FEMINISM VALUES IN THE POSTERS OF YOGYAKARTA’S STUDENTS DEMONSTRATION: THE #GEJAYANMEMANGGIL

Nurul Huda Gustema1*; Wening Sahayu2

1,2Applied Linguistics Department, Yogyakarta State University
Jl. Colombo No. 1, Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia
1nurulhuda.2018@student.uny.ac.id; 2hayyusahayu@gmail.com

Received: 27th January 2020/Revised: 18th February 2020/Accepted: 02nd March 2020

How to Cite: Gustema, N. H., & Sahayu, W. (2020). Feminism values in the posters of Yogyakarta’s students demonstration: The #gejayanmemanggil. Lingua Cultura, 14(1), 23-29. https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v14i1.6234

ABSTRACT

The research aimed to examine feminism values on the posters of Yogyakarta’s students’ demonstration the #Gejayanmemanggil. Data collection technique was conducted by reading and note-taking techniques. From social media (Instagram), read the posters for several times, made a reduction for the data, and analyzed the feminism values which were reflected in the data based on the discourse or textual aspects. In the findings, the use of feminist languages, which contained the feminism values was revealed, in order to correlate it with the previous studies and theories. It was affected by the positive and negative meanings of the words and their impact on the audience. Discourse analysis was the proper way to examine the hidden ideologies of discourse. It revealed the discursive structures and manipulative language of the speakers or writers. The results reveal that the posters on the demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil contain feminism values as reflected in the feminist languages which support the ideology. Therefore, based on the findings of the research which conducts a discourse analysis in examining mass communication, language has enormous powers in appealing to emotions, manipulating someone’s thoughts and behavior, as well as misrepresenting the realities.

Keywords: feminism values, student posters, students demonstration, discourse analysis

INTRODUCTION

There are several previous studies which aim to define and interpret feminism differently. Feminism is commonly correlated with historical political movements in Europe and the USA. Meanwhile, Nienaber and Moraka (2016) have stated that feminism concerns the identity of women, both philosophically and socially, and with equal rights politically, legally, and economically. In addition, another research by Bakar, Yusof, and Vengadasamy (2016), has revealed that feminism is an effort that aims to reclaim the voice and history of previously muted women by allowing them to express their voices and acknowledging them for their opinions since the separation between men and women is challenging in the general discourses (Udasmoro, 2017). It is in line with Shamsuddin and Hamid (2017), who have stated that there should be a long study of gender roles that conform to social and cultural expectations.

Hence, Suryaningrum, Suwandi, and Waluyo (2019) have stated that feminism is a women’s movement that is formed due to the awareness that women have the same position as men. The purpose of feminism is to increase the women’s position and the degree to be the same as men’s. Feminism intends to fight for humanity for women as independent human (women demanding their full rights as human beings). Even in Indonesian culture, this kind of discrimination still happens. In other words, feminism can be defined as an ideology that aims to make women’s rights equal to other people without considering gender. A person who supports feminism is called as feminist.

Feminism is influential in the early foundations of language, gender, and sexuality research, as an impact that continues until today. Current theories in critical thinking and feminist perspectives have informed recent studies on language and gender, shifting from an essentialist perspective to a non-essentialist perspective. It enables critical feminist
linguistics to include heterogeneity, non-fixity, specificity, and reflexivity in its perspectives. There is persistent linguistic sexism in the anthems of some countries, which diametrically negates the principle of gender equality and the global condemnation of gender-biased language use, especially in public communication (Oluga, Seng, & Rajoo, 2016). It is considered that gender cognition is viewed as a construct of thought and social practice (Anshori, 2016). Previous researches on language and gender are conducted by Jespersen (1921), the most frequently quoted and anthologized article. Jespersen (1921) has revealed that men and women use language differently, for example, in terms of phonetics, grammar, diction, vocabulary, and adverbs.

Meanwhile, another previous research by Lakoff (2009) has shown a similar result to Jespersen’s conclusion that women’s language is inferior or deficient. If it is compared to men’s language, they have different interpretations of their similar findings. If Jespersen sees the difference essentially sprung from biological determinant, on the other hand, Lakoff sees women’s linguistic deficiency as the result of the power-gender relation assigned to men and women in society in which men frequently dominate and are more privileged. Lakoff has an explicitly positive and sympathetic attitude toward women. It is showed by the use of gendered agent nouns, as well as status asymmetries in the semantics of gendered pairs like master or mistress and major or majorette (Lakoff, 2009). Thus, Lakoff’s research plays a crucial role in establishing the study of language, gender, and sexuality as a linguistic subfield. Lakoff is not endorsing but simply describing a culture-wide ideology that scorns and trivializes both women and their ways of speaking, while scholars continue to debate the concept of women’s language. As continuing until now, another study from Yusuf, Natsir, and Yusra (2016) have revealed that women’s language is seen as inferior and something that stands out from the norm. Hence, there is a term called the feminist language, which refers to the effort, often of political and grassroots movements, to change how language is used to gender people, and activities, and ideas on an individual and societal level.

