



Representation Of Women In The Writing And Pictures Of The Back Of The Truck: An Analysis Of Sexist Language

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Abstract. Communication media has an essential role in shaping public perception of women. However, the representation of women in the media often has a negative impact. For example, the writing and pictures behind the truck often contain messages that demean women through objectifying diction and visuals. This study aims to analyze the representation of women in truck visual media and shows that the media reinforces gender stereotypes and limits women's potential in society. A qualitative research approach is applied to explore natural phenomena through triangulation techniques and inductive and descriptive data analysis. Identifying key informants is crucial in this method, with selection based on their level of involvement in the social situation being studied. The researcher conducted direct interviews with five informants who have relevant knowledge and experience, using the Critical Discourse Analysis theory that underlies this study to explore how women are represented in the tailgate of trucks in the form of writing and drawings. The findings of this study reveal that the sexist language in the tailgate of a car reflects the view that women are (1) sexual objects, (2) inanimate objects, (3) vulnerable figures who need sexual attention, and (4) weak figures. The representation of women in the writings and images on the back of the truck not only strengthens the patriarchal power structure in Indonesian society but also highlights the complexity of the interaction between language, culture, and power.

Keywords: The Language of Sexism, Women's Representation, Critical Discourse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Communication media has become important for modern life in playing an increasingly important role in forming a view. Communication media is a means or tool to convey a message from a communicator to the audience. In the communication process, communication media also functions as a mediator to create information

delivery that becomes more effective and efficient. However, conveying messages in certain mediums still produces detrimental negative stereotypes that do not have practical value as a means of distributing information. One of them can be found in the medium of the tailgate of a truck; if we look at the facts in the field, there are still a lot of negative messages about women from the choice of diction and are also supported by visuals that increasingly support the subordination of women's gender.

Women do not only have one role such as household affairs and are associated with physicality and appearance. Women also have great opportunities to expand their roles in economics, politics, and other fields (Rahim, Siswoyo, and Hermawan 2022). Writings that demean women or portray them negatively can reinforce stereotypes that prevent women from reaching their full potential in various aspects of life. Images displayed on the back of trucks can even depict women as sexual objects or show violence against women. This not only damages the image of women in general but also gives legitimacy to the treatment that degrades and harms women in society. More profoundly, this phenomenon raises questions about how visual culture in the public sphere significantly influences the construction of women's identity.

In recent times, more and more attention has been paid to the study of sexist languages, and how they reflect and reinforce stereotypical views of women in society can be found in the writings on the backs of passing trucks. These writings become a medium to convey visual and textual messages to the general public. In the context of illustrations of pictures behind trucks, the visual communication media found there often objectifies women and reinforces stereotyped views of women in society. In this context, analyzing the writings and drawings often found on the back of trucks becomes very relevant. As a form of media widely spread on the streets, these writings and images can potentially influence the perception and collective understanding of women.

Miller and Shift stated that sexist language is a language that represents one gender as superior to another, such as in vocabulary, grammar, and other fields. (Li, 2014). Sexism is a form of discrimination based on a person's gender. For women, sexism becomes something. Which is quite often experienced and certainly unacceptable because it perpetuates gender stereotypes.

Based on the discussion above, in the form of visual communication, it was found that there was a problem with the representation of women, which was only objectified by men. It can be considered sexist language, as Cameron (2006: 16) expresses that in

addition to words and phrases, sexist language is also a word and phrase that makes women inferior to men. Mills (2008: 11-12) said that sexist language is divided into two, namely direct (overt sexism) and indirect (covert sexism). Mills (2008: 65-85) identifies the characteristics of direct sexist language, namely: (1) common pronouns, whose meaning is commonly understood by men and whose meaning is different for women (2) the general object of the word, The general meaning refers to men, but refers to men and women, such as college students. (3) Affixes (suffixes) that end in words as gender markers. Example: wan in graduates (males) and-wait for graduates (females), (4) Greetings to women are different if they are not married, for unmarried people such as Miss and Mbak and Mrs for married people, but this does not apply to men, (5) offensive words such as prostitutes and pimps (6) Words that have partners such as students, and women. (7) Proverbs. On the other hand, sexist language can be indirect in the form of jokes or assumptions that contribute more implicitly to the presentation of ideology

Analysis of sexist language in the back of a truck is vital because language has the power to shape perceptions and attitudes. Sexist language, which often reduces the role and dignity of women, also plays a role in perpetuating gender stereotypes. Identifying and analyzing sexist language in the back of a truck can help us understand how gender stereotypes are maintained and reinforced through this medium. In addition, images that often decorate the back of a car can also be a source of gender stereotypes. The images may depict women in traditional and clichéd roles, such as sexual objects, housewives, or mere entertainment objects. Analyzing the dominant types of images and how women are portrayed in these contexts is essential to understanding how these visual representations contribute to maintaining or rejecting gender stereotypes.

