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Symbolic Violence in Patriarchal Language Culture Against Women: A Sociolinguistic Analysis of English Education Students in Indonesian Higher Education

Hamid Ismail [1*] [iD] *, Saiful* [2] [iD] *, Rina Asrini Bakri* [3] [iD] *, Selvi Panggua* [4] [iD]

[1] *English Education Department, Institut Sains dan Kependidikan Kie Raha, Ternate 97747, Indonesia*

[2] *English Education Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Makassar 90111, Indonesia*

[3] *English Education Department, STKIP YPUP, Makassar 90111, Indonesia*

[4] *English Education Department, Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja 91811, Indonesia*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the manifestation of symbolic violence within patriarchal language culture against female students in English Education departments at Indonesian universities, specifically focusing on Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar. Utilizing Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework of symbolic violence and habitus, this qualitative research investigates how language serves as a tool of gender based oppression in academic environments. Through semi-structured interviews with three participants (two female and one male student) and ethnographic observations, the study reveals persistent gender-based linguistic discrimination despite students' theoretical understanding of gender equality concepts. The results demonstrate that certain vocabulary items, particularly profanity and emotional expressions, remain predominantly accessible to male students, while female students face social sanctions for using similar language. Three primary forms of symbolic violence were identified: restrictions on specific vulgar terminology ("*telaso*," "*sundala*"), differential standards for emotional expression, and gendered expectations in formal address ("you" vs. "we"). The research identifies emotional states, humor, and disappointment as key triggers for these linguistic manifestations. The implications extend beyond mere language use to encompass broader patterns of gender subordination that reproduce patriarchal power structures within educational settings. This study contributes

to the understanding of how symbolic violence operates through everyday linguistic practices, highlighting the need for critical awareness of gendered language norms in Indonesian higher education contexts. The study results demonstrate that formal gender education initiatives, while present, have proven insufficient to eliminate deeply embedded cultural practices that perpetuate linguistic inequality, indicating an urgent need for more comprehensive institutional approaches to addressing symbolic violence in academic environments.

Keywords: Symbolic Violence; Patriarchal Language; Gender Discrimination; Sociolinguistics; Indonesian Higher Education; Language and Power

1. Introduction

The convergence of language, gender, and power represents a pivotal domain in contemporary sociolinguistic scholarship, especially within educational environments that mold future professionals. Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework of symbolic violence offers crucial insights into how ostensibly neutral linguistic practices sustain gender-based oppression systems [1]. Higher education institutions exemplify these dynamics, where students traverse intricate social hierarchies while pursuing academic advancement and supposed equality. Symbolic violence manifests through subtle yet systematic linguistic mechanisms that reinforce gender disparities. Academic discourse, classroom communication patterns, and institutional language norms often embed masculine-coded expressions, marginalizing alternative gender perspectives. These linguistic practices operate invisibly, naturalizing power imbalances through everyday communication. Students unconsciously internalize gendered language patterns that privilege certain voices while silencing others. Faculty-student interactions, peer discussions, and academic writing conventions frequently perpetuate traditional gender hierarchies through seemingly objective linguistic choices. The pervasive nature of symbolic violence in educational discourse creates reproduction cycles where gender inequalities persist across generations of professionals. Understanding these mechanisms becomes essential for developing more inclusive pedagogical approaches that challenge dominant linguistic paradigms and promote equitable academic environments for all gender identities [1].

