

Revolutionary Lexicon: A Pragmatics Study and Discourse Analysis of Two Riot Grrrl Manifestos

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Abstract

Although the United States public and mainstream media scrutinized and oversimplified the music and iconography of the Riot Grrrl movement, there is much to be desired concerning linguistics analyses of two notable Riot Grrrl manifestos. Do the two noteworthy Riot grrrl manifestos contain distinct linguistic features? If so, how do their linguistic features function to characterize the exceptional revolutionary lexicon of the Riot Grrrl movement? This paper will discuss concepts concerning manifestos, what makes feminist manifestos distinct, and introduce the two Riot grrrl manifestos my research concerns. I will present the broad premise of the Riot Grrrl movement and provide a general overview of the third-wave feminist movement to provide more context. This paper proposes to enrich academic research by contributing a two-fold linguistic analysis of two Riot grrrl manifestos to support the research of students and academics interested in linguistics and other subjects that may benefit from this research.

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The lexica and discourse used in manifestos exemplify the concept that context informs the significance of language. Two Riot Grrrl manifestos authored by musicians and artists involved in the Riot Grrrl movement, a subset of the third-wave feminist movement, reveal the significance of the lexicon and discourse used in manifestos. A pragmatics study and Discourse Analysis may deduce the significance of the lexicon and discourse that exemplify these Riot grrrl manifestos. Applying a pragmatics study to two significant Riot grrrl manifestos using Birner's and Ward's (2006) Information Structure theory demonstrates linguistic features that function to provide information in an organized, strategic manner throughout these manifestos. Conducting a Discourse Analysis of Gee's (2011) seven-building tasks questions theory to the two notable Riot Grrrl manifestos demonstrates the interwoven nexus between language, action, and identity in these manifestos.

Introduction

Manifestos started as evidence in courts of law (Parent, 2011) to make public declarations presented by royalty, individual people, or groups. Parent states, "A manifesto is generally, by mode and form, an exhortation to a whole way of thinking and being rather than a simple command or a definition" (p. xxvii). Some conventional manifestos have evolved to expound the shared concerns of particular groups of people, sometimes in historical contexts, by interweaving an articulated awareness with political and philosophical abstractions that critically examine the socio-political and socio-economic events that generally lead to the experiences that the manifesto concerns. Firstly, conventional manifestos do this by creating group consciousness among individuals who may have perceived their experiences and concerns as solitary and unique beforehand; these individuals may be considered the rank and file. Secondly, these manifestos enlighten individuals who do not share similar experiences of the rank and file, and who may have been oblivious to the rank-and-file's concerns thereby gaining expansive legitimacy and support for the cause the premise the particular manifesto prioritizes. In a culmination of recruiting the rank-and-file group and the latter group, these manifestos serve to, (1) inspire solidarity and create group identity among the aforementioned groups and the manifestos' authors to (2) establish a fortified coalition and (3) foment momentum with the objective of fueling cohesive socio-political movements to promote and achieve desired societal/global changes and outcomes. Colman's (2010) description of conventional manifestos speaks to this process:

There is a situation of history and a rejection that is enacted in the manifesto — it is a mode of practice that considers its own rhetoric as a political strategy or political philosophy — and, as such, manifestos are produced in the same way as any aesthetic forms. (p. 377)

Manifestos sometimes function to reject traditional ways of thinking and living, taking a contrarian stance. Lusty (2017) explains the conventional manifesto form:

The manifesto is traditionally a genre of repudiation, of the bourgeois public sphere and of liberal democracy with its conflicted valorisation of individualism and universalism. In forging its oppositional voice within the radical public sphere the manifesto imagines a complete break with history whilst also identifying itself as history-in-the-making. Through its fervid declarative force, the manifesto takes on its peculiarly performative charge, converting mere words into action-oriented resolutions. (p. 222)

In some instances, manifestos are authored by sociopolitical intellectuals, and on other occasions, manifestos are authored by the avant-garde such as artists and poets. The Dada Art manifestos are examples of this in that according to the article, “The Anti-War Movement” (n.d.) on arthistoryarchive.com, the manifestos of this movement were authored by poet Tristan Tzara. What follows is an excerpt from Tzara’s (1918) 2nd Dada Manifesto:

Thus, DADA was born, out of a need for independence, out of mistrust for the community. People who join us keep their freedom. We don't accept any theories. We've had enough of the cubist and futurist academies: laboratories of formal ideas. Do we make art in order to earn money and keep the dear bourgeoisie happy? Rhymes have the smack of money, and inflexion slides along the line of the stomach in profile. Every group of artists has ended up at this bank, straddling various comets. Leaving the door open to the possibility of wallowing in comfort and food. (The 2nd Dada manifesto section, para. 5)

