

A Critical Queer Discourse Analysis of Sexual Orientation Secrecy Represented in “Love Simon”

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Abstract

The objectives of this study were to investigate the influence of sexual orientation secrecy from the utterances of main characters and author's narration and the realization of the influence of sexual orientation found in *Love Simon* movie. The study was conducted using a critical discourse analysis approach. The data of this study were taken from the transcript of *Love Simon*. The data of this study were the main character's utterances and author's narration that appeared in *Love Simon* that can categorize into kinds of sexual orientation secrecy based on romantic secrecy. The data analysis was taken by identifying, classifying, and analysing the data. The findings indicated 6 kinds of romantic secrecy of sexual orientation that were flouted by the main characters and author's narration in *Love Simon*. Based on the research findings, the most frequent utterances were the break-up distress. This proves that the sexual orientation secrecy gives a negative influence on the main character in this movie.

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INTRODUCTION

Queer theory is a discourse analysis exercise (Motschenbacher and Stegu, 2013). It emphasized the value of utterances and the power of language (Giffney, 2007). Giffney added that queer theory is concerned with how identity is formed through generally prejudiced discourse against people whose identities are being constructed. DePalma and Cullen (2011) explained that queer theory is a type of discourse analysis that investigates how texts are composed by investigating and changing the text's numerous assumptions, uncovering the text's internal conflicts, and relying on ignored characteristics to provoke a common identity.

The major goal of this research is to use critical queer discourse analysis to look at the movie's sexual orientation secrecy using Foster and Campbell's theory. The researcher chose a movie over a book because it can display content much more quickly. Furthermore, movies are more visible, visual, and easier to recall than equivalent literary works in terms of reaching and informing a broad audience.

Secrecy is the act of concealing information from people or groups who do not have a "need to know" while revealing it to others. The term "secrecy" has been defined by some experts. According to Wismeijer (2011), secrecy is the deliberate and active act of withholding information from others selectively. Confidentiality is a common social occurrence, and it is expected everywhere (Costas & Grey, 2016). People maintain secrets because they are afraid of the social consequences of disclosing their secrets, primarily to avoid being judged by others (Flett, 2012).

When the conversation turns to personal matters, sexual orientation is frequently brought up as an issue of identity. Sexual orientation is the typical secret that people wish to keep according to Itzhaky and Kissil (2015). Smith, Kippax, and Chapple (2008) mentioned that individuals who are homosexual are driven into an interplay of secrecy. The majority of these homosexuals hide their identities and practice homosexuality in secret, while some try to accept the fact that they are different and fight for their rights to live their lives as they see fit. Homosexual life has also become well-known, mainly to a variety of famous literary works representing homosexuality, such as films, novels, short tales, and so on. Films/movies unquestionably have an important role in popular literature.

Love Simon is the first film produced by a major Hollywood production to represent the romantic lives of an LGBT teenager. In the movie, secrecy has become one of the key challenges faced by the characters, and an early examination of the script reveals the secrecy. The researcher intends to be able to demonstrate the romantic secrecy done by the main characters in the film as the focus of this study. When people accept that they are romantically linked, but they keep their partners' identities or the emotional depths of their connections hidden, this is known as romantic secrecy. As a data source, the researcher uses the movie script of the film. The data was analysed using a descriptive qualitative method. Concerning the background, the problems of the study in this research were formulated as the following 1) What were the influences of sexual orientation secrecy found in Love Simon? 2) How were the influences of sexual orientation secrecy realized in the movie?

Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse is a multifaceted phenomenon that differs from the other branches of linguistics. Defining a discourse, according to van Dijk (2009), is still a work in progress. It signifies that the multidimensional component, which can be used to spark conversation, contains a diverse set of ideas and viewpoints. Discourse analysis, according to Leeuwen (2018), will reveal what texts do not state, how texts change, and examine the human experience they mirror. Although words, phrases, and sentences are the result of a communicative act, discourse refers to a larger unit that includes texts, conversations, and even interviews. Conversations and interviews occur on a daily basis.

Secrecy

According to Costas and Gray (2014), secrecy is a continuous public and private natural activity of strategically concealing knowledge from individuals in society. 'Keep this between us, but...' is a common strategy referring to the challenges of social connection as represented in the dissimilarities and dilemmas between knowing and not knowing, being and not being known, and knowing and being known (Fan & Grey, 2020). Jones (2014) stressed the distinction between outward appearances and underlying facts, as well as the contrast between what is visible to all and what is hidden or buried and only a few people know about. Secret keepers must intentionally and purposefully engage in strategic behaviours that prevent others from learning the secret (Lane & Wegner).

