

The Appearance of Sexism in English and Its Rebuilding: An analysis about to Remove Sexism in English Language

¹Richa Singh, ²Jitendra Kumar Yadav, ³Amar Pal Singh, ⁴Shashank Shekhar, ⁵Archana S. Maurya

¹Research Scholar, Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Barabanki, India.

^{2,3}Associate Professor, Institute of Natural Sciences and Humanities, SRMU, Barabanki, India.

⁴Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Lucknow, India.

⁵Assistant Professor, Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Barabanki, India.

¹richasingh8095277630@gmail.com, ²jitendra.hu@srmu.ac.in ³amarsocio.18@gmail.com

⁴addictedtouniform@gmail.com ⁵archanamaurya2308@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Language is the reflection of every part of society, no exception for English. Setting up the brand of equality and democracy, the western world actually exists a phenomenon called sexism as a well-known tradition. What on earth is Sexism? Here is the definition from American Tradition Dictionary. The discrimination that one group to another, especially male to female. Therefore, owing to language habits, sexism usually refers to discrimination that language used for women. Furthermore, it indicates that the cultural attitude of the person who is writing or speaking is stressing men and displaying women. This paper attempts to analyze sexism in English through reason, display and rebuilding, ect. Through lots of examples, the passage exhibits the phenomenon of sexism in English and its reason, its main display and it's rebuilding, and explains the importance of eliminating it.

KEYWORDS

Display, Reason, Rebuilding and, Sexism etc.

Introduction

1. The reason why sexism appears

Sexism arises due to a combination of historical, social, cultural, and psychological factors. Here are some key reasons why sexism appears:

1.1 The influence of history development

From ancient time on, the ruling position in western society is almost held by male persons. From the Emperor Caesar invading Britain, to Duke William conquering Normandy, until British royal family later, we could nearly find ruling females. After climbing to the high position, men began to look down upon women. This attitude could influence the ideology of the whole society. So lots of men-central terms with sexist's color came into being during the stage of English forming. In the 14th century, Chaucer, who is conceived as the Father of English language, created a great deal of terms, later, Milton and Shakespeare competitively invented new words. They contributed a lot to English, at the same time, the negative side they brought can't be ignored (Din, Yanren & Maurice Cogan Hauck.2001). These famous male's contribution to English who were living in male's society, accelerated the extensive transmission of the language of sexism. Atkinson defines linguistic sexism as a wide range of verbal practices, including not only how women are labeled and referred to, but also how language strategies in mixed sex interaction may serve to silence or depreciate women as interactants. Ivy and Backlund added that if sexism refers to attitudes and/or behaviors that denigrate one sex to the exaltation of the other, then it follows that sexist language would be verbal communication that conveys those attitudes or behaviors (Ivy, D.

K. and Backlund 1994). At its crudest and most hurtful, sexist language is a tool used to damage someone. Rather than a blind but innocent repetition of sexist behavior and terms many of us grow up with, some people carry that further and try to really emotionally harm a person by targeting them with sexist comments. But whether it is used on purpose or blindly, it is a form of abuse or bullying and I think we can all do well to watch what words escape our lips, just in case we are repeating things we've always repeated. Without even knowing that they may be hurting someone

1.2 The influence of cultural ideology

Cultural ideology refers to the attitude which is closely connected with cultural value. The transmission of cultural ideology will have reaction to the bias and discrimination to females. Myth is a style of culture, the image of female can help us to understand the sexism in language. In many myths all over the world, men are always called the model of races, but women are always the changed type from men (Charles Fillmore 1997). Although they sometimes are believed as the god of richness or the mother of lands, the imputation of the source of sins couldn't be got rid of. The leader god in Greek myth is Zeus, in Roman, it's Jupiter. As the headmaster of everything, they are surely men. On the contrary, the female god Pandora can only bring endless sins, disasters and unhappiness to the world. That is the allusion named Pandora's box.

1.3 The influence of social prejudice and traditional view

From the influence of social crowd parents, relatives, friends, etc. and the transmission of public media broadcasting, movie, TV, newspaper, etc, the view of men being over women will get stronger gradually. People get this view from their close persons. Then in English according to the influence of traditional view, the language sexism to female has changed into a vicious cycle. It's rooted so deeply that couldn't be eliminated in a short time.

2. The display of sexism in English

Sexism can manifest in the English language in various subtle and overt ways, shaping societal attitudes and reinforcing gender stereotypes. Here are some key ways sexism appears in English.

2.1 Regarding male's language as morality and main body

English treats everyone as a male except for special explanation. If somebody's sex is not known, he, his, him can be used to mention the human being. This is a common rule in English. In many proverbs, man is the general name for human (Mario Pei. 1983). For example No man is born wise or good. Though female's proportion in the world is over 50 percent, the using rate of He and She in documents is 4:1 according to some statistics.

2.2 Regarding women as exception

People psychologically conceive that persons who achieve success are certain to be males. Women who get famous are supposed to be exception. They will be advocated by the media unavoidably. Famous women always be added some suffixes showing their different sex from men whenever they're mentioned, but this cannot be found from men. Some words are about profession, such as doctor, lawyer, reporter, attendant, etc. Although they are natural words, people only connected them with men owing to longtime habits. When women work in these fields, woman, lady, girl, female are added on purpose. Then, woman doctor, lady lawyer, girl reporter, female attendant, etc. come into being.