One way in which feminist manifestos are distinct is that the patriarchal, commodifying, heteronormative language of conventional manifestos becomes obsolete in two consequential ways: (1) the manifesto form is equally important as the message, (2) the objectification directed at readers is shifted by creating an interdependent relationship between readers and authors. Colman (2010) articulates:

In the manifesto process, the attributions of the determining system are revealed as manipulators of the homogeneous and the heterosexual. Under this system, interactions between people are often sexualized through historical roles and institutions. But under the feminist manifesto composition, where the medium itself is taken into account and is as much a part of the tale as the story itself, the bodies of you, the reader, and you, the author, are made into task-oriented subjects whose “objectness” is highlighted through the manifesto’s implicit positioning statements. For example, two aspects of the feminist manifesto common to many feminist projects involve the critical appraisal of language and a staunch anti-consumerism. (p. 382)

Some feminist manifestos stress the notion that the personal is political, the political is personal, and to treat them as separate is unrealistic and futile. Feminist manifestos sometimes address and challenge intersecting themes; those that are common concern patriarchal, capitalist, racist, heteronormative, authoritarian, imperialist asymmetrical hegemonic systems. Some make it known that women and girls confront battles and wars when they step outside of their homes as well as when they are inside the walls of their “homes.” Some posit that capitalism, and religious institutions, in conjunction with conservatism and heteronormativity perceive, and treat

women's bodies and sexualities as means of production to ensure posterity for capitalism and patriarchy. Some feminist manifestos craft artistry as in Haraway's (2006) manifesto:

By the late 20th century, our time, a mythic time, we are all chimeras, theorized, and fabricated hybrids of machines and organisms; in short, we are cyborgs. The cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics. The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation. (p. 118)

Some of these manifestos fundamentally resist the nomenclature of woman as an anomaly known as the "other": the non-human prototype, the muse who is adored and desired but not respected. Some feminist manifestos' topics touch on the virgin-whore dichotomy, how it is used to control women by stigmatizing and vilifying women's bodies, sexualities, creating another status dimension within caste structures; as well as justifying the eroticization, exoticization, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, commodification, prostitution, sex trafficking, and acts of rape inflicted particularly on women of color, indigent and working-class women, immigrant and refugee women, LGBTQ people, fomenting segregation between women, and ultimately deterring true female solidarity and liberation.

Some feminist manifestos speak to the topic of gender binaries, how it serves to give males and the concept of "masculinity" authority and supremacy, and functions to control females, and infantilize, debase, and subjugate people and qualities perceived as "feminine." Examples of such manifestos are the Female Revolt 1970 Manifesto, Adelaide Women's Liberation 1971 Manifesto, and Radicalqueens 1973 Manifesto #2 which are included in *Feminist Manifestos: A Global Documentary Reader* (Weiss, 2018). Some feminist manifestos interrogate sophisms that equate human physiological and anatomical differences to deep-seated dichotomies that legitimize and reinforce prescribed gender norms that convenience some individuals at the expense of marginalized people.

Feminist manifestos do not simply discuss the simplistic identities that have been assigned to women, namely those of mother, wife, daughter, virgin, spinster, lover, and whore. Nor do they confront the abhorrent perspective and treatment of women, and girls, as ornamental vessels for human propagation. Neither do they ruminate solely over the theory of the public sphere versus the private sphere, how the idea of public spaces has been designated the dominion of men, and how the notion of private spaces has been assigned to women as women are assumed to be innately domestic. Nor do they theorize ivory tower ideals of how feminist utopias would look, and how they should logistically function. Feminist manifestos speak to a plethora of topics, and they go well beyond by using philosophical inquiries and/or political frameworks to address quotidian problems, and these manifestos assert that the dogmata of superiority, hegemonic structures, and hierarchies must be overthrown. These manifestos present a critical universal worldview in favor of the principle that people from all walks of life should be perceived, approached, and treated as complete, authentic, complex human beings worthy of dignity and respect, and proposing alternative solutions for a metamorphic world that is equitable, just, and inclusive for everyone.

Feminist manifestos articulate women's longings for autonomy over their bodies and the course of their lives in pursuit of self-determination, to shape their own priorities, cravings to craft their own multidimensional identities, yearnings to practice their own ethics, moral compasses, and modes of spiritualities; all of these proposed endeavors separate from biological families, social norms and mores, capitalism and consumerism, state institutions, theology, and science. Feminist manifestos promulgate emancipated living rooted in a humane humanity. In summary, in ample and at times unequivocal terms, feminist manifestos elucidate critical discourse that people and societies should collaborate and cooperate to practice an equitable distribution of labor, that all people should live wholeheartedly and safely, that they may apply their intellectual faculties and experience their bodily senses, engage in curiosity, discovery, human development, relationships, and communities in accordance by their principles and wishes as complete, authentic, complex, dignified and fully included global citizens.