Indonesia's educational landscape provides compelling evidence of how language functions as a mechanism of symbolic violence, despite persistent patriarchal structures embedded within institutional frameworks. While substantial progress has been achieved through gender equality legislation and comprehensive educational policy reforms, empirical research demonstrates that subtle forms of gender-based discrimination continue to permeate everyday linguistic practices [2]. This phenomenon manifests prominently within English Education departments, where students receive explicit instruction in language pedagogy and theoretical equality frameworks, yet simultaneously experience and perpetuate deeply ingrained gendered linguistic conventions. The striking paradox highlights how institutional knowledge transmission can coexist with discriminatory practices. Students may study feminist theory and equality principles while participating in linguistic behaviors that contradict these very concepts. This contradiction reveals the complex tension between formal curriculum content and informal social practices within educational environments. The persistence of discriminatory linguistic practices despite progressive educational content demonstrates that formal policy changes alone prove insufficient for eliminating embedded cultural patterns. Deep-rooted gender norms continue operating through subtle linguistic mechanisms that resist institutional intervention, creating ongoing challenges for achieving genuine equality in educational settings.

Bourdieu's theoretical conceptualization of symbolic violence provides the foundational framework for understanding power dynamics that transcend overt coercion, operating instead through subtle meaning imposition and legitimacy construction. Symbolic violence emerges when marginalized groups unconsciously participate in their own subordination by accepting and internalizing the precise categories and distinctions that rationalize their disadvantaged positions [3]. Within linguistic domains, this phenomenon manifests through differentiated standards governing appropriateness, accessibility, and social acceptability that systematically disadvantage specific demographic groups while maintaining appearances of naturalness and inevi-

tability. These mechanisms create invisible barriers that shape communication patterns, academic discourse, and professional development trajectories. Understanding these complex dynamics becomes essential for developing transformative pedagogical approaches that actively challenge embedded inequalities rather than inadvertently reproducing them through seemingly neutral educational practices.

Contemporary scholarship examining gendered linguistic practices has extensively documented how language norms simultaneously reflect and reinforce established gender hierarchies. Recent investigations have systematically explored linguistic microaggressions and the continued prevalence of patriarchal discourse within educational environments [4]. However, existing research predominantly concentrates on Western contexts, creating substantial knowledge gaps regarding how these complex dynamics function within non-Western educational settings. This limitation proves particularly significant in Southeast Asian contexts, where traditional gender norms intersect dynamically with rapidly modernizing educational systems. The intersection creates unique challenges as institutions navigate between preserving cultural values and embracing progressive educational frameworks. Traditional hierarchical structures embedded in language use often conflict with contemporary equality objectives, producing tension within academic environments. Understanding these culturally specific manifestations of gendered language practices becomes crucial for developing contextually appropriate interventions. Southeast Asian educational systems require nuanced analysis that considers both indigenous cultural frameworks and global educational trends, recognizing how local contexts shape the expression and impact of linguistic gender dynamics differently than in Western settings [4].

Indonesia's higher education system provides a unique analytical framework for examining gendered linguistic dynamics within academic contexts. As the world's fourth most populous nation with over 260 million inhabitants, Indonesia represents the largest Muslim-majority country globally, distinguished by complex cultural traditions governing gender roles and societal expectations [5–7]. The nation has demonstrated significant achievements in educational accessibility, with women currently comprising the majority of university students across multiple academic disciplines. This statistical milestone reflects substantial progress in removing formal barriers to higher education participation. However, this quantitative success in educational participation does not automatically guarantee qualitative equality in educational experiences or academic outcomes. Statistical representation fails to correlate directly with equitable treatment or meaningful inclusion within institutional structures and academic practices. The disconnect between numerical representation and experiential equality highlights the persistence of subtle discriminatory mechanisms that operate beyond formal admission policies. These mechanisms often manifest through linguistic practices, social expectations, and institutional cultures that continue to privilege certain groups while marginalizing others, despite apparent progress in gender representation.

