

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE #METOO MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA:

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Critical Discourse Analysis

Abstract

“The Representation of the #Metoo Movement in Indonesia: A Critical Discourse Analysis” is an examination of how the popular sexual/gender rights movement known as #MeToo has manifested itself in Indonesia. This paper employs Norman Fairclough’s approach to critical discourse analysis on articles entitled “*#MeToo Indonesia*” published on online journal InsideIndonesia and “*Indonesia's #MeToo: Film industry workers move to create safer ecosystem from within*” by Indonesian English new portal JakartaPost. Findings suggested that the MeToo movement in Indonesia has yet to reach their peak potential influence. This is due to the lack of viable legal law that may help victims in need of support. And the topicality of this matters, as it is considered to be a taboo topic in the society.

Keyword: *CDA, MeToo, sexual assault, gender equality*

INTRODUCTION

To be heard and understood is probably the least thing a sexual assault victim would’ve wanted, and when African-American activist Tarana Burke launched the MeToo campaign in 2006, that is exactly what she was hoping to achieve, to give victims a chance to become a survivor, the one that is heard and understood.

The #MeToo movement as its activists explained is a movement about raising an awareness to the public about the magnitude of sexual violence problem in our society. It is also a movement that strive to create change, one that gives victims of sexual abuse the support they need, to make them feel empowered, thus aiming bigger, to end sexual violence and harassment. The main moving power of this movement comes from the mass use of social media, contributing to its popularity over the years right to a level where it has become a viable discourse of power. This movement is one of the most prominent feminist movements that arose in the digital era since its global rise in around 2017 when social media users started to use hashtag #MeToo to let survivor tell their story and giving them the help that they need. The movement arose to international level with the goal of fighting for the rights of women to rise from oppression. This movement, unlike its other similar counterpart, has lasted longer and has achieved prominence in the global digital era, one of the main reasons being how big it is and that there was a lot famous influential figures that also support the movement.

Given its mass popularity, Regulska (2018) explained that This is a movement that is both strong and perplexing. It is powerful because it connects with women all over the world, providing a chance to have conversations with individuals from all cultural backgrounds and perspectives in different regions of the world: this is an opportunity for global learning at home and abroad. I hear rejection, disdain, and outright criticism when I go to other nations. #MeToo does not connect with everyone; for others, it is viewed as a luxury that women living in poverty or in war-torn nations cannot afford. This trend is of course an empowering moment for women as they are given chance to define their own sense of definition when it comes to sexual harassment, abuse, or assault. However, Regulska (2018) argued that it needs to be made clearer the impact of those sexual misconducts may have to a victim's understanding of their bodies and

how they position themselves in the society. It is also a challenge to acknowledge how the movement may differ depending on local cultural context, political climates, class, racial and ethnic advantages, heteronormativity, and a slew of other pressures exerted by power and dominance networks.

Ilyas (2022) also argued in their article of how the #MeToo movement exists as a strong large-scale social media phenomenon with many facets and expressions. It has undergone drastic changes, adjustments, and digressions in how it is manifested. It has also experienced changes in its aims and projection since it kickstarted in 2006 to the way it exists now as a social media phenomenon right at the peak of its popularity. #MeToo is inclusive for varied groups of people who are identified a victim of sexual misconducts depending on their gender, age, class, ethnicity, and career. The public's building of many societal structures is partly due to the campaign's various portrayals on social media and the resulting creation of various social reality by the public. The findings show how the independent, intervening, and dependent variables interact: how the body and content of #MeToo were influenced by the language used in its representation and the general public's attitude, which in turn influenced its substance and reputation.

Although its mass reputation in the international digital platform, this movement has yet to reach its peak in some countries. Indonesia is one of the countries that hasn't really feel the influence of this mass feminist movement. While women in other countries have succeeded in overthrowing the powerful men who abused them, in Indonesia, victims still have to try to find justice. (Kartika, 2019) Studies suggest that the lack of #MeToo in Indonesia is due to a mix of profoundly established patriarchal culture, conservative religious values, and gender-insensitive law enforcement tactics. Women in Indonesia rarely discuss sex, let alone sexual violence, due to

a strong patriarchal society reinforced by the government and religious authorities. Women found it difficult to enter politics under the 32-year autocratic reign that ended in 1998. Their function is still primarily that of a mother and wife. As a result, for decades, discussions about women's issues have always centred around women's home roles. In Indonesia, there is no public discussion about gender equality or protection against sexual violence. Victim-blaming phenomenon occur and recur in cases of sexual misconducts in Indonesia, widespread beliefs suggested that women are half to blame in a sexual assault as they are the one who may be the cause of male's sexual desire, resulting in a sexual assault. The victim-blaming culture is likewise perpetuated by the media. Women are frequently blamed in reports about sexual harassment for encouraging male desires. This research paper then aims to do a critical discourse analysis on two chosen articles that talks about the #MeToo movement in Indonesia. The first article is "*#MeToo Indonesia*" written by authors Monika Winarnita, Nasya Bahfen, Gavin Height, Joanne Byrne & Adriana Rahajeng Mintarsih and released as an article in InsideIndonesia an Australian based journal, that has evolved into an online journal about Indonesia. The second article is "*Indonesia's #MeToo: Film industry workers move to create safer ecosystem from within*". This article was written by Gisela Swaragita and published in thejakartapost.com in March 2022. The first article generally described how the #MeToo movement is manifested so far in Indonesia. This article stated that gender rights activism in Indonesia could potentially reach newer high considering how big Indonesia's social media mass is. However, it is equally important to put the same effort to offline activism to push the movement even further, hoping to achieve more people of different class, especially ones that aren't on social media. The second article by JakartaPost specifically talks about the MeToo movement in the sector of film industry. It has revealed that sexual misconducts occur to a