Two manifestos known as Riot Grrrl manifestos were written by and for young women involved in the arts and punk music. Riot grrrl manifestos challenged everyday sexism and misogyny, as well as the disregard, exclusion, dehumanization of women, in both mainstream music and the subversive, punk music scene. These manifestos were included in zines Riot Grrrl artists and musicians distributed freely at different venues. Kathleen Hanna, one of the founders of the feminist punk band, Bikini Kill, founding member of the band, The Julie Ruin, and member of the electroclash band, Le Tigre, is credited with authoring one of the manifestos included in this study. In an interview for the documentary, *The Punk Singer: A documentary film about Kathleen Hanna* (Anderson, 2013), Hanna explains the premise and purpose of the manifesto she authored:

I actually wrote a Riot Grrrl manifesto in the Bikini Kill fanzine called *Grrrl Power*. And I wrote what I dreamed Riot Grrrl could be and encouraged other girls and women to write their manifestos of what they wanted Riot Grrrl to be. The idea was that any woman anywhere could take that name and use it and create anything she wanted. We didn't brand it or copyright it or anything like that. It belonged to everybody. (0:26:32 – 0:26:55)

The objectives of the Riot Grrrl movement were distinct from those of the first and second-wave feminist movements in that it wanted to go beyond liberal feminist goals. The first two waves of feminism agitated for legislative and judicial policy changes thus they were reformist movements that sought progress via governmental interventions and institutions. The Riot Grrrl movement's objectives were a call for radical changes and progress in everyday life. Riot grrrls incited and fueled their movement by (1) promoting camaraderie and solidarity between young women to validate and support each other to create agency in the worlds of art, music, writing, and filmmaking, (2) creating resistance against sexism and misogyny in music and prosaic interactions, (3) speaking out against the sociopolitical misogyny and gender violence that was taking place across the United States. Wright (2016) articulates some of the motives that incited Riot Grrrls to write these manifestos:

In an effort to give nonconforming women a voice in society, Riot Grrrls vocally opposed power structures that perpetuated limiting ideals of heterosexuality and traditional gender roles. Kathleen Hanna, the front woman of the Riot Grrrl band Bikini Kill, explicitly defined the mindsets and characteristics of a Riot Grrrl in her “Riot Grrrl Manifesto,” published in 1991 in Bikini Kill Zine 2, one of the short, homemade publications used to promote Riot Grrrl ideology. (p. 53)

Riot grrrls endeavored to create authentic, supportive, safe spaces to make and practice art, music, writing, and filmmaking as activism in quotidian life. They also gathered in women-only spaces to discuss various issues, to build camaraderie and community. Downes (2007) articulates three fundamental points about the Riot Grrrl movement:

Riot grrrl rewrote feminism and activism into a punk rock rebellion and youth-centred voice that was felt to be missing from forms of feminism available in the 1990’s.

Feminism was seen to be addressing the concerns of older, middle-class, heterosexual and educated women and riot grrrl was seen to be a re-working of feminism to work through the needs, desires and issues in the situations specific to young girls and women in 1990s America; (p. 26)

Riot grrrl also proposed a different way of conceptualizing feminist activism, to move away from traditional state-focused protests like marches, rallies and petitions, towards an idea of cultural activism which incorporated everyday cultural subversions like creating art, film, zines, music and communities as part of feminist activism. ... This ethos of re-writing and re-working politicized ideas also applied to riot grrrl itself which was intended to remain a loose philosophy, made in such a way so people could take it on for their own identity and kind of change it by fleshing it out with their own ideas. (p.27)

The Riot Grrrl movement embraced three core principles: (1) girlhood legitimacy, (2) female camaraderie and solidarity, (3) do-it-yourself ethic. These principles are evident from illustrations, doodles, and handwritten messages common in the zines Riot grrrls distributed at music shows and other forums. These are reminiscent of scrawls in the scholastic book covers, notebooks, folders, binders, personal journals, and diaries which some women can recall from their own childhood and adolescence. Riot Grrrls asserted the idea that revolution equals violence is part of macho gun culture, and proposed liberation as an everyday, girl style of revolution. The impact of this movement is evident from the rise of bands such as Bratmobile, Bikini Kill, The Butchies, and Sleater-Kinney in the U. S., and Huggy Bear and Heavenly in the U.K., from the creation of Mr. Lady Records, and the Ladyfests that transpired in the U.S. and the U.K. in the 2000’s (Downes, 168-173).

