
Women Empowerment in Blackpink's *The Happiest Girl*: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study tries to illuminate the significance of female empowerment in Blackpink's song *The Happiest Girl*. The *Born Pink Album* by *The Happiest Girl* in Blackpink was used as the source of the analysis's data. This study's goals are to: (1) define the textual elements of song lyrics; (2) identify discursive devices in song lyrics; and (3) identify social elements in song lyrics. In order to address the issues in this research, this qualitative study applies Norman Fairclough's (2001) theory to a three-dimensional model that is also supported by other theories. The research's findings are reflected in the text's framework, which depicts women who possess the capacity to empower themselves via independence and self-assurance in their decision-making. The producer's experience and social issues play a major role in the creation of songs in the discourse practice dimension of the creative process. Fans can accept the song well during the listening process because of how it is structured as something that is both enjoyable and relevant to life. Sociocultural behaviors that perpetuate gender stereotypes allow the music business to be more fearless in creating songs that elevate the importance of women's empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

One way people communicate their emotions is via song. All people use music as a "self-identity shaping material" and as one of the typical methods for achieving equilibrium in their life (DeNora, 2013). Songwriters often play with language in their songs to make them more visually appealing and to more thoroughly, lyrically, or artistically communicate their emotions. Griffe (1992, p. 3) asserts that songs are vocally generated, have grammatical significance, and have melodies.

Hence, a song is a musical production with linguistically meaningful lyrics in it. The song's lyrics are significant because they are a sort of poetry that condenses the author's feelings into a few lines or a well-known structure, like a couplet. The issues that serve as regular sources of inspiration are typically those related to love, hardships, or support for a cause. The topic of female emancipation in song lyrics is the focus of inquiry. Women's empowerment and equal rights in society can be achieved through empowerment and decision-making. In Indonesia, patriarchal gender roles persist, with women treated differently. South Korean band Blackpink's song lyrics promote women's rights and empowerment. Their recent album, *Born Pink*, features eight songs celebrating women's rights and encouraging self-sufficiency.

There are several studies discussing popular culture such as song, film or digital platform. The studies significantly increase along with the technology and its development. Several issues have been conducted including gender and popular culture, language study or social construction in digital media. One of the previous studies that discussed popular culture, gender and critical discourse analysis is *Body Size on Cinema: A Critical Discourse Analysis on Contemporary Indonesian Cinema*, conducted by Afifulloh and Wijayanti (2023). This research highlights the construction of gender in film media, with Sara Mill's critical discourse analysis. This research helps the author in constructing the framework of this article. The different perspective and primary data of the research give a space to state the gap of this research.

In order to investigate *The Happiest Girl* (THG) from the *Born Pink* album (BPA) and comprehend the connection between linguistic components and social or cultural environment, this study employs critical discourse analysis. The study analyzes the text's structure, language, and grammar to determine whether the author intended to empower women using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Numerous studies have been done on the significance of female emancipation in music, with Lindemann's song *Pretty Girl* serving as a shining example.

The study focuses on women's internal attributes rather than merely their outward look in order to elucidate how the music influences the development of stereotypes about women. The study focuses on how women's liberation is communicated and addressed in a more appealing and understandable way in order to complement prior research on women's empowerment theory and song research objects.

1. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze song lyrics promoting women's empowerment, focusing on social realities and challenging the notion of

weakness. The researcher used an observational approach to analyze the lyrics of a song on Spotify, focusing on women's empowerment and categorizing them based on lexico-semantic components.

The study used Miles and Huberman's (2007) technique for data analysis, focusing on feminist theory and song lyrics that advocate for women's empowerment. The critical discourse analysis theory of Norman Fairclough was used to data visualization. The analysis answered the original problem definition with significant findings and convincing justifications.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. RESULTS

2.1.1. Theme of the Song

Through Norman Fairclough's framework, which is broken down into three stages of analysis, including textual, discourse practices, and social practices, the results of the analysis are clearly given in this part. Because this analysis's main focus is on women's empowerment, the data used was acquired by looking at how important women's empowerment is in each song's lyrics. Each value expressed in the song is implied by the language employed in the lyrics.

Songs with themes of love, independence, or freedom are just a few examples of how the value of women's empowerment can be communicated in various circumstances. The lyrics of these songs show how women overcame these gender norms, much to how the fourth wave tried to achieve greater gender equality by focusing on gender norms like openly expressing emotions and feelings and the marginalization of women in society.