However, several ways can be conducted to examine the existence of feminist language, such as by conducting discourse analysis, specifically in women’s writing. In 1984, the linguist Suzette Haden Elgin wrote a science fiction novel to test her feminist language. In addition, an American woman poet named Elizabeth Akers Allen (Kurnia, 2015) and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, who is one of the first English language utopian writers, put of gender and women’s rights at their writings (Abbasi & Moslehi, 2016). Besides that, Eithne Strong is also a writer whose main concerns are the role of women, of domestic matters, and of women’s confrontation with love, death, and sexuality (Chang, 2017). Meanwhile, in Indonesia, there are several writers whose works refer to the feminist, one of them is Okky Madasari, as reflected in her novels Entrok, Maryam, and Pasung Jiwa (Suryaningrum, Suwandi, and Waluyo, 2019). Hence, it gradually shows that the emergence of women authors whose literary works have a different style than men’s writings (Zeiny, 2019). Meanwhile, the feminist language not only can be found in novels or books but also in mass communication. Mass communication has an important role in the development of language which can be found easily in the society, how power is being reproduced by discourse in society (Marandi, Ramin, & Shabanirad, 2017). Nowadays, there are ‘new media’, such as blogs, online news, and online forums which can also affect the public’s perceptions (Al Fajri, 2017).

The discrimination between men and women in social practice, especially in the media and also the literature, people start to show the diversity of gender claimed as a social reality. This heterosexual gender is repeatedly performed in daily life, along with the history of human beings. In reality, men do not always bring the values of masculine, and women do not always be feminine (Suryaningrum, Suwandi, & Waluyo, 2019). This understanding can be seen in many societies; one of them is in Indonesia. That phenomenon which is spread in an online forum as mass communication in order to affect public perceptions happen in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. When the students from several regencies gather in an online forum and finally conduct a massive demonstration which is named #Gejayanmemanggil. In this demonstration, the participants consist of men and women. The participants meet in Jalan Colombo, a three-way intersection on Jalan Gejayan, Yogyakarta, Indonesia, on Monday, September 24th, 2019. Regarding the previous research and literature related to feminism and the feminist language, the researchers aim to examine the feminism values in mass communication, specifically in the posters of Yogyakarta’s students’ demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil by finding the feminist languages. Even though Manggarrani, Nababan, & Santosa (2019) have stated that Indonesian is a neutral language in true sense.

Thus, in the research, discourse analysis is implemented in order to examine those debates around the theories. The social theory of discourse is linguistically-oriented as it aims to analyze the social and political events in society (Ramanathan & Tan, 2015). It focuses on how power is being reproduced by discourse in society. Besides that, discourse helps in constructing the function and meaning of a sentence (Dumlao & Wilang, 2019). It includes principles of hierarchy, representation, and accountability. Thus, discourse analysis is appropriate to be implemented in the research. Therefore, the research problem is, what are the feminist values contained in the posters of Yogyakarta’s students’ demonstration #GejayanMemanggil?

METHODS

In the research, the social function of language as a powerful social practice in a specific discourse,
such as mass communication is examined. Data collection technique is conducted by reading and note-taking technique, as proposed by Sudaryanto (2015). Therefore, by analyzing the posters in demonstration #GejayanMemanggil, the researchers try to examine the feminism values contained in the posters by identifying the discourse or textual aspects and doing the note-taking. There are several steps conducted in analyzing the data. The stages of discourse analysis are establish the context, explore the production process, prepare the material for analysis, examine the structure of the text, and collect and examine discursive statements. Hence, in the research, the researchers collect the data from social media (Instagram), read the posters for several times, do a reduction for the data, and analyze the feminism values, which are reflected in the data, based on the discourse or textual aspects. Hence, the note-taking technique is also conducted in these steps. The last step is making a conclusion based on the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results are arranged based on several points which are starting from the identification of the demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil. Thousands of university students demand the government and the House of Representatives to hold off the passage of a number of controversial bills, including a revision to the criminal code. They argue that the bills threaten democracy and civil liberties. The participants of the demonstration are mostly women. Those women demand the government to ratify the criminal code related to the deletion of sexual abuse, especially for women. Those woman urges the Criminal Code on the elimination of sexual violence to be ratified immediately and demanded that the arrest of activists should be stopped. They assess the contents of the criminal code since it silences democracy and women’s rights.

