

# Gender in Power: Breaking Boundaries on Little Mix's "Power"

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## ABSTRACT

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This study uses Sara Mills' feminist stylistics theoretical framework to analyze how Little Mix's song "Power" actively challenges traditional gender norms through language. The main goal is to examine how this song challenge gender stereotypes by portraying women as strong and in charge rather than just calling for equality or opposing oppression. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study examines song lyrics at three levels: words, phrases/sentences, and discourse in accordance with Sara Mills' theoretical framework (1995). The findings of this study prove that Little Mix's power song is full of lyrics that actively break traditional gender stereotypes, affirming that women can hold and have control, not as a concession from men, but as an inherent right. The language used in the song successfully challenges patriarchal roles, reinforcing the idea that power is not only limited to masculine men but is also accessible to women. The song is a true feminist anthem.

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## I. Introduction

Gender roles are established by societal conventions defining how men and women should interact. Men have traditionally been associated with leadership, authority, and decision-making, whilst women are frequently expected to provide loving and supportive responsibilities. These expectations, formed by historical, cultural, and societal pressures, generate power disparities that limit opportunities, particularly for women. Gender roles are socially created patterns that shape behaviors, attitudes, and expectations based on one's perceived gender. They impact people's identities and social relationships, frequently reinforcing stereotypes that relate masculinity to power and dominance, and femininity to nurturing and submission. Gender roles, however, are not set; they evolve and are continually challenged by groups fighting for equality and empowerment [1]. Breaking gender norms is an important step toward resolving these limits, but true progress requires breaking the broader cultural boundaries that support them.

Music is one of the most powerful instruments for challenging existing norms, particularly in talks about gender and empowerment. As a universal language, music not only reflects but also builds social beliefs, particularly those concerning gender roles. Song lyrics, in particular allow musicians to convey, reinforce, or question conventional assumptions about gender. Using metaphor, narrative, and emotive language, musicians can highlight injustices, attack prejudices, and persuade listeners to question established gender norms. Several musicians employ metaphors in their compositions to create an aesthetic function in the lyrics. A competent composer conveys emotions and instills moral ideals in their songs [2]. For example, "Power" by Little Mix is more than just a song about gender roles; it aggressively pushes limits by redefining power itself. Rather than advocating for equality, the song reshapes our perceptions of strength, control, and agency, demonstrating that power is not inherently connected with masculinity. Power's powerful lyrics and passionate delivery claim that women actively shifting traditional power systems on their terms, rather than simply battling for a place within them.

Gender roles influence various aspects of life, women in leadership often face resistance because their authority disrupts long-standing boundaries that associate power with men. The act of breaking gender roles involves challenging stereotypes, but breaking boundaries goes even further—it means transcending traditional definitions of power and rejecting the idea that leadership, dominance, and control belong to any specific gender. Power exemplifies this shift by not only opposing gender norms but also reconstructing power dynamics to include female agency as a central force. The ongoing discussion of gender roles inevitably leads to the concept of feminism, which evolves in response to the constraints imposed by traditional societal expectations. Feminism is the feminist movement, which promotes gender equality in all spheres of life—politics, economics, education, and social and organized activities that defend women's rights and interests—as well as the realization those women are naturally self-sufficient and independent individuals [3].

Stylistics is an approach to interpreting texts that focuses on language, examining linguistic forms, patterns, and structures to understand meaning and artistic effects [4]. While often applied to literature, it can also analyze other forms of discourse like journalism, advertising, and casual conversation. Linguistic stylistics does not only see the use of linguistic practices in terms of their role in an analytical "toolkit," but also prioritizes the linguistic over the literary [5]. A branch of this field, feminist stylistics, combines feminist theory and linguistic analysis to uncover gender bias and power dynamics in language. Sara Mills (1995) emphasizes that feminist stylistics goes beyond identifying sexism, exploring broader social and cultural contexts that shape language use. It investigates elements such as point of view, agency, and narrative structure to reveal how language can reinforce unequal gender relations, empowering readers to critique and challenge oppressive narratives in both literary and non-literary texts [6]. According to Mills (2006), assessing the meanings or concepts associated with gender requires more than just examining various textual elements; we also need to take readers' reactions or processing of the meaning into account [7].

