

MILLS' PERSPECTIVE ON SIMA BAHOUS CLOSING SPEECH AT UN-WOMEN ANNUAL SEASON: A FEMINIST CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The study aimed to find out the women's representation of Sima Bahous' speech entitled "Looking Forward to a Future of Gender Equality" by applying Mills' discourse analysis perspective, such as the subject-object position, reader position, and writer-reader position. The presence of the UN Women organization is a new step and a source of hope for women fighting for gender equality and women's empowerment. Sima Bahous, the woman behind UN Women, contributed to improving the position of women globally through her speech. The descriptive qualitative method was employed in the research supported by the theory of critical discourse analysis with a feminist perspective by Sara Mills. The result showed that in Sima Bahous' selected closing remarks speech, the position of the subject was placed by Sima Bahous as the speaker of her speech and UN Women as the object of the speech. The listener's position was related to the greeting to the listener. Through "mediation" and "cultural codes," this was achieved in a circumstantial manner.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis; gender equality; speech text*

1. Introduction

Women's rights and women's dignity have frequently been disparaged throughout history. The patriarchal systems portray males as rational, powerful, protective, and decisive while women as emotional, irrational, weak, nurturing, and subservient, appropriate to the inferior status of women (Tyson, 2006). Women's primary motivations to change the status quo throughout history have included the under-representation of women in public life, such as the low pay earned by working women, educational inequality, and their objectification in popular culture. Women begin to think about how they could contribute to humanity's inevitable change, and get equal access to educational, economic, and political opportunities. They realize that they need to swap out the patriarchal system that treats them as inferior with one that recognizes their equality and does not grant any advantages or disadvantages to either side. The feminist movements then begins to arise as a result of this battle for social change (Freedman, Estelle, 2002).

The majority of feminists are of the view that women are subject to institutional and personal discrimination and are treated oppressively and differently from men (Mills, 2004). Feminists also claim that society is structured in a patriarchal manner that benefits men

more than women. Mills has laid the groundwork for feminism, and the focus of her analysis—which is referred to as the stylistic approach in a feminist manner. Her paradigm, which is based on the core idea of Foucault, reflects ideology and containment in society, where power is discussed and transmitted through interpersonal relations.

Gender and sexuality issues are examples of issues that never escape stereotypes. Both women and men are often portrayed with gender stereotypes that apply in society. Through texts and images, the concept of gender discrimination and sexuality is constructed in the media and they are consumed by society (Shofiyya & Rusadi, 2018). Mills creates a study to examine how the actor's role is depicted in the text. In terms of the characters who serve as the story's subject and its object. Additionally, it will define how the text is to be viewed as a whole in terms of how it is created and what it signifies. Mills also examines how authors and readers define how readers relate to and place themselves inside the text's storyline. This attitude will put the reader in a particular position and have an impact on how the content is delivered. According to Mills, the writer does not directly shape the reader's perspective in the story, but rather the other way around. In order to explain the justification for analyzing feminist texts, it draws on close language analysis and linguistic theory. The characteristics of males are referred to as masculinity, whereas those of women are regarded as feminine gender. Each gender has distinctive writing characteristics. We may see the author from the writer's perspective and the reader's position in the text using Mills' theory of discourse analysis. The positions of the objects and subjects as they are depicted in the verbal text vary to some extent.

Several previous studies have been conducted on discourse analysis by Sara Mills. Rafiq (2019), in her study, examined how the women were positioned in Minister Susi's case of sinking ships in Indonesian seas, as reported by the five most visited Indonesian news websites. Women in online news texts determine their position and may express themselves, so the research found that the writer was the subject and Minister Susi was the object, which strengthened the author by supporting the opinions of the object. In order for the reader to identify with the main character in the text, the reader must integrate cultural codes into the text and accept the author's notions of value orientation.

Further, Evianda, Ramli, & Harun (2019) described women's positions in Prohaba Daily News texts by applying Sara Mills' perspective of discourse analysis, especially the actor position. The study found that the female actors were positioned as subjects and objects in Prohaba Daily news texts. Women as non-marginalized subjects were found in three news texts; meanwhile, women as non-marginalized objects were found in two news texts. Women in marginalized object positions were found in eight news texts.

In addition, Muawanah (2021) investigated the position of women in texts reported in online media on Kompas.com by approaching Mill's discourse analysis. The study employed descriptive qualitative methods by providing descriptions and analyzing the verbal content of the news articles. The findings of this study placed women as objects in the text since, according to the news, rape victims who were minors were routinely treated improperly and end up dying. In this case, the media outlet Kompas.com exposed women as victims of rape, as told in the text by someone who was subjected. However, Kompas.com also positioned women as subjects in the media who had the chance to share their experiences. Through this news, the author of the media educated readers, particularly men, on the dangers of engaging in such harassment.

