

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of six elements. Those are the background of the research, identification of the problem, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, the objectives of the research, and significances of the research.

A. Background of the Research

Language, as a tool of human communication, plays a significant role in everyday life. Through language, individuals can convey thoughts, feelings, and information to others. According to Irvine (2021), language enables us to interact, share knowledge, understand one another, and build social relationships. It is a complex system of symbols and meanings that allows for more detailed and abstract communication compared to other forms of expression. According to (Hervey, 2017) in communicative interactions, language allows us to convey messages using organized words, phrases, and sentences governed by grammar rules. It also incorporates elements such as intonation, emphasis, and gestures that add expressive dimensions to verbal communication. Through language, we can describe the world, express opinions, ask questions, give commands, and establish interpersonal connections. The significance of language as a communication tool extends beyond its basic function of conveying information. According to Repka (2020), language also influences our thinking, perception, and social constructs. It enables us to express identity, cultural values, and beliefs through the use of specific words

and terms associated with particular social groups or professions. In an academic context, understanding language and its functions in communication becomes crucial in various disciplines such as linguistics.

According to Wang (2020), linguistics is the scientific theory of language that analyzes the structural properties and underlying systems of language. The scientific study of language allows us to comprehend language structure, processes of comprehension, language varieties, and language change over time. Linguistics provides a theoretical framework for examining the grammar, syntax, phonetics, and semantics that shape language use and communication (Hervey, 2017, pp. 145–284). By studying linguistic features such as sentence structures, word choices, and discourse patterns, scholars can uncover the intricacies of language and its role in conveying meaning and facilitating effective communication. Understanding linguistic principles and theories enhances our comprehension of language as a complex system of rules and conventions. According to (Boleda, 2020), linguistic analysis allows for the exploration of language variation, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and language acquisition, providing valuable insights into how language is used, understood, and interpreted within different contexts and social groups. In the field of linguistics, Irvine (2021) the intricacies of language structure, sound systems, word formation, and the ways in which language evolves and changes over time. Through linguistic analysis, we gain a deeper understanding of how language functions as a dynamic and ever-evolving tool for human communication.

However, in human communication, meaning can also be transmitted through nonverbal signs and symbols. This is where semiotics plays a crucial role. Semiotics studies the way in which signs and symbols create and convey meaning (Wang, 2020). Semiotics explores the processes by which signs and symbols represent concepts, objects, and ideas. It examines how meaning is constructed through the relationships between signs, their referents, and the interpretive systems in which they exist. Semiotics also investigates the complex interactions between signs, symbols, and their cultural, social, and individual significance (Arnoff, 2020). According to Trask and Mayblin (2017), Semiotics examines how signs communicate and convey meaning, whether through visual representations, gestures, linguistic symbols, or other forms of expression. By analyzing the underlying codes and conventions of signs and symbols, semiotics uncovers layers of meaning that extend beyond the surface level. Understanding semiotics enhances our comprehension of how communication operates and how meaning is constructed and interpreted. It illuminates how signs and symbols shape our perception of reality, cultural identities, and social interactions (Boleda, 2020; Repka, 2020; Wang, 2020). Semiotic analysis aids in exploring the complex network of meanings and associations that underlie the messages encountered in everyday life. In various fields such as literature, art, advertising, and media studies, such as movie.

According to Stam (2017), the process of making movies involves a collaborative effort among various professionals, including writers, directors, producers, actors, cinematographers, and editors. It typically begins with the

development of a script that outlines the story, characters, and dialogue. The movie is cast, rehearsed, shot, and edited, with the involvement of different members of the production crew. (Eisenstein, 2014) suggests that movies can be classified into different genres, such as drama, comedy, action, horror, and science fiction, based on the themes, characters, and storylines they explore. Additionally, movies can be categorized according to their intended audience, such as children's movies, youth movies, or adult movies.