English Education departments occupy a particularly intriguing position within Indonesia's educational landscape. As primary sites for language teacher preparation, these programs explicitly engage with communication theories, pedagogical methodologies, and comprehensive social justice frameworks. Students routinely encounter feminist pedagogical approaches, critical discourse analysis techniques, and multicultural education paradigms [7]. Paradoxically, these same academic environments may simultaneously harbor subtle forms of linguistic discrimination that fundamentally contradict their explicit commitments to equality and inclusion. This striking contradiction illuminates the complex tension existing between theoretical knowledge acquisition and practical implementation within educational settings. The phenomenon reveals how deeply embedded institutional cultures can perpetuate systemic inequalities despite progressive curricula and stated objectives explicitly promoting gender equity and social justice. Students may study theories of equality while experiencing discriminatory practices, creating cognitive dissonance between academic learning and lived experiences. This paradox demonstrates that formal education about equality principles, while necessary, proves insufficient for eliminating entrenched patterns of discrimination. The gap between theoretical understanding and practical application highlights the need for more comprehensive approaches to creating genuinely inclusive educational environments that align practice with progressive pedagogical principles.

Examining symbolic violence within linguistic prac-

tices transcends academic interest, addressing fundamental concerns regarding social justice and educational equity. Language functions as the primary medium through which social relationships are negotiated, identities constructed, and power exercised [8]. When specific groups encounter systematic constraints on their linguistic expression while others experience relative communicative freedom, the ramifications extend significantly beyond individual communication episodes. These restrictions encompass fundamental questions concerning agency, meaningful participation, and genuine belonging within educational communities. The consequences of linguistic marginalization affect students' academic engagement, professional development, and sense of institutional membership. Systematic exclusion from dominant discourse patterns creates barriers to full participation in academic life and limits opportunities for intellectual contribution and career advancement [8]. Understanding these dynamics becomes essential for creating truly inclusive educational environments. Recognizing how language operates as both a tool of empowerment and exclusion enables educators and administrators to develop more equitable practices that honor diverse communicative styles while maintaining academic rigor and professional standards.

Investigating symbolic violence within educational contexts assumes particular urgency considering universities' pivotal role in either reproducing or challenging broader social inequalities. Educational institutions function as critical socialization sites where future leaders, educators, and professionals cultivate their understanding of appropriate social relationships [7–9]. When these institutions inadvertently perpetuate gender-based linguistic restrictions, they risk reproducing inequality patterns that extend significantly beyond campus boundaries. The consequences ripple through society as graduates carry these normalized practices into their professional environments, potentially perpetuating discriminatory patterns in workplaces, schools, and community organizations. This multiplicative effect underscores the transformative potential of addressing symbolic violence within higher education. By creating more equitable linguistic environments, universities can interrupt cycles of the reproduction of inequality and instead become catalysts for broader social change [6–9].

This investigation addresses critical concerns by ex-amining English Education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar (Unismuh), a distinguished private Islamic university in South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This institutional setting offers an exceptionally rich research environment, uniquely combining established Islamic educational traditions with contemporary pedagogical methodologies. This convergence creates a complex academic atmosphere where traditional gender expectations intersect dynamically with modern educational practices. The university's English Education program attracts students from diverse backgrounds throughout the Indonesian archipelago, establishing a vibrant multilingual and multicultural learning environment where linguistic norms undergo continuous negotiation and contestation.

This investigation makes substantial contributions across multiple academic domains. Primarily, it strengthens the empirical foundation for understanding symbolic violence by delivering comprehensive ethnographic evidence from non-Western educational contexts, addressing significant gaps in predominantly Western-focused literature [10]. The research advances sociolinguistic theory by illuminating how gendered language norms operate within institutional environments that explicitly champion equality principles, revealing the persistence of discriminatory practices despite formal commitments. The study provides actionable insights for educational practitioners and administrators seeking to create genuinely inclusive learning environments through enhanced understanding of subtle linguistic mechanisms [11–17]. Furthermore, it enriches contemporary discussions about language, power, and social justice relationships in educational settings by offering culturally specific perspectives that challenge Western-centric theoretical frameworks. This work contributes to more globally representative scholarship by demonstrating how symbolic violence manifests within Indonesian higher education contexts, providing valuable comparative insights for international academic communities. The research establishes important precedents for future investigations into linguistic inequality across diverse cultural and institutional settings, ultimately supporting the development of more equitable educational practices worldwide.