The movement known as “third-wave feminism” was the larger feminist movement that the Riot grrrl movement was a component of. The objectives of third-wave feminism are difficult to pinpoint as is the beginning of the movement. As Evans and Bobel (2007) explain, some researchers credit the label to Rebecca Walker who used the term in a Ms. Magazine (1992) piece:

There appears no consensus regarding the coining of the term ‘Third Wave.’ Some accounts, like Lorber, point to Rebecca Walker, daughter of legendary feminist writer and activist Alice Walker, who boldly asserted in a 1992 Ms. Magazine: “I am not a postfeminism feminist. I am the Third Wave.” (p. 208)

Evans and Bobel (2007) articulate they agree with Rory Dicker’s and Alison Piepmeier’s description of third wave feminism:

Further, they characterize Third Wave “as a movement that contains elements of Second Wave critique of beauty culture, sexual abuse, and power structures while it also acknowledges and makes use of the pleasure, danger, and defining power of those structures.” ... For them, the Third Wave consists of those of us who have developed our sense of identity in a world shaped by technology, global capitalism, multiple models of sexuality, changing national demographics, declining economic vitality. (p. 210)

One activist group that surfaced during the third wave feminist movement which inspired the Riot Grrrl movement was a group of women in the visual arts known as the Guerrilla Girls (Corrigan, 160). The Guerilla Girls’ activism centered on the struggle for true representation, inclusion, and dignity in the world of aesthetics. Their activism possessed a confrontational style that was similar to Riot Grrrl activists’ praxis. Moreover, their activism was a crucial influence on the Riot Grrrl movement because it challenged the exclusion of women’s agency and worth, and male chauvinism in the arts, a subject and realm that would be a component of the Riot Grrrl movement and revolution.

Literature Review

I will use two theoretical frameworks to guide my linguistic analysis of the two Riot Grrrl manifestos, a pragmatics approach by applying Betty J. Birner’s and Gregory Ward’s (2006) Information Structure, and through the lens of Discourse Analysis by using James Paul Gee’s (2011) seven building tasks questions. To begin, the information-status matrix component of Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) Information Structure theory may analyze the particular noncanonical structure evident throughout these two Riot Grrrl manifestos. They explained “noncanonical constructions in English are used in consistent and characteristic ways to structure information in discourse, and significant cross-construction generalizations apply to families of related constructions” (Birner & Ward, 2006, pp. 303-304). I will apply a borrowed subcomponent of Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) information-status matrix, known as Assumed Familiarity, to my pragmatics study. Birner and Ward (2006) articulated:

Prince 1981a adopts the term ASSUMED FAMILIARITY to reflect the fact that only an omniscient observer can know what knowledge exists in the interlocutors’ discourse models, while actual language users must operate on the basis of what they *assume* constitutes shared knowledge between them and their interlocutors (or can be accommodated as such by a cooperative hearer). (p. 304)

Another subcomponent of Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) information-status matrix I will use correlates to the borrowed subcomponent of Assumed Familiarity, and it is the role of hearer-

status and discourse-status in the order in which information is presented in a sentence/utterance, a concept they explained was also borrowed from Ellen Prince (1992):

Discourse-old information is that which has been evoked in the prior discourse, whereas discourse-new information is that which has not been previously evoked. Hearer-old information is that which, regardless of whether it has been evoked in the current discourse, is assumed to be known to the hearer, while hearer-new information is assumed to be new to the hearer. (p.304)

Using Gee's (2011) Discourse Analysis seven building tasks questions theory presents another dimension to my linguistic analysis as it demonstrates the interconnected relationship between language, action, and identity. Gee (2011) articulated:

Many people think language exists so that we can "say things" in the sense of communicating information. However, language serves a great many functions in our lives. Giving and getting information is by no means the only one. ... Language allows us to do things. It allows us to engage in actions and activities. ... Language allows us to be things. It allows us to take on different socially significant identities. We can speak as experts – as doctors, lawyers, anime aficionados, or carpenters – or as "everyday people." To take on any identity at a given time and place we have to "talk the talk," not just "walk the walk." ... In language, there are important connections among saying (informing), doing (action), and being (identity). (p. 2)

According to Gee, (2011) whenever we speak or write we "construct or build seven things or seven areas of 'reality'" (p. 17).

These are known as the "seven building tasks", and these (Gee, 2011, pp. 17-20) and their respective Discourse Analysis questions are:

1. Significance: How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?
2. Practices (Activities): What practice (activity) or practices (activities) is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as going on)?
3. Identities: What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as operative)? What identity or identities is this piece of language attributing to others and how does this help the speaker or writer enact his or her own identity?
4. Relationships: What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?
5. Politics (the distribution of social goods): What perspective on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e., what is being communicated as to what is taken to be "normal," "right," "good," "correct," "proper," "appropriate," "valuable," "the way things are," "the way things ought to be," "high status or low status," "like me or not like me," and so forth)?
6. Connections: How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things; how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?

7. Sign Systems and Knowledge: How does this piece of language privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems (e.g., Spanish vs. English, technical language vs. everyday language, words vs. images, words vs. equations, etc.) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief (e.g., science vs. the Humanities, science vs. “common sense,” biology vs. “creation science”)?