Movies play a central role in popular culture for more than a century, and they continue to be a major form of entertainment and artistic expression today (Sartika, 2014). An example is "The Woman King" movie directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, which premieres at the Toronto International Movie Festival on September 9, 2022, and begins airing in cinemas throughout Indonesia on October 5, 2022. Inspired by the true story of "The Woman King," the movie is set in 1800 about the Kingdom of Dahomey, now called The Republic of Benin in West Africa. The storyline focuses on Aogojie (the women's army of the Kingdom of Dahomey), Amazonian women warriors widely feared in any country. You could say that this Aogojie is a special forces unit and includes the guard of the King of Dahomey. The main character in this movie is Naniska, General Aogojie, who is tough, disciplined, and careful with attacks from their main enemy, the Oyo Empire. For 90 years, Dahomey has been under pressure from the Oyo Empire, which kidnaps and trades black citizens to white nobles. It is because of these concerns that Naniska, with the permission of the King and the assistance of her lieutenants Izogie and Amenza, trains and prepares the next

generation of Aogojie candidates to protect the King and the people of Dahomey against the Oyo Empire, the European aristocrats, and other tribes who want to control the territory of trade and slavery around West Africa.

"The Woman King" is a specific movie that can be analyzed within the broader context of understanding the significance of the movie as a medium. Directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood, "The Woman King" presents a unique narrative that provides an opportunity for in-depth exploration and analysis. In the context of studying "The Woman King," this analysis delves into the representation of masculine women and the application of semiotic analysis. Representing masculine women in "The Woman King" movie uses John Fiske's semiotic approach that explains symbols and how they are used to communicate meaning. In the context of the movie, (Fiske, 2017) semiotic masculinity refers to the way masculinity is represented based on the level of reality communicated through the use of symbols and codes such as appearance code, behavior code, gesture code, speech code, environment code, transcripts at the movie and level of ideology are elements organized and categorized in social codes. As in patriarchy, individualism, race, gender, class, materialism, capitalism, etc. By focusing on this particular movie, an examination can be made of the specific cinematic techniques, visual symbolism, and narrative choices employed by Gina Prince-Bythewood to represent masculine women characters. Analyzing "The Woman King" from a semiotic perspective allows for the unraveling of the layers of meaning embedded within the movie's visual and auditory elements. By examining the use of signs, symbols, and cultural codes, insights can be

gained into how the movie constructs and conveys the representation of masculine women. This analysis involves studying the characters' appearances, behaviors, interactions, and the broader socio-cultural context depicted in the movie. "The Woman King" serves as a valuable source of material for exploring the representation of masculine women and understanding the ways in which the movie employs semiotic elements to construct meaning. By focusing on this specific movie, a comprehensive analysis is provided that contributes to the broader understanding of gender representation in cinema and the application of semiotic analysis within movie studies.

"The Woman King" offers a thought-provoking exploration of characters who embody masculine traits and defy traditional gender norms. The movie presents nuanced depictions of these women, providing an opportunity for analysis and interpretation of their representation. Through a close examination of the visual and narrative elements of "The Woman King," researchers gain insights into how masculine women are portrayed and represented. This analysis involves studying their appearances, body language, dialogue, relationships, and personal journeys within the movie's narrative. By exploring these aspects, researchers understand the choices made by the moviemakers in constructing these characters and their relevance to the broader themes and messages of the movie. Furthermore, analyzing the representation of masculine women in "The Woman King" contributes to a deeper understanding of gender dynamics and challenges conventional notions of femininity and masculinity. It allows for a critical examination of how these representations can challenge and reshape

traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The study of these portrayals also sheds light on the potential impact they may have on audience perceptions and the wider cultural conversation surrounding gender identity.