Romantic Secrecy in Sexual Orientation

People are frequently questioned about their secret identities, such as their sexual orientation (Itzhaky & Kissil, 2015). Individuals choose to keep their sexual orientation a secret (Itzhaky & Kissil, 2015). Furthermore, most sexual development theorists regard this hidden discovery as a critical initial step toward a balanced sexual development. Coming out, or revealing one's gay inclination to others, is often seen as one of the most important steps for developing a stable and acceptable homosexual identity (McLean, 2007). This, according to Miles-Johnson and Wang (2018), is due to everyday kinds of societal discrimination and indifference that prevent many LGBT persons from expressing their sexual identity.

Romantic secrecy is the intentional concealment of one's ongoing romantic relationship from a person or persons outside of the partnership (Foster & Campbell,

2005). Love lovers might keep romantic secrets by expressing that they are emotionally unattached while they are in the presence of specified people. Romantic secrecy occurs when people accept being sexually attracted but keep their partners' identities or the emotional aspects of their relationships private. According to another theory, romantic concealment is stressful, and as a result, romantic partnerships suffer as a result (Foster & Campbell, 2005). According to Foster and Campbell, romantic concealment has a favorable impact on fresher romantic partnerships and a negative impact on older romantic relationships (obsessive preoccupation theory). Romantic theory categorizes several types that affect the secrecy in relationships,

There are:

1. Romantic secrecy
2. Relationship burden
3. Relationship satisfaction
4. Partner thought intuition
5. Partner thought suppression Perceived physical attractiveness
6. Anticipated breakup distress
7. Love.

Critical Queer Discourse Analysis

When looking at representations of queerness in cultural artifacts, discourse analysis is useful for uncovering relationships between the text, its construction, and interpretation (Browne & Nash, 2010). Critical discourse analysis is accessible to queer approaches to research studies because it "allows for the study of diversity, limits of rigid categories, as well as overcome moments of distraction, pause, and instability" when examining texts" when examining texts (Browne & Nash, 2010).

Queer research entails not just recognizing marginalized identities in terms of gender and sexuality, but also unusual subject positions and/or representations; it also demands a break with binary categories and fosters openness and disorientation. Using queer critical discourse analysis approaches, the researcher can examine how distinct power structures of gender and sexuality are socially constructed and regulated.

METHOD

The researcher used the descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative method was a research procedure which results in descriptive data, including written and oral

word from the research objectives whether it is from society or books. Strauss (2003) states that qualitative research seeks to provide the goals using the data in words. The research used descriptive qualitative methods because the data is the form of words or qualitative. The researcher's data sources were taken from the written utterances by the main characters in "Love Simon". The researcher used a source of theories about the romantic secret by Foster and Campbell's theory to support the thesis.

Research Object

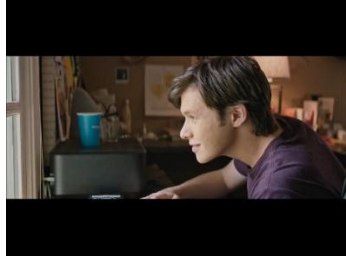
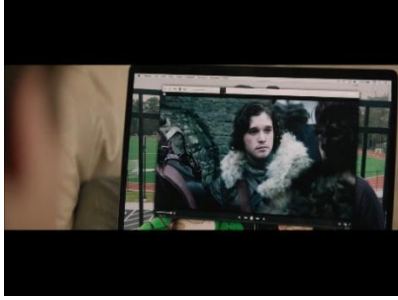

Simon Spier (Nick Robinson) begins the film by talking about himself. His parent's Jack (Josh Duhamel) and Emily (Jennifer Garner). His younger sibling Nora (Talitha Bateman), is a young chef. Simon enjoys time with his three childhood friends, Katherine Langford (Leah), Nick (Jorge Lindeborg, Jr.), and Abby (Alexandra Shipp). However, there is one thing that Simon is hiding from everyone in his life. It is about his sexual orientation that he is a gay. But it did not scare him, Simon continued to live his life as usual.

