

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to determine whether use of profanity in the language of female film characters has changed in the past 40 years. Due to the reported increase in women's use of profanity and the development of media's treatment of language and gender, the study presumed that there would be more occurrences of vulgar expressions in the speech of women in recent films in comparison to older ones. The data used for the analysis are transcripts of 25 American romantic comedies released between the years 1984 and 2024. 314 female-uttered expressions of profanity were identified in the corpus. The research revealed there is a gradual increase in the frequency and strength of vulgarisms used by female characters, with the most significant increase found from the 2000s to the 2010s. The thesis also examined the relative value of offensiveness of the expressions, and found an increase of popularity of stronger vulgarisms. The ratio of vulgarisms uttered by female characters in comparison to male characters has also increased from the earliest to the most recent films. The analysis overall suggests that language of female characters in film has evolved towards being less restrained and more realistic.

Keywords: profanity, language and gender, film language