond conveying direct meaning. Stylistic analysis can enhance our understanding of its usage.

Stylistic is a branch of applied linguistics concerned with the study of style in texts. According to Almahameed (2020), stylistics is the study of distinctive features of language with clarification of their purposes and effects. In Burke (2023), stylistics, or literary linguistics as it is sometimes called, is the study and analysis of texts it is in particular, although not exclusively, the study and analysis of literary texts. Stylistics focuses on the aesthetic aspects of language in its two forms: written and spoken. Literary texts, speeches, legal documents, news reports, commercials,

jokes, and many other forms of linguistic stretching are studied by stylists.

Almahameed (2020) stated that feminist stylistics is a sub-branch of stylistics that aims to account for how gender concerns are linguistically encoded in texts, and does so by employing some of the frameworks and models found in the stylistics toolbox. According to Mills (1995), feminist stylistic analysis is concerned not only with describing sexism in a text, but also with analysing how point of view, agency, metaphor, or transitivity are unexpectedly closely related to gender issues, in order to determine whether women's rights are violated .

Maknun et al. (2023) stated that feminist stylistic analysis, or a feminist approach to stylistics, focuses on the works of Sara Mills, Dedre Burton, Virginia Woolf, Helene Cixous, and Jacques Lacan. They argue that the portrayal of women in literature and society has long been shaped by the dominant male perspective. It is a group of women challenge about men being seen as the centre of the universe. In a patriarchal society, men rule the world. Women were not permitted to be as well educated as men. They had no chance of providing any ability in any field, no matter what class or race they remained in. Men had the opportunity to succeed in any level of

opportunity that society provided. Women felt, and continue to feel, that there is no equality for them (Batular, 2019).

In this study, the researchers used the song lyrics of Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj *Women Like Me* is a song by British girl group Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj. It was released on 12 October 2018, by Syco Music, as the lead single from the group's fifth studio album, "LM5". In this research described how women leadership presented in song lyrics. The application of feminist stylistics to Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj's song will include the answers to these questions and will be developed at three levels as Mills suggests in her book: analysis at the level of the word, analysis at the level of the phrase/sentence, and analysis at the level of discourse all of which are in relation to gender issues. The data is lyrics were analysed in several steps, identified, categorized/ classified, described, interpreted and analysed by using the feminist linguistic stylistics approach.

To support the issues discussed in this study, the author has conducted a search and exploration of relevant previous literature and research. Some relevant previous research can be mentioned as a reference in this study. Researchers must explain how these studies are related to current research

and how current research provides new or different contributions to understanding and solutions to the problems discussed.

The first research with the title *A Feminist Stylistics Analysis in Rupi Kaur's The Sun and Her Flowers* in Siregar et al. (2020). The previous researchers used the same theory in this research, that is Mills' feminist stylistics theory. The previous author used a poem as her substance research, with the title *The Sun and Her Flowers*. The differences between Saskia's and this research are in the data used. Meanwhile, this research used the lyrics of the song as the data. The objective is to analyse linguistic stylistics describing how women leadership are presented in texts by applying a feminist approach, i.e. feminist stylistics in addition, this study found that gender-specific terms are mostly used to refer primarily to the female gender.

The second research with the title *Women's Discrimination of Beauty is A Wound: Feminist Stylistics Approach of Sara Mills by* Maknun et al. (2023)*.* This research investigated woman discrimination by the theory of critical discourse analysis from Sara Mills perspective. The difference between with this research is the data that used in this research is *Women Like Me* song. Meanwhile this previous research used Novel Beauty is a

Wound by Kurniawan. The data were analysed by qualitative descriptive technique through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification, employing the feminist literary criticism theory by revealing woman' discrimination in the position of the subject, the object position, and the position of the reader. This research has the similarity that used Mills's theory but with the differences analysis a women leadership in song lyrics.

Method

This research was conducted by the descriptive qualitative method. The information qualitative researchers gather to get insights into people's world constructions is gathered through narratives in which the persons being investigated convey their understanding of the world. Narratives most obviously involve speaking or writing, but they can also be based on other forms of communication, such as diaries, literary or journalistic works, audio or video tapes, or artworks, or even close and systematic observation of people going about their daily lives (i.e., behaviour observation). Interviews are frequently used in qualitative research narratives; however, this is not always the case. Indeed, there is sometimes no direct interaction between the researcher and the person being researched (Cropley, 1971).