Table 1. Themes

Lyrics	Theme (love)
Don't hold my hand, don't beg me back	relation
Don't say that we'll make it through this	relation
Yeah, if I'm so beautiful, then why?	yourself
My heart only wants you	Relation
The moment you say no	Relation
But tonight, I'll be the happiest girl in the world	yourself
You'll see like it doesn't matter	relation
Tonight, I'll be the happiest girl in the world	yourself
You'll see like it never happened	relation

In its themes, the romance does not always run as expected. In the romantic stereotype, girls are portrayed as defenseless creatures who always agree with the boys'

acts, even when they are stupid things that shouldn't be done. The females frequently have bigger hearts to love than the males. The girls are also regarded as being harder to forget someone they love. In fact, they are free to leave relationships they feel are not rewarding them. THG exhorts the girls to break up with their lovers if they are not happy with it. It encourages the girls to see themselves in a high pride, that they are beautiful and deserve a better man, a better love. Thus, even in the moment of break up, they can be very happy even, as it is a new page to start a good time.

2.1.2. Textual Analysis of the Song

Regarding the lyrics of this The Happiest Girl song, the researcher found a wide range of language, including pronouns, adjectives, and sentence structures like imperative, declarative, and interrogative phrases.

a. Lexico-grammatical

1) Pronoun

First person singular pronouns are frequently used in song lyrics to identify the main characters. These pronouns try to give the listeners a sense of self-identity in the phenomenon by referring to them in the same way that the artists do. We learn that the first-person pronouns "I" and "me" have different meanings depending on the situation. The pronoun "I" is used as the subject to refer to the person performing the action. The object pronoun "me" is used in this instance to refer to the individual who is affected by the activity. Additionally, the second-person singular pronoun "you" is used.

Table 2. Pronouns

Lyrics	Pronouns
If I'm so beautiful then why?	First person subject
I'll be the happiest girl in the world	First person subject
Don't beg me back	First person object
The moment you say no	Second person subject
My heart only wants you	Second person object
Don't hold my hand	First person possessive
My heart only wants you	First person possessive

First and second person pronouns help to build a strong bond between the singer and the addressee. The vocalist displays a strong personality in this song; she is independent of a boy, you, and has the self-determination to make her own life decisions. I, a girl, am speaking for all the girls left behind by you, boys, in the globe. It proclaims a girl's beauty, just like the boy did when he persuaded her to become his girlfriend. When he dumps his girl, he disregards this reality. Since the boy is

leaving her, all the girls should be happy at all times, if not the happiest. They will find it easy to relate to the situations that women have personally encountered. When first- and second-person pronouns are employed, it is often assumed that the listener can feel what the performer is going through.

2) Sentence Type

After pronouns, the imperative is the second most common sentence structure in song lyrics. Orders, instructions, requests, invites, and other directives are all expressed using imperative language. The main character of this song uses imperative language while speaking in the second person.

This is done to highlight the woman's confidence and to imply that she is of higher status than the primary character, a male. Declarative language is used in the next sentence. Declarative sentences usually aim to inform or make claims about the facts and are short, straightforward statements. This song's declarative language, which claims that women may be freed from the things that make them unhappy and choose what makes them happy, is an illustration of how women have gained more power.

The interrogative is the last sentence pattern you'll see in song lyrics. In order to extract information about something, interrogative statements are frequently utilized. Any topic, broad or specific, may be the subject of the investigation. In this lyric, a woman is the first person and a male is the second person. The first person uses an interrogative remark to address the second person. The man's response to attractive ladies is the subject of this interrogative remark.

Table 3. The sentence types

Lyrics	Sentence Type
Don't hold my hand	Imperative
Don't beg me back	Imperative
Don't say that we'll make it through this	Imperative
But tonight, I'll be the happiest girl in the world	Declarative
You'll see like it doesn't matter	Declarative
Tonight, I'll be the happiest girl in the world	Declarative
You'll see like it never happened	Declarative
If I'm so beautiful then why?	Interrogative

3) Adjective

An adjective can describe or modify a noun or pronoun. A noun can be more fully described by the use of adjectives. Personality, size, color, and temperature are examples of this. Adjectives frequently occur before the noun they modify. The adjectives in the songs included in this study describe the positive traits that a woman in the song possesses. The song's lyrics include possessive adjectives in addition to

positive ones. Possessive adjectives are those that modify nouns or noun phrases and denote ownership or belonging.