serious magnitude in the sector. It's the ideal time to fight for change in the industry, as by 2021, the country's cinematic scene will have elicited a powerful wave of public appreciation and critical attention with the release of outstanding films telling daring and unique tales.

In order to discover the power relations that exists in the two articles regarding the #MeToo movement in Indonesia, Norman Fairclough's (2013) critical discourse analysis (CDA) is applied as the main theory and research method. By these means, this research hopes to contribute to the rising of sexual violence awareness in Indonesia by conducting CDA on the chosen articles. These reasons are enough to start paying attention to academic studies regarding sexual violence in Indonesia, more specifically how the #MeToo movement is represented in the archipelago country. In order to confirm the movement's redefinition in Indonesia, a survey including readers of the article on sexual misbehaviour in Indonesia is necessary.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis technique. This approach was chosen by the researcher because it provides for a systematic explanation of the data's facts and features. This viewpoint sees language as a reflection of social relationships or as a source of power. Understanding discourse as a sort of social activity is the objective of a critical discourse analysis method. In social practice, a person's goal in constructing a discourse, including the intention of wielding power, is always present. The two chosen articles, “*#MeToo Indonesia*” written by authors Monika Winarnita, Nasya Bahfen, Gavin Height, Joanne Byrne & Adriana Rahajeng Mintarsih and released as an article in InsideIndonesia and “*Indonesia's #MeToo: Film industry workers move to create safer ecosystem from within*” by Gisela Swaragita and published in thejakartapost.com will serve as the main data source and provide the data necessary for this research.

DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the research using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis. The analysis will be done in a textual and discursive stage. Each part begins with a brief introduction to the article, followed by a data analysis.

***"#MeToo Indonesia"* written by authors Monika Winarnita, Nasya Bahfen, Gavin Height, Joanne Byrne & Adriana Rahajeng Mintarsih**

This first article is a journal article written by Winarnita et al. (2020) as a part of InsideIndonesia, an Australian based online journal about Indonesia. This article described the status quo of Indonesia's fight against sexual violence, harassment, and other misconducts. This article revealed that even before the MeToo movement, feminist groups in Indonesia had already waging campaigns against sexual misconducts even since the new order regime under the presidency of Suharto. Decades later, fight for an environment free of sexual assault and violence had reach its new high in Indonesia. With the development of social media, especially in a country like Indonesia as the third fastest growing numbers of social media user in the world, these movements are proven to grow at a viable pace. The initialization of the MeToo movement had also helped sexual justice fights in Indonesia. However, this article also revealed challenges that the movement is facing in Indonesia, such as the number of people that still don't understand the magnitude of the problem and how the topic for such matters are still very taboo to be properly talked about, especially when it comes to the law. The analysis below will explore the discourse even further.

Micro-structural Analysis

This section of the analysis explored the textual stages of the critical discourse analysis process. Findings suggested that the author of this article wrote this text to warn about the goal, the challenges, and the seriousness of the movement. Starting with the tiniest characteristics of textual analysis, there is a distinct focus on the goal of #MeToo and feminism in general.

1. "...online campaigns to encourage women to speak up about sexual assault and harassment."
2. "...to raise awareness of sexual violence and gendered power imbalances."
3. "...lobbied the new post-Suharto government to investigate the rape and sexual assault of Chinese Indonesian women during the May 1998 riots."
4. "...a collection of causes, including LGBT issues, domestic and migrant worker rights, child marriage and reproductive rights."

Data 1-4 is found within the article, the repeating pattern of how they aim to fight sexual violence shows the clear goal of the fight against the problem. Data 1 contextually speaking about feminist movement in Indonesia before the global rise of the #MeToo movement in 2017, setting up the status quo of how far the fight has gone in Indonesia. Data 2 shows the clear and concise global goal of the #MeToo movement, it is described that the vision of this movement is in line with the goal of Indonesia's feminists fight against sexual assault and violence. Data 3 set up the historical context of how fight against sexual violence has already done in the past, thus constructing a discourse where this matter is not of novel events, describing that it is not a form of cultural invasion, but a fight against an already existing problem that is yet to be dealt with. Data 4 contextually show how movements against sexual violence had also caused its influence on other matters including LGBT rights, gender equality, and other issues that are considered 'taboo' in the Indonesian society.

Macro-structural Analysis

Explicit mentions of challenges, motives, and goals are also found in this article. For instance,

1. "...responding positively to the marches via social media, President Joko Widodo congratulated the protesters, declaring that Indonesia needs 'strong women,' though he stopped short of commenting on specific issues."
2. "...including the media's treatment of sexual abuse cases, body shaming, sexual abuse within the family, Islamic perspectives on violence against women, and a lack of access to safe abortion being akin to sexual violence."