Methodology

To conduct my linguistic analysis of the two Riot Grrrl manifestos, I read the manifestos on pages 143 and 168 of *The Riot Grrrl Collection* (Darms & Fateman, 2016) book. I initiated my linguistic analysis by reading the manifesto printed on page 143. Firstly, through the perspective of Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) information-status matrix, I examined this manifesto’s general noncanonical syntactic construction. Secondly, I applied Birner’s, and Ward’s (2006) borrowed subcomponent of Assumed Familiarity to determine if there was evidence of an assumption of shared knowledge between the authors and the readers. Thirdly, I used the borrowed subcomponent of Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) role of hearer-status and discourse-status to decipher the order of the information presented in the sentences contained in this manifesto. Fourthly, I used Gee’s (2011) Discourse Analysis seven building tasks questions to determine if and how the relationship between language, action, and identity is articulated within this manifesto.

I continued my linguistic analysis by reading the Riot grrrl manifesto on page 168 of the aforementioned book by following the same order. I used Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) information-status matrix to decipher the overall noncanonical syntactic construction of this manifesto. Next, I applied Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) discussion of Assumed Familiarity to determine if there was evidence of an assumption of shared knowledge between the authors and their readers. Then, I used the subcomponent of Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) discussion of the role of hearer-status and discourse-status to decipher the order of information presented in the sentences that compose this manifesto. Afterward, I used Gee’s (2011) Discourse Analysis seven building tasks questions to determine if and how the relationship between language, action, and identity is expressed within this manifesto. Lastly, I compared the linguistic similarities and differences between the two manifestos with particular emphasis on their shared patterns.

Results

One of the most salient linguistic features is the use of the lexical unit *because*, entirely in uppercase, as the first lexical unit of each sentence or grouped sentences throughout both manifestos. Anderson (2018) explains that while the reader may have learned words such as *because* are a type of conjunction, “Their behaviour is more similar to a category of words we label as **complementizers**. Complementizers are function words that introduce a clause, which is a sentence embedded inside a larger sentence...” (p. 145). Given this explanation, a major question is, what critical function does the complementizer, *because*, serve as the onset of the syntactic constructions or as the onset of grouped syntactic constructions contained in these two Riot Grrrl manifestos?

Another striking linguistic feature is the creative use of certain lexical units written entirely in uppercase throughout both manifestos. I have listed these lexical units in the order in which they first appear in each manifesto in the *Riot Grrrl Collection* (Darms & Fateman, 2016): (1) BECAUSE (2) US (3) WE (4) DISRUPTS (5) AND THUS (6) WE KNOW (7) AND (p. 143); (1) BECAUSE (2) BOY (3) US (4) ARE (p. 168). What are possible reasons for presenting these lexical units entirely in uppercase?

Although these manifestos differ in the number of the complementizer, *because*, and there is a difference in the number of select lexical units that are written entirely in uppercase, and they do not share all the same lexical units written in uppercase, the use of both of these linguistic features throughout both manifestos demonstrate a consistent quality between these Riot Grrrl manifestos. The use of the complementizer, *because*, as the lexical unit that opens each syntactic construction or grouped syntactic constructions, and the use of some lexical units written entirely in uppercase, are not random, haphazard, or chaotic language use. On the contrary, the use of these features in both manifestos exhibits an organized, strategic use of language.

Applying a pragmatics study using Birner's, and Ward's (2006) information-status matrix component of their Information Structure theory demonstrates noncanonical use of the complementizer, *because*, functioning as the onset of syntactic constructions or as the onset of grouped syntactic constructions throughout these Riot Grrrl manifestos. In addition, Birner's and Ward's (2006) information-status matrix applies due to the use of precisely the same lexical unit, *because*, as either the onset of each sentence or as the onset of grouped sentences. Lastly, the information-status matrix theory is evident throughout these manifestos in that the forms which constitute the lexical unit, *BECAUSE*, are written entirely in uppercase every time this lexical unit appears in both manifestos. The noncanonical use of precisely the same complementizer with all its forms in uppercase is evidence of a consistent manner of providing information.

Using Birner's and Ward's (2006) borrowed subcomponent of Assumed Familiarity demonstrates an implicit assumed familiarity the authors of these two Riot Grrrl manifestos make about their readers' knowledge or that the information they are sharing can be accommodated by cooperative readers that may not share that knowledge. Both of these Riot grrrl manifestos are declarations of mutual experiences between the writers and their ideal readers. However, these manifestos lend themselves to be receptive to cooperative readers that may not share similar experiences. Therefore, both of these manifestos exemplify the use of Assumed Familiarity.