Furthermore, the second point is by using discourse analysis. Since the content and the material which is aimed to be examined have been collected, then the researchers aim to examine the discursive statements in the posters of the demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil, as the stages of conducting a discourse analysis. Hence, the researches examine the posters as related to feminism values and try to interpret the sentences.

For the third point, it reveals that the reasons for women who joined the demonstration are dominated by their desires to preserve their rights, and they ask for equal opportunities to tell their ideas and hope that their voices can be heard by the government. In this case, it emphasizes that women can also be equal to men, and people cannot underestimate women’s power. They demand their rights as strong as they can. Hence, these women try to use the power of feminism. Since the women demand their rights as the aspects of feminism, they are able to be respected by people as their courage to tell their ideas. It is proved by many mass media that mostly informs about women’s aspirations in the demonstration, and they emphasize that in this demonstration, the women are awesome. Hence, the participants and audiences of this demonstration accept feminism.

Several feminist languages have been found, as uttered by the women in the demonstration. From 29 posters, there are fourteen (14) data, containing feminist languages that are found by the researchers when making a reduction for the data.

In Figure 1, it can be seen that there are two women, while each of them was holding a poster. It can be seen that the second poster mentioned that “perempuan lebih menawan jika turun ke jalan.” It can be defined that in her statement, there is a feminist language that aims to explain even women can be more beautiful or glamorous if they come to the street, follow the demonstration in order to defend their rights. In this context, it can also be implied that she states that women and men have equality and the same rights. Women can also express their ideas through such kind of demonstration.

In Figure 2, the girl emphasizes “Perempuan bukan objek seksualitas kaum patriarki.” In other words, she states that women cannot be underestimated, they cannot be the victims of sexual harassment by men, and women should be protected. Her statement
implies the feminist language which aims to defend the appropriate decision concerning women as an important aspect, as well as men.

In Figure 3, the girl’s statement refers to the government who bothers the women’s privacy by concerning virginity and making the criminal code which limits women’s freedom. In this case, she tries to emphasize that woman should be treated well and cannot be discriminated. Her statement implies a feminist language and feminism value.

In Figure 4, this woman aims to emphasize that women should not be discriminated against by what they wear. It implies that sexual abuse does not occur because of women’s appearance itself, and tries to imply that women should be protected, instead of discriminating and blaming them.

In Figure 5, this woman states that “walaupun skincareku luntur, tapi kami tidak mundur.” In other words, the woman aims to imply that even though women wear make-up, they cannot be considered weak or do not have the same rights as men. Women’s make-up is not a parameter to decide how women behave.

In Figure 6, bidan (midwife)’s statement relates to criminal code which aims to inhibit women from going outside at 10 PM or above it. Meanwhile, in this case, midwives mostly consist of women, and they cannot do their responsibility if the criminal code is being legalized. In other words, it implies that their rights and dedications have been restricted. It relates to feminism, which aims to defend women’s rights in order to be able to work like men without any discrimination.

In Figure 7, woman in Figure 7 briefly states that “Perempuan harus berani melawan” or women should be brave to fight the rules. Women should not always be controlled with many rules, which tends to discriminate against women and men. Her statement briefly implies a feminist value.

In Figure 8, it emphasizes the first point that the country is possessed by men, while the women are not treated like men as well. In other words, she implies that men are not the only ones who have the whole power since women also have similar power and rights. It influences their capabilities to speak up and express their idea. Her statement reveals that make-up
is not a parameter to decide how women behave since women are equal to men.

Figure 8 The Poster of Yogyakarta’s Students’ Demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil 8 (Source: Instagram @lawanpatriarki)

In Figure 8, the feminism values are highlighted by stating that women cannot be underestimated.

Figure 9 The Poster of Yogyakarta’s Students’ Demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil 9 (Source: Instagram @lawanpatriarki)

In Figure 9, the women also briefly state a feminism aspect, which explains that women’s movements should not be prevented and restricted. These women highly defend their rights, as well as men. While in Figure 10, the woman states that women should be free and protected from any sexual abuse. She has stated that freedom can be indicated by the deletion of sexual harassment. In this case, she asks for the right to be protected, and she would like to show that women cannot be underestimated.

Figure 10 The Poster of Yogyakarta’s Students’ Demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil 10 (Source: Instagram @lawanpatriarki)

In Figure 10, her statement refers that the government bothers the women by concerning virginity and make the criminal code, which limits women’s freedom. In this case, she tries to emphasize that a woman should be treated well and cannot be discriminated. Her statement implies a feminist language and feminism value.

In Figure 11, the woman aims to emphasize that women should not be discriminated against by what they wear. It implies that sexual abuse does not occur because of women’s appearance. She tries to imply that women should be protected, instead of discriminating and blaming them.