In this case, the researchers tried to find out how breaking gender roles are depicted in a song called Power. Power is a song by a British girl group included in their fourth album *Glory Days* (2016). This song has been listened to 304 million times on Spotify. Little Mix itself is famous for its songs that often raise the theme of female empowerment, independence, friendship, and self-love, which makes them one of the most influential modern girl groups in terms of breaking gender roles and spreading the message of feminism. Likewise with the song Power. This song is filled with energy with lyrics that highlight the strength and confidence of women both literally and figuratively. "Power" also discusses how a woman can take control of her own life and is not afraid to show her strength in relationships or life in general. Since its release, this song has been considered a girl power anthem. Even in 2018, this song was chosen as the official theme song for WWE's first Women's Royal Rumble. Understanding how popular music, particularly songs like "Power," might affect listeners' views of gender roles and empowerment will be severely lacking. Thus, it is crucial to carry out this research in order to support further initiatives for gender equality and empowerment as well as to draw attention to the wider social influence of music.

Recent studies have analyzed songs through a feminist stylistics' lens, focusing on gender roles and empowerment. Tarigan et al. (2023) examined Bella Poarch's *Build a Bitch*, highlighting its criticism of women's objectification and unrealistic beauty standards [8]. Caroline et al. (2023) explored Taylor Swift's *The Man*, revealing its critique of gender inequality and double standards in the professional world [9]. Neisya et al. (2023) analyzed Katy Perry's *Roar*, uncovering themes of empowerment and overcoming oppression [10]. Kurniawati (2021) analyzed Beyoncé's *Run the World (Girls)*, highlighting the song's use of aggressive terms to subvert patriarchal conventions [11]. The stereotypes of women in the lyrics of Korean Girl Group songs were analyzed by Muhammad et al. (2020), who found that people often take gender issues for granted [12]. Collectively, these studies advance our knowledge of how popular music expresses feminist ideas and questions established gender norms. However, the researcher realized that none of them specifically discussed women as individuals who hold power in relationships and society. With a feminist language style, this study will find and highlight how the lyrics in the song actively

characterize the breaking boundaries between women and men to emphasize that women can also hold power, not only demanding equality or fighting oppression.

## II. Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method. Although Creswell (2013) classifies five major qualitative approaches—narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study—he also acknowledges the existence of other qualitative strategies that do not fit neatly within these categories [13]. Specifically, he refers to Merriam (2009), who introduces the concept of a basic qualitative study, which focuses on understanding how individuals interpret their experiences and construct meaning in their lives [14]. Descriptive qualitative research, as such, seeks to provide a rich, comprehensive summary of events or phenomena in everyday terms without extensive theoretical or interpretive frameworks. This approach is appropriate for studies that aim to stay close to the data and prioritize participants' voices and perspectives.

Little Mix's song "Power" represents a cultural text that reflects current feminist discourse in popular music, providing the research environment for this study. The song is a well-known anthem of female empowerment that has a big impact on how people view gender roles and power dynamics in the media and popular culture. The analysis explores how language both creates and challenges conventional gender standards, concentrating just on the song's lyrics as a linguistic artifact. This background places the research in the larger discussions surrounding female representation in the media and the function of music as an expression for social criticism and transformation. The lyrics to Little Mix's song "Power" serve as the study's primary source of data. To ensure accuracy, the words were cross-checked with the audio recording after being taken from the songwriters' official transcript. Since the analysis only looks at linguistic traits and how they convey gender roles, no other sources were used. Sara Mills' feminist stylistics framework (1995) is used to evaluate language choices at three levels: words, phrases/sentences, and discourse.