Birner's and Ward's (2006) borrowed subcomponent of the role of hearer-status and discourse-status suggests the possibility of these Riot Grrrl manifestos' discourse as Hearer-old and Discourse-old, and Hearer-old and Discourse-new. Given that the statements throughout these manifestos connect the writers with the ideal readers through mutually shared experiences, it is possible the majority of the discourse may be categorized as Hearer-old and Discourse-old, and Hearer-old and Discourse-new. Furthermore, due to the manifestos' use of discourse that demonstrates implicitly assumed familiarity which may be accommodated by nonideal

cooperative readers, the category of Hearer-new, and Discourse-new exists. Both Riot grrrl manifestos are declarations of shared experiences between the authors and their ideal readers. This implies an assumed familiarity with the information and topics the authors present to their readers. For example, the first manifesto printed in *The Riot Grrrl Collection* (Darms & Fateman, 2016) opens with:

Riot Grrrl is.....

BECAUSE us girls crave records and books and fanzines that speak to US, that WE feel included in and can understand it our own ways.

BECAUSE we wanna make it easier for girls to see/hear each other's work so that we can share strategies and criticize-applaud each other. (p. 143)

In this example, the use of the complementizer, *BECAUSE*, as the onset of each syntactic construction functions to introduce the relevance and timeliness of the information which is about to be presented in each sentence. Presenting this complementizer with its forms entirely in uppercase seems to serve another purpose. It introduces the message with conviction and fortitude. The lexical units, *US*, and *WE*, with their forms entirely in uppercase, serve to emphatically demonstrate the shared identity and bond between the authors and their ideal readers.

In the same manifesto and near the center, the paired lexical units, *AND THUS*, make a connection with the complementizer, *BECAUSE*, by introducing proposed solutions which the complementizer, *BECAUSE*, introduced, "BECAUSE we don't wanna assimilate to someone else's (Boy) standards of what is or isn't "good" music or punk rock or "good" writing AND THUS need to create forums where we can recreate, destroy and define our own visions" (Darms & Fateman, 2016, p. 143). In so doing, these paired lexical units assist in solving the concerns addressed in the prior statements.

The second manifesto included in *The Riot Grrrl Collection* (Darms & Fateman, 2016) starts with:

What IS RIOT GRRRL?

riot grrrl is.....

BECAUSE we will never meet the hierarchical BOY standards of talented, or cool, or smart.

They are created to keep us out, and if we ever meet them they will change, or we will become tokens. (p. 168)

Here, as in the previous manifesto, the use of the complementizer, *because*, as the onset of the first sentence functions to introduce the relevance and timeliness of the message which is about to be presented. By organizing the entirety of its forms in uppercase, once again, it prepares the readers for the message with conviction and fortitude. The use of the lexical unit, *BOY*, arranged with the entirety of its forms in uppercase emphatically points out a particular group identity which contrasts the group identity of the manifestos' authors and ideal readers.

Conducting a Discourse Analysis by answering Gee's (2011) seven building tasks questions demonstrates that these Riot Grrrl manifestos exemplify the relationship between language, action, and identity. For conciseness, and given that these Riot Grrrl manifestos contain overlapping themes, the answers provided for each building task question concern both manifestos. What follows are the seven-building tasks answers:

1. The language implemented in these texts function to present as significant the intersecting issues that harm girls'/young women's daily lives, the harmful ideas about and toxic behaviors directed at girls/young women by mainstream society and the subversive punk scene, the abusive/exploitative imagery of girls/young women in mainstream media and refuting the normalization and legitimization of all of these in an everyday language manner.
2. This piece of language is enacting girls/young women to recognize themselves and other ordinary girls/young women as Riot Grrrls.
3. This language is being used to get audience readers and others to recognize the Riot grrrl movement as operative. This is attributing riot grrrl identity to the reader audience it is intended for, and this helps the authors enact their significant identities as riot grrrls.
4. This seeks to enact relationships of female camaraderie and solidarity across geography, labels, and philosophy with its ideal readers.
5. This is communicating the repudiation of societal normalization and legitimization of demeaning, exploitative, abusive, violating behavior directed at girls/young women, as well as refuting and challenging machismo, misogyny, homophobia, racism, classism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, capitalism, ageism, ableism, speciesism, and the like, and cultivating communities that foment female camaraderie and solidarity, respects and values girls/young women and their creative aspirations as distributions of social goods as virtuous, righteous, and ethical.
6. This makes a connection between machismo, misogyny, homophobia, racism, classism, anti-Semitism, heterosexism, capitalism, ageism, ableism, and speciesism. This also connects riot grrrl feminism theory to non-commercial modes of creating girl-centric publications, art, music, and communities as praxis.
7. This privileges everyday language by utilizing some unconventional syntax and creative grammar. It also privileges girls'/young women's perspectives by rejecting harmful, demeaning, exploitative, abusive, violent attitudes, and behaviors directed at girls/young women, holding accountable and challenging the status-quo and their enablers for their roles in these attitudes and behaviors, as well as by promoting philosophy and praxis founded on girlhood, female camaraderie and solidarity, do-it-yourself ethic, and validation for girls'/young women's creative and musical aspirations, and value, dignity, and respect for girls'/young women's lives.