2. Research Methods

This investigation employs a qualitative research design rooted in ethnographic principles and critical discourse analysis to examine symbolic violence manifestations within patriarchal language culture in Indonesian higher education contexts. The methodological approach was deliberately selected to capture subtle, often unconscious mechanisms through which gender-based linguistic discrimination operates within routine educational interactions [7,12]. This framework enables comprehensive analysis of complex social dynamics.

2.1. Research Setting and Context

This research was conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar (Unismuh), a distinguished private Islamic university situated in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The English Education Department served as the primary research site due to its distinctive position as an academic space where students explicitly engage with theoretical frameworks encompassing language, communication, and pedagogical methodologies while simultaneously navigating intricate social hierarchies and complex cultural expectations. The department annually attracts approximately 200 students representing diverse geographical origins and socioeconomic backgrounds throughout the Indonesian archipelago, establishing a remarkably rich multilingual and multicultural investigative environment. This demographic diversity creates natural opportunities for examining how varying cultural perspectives influence linguistic practices and gender dynamics within academic settings. The institutional context proves particularly valuable for research purposes, as it combines Islamic educational traditions with contemporary pedagogical approaches, generating unique tensions between traditional values and progressive educational frameworks. Students must negotiate between cultural expectations and academic requirements, making this environment ideal for studying symbolic violence manifestations through linguistic practices. The department's explicit focus on language education amplifies the significance of communication patterns and their underlying power dynamics.

2.2. Participant Selection and Characteristics

Participants were strategically selected through purposive sampling to ensure maximum variation in perspectives and experiences while maintaining focus on research objectives [13]. Primary participants comprised three individuals: two female students (designated S and R) and one male student (identified as H), all actively enrolled in the English Education program. Selection criteria encompassed several key requirements: active participation in student organizations dedicated to gender equality and social justice advocacy, demonstrated awareness of feminist issues through organizational involvement, particularly with Front Mahasiswa Kerakyatan (FMK) and Srikandi organizations, and genuine willingness to engage in reflective discussions regarding personal experiences with gendered language practices. Secondary participants included additional students who contributed valuable observational data and participated in informal conversations throughout the research duration. The researcher maintained comprehensive field notes meticulously documenting linguistic interactions across diverse educational contexts, including formal classroom discussions, informal peer conversations, and organizational meetings. This methodological approach enabled comprehensive data collection that captured both explicit articulations of gender-related experiences and subtle manifestations of symbolic violence through everyday linguistic practices. The combination of purposive sampling and ethnographic observation provided rich, contextually grounded insights into symbolic violence operations within the specific institutional environment.

2.3. Data Collection Procedures

Data collection utilized multiple methodological approaches to ensure triangulation and comprehensive understanding of the investigated phenomenon. Semi-structured interviews constituted the primary data source and were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and appropriate local languages to guarantee participant comfort and facilitate authentic expression. Interview protocols were systematically designed to explore participants' experiences with gendered language expectations, their comprehension of symbolic violence concepts, and their perceptions regarding linguistic freedom and restrictions within educational contexts [14]. Ethnographic observation complemented interview data by providing essential contextual understanding of how gendered language norms operated within natural-

istic settings. The researcher conducted systematic observations across diverse contexts, including formal classroom environments, informal peer interactions, student organization meetings, and various campus social spaces. Observational data specifically focused on documenting distinct patterns of language use, participant reactions to particular linguistic choices, and the subtle mechanisms through which gender expectations fundamentally shaped communicative practices. This methodological combination enabled comprehensive data capture that revealed both explicit participant articulations and implicit behavioral manifestations of symbolic violence. The triangulated approach strengthened research validity by providing multiple perspectives on the same phenomena, ensuring a more robust and nuanced understanding of symbolic violence operations through patriarchal language cultures within the institutional context.