One day, everyone at his school found out that he was gay because Martin leaked his email with someone with Blue who is also a gay. Simon is sad, he feels isolated and has no friends. Because everything was already done. Simon confessed his sexual orientation to his parents openly and honestly. Because everything was already happened, Simon confessed his sexual orientation to his parents openly and honestly.

FINDINGS

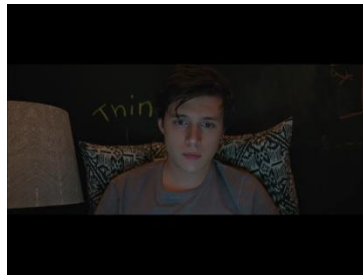
The data is taken from the "Love Simon" movie script. First, the movie script was read to collect the secrecy utterances. Then they were transcribed. The researcher obtained 16 utterances of romantic secrecy collected from "Love Simon movie script."

In the movie script, the researcher found three utterances of *romantic secrecy*, two utterances of *burden*, three utterances of *suppression*, one utterance of *physical attractiveness*, five utterances of *breakup distress*, and two utterances of *love*. The findings of this research on the influence of romantic secrecy are provided in the table below.

Scale	Scene	Items
<p>Romantic Secrecy</p>	<p>Scene 1</p>	<p>SIMON</p>
		<p>“So, like I said I’m just like you, I have totally perfectly normal life except I have one huge ass secret” (Simon’s eyes are locked on the hot gardener)</p>
	<p>Scene 30</p>	<p>BLUE</p>
	<p>“My friends were all holding their breaths waiting to see the Dragon Princess boobs. I was crushing hard on Jon Snow. Wow, I’ve never told that to anyone before”</p>	
<p>Scene 30</p>	<p>SIMON</p>	
	<p>“Well, I’ve never told anyone about my Daniel Radcliffe phase, so now we’re even. And for the record, I think this Jon Snow guy is an excellent choice for your sexual awakening.”</p>	

Burden

Scene 79



SIMON

"And every single time, I have to reintroduce myself to the world all over again"

Scene 139



SIMON

"Change is exhausting. And I feel like there's nowhere to hide"

Satisfaction

-

-

Thought

-

-

Instrution

Thought

Scene 10

BLUE

Supression

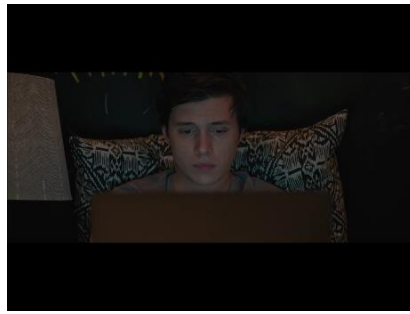


"Sometimes I feel like I'm stuck on a ferries wheel. One minute I'm on top of the world, the next I'm at rock bottom. Over and over, all day long. Because a lot about my life is great. But nobody knows I'm gay."

SIMON

" Dear Blue, I've been thinking about why I haven't come out yes. Maybe it's because it doesn't seem fair that only gay people have to come our. Why is straight the default?"

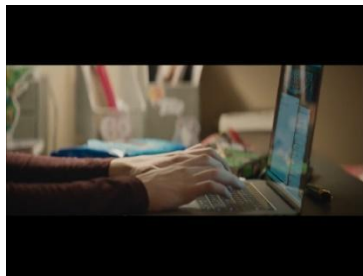
Scene 67



SIMON

"For a long time, I was bending over backwards to hide that face. It was unfair only gay people had to come out. I was sick of change. But the truth is, I was terrified"

Scene 163



**Perceived
Pysical
Attractivness**

Scene 13

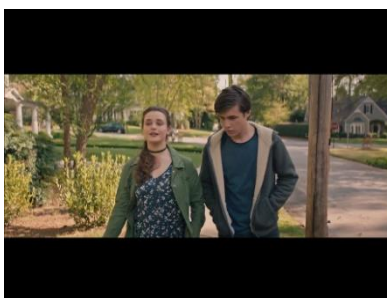


AUTHOR'S NARRATION

He takes in Bram, gets a lizzle lost in his dark brown eyes

**Break-up
Distress**

Scene 160



SIMON

"If Martin leaked our e-mails, it would scare him off. I've been so lonely for so long. And I wish him, I didn't feel lonely."