LITERATURE

Previous research found that visual communication media was used as a tool to perpetuate the ideology of power. The mass media also plays a significant role as an agent of gender socialization through the spread and preservation of gender ideology. Although mass media is not the only factor that influences people's perception of gender bias, the high intensity of media consumption by society can reinforce stereotypes that have been embedded in social values. In addition, in other media such as advertisements, women are often shown only in domestic contexts, such as household products and household appliances, which reinforce gender role boundaries. (Rahim, Siswoyo, and Hermawan 2022).

In a study conducted by Rina Wahyu Winarni (2010) entitled *Women's Beauty Representation in Advertising*, it was found that several beauty products provide a narrative that leads women to have glowing white skin to be considered beautiful and satisfy men. Rahmat Edi Irawan (2014), in his research entitled *Women's Representation in the Cinema Industry*, stated that the objectification of women is a common thing. Instead of being seen as her ability in acting, women in the cinema industry are considered to be only sweeteners who sell beauty, body beauty, and behavior that is only to provide satisfaction for men.

Research on women's representation in its journey has been carried out a lot, one of which is a study entitled *Women's Representation in the Cinema Industry* by Rahmat Edi Irawan (2014). This study aims to look at the representation of women in the cinema industry. It uses literature studies or literature studies to see the relationship between several theories of mass communication, especially those that raise the issue of representation.

Then it was also found in another study entitled *Types of Discourse and Criticism of Feminism in Illustration Images of Women in Truck Beds in the North Coast of Java* by Sunahrowi (2018); this study aims to see the types of discourse types and feminist criticisms contained in the images in the truck beds. Then, this research uses three theories combinations: Barthes' semiotic theory, Mills' criticism of feminism, and Foucault's discourse analysis.

Based on the research mentioned earlier, it can be concluded that the representation of women in the writing and pictures behind the truck is part of a narrative beyond just visual media. Rahmat Edi Irawan's (2014) research highlights the representation of women in the cinema industry using mass media theory, while Sunahrowi (2018) delves deeper into representation through illustrations in the tailgate using semiotics theory. Both demonstrate the complexity of understanding how women are represented in different cultural contexts. With a diverse approach, including semiotic theory, feminist critique, and discourse analysis, the research highlights the importance of understanding the various contexts behind representation. In conclusion, it is crucial to continue examining and criticizing women's representation in any media, including *Behind the Truck*. Thus, this study aims to explore more deeply related sexist language in the writing and images of the back of the truck using discourse analysis techniques.

The problem of this research is indirect sexism contained in the writings and pictures of the back of the truck. This research reveals criticism of writings and photographs that contain sexist language behind the car that can be analyzed with critical discourse analysis theory. The main difference from previous research lies in the analysis method used, and the focus of the study is more specific to sexist language. Engaging respondents from the general public to gather their opinions will significantly contribute to understanding sexist language representation in this particular context. Thus, this research will make a valuable contribution and present its novelty in discourse analysis.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research method. Sugiyono (2017) revealed that qualitative research is a research method used to obtain in-depth data that contains meaning, which in this case is actual data, data that is a value behind visible data. According to Ramdhan Muhammad (2021), Descriptive research is research with a method to describe the research results; as the name implies, the type of descriptive research aims to provide descriptions, explanations, and validation of the phenomenon being researched.

This study carries a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis to holistically understand the subject's experience phenomena, such as behavior, motivation, perception, and action. The qualitative approach utilizes language and words to describe natural reality, with researchers asking participants specific questions, collecting data, and interpreting the meaning of the data.

The data source of this research was obtained from the interviews with informants based on the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis which was used as a theoretical basis for preparing a list of relevant interviews and supported this research. *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* theory was introduced by Norman Fairclough, a professor of English linguistics is known for contributing to studying language and power in social contexts. Fairclough himself began developing this theory in the 1980s.

According to Fairclough, three elements are the procedure of critical discourse analysis: text analysis, processing analysis, and social analysis. At the text analysis stage, linguistic analysis is carried out. At the processing analysis stage, an analysis of the text is carried out and associated with the interpretation of discourse practices. In the social analysis stage, the relationship between the discourse and social practices is analyzed.