Conclusion

The lexica and discourse used in manifestos exemplify the concept that context informs the significance of language. Manifestos convey extraordinary and commanding notions, declarations, and aspirations. As is the case with feminist manifestos, the manifesto form may be equally important as the message. “The manifesto is an act of *démésure*, going past what is thought of as proper, sane, and literary. Its outreach demands an extravagant self-assurance. At its peak performance, its form creates its meaning” (Parent, 2001, p. xx).

By applying Birner’s and Ward’s (2006) information-status matrix component of their Information Structure theory we observe the use of two major pragmatics features throughout these two Riot Grrrl manifestos. The first pragmatics feature that stands out is the noncanonical use of the complementizer, *because*. The complementizer, *because*, is used noncanonically to organize information emphatically and succinctly to articulate the significance and relevance of the Riot grrrl movement. The second pragmatics feature is the use of Assumed Familiarity which may be categorized as Hearer-old and Discourse-old, and Hearer-old and Discourse-new, as well as the possibility of Hearer-new and Discourse-new. The use of Assumed Familiarity demonstrates the authors of these two Riot Grrrl manifestos assume a shared knowledge with their ideal readers. Additionally, it is possible the information they share may be accommodated by nonideal cooperative readers.

The discourse of these two Riot Grrrl manifestos exemplifies the interwoven relationship between language, action, and identity that Gee’s (2011) Discourse Analysis theory postulates. My research demonstrates this relationship by answering Gee’s (2011) seven building tasks questions. These two Riot Grrrl manifestos exemplify the critical link between language, action, and identity by using language to hold U.S. society accountable for sexist and misogynistic actions it allows and promotes, by informing young women that their creative and musical aspirations are valid, and by linking these to a particular way of being in the world in a specific context: their particular identity in a specific moment as Riot grrrls. It may be argued that the activities proposed in these Riot Grrrl manifestos are the action component of the language-action-identity nexus which serves as praxis to the Riot grrrl theory and identity the language serves to promulgate.

This research demonstrates that these two Riot Grrrl manifestos contain distinct and significant linguistic features which function in an informative, organized, and strategic manner. This research also demonstrates that these two Riot grrrl manifestos exemplify the critical relationship between language, action, and identity. I included the two Riot grrrl manifestos that I used for my research as images with permission from *The Riot Grrrl Collection* (Darms & Fateman, 2016) book publisher. I labeled the manifesto on page 143, as Figure 1 on page 27, and the manifesto on page 168, as Figure 2 on page 28 of this paper. I provided these for readers and researchers to have another dimension of context concerning my research.

The research presented in this linguistic analysis is limited by time constraints, the allowed word count, and its shared focus on two branches of linguistics rather than an ample linguistic analysis that concentrates on one branch of linguistics. For future prospects, I will

build on this research by developing the use of Gee's (2011) Discourse Analysis seven building tasks questions component. I will expand the application of Birner's and Ward's (2006) Information Structure discussion of the Assumed Familiarity subcategory. I will also expand on the discussion concerning feminist manifestos by presenting more examples of feminist manifestos. I propose students and academics use this paper to support their research concerning Riot Grrrl manifestos, feminist manifestos, and manifestos in general. "Language is about saying, doing, and being" (Langman, 2020, slide 5). It has been stated that the pen is mightier than the sword, and the revolutionary lexicon of these two Riot Grrrl manifestos exemplifies this adage.