The limitations of this study must be considered. First, this study only examines the lyrics of the song Power using the Feminist Stylistics theory developed by Sara Mills. The analysis is limited to the linguistic aspects and gender representation in the lyrics. Due to these limitations, the scope of the study is more limited to seeing the musical or visual aspects that can help us understand the feminist message in the song. Second, this study uses descriptive qualitative data on only one song, "Power" by Little Mix, which defies conventional gender norms with a bold celebration of female strength and independence through powerful lyrics and upbeat music. Moreover, unlike many pop songs that still reproduce gender stereotypes, "Power" explicitly challenges patriarchal power relations through bold diction and sentence structures that place women as active subjects. Lyrics such as "I got the power" make direct claims of agency with the vocal blend between members showing the diversity of equal female voices in the narrative.

Therefore, the results of the analysis cannot be generalized to other songs with the same theme. In addition, the researchers' perspective greatly influences the resulting interpretation; this perspective may differ from other listeners or different cultural contexts. It is hoped that the results of this study will be the basis for further research that addresses gender representation in popular music and various other aspects of the song Power by considering these limitations.

## III. Results and Discussion

Little Mix's "Power" song lyrics:

- [1] Hold up, no, you didn't bow, bow
- [2] I ain't the chick to walk behind you 'round town
- [3] Just 'cause you're packin', packin', whoop, down south
- [4] That don't mean I'm ever gonna take it lying down, baby, oh
- [5] I'm a machine when I do it
- [6] I'll be catching fire, gasoline when I do it (uh-huh)

- [7] Just 'cause you're packin', packin', whoop, down south  
[8] That don't mean I'm ever gonna take it lying down, baby  
[9] You're the man, but I got the, I got the, I got the power  
[10] You make rain, but I'll make it, I'll make it, I'll make it shower  
[11] You should know, I'm the one who's in control  
[12] I'll let you come take the wheel, 'long as you don't forget  
[13] Who got the power?  
[14] I got the-, I got the power  
[15] I got the-, I got the power  
[16] I got the-, I got the power  
[17] Hold up!  
[18] My turn  
[19] I make this look easy, tick-tick, boom, like gasoline-y  
[20] Yeah, they call me Lamborghini, 'cause I know just what I'm worth  
[21] Z-z-z-zero to a hundred, b-b-body make 'em stutter  
[22] Start my engine, push the button, 'cause I'm gon' be coming first  
[23] Yeah, I'm a machine when I do it  
[24] I'll be catching fire, gasoline when I do it  
[25] Just 'cause you're packin', packin', whoop, down south  
[26] That don't mean I'm ever gonna take it lying down, baby  
[27] You're the man, but I got the, I got the, I got the power  
[28] You make rain, but I'll make it, I'll make it, I'll make it shower  
[29] You should know, I'm the one who's in control  
[30] I'll let you come take the wheel, 'long as you don't forget, yeah, yeah  
[31] Who got the power?  
[32] I got the-, I got the power  
[33] I got the-, I got the power  
[34] I got the-, I got the power  
[35] I got the-  
[36] Who got the power?  
[37] I got the-, I got the power  
[38] I got the-, I got the power  
[39] I got the-, I got the power  
[40] I got the-  
[41] Who got the power?  
[42] Don't be fooled, I got you wrapped up  
[43] In the arms of an animal  
[44] Got you thinking that I'm all innocent  
[45] But wait 'til I get you home  
[46] If you don't, baby, you should know  
[47] I'm the one who's in control  
[48] Motorbike, motorbike, motorbike, motorbike  
[49] Bike, bike, bike, bike  
[50] Bike, bike, bike, bike, bike, bike, whoop!  
[51] You're the man (you're the man, you're the man)  
[52] But I got the, I got the, I got the power  
[53] You make rain (rain)  
[54] But I'll make it, I'll make it, I'll make it shower (I'll make it shower)  
[55] You should know, I'm the one who's in control (I'm in control now)  
[56] I'll let you come take the wheel, 'long as you don't forget (as long as you don't forget)