To analyse gender issues, this study attempts to combine literary and linguistic theories by Mills' feminist stylistics theory. The primary source of data is from the song itself. The author used this song as the primary source of data and used journals, articles, theses, and internet resources as secondary data sources to support this research. The author follows a few steps in collecting the data source. First, the author listens to the song. Second, the author transcribes lyrics relevant to this research's subject. Lastly, the author used resources from journals, articles, or theses related to the topic of this research and the song itself. This research used a qualitative descriptive method to analyse the data. According to Miles et al. (2014), the process involved in data analysis comprises three concurrent streams of activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The author used this step to analyse the data in the *Women Like Me* song.

Result and Discussion

The lyrics of Women Like Me show a mix of confidence and sensitivity, presenting a strong image of a woman who knows her value.

Table 1. Specific Gender (Word of Level)

Title	Female	
The Song Lyrics *Women Like Me* by Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj	1.	Woman
	2.	High heels
	3.	Jewellery
	4.	Queen
	5.	Bitches
	6.	Momma
	7.	Sweet

The song's general tone is bold and aggressive, supporting self-reliance and independence. The mood changes between self-reflection and empowerment, resulting in a dynamic emotional environment. The song shows a story of self-discovery and acceptance, with the protagonist identifying her value and accepting her in uniqueness. The narration is simple but powerful, allowing listeners to engage on a personal level with the story. The analysis of this research can be seen below.

Analysis at the Word Level

This level of analysis focuses on women leadership in the use of specific words. As shown in Table 1, this section of the analysis focuses on the representation of a few words that indicate the women leadership that the researchers discovered in the song lyrics *Women Like Me* by Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj.

The word *woman* appears most frequently in the song. This song is intended for woman. The lyrics describe a woman who is self-assured and does not hold back. She always speaks her mind, likes what she likes *(high heels and her jewelry)* and how she likes it, even if it's something as insignificant and how she likes to wear her jewellery and that adds to the impression of luxury in women. Consider if the word is used to challenge or maintain existing gender standards. The word *Queen* is frequently connected with power and authority. Analyze how the phrase is utilized in the song. Is it meant to empower women by showing them as leaders and powerful characters. The word *bitches* is contentious since it has been used to claim the language as a freedom. Take a look at the context in which it is utilized in the lyrics. The word *momma* can be defined in terms of nurturing and caring for others. This word means that only a mother can give new life to

her child, such as breasfeeding and giving birth. The word *sweet* can be construed in a variety of ways. Consider if its use perpetuates perceptions of women as soft and meek, or whether it is used in a positive way.

Analysis at the Phrase and Sentence Level

The text must also be analysed at the phrase or sentence level. Mills declares certain criteria for checking the text at the phrase level based on previous research in Siregar et al. (2020). When analysing phrases that could significantly decompose gender-biased features, the analysis should be careful with ready-made phrase, presupposition and inference, metaphor, and jokes or humour.

1.   Ready-Made Phrase

Ready-made phrases are a type of linguistic structure that is studied in feminist stylistics. These phrases are pre-built and frequently convey sexist meanings. Examples of ready-made phrases include proverbs, set phrases, and rhyming slang. Feminist stylistic analysis at the phrase and sentence level focuses on identifying and analysing ready-made phrases that may be sexist (Hussain & Jabeen, 2019).

The lyric *I made a few mistakes I regret it nightly* from Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj's song *Women Like Me* may be analysed from a feminist stylistic perspective. In this phrase, the singer admits to committing errors but underlines the frequency with which she thinks about them by saying she thinks about them *nightly.*

From the perspective of a feminist, this might be interpreted as a reflection of societal expectations and constraints imposed on women. The phrase *mistakes* implies that the singer is referring to decisions or acts that deviate from cultural norms or expectations placed on women. The concept of regretting these acts *nightly* may indicate a perpetual internal battle or self-reflection, emphasizing the ongoing difficulties women experience in negotiating cultural expectations and standards. Furthermore, the term might be regarded as a criticism on the cultural scrutiny and judgment that women undergo as a result of their decisions. Recognizing mistakes and expressing sorrow on a frequent basis may be a method for women to convey the continual pressure they feel to adhere to cultural expectations and the difficulties of avoiding criticism.