Figure 1

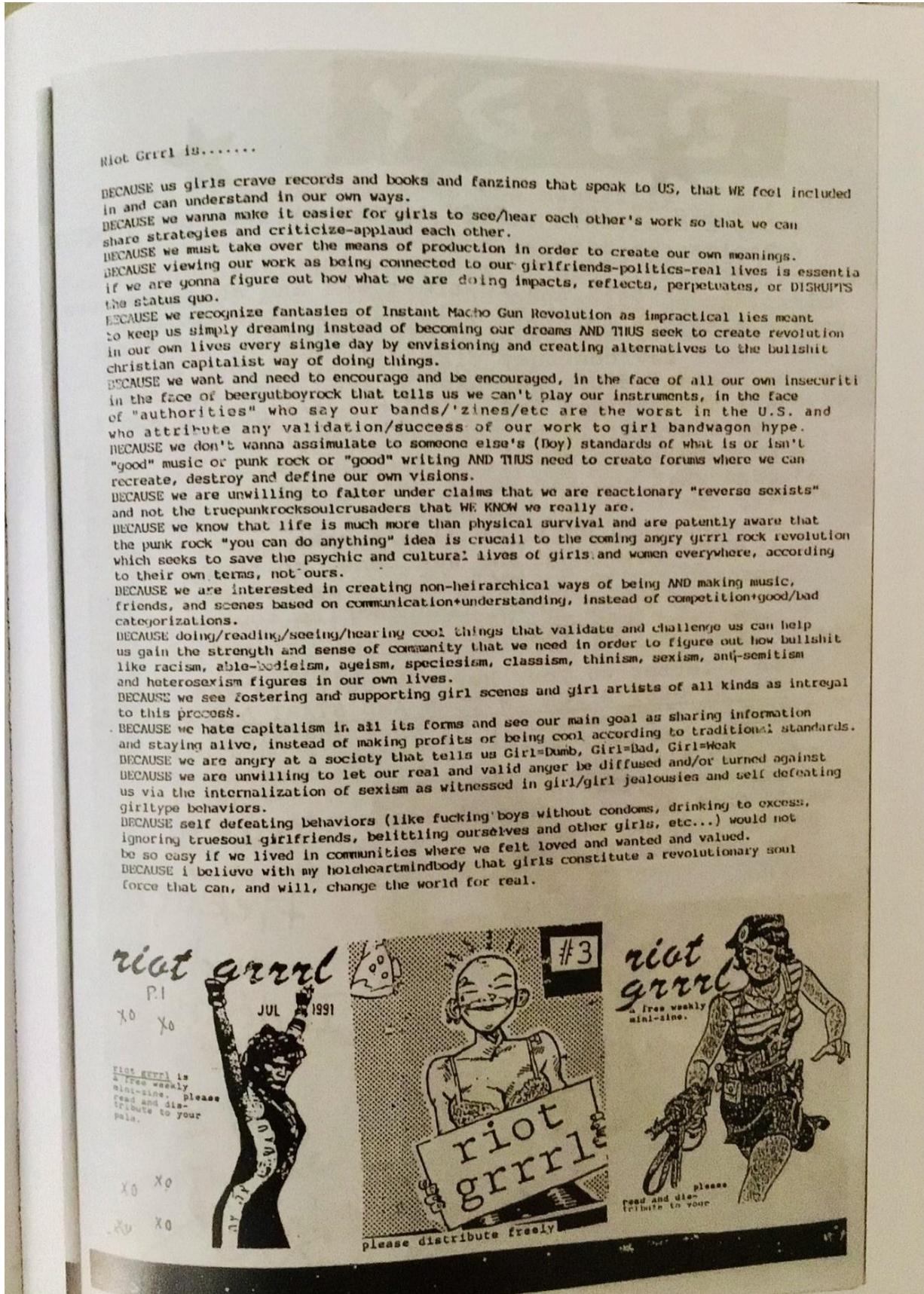


Figure 2

WHAT IS RIOT GIRL

Riot girl
is...

BECAUSE we will never meet the hierarchical BOY standards of talented, or cool, or smart. They are created to keep us out, and if we ever meet them they will change, or we will become tokens.

BECAUSE I need laughter and I need girl love. We need to build lines of communication so we can be more open and accessible to each other.

BECAUSE we are being divided by our labels and philosophies, and we need to accept and support each other as girls; acknowledging our different approaches to life and accepting all of them as valid.

BECAUSE in every form of media I see us/myself slapped, decapitated, laughed at, objectified, raped, trivialized, pushed, ignored, stereotyped, kicked, scorned, molested, silenced, invalidated, knifed, shot, choked, and killed

BECAUSE I see the connectedness of all forms of oppression and I believe we need to fight them with this awareness.

BECAUSE a safe space needs to be created for girls where we can open our eyes and reach out to each other without being threatened by this sexist society and our day to day bullshit.

BECAUSE we need to acknowledge that our blood is being spilt; that right now a girl is being raped or battered and it might be me or you or your mom or the girl you sat next to on the bus last Tuesday, and she might be dead by the time you finish reading this. I am not making this up.

BECAUSE I can't smile when my girlfriends are dying inside. We are dying inside and we never even touch each other; we are supposed to hate each other.

BECAUSE I am still fucked up, I am still dealing with internalized racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, etc., and I don't want to do it alone.

BECAUSE we need to talk to each other. Communication/inclusion is key. We will never know if we don't break the code of silence.

BECAUSE we girls want to create mediums that speak to US. We are tired of boy band after boy band, boy zine after boy zine, boy punk after boy punk after boy.

BECAUSE I am tired of these things happening to me; I'm not a fuck tov. I'm not a punching bag, I'm not a joke.

No we are not paranoid.
No we are not manhaters.
No we are not worrying too much.
No we are not taking it too seriously.

RIOT GIRL
P.O. Box 5533
IRVINE, CA. 92716-5533
PLEASE SEND A STAMP FOR EACH COPY

riot

start a

Fuckin

HELP ME

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