2.4. Theoretical Framework and Analysis

This study primarily employs Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical frameworks of symbolic violence and habitus as analytical tools for understanding gender-based linguistic discrimination operations within educational settings [12,15]. Bourdieu's habitus concept, encompassing deeply embedded dispositions, preferences, and behavioral patterns that guide individual action, provides crucial insights into how gendered language expectations become naturalized and systematically reproduced through everyday practices. The analysis concentrated on identifying specific moments where these habituated responses became visible and examining their functional mechanisms in maintaining particular power relations. Data analysis followed an iterative process combining deductive and inductive methodological approaches. Initial coding procedures were guided by Bourdieu's core theoretical concepts, including symbolic violence, habitus, and cultural capital [16]. Subsequent analytical phases employed grounded theory techniques to identify emergent themes and patterns not adequately captured by existing theoretical frameworks. Throughout the analytical process, the researcher maintained comprehensive analytical memos documenting evolving interpretations and theoretical insights. This systematic approach enabled the identification of both theoretically predicted phenomena and unexpected patterns that emerged from

the data. The combination of established theoretical frameworks with grounded analysis techniques facilitated nuanced understanding of symbolic violence manifestations while remaining open to novel insights emerging from the specific cultural and institutional context.

2.5. Ethical Considerations and Validity

All research procedures obtained formal approval from the university's ethics review board, with participants providing comprehensive informed consent for interviews and observations. Pseudonyms and initials were consistently employed throughout the study to safeguard participant anonymity, while sensitive information received careful handling to prevent potential academic or social harm within the university community. Research validity was ensured through multiple strategic approaches, including prolonged engagement within the research setting, systematic triangulation of data sources and methodological approaches, member checking procedures with participants regarding analytical interpretations, and peer debriefing sessions with colleagues possessing familiarity with both the theoretical framework and cultural context. The researcher's position as an outsider to the immediate educational community provided distinct analytical advantages through enhanced objectivity and critical distance, while simultaneously requiring meticulous attention to cultural nuances and local meanings. This positioning necessitated continuous reflexivity regarding potential interpretive biases and cultural assumptions. Additional validity measures included maintaining detailed reflexive journals documenting researcher positionality, regular consultation with local cultural experts, and systematic verification of interpretations through multiple data sources. These comprehensive validity strategies strengthened research credibility while ensuring ethical protection of all participants throughout the investigation process, maintaining both academic rigor and participant welfare.

3. Results and Discussion

The analysis reveals three distinct yet interconnected dimensions of symbolic violence operating through patriarchal language culture within Unismuh Makassar's English Education Department. These manifestations demon-

strate how apparently neutral linguistic practices function to maintain gender hierarchies while seeming natural and inevitable to participants [11,15–17]. Each dimension exposes systematic patterns of linguistic discrimination embedded within routine academic interactions that shape daily educational experiences.

The first dimension encompasses differential access to linguistic resources, where specific vocabulary, speaking styles, and communicative approaches become implicitly reserved for particular gender groups. This mechanism creates invisible barriers that systematically limit expressive possibilities while maintaining superficial appearances of equal opportunity for all students. The second dimension involves gendered expectations concerning communication styles, particularly regarding politeness, formality, and appropriateness standards. These expectations function as unwritten institutional rules that constrain authentic self-expression and actively reinforce traditional gender roles within academic discourse environments. The third dimension centers on unequal evaluative standards for emotional expression and authenticity, where identical communicative behaviors receive differential assessment based solely on the speaker's gender identity. This creates persistent double standards that systematically disadvantage certain demographic groups while privileging others. Together, these three interconnected dimensions establish a comprehensive system of linguistic inequality that operates subtly yet pervasively throughout educational environments. This system affects student participation patterns, academic engagement levels, and professional development opportunities in ways that frequently remain invisible to both participants and institutional observers, perpetuating gender-based discrimination through seemingly neutral linguistic practices.