- [57] You're the man (yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah)  
 [58] But I got the (whoa!), I got the, I got the power (whoa, oh)  
 [59] You make rain, but I'll make it, I'll make it, I'll make it shower (you make it rain, you make it rain)  
 [60] You should know, I'm the one who's in control  
 [61] I'll let you come take the wheel, 'long as you don't forget (take the wheel, you don't forget)  
 [62] I got the-, I got the power  
 [63] (Whoa-oh) I got the-, I got the power  
 [64] (Whoa-oh) I got the-, I got the power  
 [65] 'Cause I got the, I got the, I got the power  
 [66] Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, oh-whoa  
 [67] Baby, don't forget, I got the power, yeah  
 [68] The power, yeah, yeah-eh  
 [69] Motorbike, motorbike, motorbike, motorbike  
 [70] Bike, bike, bike, bike  
 [71] Bike, bike, bike, bike, bike, bike, whoop!

**Table 1**  
**The findings of the research**

Level	Aspects	Lyrics
Word-Level	Generic Pronouns	[9] " <b>You're the man, but I got the power</b> "
	Generic Nouns	[5], [23] I'm a <b>machine</b> when I do it [4], [26] That don't mean I'm ever gonna take it lying down, <b>baby</b> , oh [20] Yeah, they call me <b>Lamborghini</b> , 'cause I know just what I'm worth
Phrase-Level	Metaphor	[6], [24] I'll be <b>catching fire, gasoline</b> when I do it (uh-huh) [10], [28] You <b>make rain</b> , but I'll make it, I'll make it, I'll <b>make it shower</b> [20] Yeah, they <b>call me Lamborghini</b> , 'cause I know just what I'm worth [19] I make this look easy, tick-tick, boom, <b>like gasoline-y</b>
	Transitivity Choice (Material Process)	[12] <b>I'll let you come take the wheel</b> , 'long as you don't forget [22] <b>Start my engine, push the button</b> , 'cause I'm gon' <b>be coming first</b>
	Transitivity Choice (Mental Process)	[11] <b>You should know</b> , I'm the one who's in control [44] <b>Got you thinking</b> that I'm all innocent

		[42] <b>Don't be fooled</b> , I got you wrapped up
	Transitivity Choice (Relational Process)	[14] I got the-, I got the <b>power</b> [43] In the <b>arms of an animal</b>
Discourse-Level	Characterization	[9] You're the man, but I got the, I got the, I got the power [5], [23] I'm a machine when I do it [20] Yeah, they call me Lamborghini, 'cause I know just what I'm worth
	Focalization	[13] Who got the power? [14] I got the-, I got the power [30] I'll let you come take the wheel, 'long as you don't forget, yeah, yeah

### Analysis at Level of Word

In her theoretical framework, Sara Mills' concept of word-level analysis focuses on how individual words have ideological weight, either supporting or contradicting social norms, especially those related to gender. Words have meanings and connotations that are shaped by their historical and cultural settings; they are not neutral. Mills contends that gendered assumptions mark certain words in feminist linguistic analysis, emphasizing that by examining words both in isolation and in their usage, we can uncover how language either reinforces power imbalances or challenges dominant ideologies [6]. She aligns with the perspective that language shapes our perception and, as a result, advocates for changing entrenched gender-biased perceptions through critical linguistic analysis, beginning with a close examination of words themselves [15].

#### a) Generic Pronouns

A generic pronoun is a noun that can be used for both masculine and feminine objects, but it is typically employed discriminatorily to refer to those who work in stereotypically male and female occupations [16]. Nevertheless, by recognizing and addressing biases in generic pronouns, language can become a tool to break down gender stereotypes rather than reinforce them. In this section, the researcher will show that in the lyrics of Little Mix's Power, the generic pronouns used challenge social perceptions of gender itself.