In this context, the theory of critical discourse analysis is used to understand the complexity of the audience, especially about how women are represented. During its journey, critical discourse analysis theory has also been widely used for similar types of research because this theory is considered a valuable and appropriate tool for research related to gender and sexism. The researcher is here to present what happens to the representation of women in the writing and images of the back of the truck in detail to identify and analyze the use of sexist language that may be reflected in the context.

The researcher collected accurate data from 5 informants who had direct experience or in-depth knowledge of the topic to gain comprehensive and representative insights. One of the informants is Ahmad, who lives in Brebes, Central Java. Ahmad is a Pantura road user who often performs high mobility, so he frequently encounters writings and images similar to the samples attached by the researcher. Ahmad's direct experience as a road user provides an essential perspective in this research. Apart from Ahmad, three other informants, Alpin, Tyas, and Inggit, live in Ciledug, West Java. They have very high mobility as road users and often interact with writing and images similar to the samples attached by the researchers. Their presence in a high-traffic area provides a diverse perspective on the representation of women behind trucks. The fifth informant was Dzaki Ramadhan, who often traveled long distances from Indramayu, West Java, to Yogyakarta for his studies. Dzaki is a Pantura road user who frequently interacts with writing and pictures on the back of trucks. Dzaki's high mobility and frequency of travel provide valuable insights into the context and perception of women's representation in the street media.

The data collection process will involve in-depth interviews with selected informants, focusing on their observations and experiences related to women's representations in writings and drawings on the back of trucks.

DISCUSSION

Fairclough states that CDA has three basic properties: relational, dialectical, and transdisciplinary. It is a *relational form of* research in that its main focus is not on entities or individuals (where Fairclough includes objects and people) but on social relationships. The main focus of Critical Discourse Analysis, or CDA, is how power relations and disparities impact social fallacies. It is mainly concerned with the discursive aspects of power relations and disparities: the dialectical relationship between discourse and power and its impact on ties and other components of social processes. Social relations are

complex and "layered" in that they include "relationships between relationships." For example, while "discourse" can be thought of as a kind of entity or "object," discourse itself is a complex set of relationships, including communication between people who speak, write, and otherwise communicate with each other. Discourse also describes the relationship between concrete communicative events (conversations). Fairclough, N. (2013).

CDA allows for an in-depth analysis of how women are represented in the writing and images on the back of the truck, sexist language is produced and processed in this context, and the social effects of these representations. By using the three key indicators of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, it will analyze how the representations of women in the writing and images on the back of trucks reflect and strengthens existing power relations in society. In this section, the results and discussion will be presented in three sections that the author separates based on the theoretical indicators used, which included:

Representation of Women in Writings and Drawings of the Rear of Trucks

Hartley (2010) revealed that representation in the context of media, language, and communication can be in words, images, series, stories, and other forms that express ideas, emotions, events, and others. Some representations are very essential in cultural and political life, such as gender, nation, age, class, and others. Hartley (2010) also states that representation relies on signs and images that already exist and are understood in cultural contexts in language learning and various systems of marking or writing. Representation is also considered an effort to shape meaning and reality.

This section discusses how women are represented in the writing and images on the back of the truck, especially in the images with women in them. In this section, the indicators of text analysis and processing analysis become the main foundation in describing how women are represented there. The two indicators reinforce each other in finding how women are portrayed.

The writings and pictures on the back of the truck often contain women who are used as objects both in the pictures and in the writings. Women are usually portrayed as weak and thirsty for sexual attention. As listed in the following image:



Figure 1. Picture of Woman Behind Truck 1

Source: Internet

In picture 1, a woman with a relaxed, sensual pose is seen wearing clothes that accentuate her body shape, accompanied by the words, "*Sini Dong Mas!!!*". The image on the back of the truck, accompanied by supporting writing, makes the message received by the reader lead to sexual things. In the image, women are represented as vulnerable figures who need sexual attention.

"The picture looks like a cheap woman who is "fishing". (interview with Ahmad on June 3, 2024).

According to Ahmad, the image of a woman with a sensual style and open clothes represents women as figures who like to lure men to sexual things. This cannot be separated from the stereotype that is present in society that is quite strong, seeing women with sexy clothes and sensual bodies as cheap women and easily invited to do sexual activities.

In picture 2, two women with sensual styles and open clothes are seen lying next to a man who is standing valiantly while clenching one of his hands upwards as if to signify strength. The message of the picture is reinforced by the words "*The Conqueror*" and "*Ojo Iri, Ojo Niru Aku*". This picture shows that women are represented as weak figures and men as superior figures. The existence of the image of two women flanking men can be interpreted that women are submissive and easy to be controlled by men.

"Men are described as mighty figures who easily conquer women. *Meanwhile, women are portrayed as weak figures and do not have the power to reject polygamy*". (interview with Tyas on June 3, 2024).