2.   Presupposition and Inference

In feminist stylistics, presupposition is a linguistic phrase that refers to the assumptions or beliefs that are suggested by the language employed in a document in

Mills (1995). There are various instances of presuppositions and inference in the lyrics of *Women Like Me* songs by Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj that add to the overall topic of feminism and imaginative features. Let's look at a few of them:

"I was born without a zip on my mouth"

This line assumes that women are frequently expected to be silent or subservient. *zip on my mouth* means that the speaker refuses to submit to such norms and is shamelessly loud about her opinions and feelings.

"My momma always said girl, you're trouble"

The implication here is that outspoken, self-assured women are frequently branded as *trouble* by society standards. The speaker recognizes this title but does not avoid it, embracing her own personality and confronting the negative stereotypes about strong, independent women.

"And every time we touch, boy you make me feel weak"

This sentence assumes a typical narrative in which women are shown as emotionally fragile or *weak* in romantic interactions. However, the speaker does not consider this fragility to be a bad quality, defying the stereotype by expressing it confidently. In the context of feminist stylistics, inference refers to the act of

drawing inferences or forming assumptions based on the language employed in a work (Hutasuhut & Rangkuti, 2022).

"Could you fall for a Women Like Me"

The recurring ask throughout the song emphasizes that the speaker's distinctive attributes, such as aggressiveness and independence, may be difficult for a possible mate to accept. This implies that the speaker is seeking for someone who accepts her for who she is, underlining the idea of self-acceptance and uniqueness.

3. Metaphor

The process of finding and studying metaphors employed in a text to discover how they contribute to the formation of gender is known as feminist stylistic of metaphor (Qayyum, Rahman, and Nisar 2019). This study can show how gender-specific meanings are communicated through metaphor and how these meanings lead to women's subordination to males in Batular (2019). There are several metaphors in Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj's song lyrics *Women Like Me* that contribute to the feminist and stylistic components of the song.

"I was born without a zip on my mouth"

The metaphor *without a zip on my mouth* implies that the speaker was born with the ability to be vocal and fearless in

expressing her views and feelings. The word *zip* refers to a restricting mechanism that is frequently connected with quiet or the inability to freely express oneself.

The speaker affirms her independence and reluctance to comply to conventional standards that frequently suggest women to be restrained or meek by asserting that she lacks this constraining feature.

"Women Like Me, like a Women Like Me"

The phrase *Women Like Me* is used to symbolize a strong, self-reliant, and self-assured woman who accepts her shortcomings and weaknesses. The lyrics highlight the notion of being oneself without apology and without adhering to cultural expectations or stereotypes. The phrase *Women Like Me* is repeated several times throughout the song to stress the singer's distinctiveness and individuality.

4.   Jokes and Humour

According to, readers can unknowingly contribute to the persistence of sexism in the literature by laughing at the joke. A joke is regarded hazardous not just because it reflects gender bias in society, but also because it is structured such that neither the reader nor the human listener competes, but only laughs. Many of these jokes have double extenders, and the majority of the topics are

sexually abused and allegedly sexually harassing women.

The song lyrics *Women Like Me* by Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj emphasizes feminism while also using comedy to express its message. The lyrics address numerous elements of being a woman, such as accepting one's imperfections and defying society standards.

"I like my coffee with two sugars in it
High heels and my jewellery dripping
Drink and I get all fired up
(Hey-hey-hey)"

A humorous image is created when jewellery and high heels are contrasted with a liking for coffee. The speaker's lively and enthusiastic nature is conveyed with a hint of humour when they discuss feeling *fired up* after drinking.

"And baby, just be mine for the weekend
We can get a takeaway and sit on the couch
Or we could just go out for the evening
Hopefully end up with you kissing my
mouth, eh eh"

These lines' informal and familiar character, implying a laid-back weekend agenda, provides a light and light hearted tone. The *eh eh* at the end adds to the impression of humour.

You know all them mandem, a try to swipe me (Kyuh)
Knotted up, he could afford to ice me (hh, rhrr)

The use of the word *mandem* and the play on words with *swipe* provide a colloquial and modern touch. The allusion to being *ice* adds a light hearted touch, playing on the image of being decorated with jewellery.