The interconnected nature of these dimensions creates a comprehensive system of inequality that operates subtly yet pervasively throughout educational environments. This system affects student participation levels, academic engagement patterns, and professional development opportunities in ways that often remain invisible to both participants and institutional observers. The cumulative effect transcends individual interactions, shaping broader educational experiences and career trajectories while maintaining plausible deniability about discriminatory intent or impact within the institutional structure.

3.1. Restricted Linguistic Access: The Politics of Profanity

The most explicit form of symbolic violence identified in this study involves differential access to particular vocabulary items, especially profane or emotionally charged language. The analysis reveals that certain terms carry distinctly gendered expectations regarding appropriate usage, with male students enjoying significantly greater linguistic freedom than their female counterparts [17–22]. The term "*telaso*" (referring to male genitalia) emerged as a paradigmatic example of this dynamic. Male participants described using this term freely in peer interactions, both as an expression of frustration and as a form of casual address among friends. As participant H explained, "dirty words like '*telaso*' are commonplace when spoken by men, and these words are often used as a joke or when we meet with peers. Sometimes we don't call someone by their name but by the word '*telaso*'". This casual appropriation of vulgar language serves multiple social functions for male students: it establishes in-group solidarity, demonstrates emotional authenticity, and asserts a form of linguistic privilege that explicitly excludes female participants.

Female students, conversely, encounter substantial social sanctions for employing identical language. When women utilize terms like "telaso", they receive labels such as "impudent, unethical, not a good woman," according to participant testimony. This differential treatment demonstrates how linguistic norms function as sophisticated mechanisms of social control, systematically restricting women's expressive possibilities while preserving male privilege in emotional and social expression [21–23]. Similar discriminatory patterns emerge with other vulgar terminology, including "sundala" (meaning illegitimate child, prostitute, or bitch in Makassar language). Participant S observed that "the word 'sundala' is more often spoken by men in the English Education, even men often use the language freely, both women and men, when they are emotional. Meanwhile, women are not able to say 'sundala', they just seem like a naughty girl, rude-mouthd." This observation illuminates how symbolic violence operates not through absolute prohibition but through differential social consequences that effectively constrain women's linguistic

choices. The mechanism maintains gender hierarchies by creating unequal standards for identical communicative behaviors, forcing women to navigate between authentic expression and social acceptability while men enjoy relative linguistic freedom.

The implications of these restrictions extend beyond individual communication events to encompass broader questions of agency and authenticity. When women are systematically excluded from particular forms of emotional expression, they face a double bind: either conform to restrictive feminine ideals and sacrifice authentic self-expression, or risk social sanctions for violating gendered expectations. This dynamic exemplifies Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, as women participate in their own linguistic subordination by internalizing and reproducing standards that systematically disadvantage them.

3.2. Gendered Politeness and the Performance of Femininity

A second dimension of symbolic violence operates through differential expectations regarding politeness and formality in address forms. The analysis reveals how seemingly neutral choices between pronouns and address forms carry heavy gendered implications within the educational context [7,24]. The distinction between "*kau*" (you, informal/ potentially rude) and "*kita*" (we, inclusive and polite) illustrates this dynamic clearly. Male students regularly employ "*kau*" in peer interactions without social consequence, reflecting what participants describe as the "nature of male language", which"tends to be free, has no rules, and does not pay too much attention to politeness norms." Female students, however, face pressure to consistently employ more formal and inclusive language patterns, even in informal peer interactions. Participant R explained this differential standard: "when women use your language, they seem rude; in general, women use the word we instead of you." This expectation requires women to constantly monitor and modify their linguistic choices to maintain social acceptability, creating additional cognitive and emotional labor not required of male peers. The preference for inclusive "we" over direct "you" forces women to adopt deferential speaking positions that minimize direct assertion and maintain harmony even at the cost of clarity or efficiency.

