

Sexism in Language Use Amongst Sepedi Speaking Students

Mmagonkahloleng Brudance Makua

Department of English and Comparative Literature, University of Fort Hare, East London, Eastern Cape

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the sexist language that is used among Sepedi speaking students, both females and males, at the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus. Qualitative, descriptive research was conducted to identify and evaluate cultural norms and values that cause sexism in language use, to investigate how females are affected by the use of sexist language and giving strategies that can be used to avoid sexist language. Data was collected using interviews. Ten Sepedi speaking students participated in the study. The study highlighted that 70% of the students were not aware of sexist language though they are very much affected because they depend on their male counterparts for most things because they abide by their cultural values and norms. Only 30% of the respondents knew exactly what sexist language is and they were not affected because they said that women are now empowered to stand on their own and be self-dependent. The findings revealed that sexist language is a social problem, which reflects the social reality and social division of populations.

Keywords: cultural norms, language, values, socialisation