Figure 11 The Poster of Yogyakarta’s Students’ Demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil 11 (Source: Instagram @lawanpatriarki)

In Figure 11, the woman also briefly states a feminism aspect, which explains that women’s movements should not be blamed since sexual harassment does not only occur because of the woman herself. She rejects the criminal code, which tends to blame women as the only one factor.

Figure 12 The Poster of Yogyakarta’s Students’ Demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil 12 (Source: Instagram @lawanpatriarki)

In Figure 12, her statement refers that the government bothers the women by concerning virginity and make the criminal code, which limits women’s freedom. In this case, she tries to emphasize that a woman should be treated well and cannot be discriminated. Her statement implies a feminist language and feminism value.

In Figure 13, the woman has briefly stated a feminism aspect. It is stated a justice should be received by women, and women’s movements should not be blamed since sexual harassment does not only occur because of the woman herself. She rejects the criminal code, which tends to blame women as the only one factor.

Figure 13 The Poster of Yogyakarta’s Students’ Demonstration #Gejayanmemanggil 13 (Source: Instagram @lawanpatriarki)

In Figure 13, the woman aims to emphasize
that women should not be discriminated against by what they wear. It implies that sexual abuse does not occur because of women’s appearance, and she tries to imply that women should be protected, instead of distinguishing and blaming them. This woman also tries to emphasize that even a woman who wears a hijab like her still can get cat-calling. Her statement implies a feminist aspect that defends women’s rights in order to be equal to men.

Hence, based on the previous researches and theories conducted by Jespersen (1922), Lakoff (2009), Nienaber and Moraka (2016), Bakar, Yusof, and Vengadasamy (2016), which have examined feminism and feminist language. It is proved that the researches’ impacts have been continuing until today. By conducting the research, it has been proved that this phenomenon still occurs, which concerned with the feminist language. One of the most important criticisms of the feminist theory of language is the criticism to the basis of it, while language tends to be not neutral.

Feminist issues in the field of nature of language and literary criticism are still originated. Feminists differentiate between sex (physiological and biological aspects) and gender (social and cultural aspects), and they believe that what caused the discrimination in language refers to the cultural and social aspects (gender). Discourse analysis is implemented since it is aimed at analyzing social and political events in society since language becomes the central importance of understanding discourse and how to examine feminism aspects contain in someone’s thoughts, which are expressed through his/her language. It can be conducted since discourse helps to analyze the construction of the function and meaning of a sentence, as stated by Dumlaol and Wilang (2019).

How the language represents someone’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors are found in the posters of the demonstration. Based on 14 (fourteen) data obtained from social media (Instagram @lawanpatriarki), it can be seen that the researchers have found the feminism in them since the participants refuse the patriarchy culture. They refuse to go home before 10 p.m.; they ask for freedom to express their thought in either social media or mass media, and so does in a demonstration; and also they ask the government to not supervising and giving punishment for them since it will violate their privacy. The women state that they are strong, and women and men have no differences. The researchers could analyze their languages since they are expressed through the posters. Certainly, discourse helps to establish frames of meaning by interpreting events and situations. It includes principles of hierarchy, representation, and accountability. It deals with the narrative interpretation of events and ideas in order to evaluate the data.

Based on the findings, it is in line with Lakoff (2009), which has stated that feminist language can be found wherever and whatever the situation. It is also like in the research, which can be found in mass communication. In the posters of demonstration #GejayanMemanggil, the women participants write many posters in order to be equalized with men, defended their rights, and proved that women and men should not be discriminated, especially with the criminal code. The relations between text and context are, of course, crucial, and no fledged theory of the media that is adequate without such explicit inferences.

Analysis of the relations between media texts and contexts requires a more systematic approach to discourse. Para verbal and non-verbal features in spoken media discourse. On the one hand, through an analysis of syntactic structures, lexical style or rhetorical devices, to the underlying meanings, connotations or associations, or the pragmatics of speech acts performed. Such systematic analyses should be made for a large variety of discourse types in the media, not only of news but also of advertising, film, TV-programs (talk shows, etc.), mass communication and so on. A comparison between different media genres may then yield specific properties for different genres but also commonalities. Besides that, it also cannot be separated from the language and linguistics functions from a text. Discourse has enormous powers in appealing to emotions, manipulating someone’s thoughts and behavior, and misrepresenting the realities. In conclusion, the research in examining the feminism and feminist language can be conducted by using discourse analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

The results reveal that the posters on the demonstration #GejayanMemanggil contain feminism values as reflected in the 14 data which support the ideology. It can also be concluded that the use of feminist languages still exists, especially in mass communication. In the posters of demonstration #GejayanMemanggil, the women participants write many posters in order to be equalized with men, defended their rights, and proved that women and men should not be discriminated, especially with the
Feminism Values in the Posters.... (Nurul Huda Gustema; Wening Sahayu)