Table 4. The use of adjectives

Lyrics	Type of adjectives
If I'm so beautiful then why?	Positive
But tonight, I'll be the happiest girl in the world	Positive
Tonight, I'll be the happiest girl in the world	Positive

4) Lexico-semantics

In order to explain the meaning of each word in the line from the song The Happiest Girl, the researcher provides an explanation in this analysis. This word is used in the lyrics to depict a lady who takes control of a failing relationship and resolves to find happiness on her own terms.

Table 5. *The meaning types*

No.	Word/ Phrase	Meaning	
		Lexical	Contextual
1.	Hold	An action or verb that involves holding or grasping something or someone with your hand.	The means through which a man prevents the departure of his partner.
2.	Beg	To ask for something earnestly and pleadingly, or to make a very forceful and urgent request.	The man's action is to ask the woman not to let go of the bond of love that exists between them.
3.	Moment	A relatively brief period of time or a single point in time.	The period of time that couples, both men and women, spend together.
4.	Beautiful	A word used to describe something that is appealing and makes people feel good when they encounter it or think about it.	A woman's physical beauty does not imply that she can be readily played with.
5.	Happiest	Being happy about something and demonstrating or expressing happiness by	A woman who is able to let go of all her worries, uncertainties, and sorrows and transform into the happiest woman in the entire

No.	Word/ Phrase	Meaning	
		Lexical	Contextual
		feeling or acting excited.	world as a result of her ability to do so with the unpleasant memories that have been the source of her constant feelings of disappointment.
6.	Tonight	A night on this day that falls at or just before this time, either in the afternoon or evening	A period of time when individuals typically relax and release their stresses. This is also in keeping with the song's lyrics, which indicate that a woman lets go of all her feelings at night in order to be prepared to begin her new life the next day.
7.	Make it through	Doing something difficult in order to achieve a specific objective or aim.	The efforts of a couple to strengthen their relationship despite its problems.
8.	This	To point out a certain individual or object that is nearby, being spoken, or being experienced	Issues that arise in relationships where partners are aware that they cannot stay together.
9.	Back	A state that signifies a return to the prior state or a regular state.	The period when couples get together to keep their relationship solid.

b. Discourse Practice

Songwriters have a critical role in constructing song lyrics, which is the focus of discourse analysis. The producer uses social challenges that women face in relationships to illustrate ideals of female emancipation in keeping with the romantic theme. The song expresses viewpoints to encourage women as it discusses the subject of cheating in partnerships.

This can be seen from the following lyric :

Don't hold my hand,

don't beg me back

Don't say that we'll make it through this

If I'm so beautiful then why?

The song's lyrics highlight the issues that occur by illustrating the intimate interactions between spouses in everyday language. The words "don't beg me back" show a guy pleading with a woman to stay in a relationship, and the word "beautiful" emphasizes a woman's self-assurance. Additionally, the song criticizes men by making reference to the way they treat women badly. The song's author hopes to offer a fresh viewpoint on women's empowerment by arguing that they are capable of finding happiness on their own, apart from men.

The producer went on to add the following lyrics to further emphasize the support for women's ability to overcome and enjoy their circumstances :

*But, tonight I'll be the happiest girl in the world
You'll see like it doesn't matter
Tonight, I'll be the happiest girl in the world
You'll see like it never happened*

The song's lyrics are strong and support women on their path to empowerment. Declarative words and expressive language are used in the lyrics to convey the feelings of the women, highlighting their independence and sense of empowerment. Black Pink members are among the singers chosen for the song, and their inclusion influences listeners by subtly conveying the happiness they chose and live. Female listeners are drawn to the ballad genre because of the soft, warm instruments. Additionally, the lyrics draw attention to how women are portrayed both positively and negatively in society at large. This strategy effectively communicates the topic of the song by assisting listeners in appreciating the positive aspects of a woman's power and empowerment.

c. Sociocultural Practice

The Happiest Girl, released in 2022, encourages female empowerment and dispels gender stereotypes. The song examines problems with women's self-love and authority in relationships with men. It talks on how women are typically perceived as weaker and less capable in romantic relationships, which contributes to the stigma around their abilities and the idea that they should submit to males.

As women are frequently seen as inferior and unable to maintain relationships despite being hurt by men, the song encourages them to communicate their emotions. It stresses the value of enabling one another in partnerships since doing so calls for dedication, assurance, humility, and selflessness. But many couples engage in gender discrimination, making women the ones who are dominated by men.