[9] "*You're the **man**, but **I** got the **power***"

At the word level, the phrase "*You're the man, but I got the power*" juxtaposes two key gender terms: **man** and **power**. The use of "man" here symbolizes traditional masculinity, which aligns with historical notions that associate men with dominance, authority, and control. However, the phrase immediately subverts these expectations with the contrasting statement, "*but I got the power.*" The use of **but** signals opposition, disrupting the conventional assumption that power naturally belongs to men.

Thereafter, the word **power** takes on strong connotations of leadership and influence, which are traditionally associated with masculinity. By affirming women's possession of power, the song's lyrics challenge the patriarchal narrative that men are inherently in control. This is a linguistic act of reclaiming power and redefining agency within gender dynamics.

Furthermore, the line "*You're the man*" uses the direct address **you**, reinforcing the presence of a male figure who is expected to embody authority. However, the phrase does not allow this authority to remain unchallenged. By following with "*but I got the power,*" the singer (who is female) actively disrupts the expectation that power belongs exclusively to men.



From a feminist linguistic perspective, this challenge common notions of masculinity, where terms like **man** and male pronouns are often the default references to power and leadership. Instead, the song's lyrics affirm women's autonomy, suggesting a redistribution of power rather than a passive acceptance of male dominance.

Through Mills' framework, we see that the song's lyrics engage in subverting traditional gender roles by separating power from masculinity. Historically, power structures have positioned men as dominant and women as submissive. However, in Little Mix's *Power*, the singer does not deny the existence of male authority ("*You're the man*") but instead redefines power as something that women can have and control. This challenges traditional stereotypes of passive femininity and reinforces the image of women as independent and powerful.

#### b) Generic Nouns

Nouns that are traditionally regarded as neutral but frequently have implicit gendered connections based on social standards are referred to as generic nouns in Sara Mills' theoretical framework [17]. For example, the terms "doctor" and "engineer" are frequently thought of as referring to men, while "secretary" and "nurse" are usually associated with women. This illustrates how language can subtly maintain traditional gender roles by encapsulating social norms in terms that appear neutral. In order to ensure that power and agency are not exclusively associated with masculinity, feminist linguistic analysis aims to break down gendered language structures and advance gender inclusivity.

[5], [23] *I'm a **machine** when I do it*

Despite having any inherent gender, the neutral noun **machine** is frequently associated with masculine-coded like **strength, power, endurance**—qualities traditionally linked to male identity in patriarchal societies. Mills' theory demonstrates how women's usage of this phrase might challenge norms by distancing resilience and power from masculine identity. Here, the speaker asserts that women can be just as strong and efficient as males, reclaiming a term that has historically been associated with men. This lyric challenges the social norm that only men possess strength and stamina. The singer declares with confidence that women is as strong, capable, and unstoppable as any man by declaring, "*I'm a machine when I do it*".

[4], [26] *That don't mean I'm ever gonna take it lying down, baby, oh*

Despite **baby** is a neutral term that can be used to describe anyone, its meanings and usage in various circumstances can be gendered. **Baby** is frequently used as a term of affection, particularly in romantic relationships. However, men commonly utilize it to diminish or infantilize women in patriarchal discourse, which creates a power imbalance where women are seen as weak, reliant, or in need of protection. This usage of the word **baby** conforms to traditional gender norms that link women to passivity, emotionality, and fragility. However, in this lyric, the singer takes control of the conversation and tone, taking back the term instead of being subjected to it. Here, the singer confidently uses the word **baby** while rejecting submission ("*That don't mean I'm ever gonna take it lying down*"), opposing to man using it to show dominance over a woman. While still using a term that is frequently associated with emotional intimacy, this reverses the conventional power dynamic and demonstrates the singer's strength and independence.