The movie tells the story of Aogojie troops, who come from diverse backgrounds and reasons to become Aogojie warriors. They bravely demonstrate their manhood as Aogojie women against the forces of the Oyo Empire and European nobles. The traits of being mainly assertive and courageous, usually associated with masculinity, are typically attributed to men, while women are described with feminine traits. However, the movie shows that masculinity is not exclusive to men but can also be embodied by women. This is evident in the behaviors, speech, appearance, and actions of the Aogojie characters in “The Woman King” movie. In shows, movies, and other forms of media, masculinity is often portrayed as referring only to male traits. However, masculinity is actually a set of characteristics and behaviors that are considered valued and dominant in a given society. According to (O’Neill, 2015), these characteristics and behaviors, such as strength, aggression, and competitiveness, are often associated with traditional gender roles and expectations for men. Masculinity is shaped not only by gender but also by other factors such as race, class, sexual orientation, and ability. This perspective acknowledges that individuals of different genders and identities experience and perform masculinity in different ways, and that masculinity is not a singular concept. While, (Waling, 2019), masculinity can be understood through two different approaches in the humanities and social sciences. First, through an analysis of how masculinity

shapes male social behavior and practices through consideration of discursive and material practices, subjectivity, and gender relations. Second, by applying diverse models and categories to men to assess whether or not they maintain, or reject, certain forms of masculinity. So, the phenomenon of masculine women in this movie is caused by the desire of women to live, be independent, assertive, and have a tough personality followed by changes in appearance due to the patriarchal environment of society.

In movies, masculinity is often represented through the use of certain types of costumes and props, such as weapons and vehicles. These symbols communicate ideas about what it means to be masculine, such as strength, power, and authority. Behavior can also be used to represent masculinity in movies. For example, a character described as physically strong, aggressive, or dominant may be seen as more masculine. It is important to realize that the representation of masculinity in movies is often influenced by cultural norms and expectations regarding gender roles. However, the way masculinity is portrayed in movies can be narrow and limited, thus not fully reflecting the diverse expressions of masculinity in real life. Therefore, it is crucial to critique and challenge these representations to create a more nuanced and diverse portrayal of masculinity in movies.

However, several researchers have previously conducted research analyzing masculine women. Hutabarat, Lubis, and Oxcygentri (2020) conducted a study on the representation of masculine women, specifically focusing on the character of Harley Quinn in the movie "Birds of Prey" using

Roland Barthes's semiotic method. Mardina, Mayasari, and Nurkinan (2022) also found out and analyzed the scenes that represent masculine women in Captain Jang through the stage of denotation and connotation by Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis. Sujatmoko and Widagdo (2019) aimed to find out the standpoints used to represent women's power in movies using Critical Discourse. Hasanah (2016) conducted research to aim to know about the woman power that is oppressed by man using feminist analysis by Sara Mills: Characters/Roles, Fragmentation, Focalization, and Schemata. Sasmita (2017) conducted a study to identify the signs of masculinity found in the main character of Princess Moana with the semiotic model of Charles Sanders Peirce. Oktaviyanti and Melida (2020) conducted a study on the representation of masculine women in the drama series "Money Heist" using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method. Paramita and Chaniago (2018) conducted research to identify signs of masculinity in movies using Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics. Lastly, Yudha and Komisah (2023) conducted research to find the meaning of denotations, connotations, and myths about masculine women in movies using Roland Barthes' approach.

There are differences between this study and previous studies (Hutabarat, Lubis, Oxygentri (2020), Fitri Mardina, Mayasari, Nurkinan (2022), Sujatmoko and Widagdo (2019), Hasanah (2016), Sasmita (2017), Paramita and Chaniago (2018), Yudha and Komisah (2023)). The main differences from this study are the constructed method of analysis and the object of the research. The researcher uses the Semiotic of John Fiske to analyze the data. Additionally, this research

chooses "The Woman King" movie as the object, whereas previous studies did not.