The difference between this study and the previous studies is the object of the research. Therefore, the researchers are interested in finding out the representation (the

position of the subject-object, the reader/listener, and the writer/speaker and reader/listener positions) based on Mills' feminist perspective in Sima Bahous' selected closing remarks speech text about gender equality and women's rights at UN Women by using Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis. Sima Bahou's selected closing remarks speech in the title "Looking Forward to a Future of Gender Equality," which was held on June 22nd, 2022, at the UN Women Executive Board's annual meeting, is the object of this study. She is the executive director of the UN Women organization, which fights for gender equality and women's empowerment. Through her speech, she conveyed that she herself persuaded the audience to fight for gender equality and women's rights through the UN Women organization, where she has created a strategic plan in an effort to strengthen the organization's fiduciary responsibilities, transparency, and accountability. The feminist style gives concerned individuals a way to address gender equality (Mills, 1995). Linguists can build tool kits that demonstrate gender and how it functions at various textual levels.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Model Analysis of Sara Mills

Mill's (1992) critical discourse analysis, or feminist perspective, focuses on how women are portrayed in a text. According to Mills (1992), compared to males, the female character in the text tends to appear as the marginalized and guilty participant. With her theory, according to Mills (1992), women's roles in the texts—such as who is the narrator's subject and who is the narrative's object—are highlighted, and how these positions impact the text's overall structure is a key area of study. This situation sides with the reader and affects how well they comprehend the text. Additionally, Mills' feminist stylistics considers how readers and writers are portrayed in the text. The subject-object relation and a study of how the actors' positions are generally represented in the text will show how the dominant ideology and beliefs function in the text. Being a subject or object in a representation carries with it certain ideological assumptions. In the beginning, this position will show how far the storytelling point of view extends. This indicates that a discourse or event will be explained from the viewpoint of the individual participating as the event's narrator.

2.1.1 Subject-Object Position

The position of the subject-object in discourse might affect how women are positioned in feminism (Rafiq, 2019). The ideologies embodied in each of these positions may be discovered by analyzing the actor's position in discourse, both verbal and nonverbal. First, how listeners interpret a particular speech by the speaker is determined by the subject's point of view as the narrator or speaker. In order to communicate his or her views and important points to the reader or listener, the narrator or speaker who assumes the role of the subject must first recount events and then interpret the acts that provide credence to those events. Last but not least, interpretation is a subjective process; thus, how one views an event will have a big impact.

2.1.2 Reader's Position (Listener)

According to the discourse analysis model proposed by Sara Mills, the presence of authors (speakers) and readers (listeners) allows for the formation of discourse (Evianda, & Harun, 2019). She asserts that the reader's position plays a crucial part in a discourse; in this research, the reader is positioned as a listener to the speech that the speaker is delivering. According to Mills, there are two ways to see the listener's position: First, through

mediation, in which the listener positions herself in accordance with the characters she hears in a text; second, when viewers or listeners interpret a text using cultural norms or values (values that are known and mutually agreed upon).

As a result, the narrator's role as the truth-bearer will determine what the audience interprets. Next, the narrator has the flexibility to not only describe events but also to interpret the many activities that make up the event, and then the results of the interpretation of the event are used to construct the meaning to convey to the audience. Finally, as the definition is a subjective process, the point of view used will also affect how an event is defined. When shown in a discourse, the subject-object position in a feminist discourse will also place the position of women. The position of a social actor, a concept, or an event within the text is what is important. The position of the reader is thus that of the person who just reads the text and takes part in carrying out the transaction described in it (Darma, 2014). In this study, Sima Bahous took on the role of the speaker of remarks that were written up in text form, while the listeners and audience members who also attended the annual event played the part of the readers.

3. Research Method

This is a descriptive qualitative study that employs Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis method from a feminist perspective (Mills, 2004). The position of women in the speech is the primary concern from the standpoint of feminist discourse. The data source for this research was obtained from Sima Bahous' selected closing remarks speech entitled "Looking Forward to a Future of Gender Equality" on June 22, 2022. The techniques for collecting data were as follows: 1). finding and reading the entire speech that has been transformed into a text, 2). selecting the ideas of the speech that are identified according to research objectives, and 3). classifying and analyzing the data obtained.

The data were analyzed with the following steps: 1). reading and comprehending Sara Mills' discourse analysis as the theory of analyzing the data, 2). reading the full transcribed text of the speech, 3). sorting out the statements of the speech based on Mills' (1992) gender perspective, 4). classifying the selected data according to the subject-object position, reader/listener position, and writer/speaker-reader/listener position, 5). analyzing the data that have been classified, 6). concluding the analysis. This discourse analysis aims to show how gender equality will be promoted in the future in the text of the speech read by Sima Bahous, the Executive Director of UN Women and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, who spoke during the annual meeting of the UN Women Executive Board.

4. Result and Discussion

There are two concepts of Mill's analysis model in the analysis. First, the position of the actor as depicted in the text is the first idea. It relates to the placement of the narrator (subject), the audience (object), and the subject-object. The next issue is the reader's location, or more specifically, how the reader or listener is situated inside the displayed text. To which group the readers or listeners identify themselves, and how the writer conveys his or her ideology to the reader or listener.