[20] *Yeah, they call me Lamborghini, 'cause I know just what I'm worth*

The noun **Lamborghini** is significant because it represents exclusivity, power, speed, and luxury—qualities that are typically associated with men. The marketing of high-performance sports cars, particularly those from Lamborghini and other companies, frequently targets towards men, which reinforces the association between masculine power, wealth, and prestige. The singer challenges these masculine-coded connotations by claiming this identity ("*They call me Lamborghini*"), redefining value and power in a feminine context. Since it challenges the concept that riches, power, and self-assurance are essentially masculine characteristics, this lyric has a direct connection to breaking gender roles. By adopting a sign of wealth and high performance that are

typically associated with men—the singer makes the claim that women also have worth power, ambition, and strength.

### Analysis at the Level of Phrase

This level shows the use of language beyond the word level. Phrase categories include transitivity, ready-made phrases, metaphors, jokes, and humor. Phrases can be divided into two categories in the lyrics of Little Mix's song "Power": metaphor and transitivity.

#### a) Metaphor

People think of metaphor as a rhetorical expression and a poetic imagination device that is associated with extraordinary language rather than ordinary language [18]. Mills (1995) examines how metaphors can reveal and reinforce gender discrimination in texts. She looks at how some metaphorical choices can reveal a gender-biased worldview, and how feminist stylistic analysis can uncover and challenge these biases [6]. Breaking Boundaries is discussed in Little Mix's song "Power", which uses a lot of metaphors. The lyrics include the following metaphor:

[6], [24] *"I'll be **catching fire, gasoline** when I do it"*

The metaphors of "catching fire" and "gasoline" represent uncontrollable intensity and energy, presenting the speaker as a natural force. It challenges the idea that women are weak or docile by expressing female strength and passion.

[10], [28] *"You **make rain**, but I'll **make it shower**"*

This difference between "make rain" and "make it shower" represents conflicting power dynamics, suggesting that although the man may have a major influence, the woman can intensify and manage it.

[20] *"Yeah, they **call me Lamborghini**, 'cause I know just what I'm worth"*

By comparing herself to a Lamborghini, a high-end, high-performance vehicle, she challenges social conventions that frequently undervalue women's worth and stresses confidence, value, and personal power.

[9] *"I make this look easy, tick-tick, boom, **like gasoline-y**"*

This line employs explosive imagery to symbolize strength and passion, qualities that are frequently associated with men. By demonstrating her might and authority, she confronts the notion of women as passive by comparing herself to a gasoline.

#### b) Transitivity Choice

Transitivity choice focuses on the representation of people as agents—those who act—and as affected—those who are impacted by the activities of others. It is easy to relate the idea that language and beliefs are related to how actions are expressed in language and how this influences our perception of the world [19]. The authors discovered three different kinds of transitivity processes in the song: material, mental and relation.

##### 1. Material Process

Material processes are "doing" processes. They convey the idea that one object "does" something, which could be done "to" another thing. There must always be a doing (process) and a doer (participant) in clauses involving a material process. These are some material processes found in the song lyrics:

[12] *"I'll let you come **take the wheel**, 'long as you don't forget"*

In "I'll let you" indicates that the woman enables or allows the man to perform an action but still holds power by deciding permit the action. While "take the wheel" symbolizing leadership or decision-making as it signifies an action of acquiring control.

[22] *"**Start my engine, push the button**, 'cause I'm gon' be coming first"*

Since "start" refers to a physical action—turning on the engine— it serves as a material process in this context. This phrase reinforces notions of control and preparation by implying starting movement or getting ready for action. The "push" implies triggering or activating something which could



represent taking control. In “be coming first” conveys the determination and competition, emphasizing the woman’s intent to win or succeed.