SIMON

Scene 83

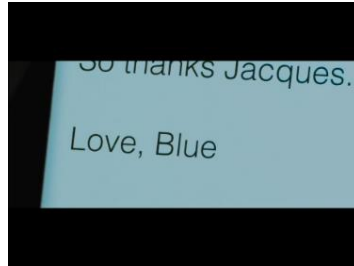


"You don't understand. If you posted our e-mails he'd be so freaked up. He'd never talk to me again"

AUTHOR'S NARRATION

He opens up the same e-mail we just heard. There is in black and white : "*Love, Blue*". He stares at the words, terrified of losing Blue.

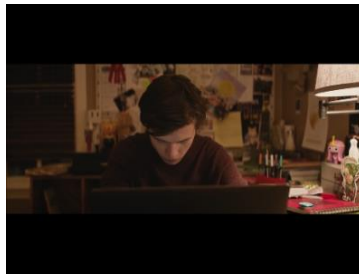
Scene 84



SIMON

"You're going to find out who I am. But please don't freak out and stop writing for me. I need you to promise me you won't disappear"

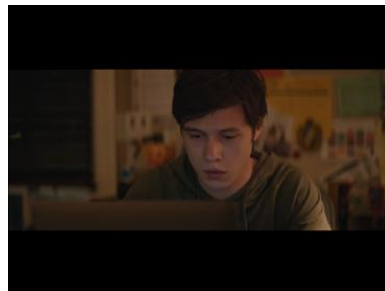
Scene 126



SIMON

"Please, Blue. You can't leave me alone. Everything's falling apart.

Scene 156



Love

Scene 160



SIMON

"I fell in love with someone. The guy in e-mails, I love him."

Scene 174



Simon

"So, guy I love, after the play tonight, at 10:00, you know where I'll be."

Following burden theories of romantic secrecy, the table above depicted the impact of sexual orientation secrecy found in the Love Simon movie script. Breakup anguish is the most common effect of sexual orientation hiding, as described by the first main character Simon. He is afraid that if blue leaves his side, he will lose his feelings for him. Simon is aware that blue is concealing his sexual orientation, and he is being blackmailed by Martin, who threatens to publish his talk with blue via e-mail. The main character does not feel two of the nine sorts of influence from sexual orientation secrecy based on the burden theory of romantic secrecy: satisfaction and thinking intuition.

The Realization of The Influences of Sexual Orientation in The Movie

This section elaborates on the realization of sexual orientation's influence, which is the research's second question. According to the romantic secrecy theory, the influence of sexual orientation secrecy in Love Simon Movie is recognized.

In scenes 1, 18, and 30, where Simon and Blue, as the main protagonists, describe their sentiments and experiences as "same-sex" lovers, there is an example of romantic secrecy. Because he pretends to have a major secret that he is gay, Simon inadvertently defines himself as someone with a "gay" sexual orientation in scene 1. Following that, while watching a movie with one another, Simon and Blue share their

first experience of understanding they liked boys in scene 30. They enjoy the male protagonist.

An example of burden realization can be seen in sections 79 and 139 of the Love Simon film, when Simon expresses how it feels to not be himself when he still hides his sexual orientation as a "gay." In scenes 79 and 139, Simon tells Blue how tough it is to be someone else in him since he has to disguise his gay identity every day, which he finds frustrating.

The protagonists explain how liberated they feel now that they've realized they want men, which is an example of thought repression. They believe that being gay is an embarrassment and that it will ruin their fun. In scenes 10, 67, and 163, Blue portrays himself as a Ferris wheel, and Simon feels unjustified in being gay because coming out only applies to those who are "different" and not heteronormative. As a result of these feelings, every one of them is under pressure.

The author gave an example of perceived physical attractiveness when Simon was the main character when he liked Bram's brown eyes. Simon was taken aback by Bram's brown eyes, which made him dizzy. This thing is revealed in scene 13 through the author's narration. Because of his gay sexual orientation, Simon is physically attracted to men like Bram. Simon could only stealthily glance into Bram's eyes without anyone noticing.

The main characters describe how they don't feel free since they realized they want males, which is an example of thoughts suppression. They are under the impression that being gay is an embarrassment and that it will ruin their fun. Suppression was discussed in scenes 10, 67, and 163, where Blue describes himself as a ferris wheel in scene 10 and Simon feels unfairness in being gay because coming out only applies to individuals who are "queer" and not heteronormative in scene 67. Each of them is under pressure as a result of these feelings.