Men are more likely to have affairs than women, and both infidelity and violence against women are widespread problems. Due to the view of harsh behavior as a sign of a man's aggressive personality and their fear of being seen as failures, women frequently stay in violent marriages. Lack of self-control and repressed emotions are factors in the problem. The song "The Happiest Girl" affirms and promotes women's autonomy to express their emotions and find fulfillment in their life without depending on other people.

2.2. DISCUSSIONS

2.2.1. Textual Analysis

The grammatical and semantically connected material of the song is taken into account in the earlier stage of the textual analysis. The language that each song's lyrics are written in is categorized, notably through lexico-grammatical analysis, which examines the verbs, adjectives, and pronouns in each song. Following a subsequent analysis of word meaning, the categorization information was integrated, and each lyric in this case is explained using semantic meaning. The vocabulary classification states that the song's style is determined by its lyrics and theme.

In this The Happiest Girl song, the first person pronoun "I" has been used to refer to the singer, who is also a woman, and the second-person pronoun "you" has been used to refer to a male character who is portrayed as the woman's boyfriend who is no longer really in love with his partner. All of the phrases used to depict the woman's strength as a kind of self-empowerment for women to be free from the past experience that has shattered her are quite diverse in terms of expression, ranging from imperative, declarative, and interrogative. Additionally, supportive language is inserted to highlight the constructive and pro-women ideas.

The use of positive self-representation increases. The goal is to make sure that women can feel empowered by the strong and positive traits that are used in songs that highlight the significance of women's empowerment. Each song's lyrics, whether they are about love, freedom, or women's independence, show how determined women are to take control of their own lives.

2.2.2. Discourse Practice

The producer of The Happiest Girl is focusing on the social difficulties that women face in relationships in order to convey ideas about female independence and love topics. While expressing pro-women perspectives and using common language, the lyrics depict interpersonal relationships and problems between men and women. The author of the song strongly advocates for women's emancipation and urges them to let go of their worries so they can find happiness apart from males. Ballads draw listeners in with their soothing tones and informal language while highlighting both unfavorable and good portrayals of women in real life. This tactic makes it easier for listeners to see the benefits of having a woman with the power to speak up for their interests.

The song's electronic music, trap song aesthetic, and hip-hop subgenre appeal to young listeners. The efficient message delivery of the vocabulary instills a sense of empowerment in the listeners. Through lyrics that are more powerful and forceful, it gives good self-representation and an understanding of the value of women. Women are portrayed in the song as being stunning, sophisticated, and elegant.

The song is a way to show support for women who find it difficult to express their emotions in words. Pop-pop is a genre with hip-hop and rock influences that successfully communicates its message through straightforward lyrics, commonplace

vocabulary, and well-known anecdotes. Because of the direct language used in the lyrics, listeners can express their displeasure with the expectations and stereotypes that are made of women, which results in a satisfying and relaxing feeling.

2.2.3. Sociocultural Practice

The song's theme, which is how women are treated in matters of love, provides a clue as to the sociocultural study of The Happiest Girl. Gender prejudice was still prevalent in society when this BPA was issued in 2022. Like in this song, misconceptions about women in society still seem to be incredibly pervasive. In actual relationships with the men they love, women are more likely to experience difficult times and feel wounded than men.

Not only in one country, but nearly everywhere in the world, women experience this. Women in relationships are commonly perceived as being weak and lacking the same authority as males, despite the reality that everyone has the same rights in general. Particularly when two people are meant to complement one another, this is true. Men's behaviors, such as having affairs or expressing their fury on women, subject women to a variety of events.

Though the majority of women continue to be in unhealthy relationships, they are unable to stand out for themselves or take the required action to protect themselves because of the stigma they experience and the forces at play in their surroundings.

3. CONCLUSION

The study analyzes songs, focusing on grammatical and semantic lexicon. The Happiest Girl song portrays women as empowered, independent, and confident. The use of declarative sentences emphasizes female empowerment. Semantic analysis reveals the unique charm of each song, with symbols expressing women's empowerment. The study highlights the importance of women's empowerment. While text consumption emphasizes the significance of independent women, text composition entails the songwriter's experiences and difficulties. Blackpink, a singer, has an impact on texts and admirers. Gender discrimination in love, independence, and liberty is revealed by sociocultural study. The fact that both men and women have equal possibilities means that empowering women encourages positive change and advances gender equality.

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