This dynamic reveals how symbolic violence operates

through the naturalization of gender-differentiated communication styles. Rather than recognizing these patterns as socially constructed and potentially restrictive, participants tend to interpret them as reflecting essential differences between men and women. Female students internalize expectations for "soft language" as part of maintaining their identity as "soft women," demonstrating how symbolic violence functions through the apparent consent of those it disadvantages [9,23–26]. The performance of feminine politeness extends beyond individual interactions to shape broader patterns of participation and voice within educational settings. When women consistently adopt deferential linguistic positions, they may find themselves excluded from more assertive forms of academic discourse, potentially limiting their effectiveness as future educators and leaders.

3.3. Emotional Expression and the Gendering of Authenticity

The third dimension of symbolic violence involves differential standards governing emotional expression and authenticity within academic environments. The analysis reveals how expressions of anger, frustration, and disappointment are subject to gendered interpretations that privilege male emotional directness while pathologizing similar expressions from women [27]. This creates fundamental inequalities in students' ability to communicate their internal emotional states authentically. Participant S described using harsh language during emotional moments: "When I am emotional, I say rude words like dogs, *sundala*, *telaso* because I can't control them. However, I often use harsh words jokingly to lighten a tense atmosphere." Despite the communicative intent, she noted that identical language carries different meanings when used by women: "It's different when I say harsh words when I meet my male friend, even though it's meant to be a joke, so he thinks it's disrespectful."

This differential interpretation establishes fundamental inequality in authentic communication capabilities within academic environments. While male emotional expression receives interpretation as natural and acceptable behavior, female emotional expression encounters intensive scrutiny and potential reinterpretation as inappropriate or disrespectful conduct. This dynamic compels women to

navigate between emotional authenticity and social acceptability, creating additional psychological burden while potentially limiting their capacity to develop genuine peer relationships [9,28]. The analysis demonstrates how disappointment and frustration become particularly problematic for female students navigating academic spaces. When women express negative emotions through harsh language, they risk immediate social sanctions alongside longer-term reputational damage and relationship deterioration. This phenomenon creates a destructive cycle wherein women systematically learn to suppress or redirect emotional expression in ways that significantly constrain their psychological well-being and social development. Consequently, this pattern perpetuates gender-based inequality throughout educational environments by establishing unequal communicative standards. Women must constantly self-monitor their emotional expression while men enjoy relative freedom, creating disparate educational experiences that extend beyond academic achievement to encompass fundamental aspects of social and psychological development within institutional settings.

3.4. Institutional Implications and Broader Patterns

These three dimensions of symbolic violence operate synergistically, establishing a sophisticated system of linguistic inequality within educational environments. The cumulative impact extends beyond individual communication episodes, fundamentally shaping broader participation patterns, leadership development trajectories, and professional advancement opportunities. Female students who consistently modify their linguistic choices to avoid social sanctions frequently find themselves systematically excluded from specific forms of peer bonding, informal networking opportunities, and assertive academic discourse [29]. The institutional implications prove particularly concerning given English Education programs' crucial role in preparing future educators and educational leaders. When female students experience systematic linguistic restrictions throughout their academic journey, they become significantly less likely to challenge similar discriminatory patterns within their future classrooms or professional environments. This phenomenon creates a troubling reproductive cycle where symbolic violence in higher education

directly contributes to its perpetuation across broader educational systems.

Moreover, these restrictions' subtle nature renders them exceptionally resistant to institutional intervention strategies. Unlike overt discrimination forms that are addressable through formal policies and procedures, symbolic violence operates through seemingly voluntary choices and natural preferences that are difficult to identify and systematically challenge [9,22]. This inherent invisibility enables the system's persistence even within educational contexts explicitly committed to gender equality and social justice principles. The results reveal significant connections between local cultural norms and broader gender inequality patterns. While specific linguistic forms and expectations identified reflect South Sulawesi's particular cultural context and Indonesian higher education dynamics, underlying symbolic violence mechanisms appear to operate across diverse cultural settings [2,7–9,30]. This suggests that addressing linguistic inequality requires simultaneous attention to local cultural specificities and broader structural patterns of gender-based oppression.