## 2. *Mental Process*

Feeling, thinking, and perceiving are all examples of sensations that are mental processes [18]. The participants in a mental process are the phenomena and the senser. A conscious being that thinks, feels, or observes is said to have senses. These are some mental processes found in the song lyrics:

[11] *“You should know, I’m the one who’s in control”*

This phrase reinforces the woman’s dominance, positioning herself as the one possessing knowledge and authority while the man is instructed to acknowledge it. The use of “should” affirm the woman’s confidence that the man must recognize her authority.

[44] *“Got you thinking that I’m all innocent”*

The use “Got you thinking” positions the woman as the one who control over how she is perceived, rather than being passively defined by societal norms. This act of reclaiming perception and actively shaping identity disrupts the traditional gender boundaries.

[42] *“Don’t be fooled, I got you wrapped up”*

The command “Don’t be fooled” asserts authority, directly instructing the man not to fall for false impression and implies that the woman holds power over man.

## 3. *Relational Process*

The relational process involves the use of the verbs "being" and "having" to determine the connections between various aspects of experience. The "carriers," which are primarily nouns or noun phrases and "attributes," and occasionally "identified" and "identifier," are the players in this process [20]. These are two relational processes found in the song lyrics:

[14] *“I got the-, I got the power”*

In “got the power” represents that the woman possesses and controls power. It emphasizing ownership and dominance by asserting that power belongs to woman.

[43] *“In the arms of an animal”*

The phrase “arms of an animal” replaces the traditional image of woman in a man’s arms with wild, untamed power, challenging gender norms. This reinforces the song’s theme of empowerment and raw, instinctual power beyond human control.

## **Analysis at Level of Discourse**

According to Sara Mills (1995), the discourse level of analysis encompasses a broader analysis than the sentence level. Mills argues that discursive processes can be gender biased. She claims that discourse is profoundly gendered, and she aims to demonstrate how discourse, words, and phrases work together to uncover gender ideology [21]. Discourse in popular music frequently encourages gender stereotypes, with males presented as strong, dominant, and powerful, and women as docile, emotional, or dependent on men. However, in Little Mix's Power, the gender rhetoric is completely reversed, with women shown as powerful, independent, and in charge of their relationships and societal situations. At the discourse level, this song challenges gender norms through two key aspects namely characterization and focalization.

### a) *Characterization*

In feminist analysis, characterization refers to how female and male figures are constructed through language (Mills, 1995). Mills emphasizes that in patriarchal discourse, women are often constructed as objects rather than active subjects who have control over their actions and narratives [18]. However, in Power, the female characterization is not passive but is instead portrayed as a leader who dominates and challenges male authority, which can be seen in the following lyrics:

[9] *You’re the man, but I got the, I got the, I got the power*

[5], [23] *I’m a machine when I do it*

[20] *Yeah, they call me Lamborghini, 'cause I know just what I’m worth*

In patriarchal discourse, men are regarded as the major holders of power, both in personal and social relationships. This song challenges gender stereotypes by directly asserting women's authority. The conjunction "but" acts as a counter to the notion of male dominance, implying that, while males may still be regarded as possessing authority ("You're the man"), the female character in the song asserts a higher level of power. This definition illustrates that women are no longer passive objects in gender discourse, but rather active participants who define their roles. In the lyrics "I'm a machine when I do it." (Line 5, 23) These convey the idea that the woman is characterized as "a machine," a sign typically associated with efficiency, strength, and durability, all of which are frequent characteristics of masculinity. According to Mills, this is an example of how language may influence social ideas of gender by portraying women as powerful and independent rather than passive supporters of men. The character defines herself as exceedingly valuable in the lyrics: "Yeah, they call me Lamborghini, 'cause I know just what I'm worth." (Line 20) In this lyric, the woman boldly states that she understands her worth by invoking the Lamborghini symbol, which denotes speed, control, and exclusivity—qualities commonly associated with successful males. This demonstrates that women do not require male validation to decide their self-worth, and it underscores how showing women as independent in language helps to break gender stereotypes.