The author gives an example of perceived physical attractiveness at the time of Simon as the main character when he likes Bram's brown eyes. Simon was taken aback by Bram's brown eyes, which made him dizzy. This is revealed in scene 13 through the author's narration. Because of his gay sexual orientation, Simon has a physical attraction to men like Bram. Simon could only stealthily glance into Bram's eyes without anyone noticing.

In this movie, five scenes depict breakup distress, where Simon used to say that he was frightened of losing Blue since he was the only place he could discuss his LGBT

sentiments and experiences. Breakup distress occurs only when a person develops feelings for the person he likes. Simon, who has affection for Blue, is worried about losing his relationship with her. One of the elements that influence sexual orientation is breakup distress. Because "gay" is a group that frequently hides or avoids being labelled "gay," it is difficult to fall in love with someone with the same sexual orientation.

When Simon states clearly that Blue is someone, he loves in the film, love is realized. Simon informs his friend Leah and even his school blog in scenes 160 and 174 that blue, whom he used to email, has turned into someone he likes. This is a positive influence for Simon since he finds someone who can truly listen to and comprehend his life stories as long as he hides his sexual orientation.

From the explanation of the classifications above, it could be deduced that the most influence given to the main characters when they keep their sexual orientation secrecy is break-up distress. Break-up distress is the most common influence on sexual orientation secrecy in Love Simon Movie. This shows that Simon as the character who most describes break-up distress have emotions which included denial about the separation and feelings of loneliness and emptiness if he loses someone he loves.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of this study, after analysing the types of the influence of sexual orientation secrecy using the romantic secrecy theory of Foster and Campbell (2005). First, in the 16 data found in the "Love Simon" movie script, it was found that romantic secrecy categories were based on Foster and Campbell (2005), namely from 16 data, there were 16 category romantic secrecy that occurred and were then classified 6 types. The researcher found 16 utterances of romantic secrecy collected from "Love Simon movie script." Fourteen utterances were derived from the main characters and two from the author's narration.

Related to previous study, the findings of this study, similar with the research Beth Easterling, David Knox & Alora Brackett (2005) entitle Secrets in Romantic Relationships: Does Sexual Orientation Matter?. The data took from 431 respondents (primarily attending a large south-eastern university). The objective of the study was to find out how homosexuals live in a heterosexist environment. The researcher found that homosexuals were much more likely to keep secrets than heterosexuals. Second, in hopes of avoiding prejudice and discrimination, homosexuals live in a heterosexist environment that fosters constant deceit by hiding their sexual orientation (the phrase

"in the closet" means "keeping a secret"). Because they have a tendency of maintaining secrets, homosexuals are more likely to keep a secret from a love partner.

Other study was Kristyn Marie Jackson (2016) entitled *Secrecy in the Context of Romantic Relationships*. The objectives of the study were to investigate the issues of individual romantic partners' secrets and the public's impression of secret keeping in romantic partnerships.

And Lacey J. Ritter, Tara Martin, Keely Fox, David Knox, Susan Milstein entitled "Thanks for Telling Me": The Impact of Disclosing Sex Secrets on Romantic Relationships (2021). The data took from a 39-item Internet questionnaire completed by 195 undergraduate students showed that revealing sex secrets to a romantic partner. The objectives of the study were to find out the type of romantic relationship.

According to the description above, the differences between this study and the previous study are not the same as those of other researchers. In contrast, the researcher employed Foster and Campbell's theory, whereas earlier investigations used Lane and Wegner's (1994) theory. Although one researcher employed the same theory, the subject and analysis were not the same.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In *Love Simon* movie, the researcher discovered that romantic concealment is costly since it is mentally stressful. Based on the romantic secrecy theory, the researcher discovered six forms of influence of sexual orientation secrecy. Break-up anguish was shown to be the most common type of sexual orientation secrecy in the study. If the romantic secrecy theory is correct, then the relationship between sexual orientation secrecy and secrecy is a burden for those who live it. Furthermore, researchers discovered that each sort of influence on sexual orientation secrecy has a different effect. For example, the main character recognizes the idea of repression when he reveals that he is tired of keeping his sexual orientation a secret.

By considering the conclusion mentioned above, the writer formulized some suggestions as follows. Several suggestions were recommended by the researcher to readers towards sexual orientation secrecy. For readers, it would be enriching their knowledge through queer critical analysis and secrecy. For those who love watching Queer movies are advised to use this research to recognize and comprehend sexual orientation secrecy and the for researchers are advised to research more and expand analysis about queer and sexual orientation secrecy.

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