Describing that one of the challenges in this movement is how government executives still find it taboo to talk about certain things. This has hindered changes about sexual assault, gender equality, and other gender/sexuality related issue many times in Indonesia, it is no secret that it is the biggest challenge to talk about sexual/gender issue in Indonesia: not talking about it. Conservatism and religion restriction has contributed to this challenge. Thus, the lack of influence that #MeToo has in Indonesia is due to a mix of strongly ingrained patriarchal culture, conservative religious values, and gender-insensitive law enforcement tactics.

Finally, in discursivity, the MeToo movement in Indonesia had also hindered by the fact that it is a movement that are launched and motorized mainly by western culture. There has been a popular discourse that it is an important mission to fight westernization in Indonesia, especially in the education sector, where it is learned how westernization may bring bad influence especially to Indonesia's traditional culture and value. Ideas of MeToo or feminism in general are often seen as a part of westernization that does not fit the values of Indonesian culture, thus making it harder for the movement to give its influence in Indonesia.

“Indonesia's #MeToo: Film industry workers move to create safer ecosystem from within” by Gisela Swaragita

The second data source is an article published on JakartaPost by author Gisela Swaragita. It concerns about sexual assault and violence in film industry and how MeToo movement had manifested itself so far in the sector. It has revealed that the problem does exist and to a magnitude where it requires serious deterrent act. This article stated that there we are still far from a safe filmmaking environment, part of the reason being the existence of power abuse that result in sexual assault. The film industry's transition toward a more progressive production environment has been delayed by a shortage of female policymakers and a predilection for male crew members, as well as limited regeneration. The analysis below explores the text further.

Micro-structural Analysis

There is a similar pattern of repeatedly mentioning the problem to express the magnitude of it. Although, it is limited, part of the reason of it being it is written specifically in the filmmaking industry.

1. “...to eliminate sexual violence across the industry.”
2. “...The incident was particularly ironic, as Photocopier tells the story of a sexual assault victim struggling to find justice against her powerful perpetrators.”
3. “...to create a safe industry ecosystem.”
4. “...providing training on sexual violence for film workers, encourages establishing an industry hotline for reporting incidents of sexual violence and harassment, as well as a dedicated committee to create a standard operational procedure (SOP) as an industry

guideline for workers to follow in the event that a sexual violence incident is reported or happens during production.”

5. “...to eradicate sexual violence and other kinds of problematic behaviour.”
6. “...Abuse of power was also widespread, Adrian said, noting that one of the most common patterns was sexual misconduct that involved seasoned filmmakers and student volunteers who met at workshops or seminars.”
7. “...Adrian wanted concerned parties in the film community to sit down to pool together their knowledge of sexual violence, which would ultimately help make the community and its events into a safe space.”

Data 1 is one the main mission of the MeToo movement in the industry. In intertextuality to the first article, it can be said that the mission of #MeToo is inclusive to every sector, including filmmaking industry. Data 2 is one of the real examples of the problem at hand, creating a sense of reality of the issue. Irony is used in this case, indicating that sexual assault could happen at any given time at any given situation. Data 3 and 5 revealed the MeToo specific goal in the filmmaking industry, in intertextuality to the first data source, it is learned that the MeToo movement shares a similar goal disregarding where it is waged. Data 4 then provided steps, taking the movement to its possible actuating state. Data 6 and 7 then talked about the challenge and its solution.

Macro-structural Analysis

The author of this article also explicitly uttered their concern. There are mentions of challenges of this movement that possibly hindered its progression.

1. "...These days, an online public tribunal is often the preferred avenue among victims of sexual violence to seek justice. Many times, victims feel like they have no choice other than to make their story go viral as a deterrent against their perpetrator, since the existing legal system often falls short in handling such cases."
2. "...The incident was particularly ironic, as Photocopier tells the story of a sexual assault victim struggling to find justice against her powerful perpetrators."

Data 1 and 2 revealed the industry's challenges in tackling problematic sexual behaviour. Again, suggesting that the problem lies in the incompetence of the existing legal law. In interdiscursivity with the first article, it can be concluded that one of Indonesia's main problems in waging the MeToo movement and anti-sexual misconducts in general is how the government and the existing legal law does not participate themselves enough to help tackle the problem that exists.

CONCLUSION

This critical discourse analysis paper had revealed key point of the representation of MeToo movement in Indonesia. The findings suggested that although feminism had existed long before the MeToo movement in Indonesia, the movement is yet to reach its peak. Part of the problem is how Indonesian's society is not ready to face changes regarding gender/sexual problem, considering the topic to be 'taboo' to be talked about. So, instead of talking of how to tackle the problem that exist, the society focuses on whether these 'western values' fit to Indonesia's values or not, which is understandable as the majority of the population is still strange to the MeToo movement. The second problem is the lack of the government's participation in actuating the law. The fact that viral stories about sexual assault still exist in big number in social media is proof of how this problem is not taken care enough.

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