2.3 Positive male's words and negative female's words

The two words Woman and Female are the most typical examples. Woman also means female servants, and female also represents being despised. The derived words of woman are more ridiculous. Womanish takes the place of a weak man as a woman, womanize refers to a flirting man. A vulgar man is described by a root from women! On the contrary, some words about male are positive, meaning strength and courage, such as manly, virile, masculine etc.. Some terms only about female are negative more or less (Jim Quinn. 1990). For example, madam also means gossiping woman, flirting woman or procuress; starlet means female star; witch is connected with female demon. In correspondence, sir, star, and wizard are all positive, even wizard also means a magic and skillful man.

2.4 Female terms are mostly marked

Most male words have no any fixed ending, however, most female words are often added a bound morpheme to the corresponded male words to become marked terms. Few example are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: List of few male and female nouns

Male	Female
actor	actress
author	Authoress
god	goddess
hero	heroine
host	hostess
prince	princess

2.5 Male is followed by female when appears at the same time

Owning to the longtime habits, the order of the two sexes obeys a rule mostly that men leads women. The following examples are common, such as Mr. and Mrs. his and hers, boys and girls, men and women, prince and princess, brothers and sisters, and host and hostess, and so on. If the order is reversed, almost all are supposed to feel uncomfortable.

3. The rebuilding of sexism in English. The rebuilding of female terms generally includes the followings,

3.1 Change positive endings into natural, invent negative endings in correspondence with positive, and turn original positive endings into marked terms only for men. Few terms listed in Table 2.

Table 2: List of few male and female and neutral nouns

Positive Endings	Negative Endings	Neutral
chairman	chairwoman	chairperson
congressman	congresswoman	congress one
foreman	forewoman	supervisor
postman	postwoman	post worker
mankind	womankind	people

3.2 Take the places of the terms and phrases including man as much as possible.

man:	human being	human	person	individual man
mankind	humankind	humanity		
man made:	synthetic	artificial		
manpower:	workforce	staff	personnel	labour

3.3 Select neutral words instead of suffixes of females.

Table 3: table showing list of suffixes of females and neutral data

Suffixes of females	neutral
waitress	server
stewardesses	flight attendants
aviatrix	aviator
poetess	poet
usherette	usher

3.4 Avoid using the words showing little respect to women

Don't use these words such as the distaff or the fair/soft/weak/second sex, and don't call your wife as a little

woman.

3.5 Use parallelism when mention males and females at the same time. Original rebuilt man and wife husband and wife men and girls men and women /boys and girls.

3.6 About the pronoun of the third singular He

3.6.1 Use plural when bathing a baby, never leave him unattended. When bathing a baby, never leave them unattended.

3.6.2 Rebuild the original by We/us/our from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs. From each of us according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.

3.6.3 Change into the second person No man knows his true character unit he has run out of gas, purchased something on the installment plan and raised an adolescent. You don't know what your true character is until you have run out of gas, purchased something on the installment plan and raised an adolescent.

3.6.4 Change into the passive voice one who, when he has the choice of two evils, chooses both. One who, when given the choice of two evils, chooses both.

4. Sexist Terms and Alternatives

Many people speaking or writing English today wish to avoid using language which supports unfair or untrue attitudes to a particular sex, usually women. Professional organizations, periodical publications and feminist activists, grimly aware of this phenomenon, launch their awareness campaign to make people more sensible in using language as a social and political tool of communication (Trask, R. L). Political correctness in using language has been the banner of their campaign. If in the company of people who are made uncomfortable by sexist terms, there is a polite and linguistically acceptable alternative in most cases. Some of them are listed in Table 4:

Table 4: List of terms to be avoided and preferred

To be avoided	To be preferred
mankind	humanity, human beings, human race, people, humankind, humans
man's achievements	human achievements, our achievements
If a man drove 50 miles at 60 mph I	If a person drove 50 miles at 60 mph
the best man for the job	the best person (or candidate) for the job
man-made	artificial, synthetic, manufactured, constructed, of human origin
manpower	Workers, workforce, staff, labour, staffing, human resources
man	people, humankind, men and women, women and men, individuals, human beings,

	person, the individual
man the desk	staff the desk, be at the desk
manpower planning	labor market planning, workforce planning, staff planning, workload planning
chairman	chairperson, chair, convener (don't use non-parallel terms such as 'chairman' for men and 'chairperson' or 'person chairing' for women)
headmaster	head teacher, head
policeman, fireman	police officer, fire fighter
Two men and three girls work in that lab	Five people work in that lab or Two men and three women work in that lab
She's a tomboy	She's an adventurous/daring girl
He's a sissy	He's a sensitive/caring boy

5. Conclusion:

The forming of sexism in English language is closely connected with history, culture, education and custom, etc. , so it's impossible to eliminate or rebuild them in such a short time. It's a special responsibility for English learners and workers, for more persons' joining this heavy work can make the message of English more precise and clear, and the words more popular and elegant. The more vital thing is it will promote social development, sex equality, fair competition, dissolved social crisis and contradiction. Although feminists tend to be the only people fighting against sexism, this false ideology needs to be changed. People need to become more sociological in their thinking and realize this is a problem that we all should be working to fix. Many of us have never really taken the time to think about the effects of the language we use. How it can affect us or our position within society. Think about it for a minute and see if we are just succumbing to societal expectations or are we just more intelligent and more eager to promote change. The challenge to us, individuals, is to remedy this kind of problem in Modern English. Both genders must be given exactly the same respect. All along, we are one and the same because we are all created by God.

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