Analysis at the Discourse Level

According to Mills in Siregar et al. (2020), the more general concept of discourse views content as the elements that comprise negotiated text and code elements as well as the external forces that impact the way texts are formed and described. Gender bias is evident in discourse, as seen by the patterns and institutions that support it in the discussion of gender disparities. It was dubbed the *gender framework* by Mills.

The 2018 song *Women Like Me* by Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj has feminist stylistic features that can be analysed by taking a deeper look at discourse-level characterisation, fragmentation, focalization, and schemata. Remember that this analysis is subjective and liable to change based on the interpreter's point of view. Below is a summary of each of these song elements:

1. *Characterization*

The song *Women Like Me* portrays strong, independent female characters who defy traditional gender roles and expectations. The lyrics celebrate women who are unapologetically themselves and assertive. The characterization in the song highlights the idea that women can be confident, empowered, and true to their own identities.

The lyrics *And now I wonder, could you fall for a Women Like Me* and *Still I wonder, could you fall for a Women Like Me* suggest that the singer is questioning whether someone could love and accept them for who they are. This reflects a feminist theme of challenging traditional gender expectations, which often dictate how women should behave or present themselves to be considered worthy of love or acceptance.

By wondering if someone can fall for a *Women Like Me*, the song questions whether women who don't conform to societal norms can still be loved and valued. According (Ramadhan, 2019), typically gender stereotypes are used to assign particular characteristics or attributes to each gender. Stereotypes about gender are inherent to it. Stereotypes about gender are a problem that we constantly face. In these lines, the character admits to making mistakes and owning up to them, portraying vulnerability and a willingness to be honest about their imperfections.

Kristin Wilson said in (Gupta, n.d.), while introspection can awaken your inner critic, genuine self-reflection originates from

a position of impartiality and non-judgment. The line *I broke a couple hearts that I wear on my sleeve* conveys vulnerability and self-reflection. The singer admits to making mistakes in relationships, but by wearing those experiences *on my sleeve,* they acknowledge and accept their imperfections. This speaks to the feminist idea that women should be allowed to be human, with flaws and complexities, and not be defined solely by their past mistakes.

In (Ackerman, n.d.), you acknowledge your imperfections as a fallible human being. Although you'll do well most of the time, you'll make mistakes too. You accept yourself without reservation, consistently and without conditions. These lyrics also touch upon self-acceptance. By openly acknowledging past relationship failures, the singer shows that they are comfortable with their own history and do not feel the need to conform to an idealized version of themselves to be loved. This reflects the feminist idea of self-acceptance and embracing one's authentic self, even in the face of societal expectations.

Abrams said in Ortiz et al. (2016), the idea of agency is defined as transformational processes in which individuals begin to recognise their influence, potential, and power in various contexts and groups. Understanding the collective aspect of human interactions and unequal relationships is the foundation for agency. The question of whether someone can *fall for a Women Like Me* is a sign of some agency and independence. The singer is challenging the notion that their value is dependent on the approval of others and casting doubt on the prospective partner's perception. This emphasises how crucial it is for women to take charge of their own lives and make decisions that are true to who they really are.

Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj's song *Women Like Me* explores themes of self-acceptance, autonomy, vulnerability, and challenging conventional gender norms through feminist stylistic elements in its lyrics. The song challenges the idea that women must adhere to certain standards in order to be valued, promoting the idea that they can be authentically themselves and still be worthy of love and acceptance.

2. *Fragmentation*

Fragmentation in the song can be seen in the way the lyrics are constructed. The song's lyrics consist of short, impactful phrases and sentences, which can be seen as fragments of empowerment. This fragmentation emphasizes key ideas and emotions, creating a punchy and memorable impact.

In numerous domains and situations, psychologists have studied how accurately individuals judge themselves over decades of

research. Generally, the conclusion is that people's understanding of their own abilities and personalities is, at most, limited in Dunning et al. (2004). The character's sense of insecurity is highlighted in the song *Insecure but I'm working with it* lyrics, as is her proactive attempt to confront and overcome those insecurities. The character's self-awareness and resolve to face her own vulnerabilities are highlighted by the use of short, broken phrases. The feminist notion that women are free to own their fears and actively pursue self-improvement is reflected in this fragmentation.

The short, impactful phrases like *Insecure but I'm working with it* and *Many things I could get rid of* create a fragmented structure that emphasizes the self-confidence and assertiveness of the character.