Based on the description above, the researcher is interested in examining more about the portrayal or representation of masculine women in "The Woman King" movie using semiotic analysis by John Fiske. The researcher believes that the characters in "The Woman King" movie directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood can represent masculine women. As a result, the researcher and reader will gain a deeper understanding of how the representation of masculine women, including their images and characteristics, is represented in the movie "The Woman King" directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting research entitled **"The Representation of Masculine Women in 'The Woman King' Movie by Gina Prince-Bythewood (Semiotic Analysis)."**

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the study, researchers find the problems contained in "The Woman King" movie. The first issue concerns the enslavement and abduction of black people to be traded or used as slaves by European nobility.

The second issue portrays racism as one of the aspects in the movie, depicting the racial oppression and injustice experienced by black individuals in the context of colonialism in the Kingdom of Dahomey in the 18th century.

The third problem is related to the unequal treatment that women receive compared to men. Women are unable to choose their own way of life and lack

autonomy due to the patriarchal environment. This is evident in the case of a girl named Nawi, who is handed over by her father because she refuses to marry.

The last problem is related to sexual violence against women, resulting in trauma, lingering wounds, and feelings of guilt that haunt them for a lifetime. In order to overcome these wounds, women warriors like Aogojie fight for women's rights and equality, displaying their dominant masculine side.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the problem identification, the focus of this research is to analyze the representation of masculine women characters in the movie "The Woman King" directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood using John Fiske's semiotic approach. The research will be limited to the use of John Fiske's semiotics as the analytical framework to understand how various semiotic elements in the movie are employed to construct the representation of masculine women. The research limitations also encompass specific women characters in the movie who exhibit traits or appearances that are considered more masculine than traditional feminine stereotypes. While the movie may encompass other gender aspects, this study specifically concentrates on the representation of masculine women within the context of "The Woman King" movie.

D. Statement of the Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem, then the statement the following research problem, such as:

1. How are masculine women represented in the movie “The Woman King” directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood?
2. How is John Fiske’s semiotics used to analyze the representation of masculine women in the movie “The Woman King” directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood?

E. The Objectives of the Research

Based on the description of the problem formulation above, it can be concluded here that the objectives of this study.

1. To examine the representation of masculine women in the movie “The Woman King” directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood.
2. To explore the application of John Fiske’s semiotics as an analytical framework to analyze the representation of masculine women in the movie “The Woman King” directed by Gina Prince-Bythewood.

F. Significances of the Research

Based on the objectives of the research above, the result of this research is expected to provide benefits theoretically and practically.

1. Theoretically:

This research holds theoretical significance as it contributes to the field of gender and media studies. By examining the representation of masculine women in the movie "The Woman King" through the lens of John Fiske's semiotics, it enhances our understanding of how gender identities are constructed and portrayed in cinematic narratives. The research adds to the

existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the complex dynamics between gender, representation, and semiotic analysis in movies.

2. Practically:

a. Students of the English Education Study Program:

This research is beneficial for students of the English Study Program who are interested in gender representation in movies and semiotic analysis. It offers them a valuable case study to explore and analyze the depiction of masculine women in "The Woman King" using John Fiske's semiotic framework. The findings and analysis can serve as a learning resource, allowing students to deepen their understanding of gender representations and analytical approaches in movie studies.

b. Future researchers:

For future researchers, this research provides a foundation and reference for conducting further investigations on gender representation in movies. The methodology and analytical framework employed in this research, particularly the application of John Fiske's semiotics, can serve as a basis for future research endeavors. It offers insights into the possibilities and challenges of utilizing semiotic analysis to explore gender representations and provides a starting point for conducting similar studies in different movie contexts.

c. Other Readers:

Beyond the academic sphere, this research also benefits other readers who are interested in understanding and critically engaging with gender

representation in movies. The analysis of masculinity in "The Woman King" offers insights into the cultural, social, and artistic aspects of gender portrayal in popular media. It prompts readers to reflect on the complexities of gender identities and challenges traditional gender norms, contributing to broader conversations on inclusivity, representation, and gender equality in society.