Figure 2. Picture of Woman Behind Truck 2

Source: Internet

Agreeing with that, according to Tyas, the picture is enough to describe the role of gender in society. Men are believed to be solid figures and have the power to choose and make decisions, while women are considered weak figures and do not have the power to make decisions. This makes the image above relevant to women's lives in society.

Sexist Language in Writing on the Trunk of a Truck

Language related to gender is referred to as sexist language. Sexist language usually presents stereotypes that are detrimental to men and women, especially women, and portrays one of the sex groups as inhumane, simple, and inhuman.

Have the same rights (Thomas, 2007: 106). Furthermore, Shan Wareing also stated that sexism is a language that describes men and women unequally, where people from one sex group are considered to have lower humanity and fewer rights than people from other sex groups. Sexist language often describes stereotypes about men and women, which often harm women more than both (Thomas and Wareing, 2007:106).

The writing on the tailgate of a truck is one of the familiar places where sexist language is often found. These writings are usually sentences or phrases that reflect sexist views and detrimental gender stereotypes. The results of the research conducted showed that in the writing on the back of the truck that contained sexist language, there were four forms of depiction of women in general, namely (1) as a sexual object, (2) as an inanimate object, (3) a vulnerable figure who needs sexual attention, and (4) a weak figure. Negatively, women are often associated with money, sex, and love in their portrayal. Some writings clearly describe women as those who use men to get money and love. While in the context of sex, women are treated as weak sexual objects and are only

considered as satisfying male desires. The following is an image analyzed based on the use of diction selected in the writing on the tailgate of the truck:



Figure 3. Picture of Woman Behind Truck

Source: Internet

This text analysis contextually describes situations, circumstances, events, problems, and phenomena packaged in the text. This is known as the text dimension or description discourse. The lexical and grammatical view (*grammar*) in sentence structure used by the writer of the writing and drawing on the truck's tailgate is called exposure. In this section, it was found that women are always used as sexual objects, women are often judged with derogatory terms and also eliminate the human value of women themselves, such as the word "*semok*." Words such as "*chubby*" (fat and attractive) are used to describe a woman's body objectively and sexually. This term not only reduces women to physical objects but also removes their identity and human values. This section also uses processing analysis indicators to find out how women are represented. Processing analysis focuses on how texts are consumed and interpreted by readers.

"It attracts attention in the BPJS writing because the game is said to be very supportive." (interview with Alpin Azhari on June 3, 2024).

In line with the narration, according to Alpin Azhari, the writing on the back of the truck is considered very supportive in the context of degrading women; the use of this term shows a dehumanizing evaluation because women are judged solely based on their physical appearance. These words reflect the view that a woman's worth lies in her sexual attractiveness, not in her character or achievements as an individual. In addition to being considered as sexual objects, women are also described as inanimate objects. Although it does not explicitly describe women as inanimate objects, the connotation of this article points towards dehumanization. By reducing women to physical attributes such as "*stomping*", women are treated more as physical objects than individuals with feelings,

thoughts, and personalities. It can be considered an implicit form of dehumanization, where women are seen not as intact subjects of life, but rather as objects that can be possessed or used.



Figure 4. Picture of Woman Behind Truck 4
Source: Internet

Figure 4 also shows the same thing as Figure 3. Figure 4 also shows the finding that women are portrayed as sexual objects. The phrase *"for your sighing"* directly implies that women's worth lies in their attractiveness and ability to provide sexual satisfaction. The sigh here clearly refers to the sexual response so that women are reduced to objects judged based on their ability to stimulate or satisfy men physically. It ignores other aspects of women's identity and contribution, placing them solely as sexual objects.

"In picture 4, women are described as objects of satisfaction and 'degrading women' from the chosen diction because women are indeed worthy of being given a living. So why is it associated with a narrative that is such sexist and weird?". (interview with Ahmad on June 3, 2024).

The above statement is based on the narration of Ahmad's report, which in Figure 4 also implicitly describes women as vulnerable figures who need sexual attention. Stating that a man's alimony is given for the sake of a woman's sexual response creates the view that women are passive recipients of men's sexual attention and support. This implies women's dependence on sexual validation from men.

"The meaning of Figure 4 is as if men make a living only for women's sighs, even though the form of obligation to earn a living is a man's obligation. But the diction

chosen seems only to describe women's ability to do things that satisfy men after being given a living". (interview with Dzaki Ramadhan, on June 3, 2024).

The statement from Dzaki Ramadhan is in line with the previous respondent's statement, which described how women are always cornered as vulnerable figures through the exposure of the writing on the back of the truck.