4.1 The subject-object position

In a speech by Sima Bahous entitled "Looking Forward to a Future of Gender Equality", Sima Bahous was positioned as the subject (narrator/speaker), while the UN Women organization was positioned as the object discussed in the speech. According to

Sima Bahous in her speech, the engagement of delegations in establishing these shared orientations demonstrated the significant value of the multilateral process and the capacity to create a single course for the future of UN Women. Bahous also said that she had prepared a strategic plan for the future of UN Women, therefore, she expected support, guidance, and feedback from participants. In her speech, Bahous positioned herself as the subject, presenting herself as the main speaker as well as an executive director of UN Women, and representing her team organization, such as "I would like to reiterate my remarks on our institutional strengthening efforts to enhance the transparency, accountability, and fiduciary strength of the organization. I would also like to be clear that we have heard valuable feedback from our Independent Audit and Evaluation Service and our Audit Advisory Committee. Allow me to assure you of my personal commitment that we will take action as promised." Then, Bahous also stated, "In my opening statement, I undertook to establish a dedicated ethics function within UN Women." She committed to taking steps to increase this area's capabilities in order to create a new and better step for the future (in this case, the UN Women organization as the object). Beginning in 2023, she will also ensure that the organization adheres to the highest standards of behavior, including the protection of whistle-blowers, and she will update the Board on a regular basis.

The results of the data analysis above reveal that the speech by Sima Bahous placed the speaker (Sima Bahous) as the subject and the UN Women organization as the object that became the focus of the speech. Bahous' position as the subject is because she is the main speaker in her own speech, where she freely conveyed her ideas about the UN Women organization. Meanwhile, the object position is occupied by the UN Women organization because of its role as the object discussed in Sima Bahous' speech. The speech delivered by Bahous was her closing remarks on June 22, 2022, at the UN Women Executive Board's annual meeting, in which she expressed her gratitude for the support, guidance, suggestions, and feedback conveyed by the participants in the event, aiming to advance UN Women's organizational program for the welfare of women around the world.

4.2 The listener positions

Since the data source is speech, this will be in a listener's position rather than a reader's position. The listener's position must also be considered. The greeting or mention of the reader in the news is tied to the position of the listener. This is accomplished indirectly through "mediation" and "cultural codes" (Mills, Feminist Stylistics). In the statement "Excellencies, at this session we have presented the results of the 2018–2021 period and looked ahead to the areas of focus under the new Strategic Plan," the speaker inserts an element of mediation as a means of negotiation between the speaker and the listener. The greeting word "excellencies" will automatically direct the listener to agree with the idea put forward by the speaker.

Furthermore, by inserting cultural codes such as "You have placed your trust in us, and we are committed to continuing to deserve it, I am grateful for your positive comments regarding our success in mobilizing non-core resources, growing our regular resources, and maintaining a 30 percent core to non-core ratio," then the listener will agree with the speaker's idea of the value orientation that exists in society, so that the listener will place themselves in a motivated society because she is given a promise.

4.3 The speaker and listener positions

In the speech "Looking forward to a future gender equality", the speaker's position is occupied by Sima Bahous, who, in accordance with her role in the closing speech at the annual meeting of the UN Women Executive Board on June 22, 2022, is the Executive Director of UN Women and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations; while the listener position is occupied by the audience/participants who take part in the annual session. In her speech, she expressed her gratitude: "Distinguished delegates, I would like to thank the President of the Executive Board, H.E. Ambassador Fatima Rabab—my good friend, your good friend—for leading us through the annual session so effectively. And we look forward, like we said earlier in the opening, to continuing to work with her in her new capacity as our best ally for gender equality within the system. So, thank you.", "I would also like to thank the Vice Presidents and all those who have contributed to the robust discussion of this session's significant agenda. I appreciate very much the collaborative and constructive spirit in which we are able to approach all topics. Congratulations on the adoption of the robust decisions that will guide our work." She expressed her gratitude to the important participants who attended and were involved in the event because they had provided input and support for the future of the UN Women organization.

In her closing remarks, the speaker positioned herself as a representative of the world organization UN Women, which is fighting for gender equality and empowering women around the world. She expressed her gratitude for the constructive input from the delegates and participants for the future of UN Women. Not only that, but she also invited listeners to contribute materially and immaterially, because she stated that she is very dependent on the support of listeners for the advancement of UN Women.

5. Conclusion

The speech entitled: *Looking Forward to a Future of Gender Equality*, which was launched again by the unwomen.org website, attempted to present an oral discourse in writing. On these websites, the subject is more dominantly women, so the depiction of objects that also consist of many women is growing with the existence of women's issues. Furthermore, the position of listeners in this news is also one of the factors that help to form a positive image of women. By inserting the cultural code, the reader will agree with the speaker's idea of the value orientation that exists in society, so the listeners will place themselves in the position of the main character in the text.

There are limitations on how this study is done. As there are so many critical discourse analysis theories accessible in the literature, it is advised that more language usage in the media be examined critically in future studies. Critical discourse analysis has made it clear that an individual or organization may use the language of ideology to support their viewpoint and undermine those of other parties or groups.

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