The disjointed lines *Ain't about to give it up* and *Many things that I could get rid of* highlight the character's complex sense of self and her refusal to live up to social norms. This disarray highlights her complexity and her reluctance to give up any part of who she is in order to fit in. It is consistent with feminist stylistic analysis because it presents women as complex people who reject simplistic stereotypes and hold onto their individuality. Positively, research indicates that having a high level of self-awareness can help people better adapt to their surroundings and may even have psychotherapeutic effects (Ashley and Palmon 2012).

3. Focalization

Focalization in the song refers to the point of view or perspective from which the narrative is presented. *Women Like Me* song predominantly features a first-person perspective, where the singers (Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj) express their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This gives the song a personal and relatable touch, allowing the audience to connect with the narrators on a deeper level.

The speaker in the lyrics expresses their own ideas and emotions from a first-person point of view. Feminist analysis values this focalization choice because it gives the female character the voice and agency to express her agency, experiences, and desires. Feminist stylistic analysis frequently includes this element since it gives women and their stories a voice.

She shares their ideas and emotions with the reader by narrating the tale from their point of view. Rather than the narrator being a supporting character, it is their story. The use of *"I"* reinforces the focalization on the character's point of view.

The line *Sometimes I don't even mean it* reflects the complexity of the speaker's self-identity. The use of the first-person perspective allows the character to communicate her inner conflicts and challenges in understanding herself. It portrays a nuanced portrayal of self-identity, free from simplified stereotypes, which is a key element in feminist analysis. Women tend to identify as having a lower status because we live in a society where men predominate (Robbins, 2012).

The song's lyrics offer a choice between two options: *Spending every night under covers* and *Or we could just go out for the evening.* The first-person point of view highlights the character's autonomy in choosing how to live her social and personal life. This is in line with feminist principles because it emphasises the value of women's autonomy and their freedom to make decisions according to their own tastes and desires.

4.   Schemata

The song *"I made a few mistakes, I regret it nightly* challenges the stereotype of women as faultless, idealised individuals. This acceptance of human error goes against the social norm that demands women live up to a perfectionism ideal. Rather, the song presents a woman who is unrepentant about her flaws, which is consistent with the emphasis on self acceptance and authenticity placed by

feminist stylistic analysis.

To put it simply, imperfections are characteristics or traits that don't conform to the artificial standards that society has established. These could be intellectual, emotional, or physical traits that the general public finds repulsive or ugly, leading women to suppress or hate them (Maharaj, n.d.)

The expression *I regret it nightly* evokes introspection and a desire for personal development. The idea that women should already be the embodiments of perfection is challenged by the schema of ongoing self-improvement and learning from past experiences. It emphasises the value of women's experiences and growth over time, fostering resilience and self-awareness.

This song's lyrics encourage self-reflection as a means of empowerment. Through her candid admission of her past transgressions, the character assumes responsibility for her story and highlights her potential for development. This challenges gender stereotypes that typically portray women as submissive or reliant on other people for approval.

The song questions gender stereotypes by embracing the character's flaws as a necessary part of who she is. This subverts the traditional notion that women ought to be faultless and flawless. Furthermore, introspection is essential to changing society. It can establish a culture that rejects

gender based restrictions and supports the emotional health of every person every person by critically analysing our words, deeds, and beliefs (Matutina, n.d.).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj's song lyrics Women Like Me explores the women leadership vulnerability, and challenging conventional gender norms through feminist stylistic elements in its lyrics. Based on the analysis, Little Mix feat Nicki Minaj's song lyrics Women Like Me explores the women leadership vulnerability, and challenging conventional gender norms through feminist stylistic elements in its lyrics.

The analysis, there are found feminist stylistic analysis at the word level phrase and sentence level, and discourse level. Seven words were identified in the analysis at the word level. In analysis at the phrase and sentence level, there are found: ready-made phrases, presupposition and inference, metaphors and jokes and humour describe women's leadership. An analysis at the discourse level also found the analysis there are: characterization, fragmentation, focalization and schemata that describe the women leadership in Women Like Me song lyrics. The author suggested the other authors to analyse another research that studies on women leadership impacts one's life. The author is aware of her limitations of knowledge to complete and therefore to make this thesis better, the author hopes to be given criticism, suggestions, corrections, or other feedback.

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