b) Focalization

Focalization refers to the narrative's dominant standpoint (Mills, 1995). In patriarchal culture, stories typically appear from a male perspective, with women serving as the objects of male vision and desire. The patriarchal culture has long held these positions, making them difficult to change. Any attempt to destabilise it would involve attacking the long-standing patriarchal system that disregards gender equality [22]. However, in *Power*, the female voice has complete control over focalization, thus undermining established discourse that places men as key actors of power. It can be seen multiple times in the following lyrics below:

**[13] Who got the power?**

**[14] I got the-, I got the power**

**[30] I'll let you come take the wheel, long as you don't forget, yeah, yeah**

The focalization in these lyrics ensures that the woman is at the center of the discussion, rather than a supporting character in a male-dominated narrative. This rhetorical inquiry is a verbal tactic for challenging male supremacy. In traditional gender discourse, women rarely have the opportunity to claim recognition of their power, therefore this question challenges the listener to ask who genuinely has the power, followed by "I got the power" as an indisputable acknowledgment that the woman does. The tune is: "I'll let you take control, as long as you don't forget." (Lines 12, 30, and 56) Men are usually supposed to take the lead in relationships, as signified by "taking control" here. The phrase, "I'll let you" implies that this control is conditional and ultimately up to the woman. This phrase questions the notion that males automatically control relationships, instead emphasizing the woman's agency as the deciding element.

*Power* by Little Mix intentionally reverses established gender stereotypes through characterization and focalization, portraying women as dominant personalities who assert power, self-worth, and agency. Unlike usual representations of women as romantic, emotional, or dependent, the speaker in *Power* represents command, ambition, and self-confidence. By reclaiming powerful symbols (machines, vehicles, speed) and redefining control in relationships, the song functions as a feminist anthem that actively breaks gender roles. At the discourse level, *Power* represents a significant shift in gender representation in music, demonstrating that women can be narrators of their power. Rather than being a passive figures in a male-dominated environment, the female speaker keeps her voice, strength, and identity at the forefront of the conversation. This linguistic reframing of power acts as a kind of resistance to patriarchal norms, making the song a prime example of feminist stylistics in modern music discourse.

#### IV. Conclusion

Using the feminist stylistics framework by Sara Mills, this study discovers that Power by Little Mix actively challenges gender roles by redefining female agency through language. The traditional perception of masculinity and authority is disrupted at the word level by lines like "You're the man, but I got the power," while generic nouns like "machine" and "Lamborghini" reclaim strength and value as feminine qualities. Metaphors such as "I'll be catching fire, gasoline when I do it" highlight women's power and intensity at the phrase level, while transitivity choices show women as active rather than passive figures. Characterization and focalization at the discourse level serves to reinforce women's supremacy by transforming them from secondary characters into leaders who exercise their own authority. According to the lyrics, women grab power as their own and do more than simply fight oppression or demand equality. "Power" becomes a feminist anthem that actively break gender stereotypes by challenging patriarchal narratives and shows that power is not essentially masculine thing. This proves that women can hold and have control, not as a concession from men but as an inherent right.

Building on the findings of this study, future research could explore feminist stylistic comparisons between songs by other female artists, such Taylor Swift, Lizzo, or Beyoncé, to show how empowerment is expressed differently and similarly across audiences and genres. Extending the analysis to non-Western or bilingual music would also test the universality of Sara Mills' framework in diverse cultural contexts. Beyond words, a multimodal strategy that incorporates visual and performative components from the Power music video could enhance comprehension of the construction of empowerment. Furthermore, research on audience reaction would provide information on how listeners from different backgrounds understand music's feminist messages. While an intersectional approach would take into consideration how race, class, and sexual orientation influence how power and agency are portrayed, a diachronic analysis may follow the evolution of feminist language in pop music across time. In addition to broadening the definition of feminist stylistics, these paths would demonstrate how popular music actively subverts and reshapes gender stereotypes in inclusive and complex ways.

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