4. Conclusions

This investigation provides compelling evidence for symbolic violence operations through patriarchal language culture within Indonesian higher education contexts, specifically demonstrating how ostensibly neutral linguistic practices maintain gender hierarchies while appearing natural and inevitable. The research reveals three primary mechanisms through which symbolic violence operates: differential access to specific vocabulary items, gendered expectations regarding politeness and formality standards, and unequal criteria for emotional expression and authenticity. This study significantly advances understanding of how power functions through everyday linguistic practices in educational environments. By examining students possessing explicit theoretical knowledge of gender equality, who nevertheless continue to experience and perpetuate linguistic discrimination, the investigation illuminates symbolic violence's subtle and pervasive nature as conceptualized by Pierre Bourdieu [1]. The results demonstrate that formal gender equality education, while essential, proves insufficient for eliminating deeply embedded linguistic

inequality patterns operating below conscious awareness thresholds. This reveals the sophisticated mechanisms through which symbolic violence persists despite institutional commitments to equality and social justice.

The research highlights the urgent need for more comprehensive approaches to addressing linguistic discrimination in educational settings. Understanding these dynamics becomes crucial for developing transformative pedagogical strategies that move beyond theoretical knowledge transmission to actively challenge and disrupt embedded patterns of symbolic violence within academic environments. The institutional implications of these results are particularly significant given the role of English Education programs in preparing future teachers and educational leaders. When female students experience systematic linguistic restrictions during their own education, they may be less equipped to recognize and challenge similar patterns in their future professional contexts. This creates a potential cycle of reproduction where symbolic violence in higher education contributes to its perpetuation throughout the broader educational system[5].

The study also reveals important tensions between modernizing educational aspirations and traditional cultural norms. While Indonesian higher education institutions formally embrace principles of gender equality and inclusive education, the persistence of patriarchal language practices suggests that institutional change requires more than policy modification to encompass deep cultural transformation [29]. The results indicate that addressing symbolic violence requires sustained attention to the subtle ways in which gender hierarchies are reproduced through everyday interactions and seemingly neutral institutional practices. From a theoretical perspective, this research extends Bourdieu's framework of symbolic violence to encompass non-Western educational contexts while demonstrating its continued relevance for understanding contemporary forms of gender-based oppression. The analysis reveals how symbolic violence operates not through absolute prohibition but through differential social consequences that effectively limit women's expressive possibilities while maintaining the appearance of choice and freedom.

The study's focus on linguistic practices provides important insights into the mechanisms through which broader social inequalities are reproduced and legitimized. Language serves as both a site and a tool of power relations, making linguistic analysis crucial for understanding how gender hierarchies persist even within contexts explicitly committed to equality. The results suggest that achieving genuine gender equality in educational settings requires attention to the subtle linguistic dynamics that shape daily interactions and social relationships [4]. Looking forward, this research opens several important avenues for future investigation and intervention. Scholars should continue to examine how symbolic violence operates across diverse cultural and institutional contexts, paying particular attention to the intersection of local cultural norms with broader patterns of gender inequality. Educational practitioners and administrators need to develop more sophisticated approaches to recognizing and addressing linguistic discrimination that operates below the threshold of formal policies and procedures [10]. The development of critical linguistic awareness among both students and faculty emerges as a crucial priority for creating more equitable educational environments. This requires moving beyond simple awareness of gender bias to encompass deeper understanding of how language functions as a mechanism of social control and inequality. Such awareness must be integrated throughout educational curricula rather than confined to specialized gender studies courses.

Finally, this study underscores the importance of ongoing vigilance regarding the subtle ways in which educational institutions may inadvertently perpetuate the very inequalities they formally oppose. Achieving genuine educational equity requires sustained attention to the complex intersection of language, culture, and power that shapes daily educational experiences. Only through such comprehensive approaches can educational institutions fulfill their potential as sites of social transformation rather than the reproduction of existing inequalities.

Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the conception, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this study. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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