Social Effects in Women's Representation in Truck Rear Writing and Images

The writings and pictures behind the trucks that represent women reflect the views and social norms that exist and actively shape and influence the behaviors, expectations, and values accepted in society. The depiction of women, which is often laden with stereotypes and objectification, has a significant impact that extends to various aspects of social life. In this section, the social analysis indicators are used as the main basis in finding out how social roles make the writing and images on the back of the truck exist and how the writing and images on the back of the truck have an effect on society.

The informant said social norms influence how women are portrayed in the writing and pictures on the back of the truck. Alpin noted that social norms that apply in society play a controlling role. Atmosudirdjo (1982) noted that *controlling* is a whole rather than an activity that compares or measures what is being or has been carried out with criteria, norms, standards or plans set previously. As the controlling role should be, anyone who violates the applicable norms will be given social sanctions, which can be in the form of *labeling* and then give birth to stereotypes that are often found in women. The process of forming *labeling* from society is dynamic and complex and can be influenced by various social, cultural, and power factors that exist in society. *Labeling* from the community can significantly impact the labeled individual or group, both positively and negatively, so it is vital to understand the social context behind the *labeling* process. The process of labeling women has become a tradition in capitalist patriarchal societies, either directly or through the mass media. In this section, it is found that there are several social effects resulting from the representation of women in the writing and images behind the truck that are biased and sexist:

Strengthening Gender Stereotypes

The most striking social effect of women's representation is the strengthening of gender stereotypes. Women are often portrayed in traditional roles as caregivers or sexual objects, while men are associated with dominant and influential roles. This kind of representation reinforces a narrow view of the appropriate roles for each gender and

limits women's possibilities to explore more varied and competitive roles in society. In line with that, Alpin argues that the representation of women. Biased and sexist, as depicted in the writing and the picture behind the truck, can strengthen the view of women as weak and inferior figures.

Influence on Self-Image and Identity

Women who are portrayed in a biased and trivial way can have an impact that damages their self-image and identity. In the context of writing and pictures in the back of trucks, women portrayed as objects of sexuality affect the way women perceive themselves and how others treat them. Inggit, a recolonen, argues that when women are constantly exposed to derogatory and objectifying representations, women will tend to internalize these negative messages. This can lead to a decrease in self-esteem, as perhaps they begin to believe that their self-worth is based on physical appearance or sexual attractiveness, as shown by harassing writings and images.

Normalization of Violence and Harassment

The portrayal of women as subordinate sexual objects can contribute to the normalization of violence and abuse against them. This kind of representation can create a culture where sexual harassment and violence are considered normal or acceptable. Dzaki stated that sexist representation of women can be one of the factors that normalize violence and harassment. This not only undermines women's well-being but also reinforces social norms that favor power inequality between men and women, which in turn strengthens the cycle of violence and gender injustice.

Impact on Community Engagement

The representation of women depicted in the writings and pictures behind the trucks in this context not only reinforces sexism but also affects various aspects of social life. They reinforce negative stereotypes about women, limit their roles and opportunities in different aspects of life, and hinder progress toward gender equality. This can affect how women are treated in various contexts, from workspace to family life, as well as affecting the aspirations and self-perception of women themselves.

Biased and stereotype-based representation can reduce women's participation in society. Stereotypes that underestimate women's ability to contribute to essential decisions can prevent them from actively participating in social processes. This reduces women's representation in decision-making and reinforces inequalities in the distribution of power and resources. This low involvement can also hinder progress on policies that support gender equality and women's empowerment. Alpin stated that social life is greatly

influenced by how gender construction in society is constructed. Women who are considered weak and inferior often have their roles reduced in social life, and their voices are not heard. Biased and sexist representations of women, as depicted in the writings and pictures of the back of the truck, will exacerbate this. The writings and photos behind the trucks that are made in a biased and sexist manner represent how society views women and how women stand in social life. Often, women are considered inferior to men and are considered weak.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the representation of women in writing and images on the back of the truck not only strengthens the patriarchal power structure in Indonesian society but also highlights the complexity of the interaction between language, culture, and power. Based on the research results, the language and images behind the truck not only reflect the existing sexist attitude but also play a role in strengthening and preserving sexism as an integral part of daily life.

This research reveals that language in writing and images behind trucks is not only a passive representation but an active instrument in the formation and maintenance of gender hierarchies. The use of gender stereotypes in this context not only portrays women as objects or subordinates but also creates a narrative that justifies and legitimizes gender inequality in popular culture. The writing and pictures on the back of the truck are concrete examples of how language is used to maintain a status quo that favors patriarchy while also creating resistance and potential social change.

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