

THE ANALYSIS OF DENOTATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANING OF INDONESIAN SEXIST METAPHORS

Tutur Nur Utami, Putriahyana Sucianingrum, and Patricia Marceline P.G.T.

Sanata Dharma University

tuturnurutami@gmail.com, putria.suci@gmail.com, and

marcelnimunuho@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.37147/eltr.v3i2.90>

received 23 January 2019; accepted 29 June 2018

Abstract

This research was conducted to analyse the denotative and connotative meaning of Indonesian sexist metaphors. The metaphors were collected from various sources, such as online sources, Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), song lyrics, poems, movies, and newspaper. There were two research questions formulated as follows: 1) What are the Indonesian sexist metaphors? and 2) What are the denotative and connotative meaning of the sexist metaphors? The method of this research was qualitative method, specifically content analysis. This method has two sources, they are primary and secondary sources. The primary source was the metaphors found in various sources. The secondary sources were theories of metaphor, denotative and connotative meaning, and sexist language. The metaphors were analysed using Lakoff and Johnson's theory (1980) and the meaning of the metaphor was analysed using Parera's theory (2004). In identifying the sexist in the metaphor, this study used the sexist language theory from Mills (1995). The results of this research showed that there were 32 Indonesian sexist metaphors, 16 of which belonged to female and the other 16 belonged to male. Each metaphor had both connotative and denotative meanings. Based on the findings, it could be concluded that Indonesian language has sexist metaphors for both male and female.

Keywords: sexist metaphors, denotative meaning, connotative meaning

Introduction

Language takes a big role in human's life. One of the functions of language is to communicate to one another. Language for communication is not only about giving someone information, but it can also be used as a tool to express feelings and emotions.

Metaphor is one of the examples of the language used by people. As a part of language, metaphor shows the social psychological ideas. In addition, metaphor also indicates some social phenomena in the society. One of the phenomena is sexist behaviour.

With the development of feminism around the world, one of the concerns of the sociolinguists is about sexist language. In Indonesia, starting from R.A. Kartini's era, the development of feminism has been increasing. Women have

begun giving contribution in every aspect of life that were previously done only by men. The fact that women are moving into the next level of feminism does not change the fact that some words in Indonesian language are considered sexist. Many people still use the words daily since they are not aware of it. One of the forms of the sexist language is sexist metaphors. Considering the issues, this study was done to analyse Indonesian sexist metaphors and the denotative and connotative meaning of the metaphors. Based on the research background, this research formulated two research questions, they are: What are the Indonesian sexist metaphors? and What are the denotative and connotative meanings of the sexist metaphors?

Literature Review

The theories used in this research are theory of metaphor, theory of connotative and denotative meaning, and theory of sexist language. The researchers used the theory of metaphor to identify metaphors, and the theory of sexist language to sort the sexist metaphors as the main data in this research. After collecting the sexist metaphors, the researchers use the theory of connotative and denotative meaning to find and interpret the meaning of the sexist metaphors.

Metaphors

Mooij (1976) said that metaphor is a type of figurative language which can be discovered in many literary works, such as novels and poems, as well as in newspapers, articles, and even in daily conversations (p. 1). Metaphors make a person's thought become more interesting and they create people's own perception and understanding (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Even though metaphor somehow cannot be seen, many people use it in the speech of their daily life conversation (Jati, 2018). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) gave an example of metaphor that is commonly used in everyday language and expression. They assume the metaphorical concept of "time is money" as the most understandable example (p. 7).

People unconsciously use metaphorical expressions in their daily language. Jati (2018) stated that between the terms "time" and "money", there is no connection in their literal meaning (p. 13). The word "time" literally means something that is measured in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years, and so on. On the other hand, "money" is a word that one uses to name something that they use to pay and buy things. Somehow, the metaphorical concept of "time is money" is usually used as an expression about how precious someone's time is. However, without realizing it, people use this metaphorical concept whenever they want to treasure time. Since the term "time is money" illustrates how precious time is, that it is limited; thus, everyone has to use it wisely to accomplish something that they want to achieve in their life, this metaphorical concept is used in daily language in using time.

Denotative and Connotative Meaning

In finding the meaning of someone's speech in a conversation, people can use either the denotative or connotative meaning. According to Parera (2004), humans use denotative when they want other people to understand and get what they say directly. However, when they say what they want to say indirectly, it means that they use connotative because there must be a message or something behind the utterances (p. 121). In this research, the researchers tried to find the meaning of

metaphors by finding the denotative meaning before finding the connotative meaning of the metaphor. The reason was by knowing the denotative and connotative meaning of the metaphors, the readers can use their own perception in understanding the meaning of the metaphors. (Jati, 2018).

Denotative meaning is a meaning of some words or utterances written in the dictionary. People always use it when they want to make others understand about what they mean, because the speakers will use words which they want the addressee to understand without thinking about the meaning or interpreting the words. As mentioned by Silverman (1983), denotative language is seen as mathematic or logic that can be understood by the growth of scientific knowledge. Hence, denotative meaning can be described as the literal meaning or the meaning of some words that can be found in the dictionary (p. 126). Wilden (1987) mentioned that denotative can be described as a digital code, while connotative can be described as an analogue code (p. 224). From his theory, it can be interpreted that people do not have to think when they use a digital clock since the number is already shown, while in an analogue clock, people have to think first to know the time.

Parera (2004) mentioned that connotative meaning is made by an idea or a certain meaning that is related to the spoken or written word (p. 97). Thus, when people mean something else that is implied in their speech, it is included as a connotative meaning. For example, when someone says 'time is money', connotatively, they do not mean that time is a thousand or five thousand rupiahs, but the connotative meaning is that time is something ones have to spend wisely. There is a clear example of denotative and connotative meaning of the term "mother" provided by Arp and Johnson (2009). Generally, this term is understood as a female parent; however, in connotative context, it can be referred as family, love, security, and comfort (p. 674). Therefore, to conduct descriptive approach, it is important to learn and understand the meaning of denotative and connotative terms.

Sexist Language

In everyday conversation, people sometimes do not realize that they use sexist language. Nneka (2012) stated that the terms sexist language itself refers to "any language that is supposed to include all people, but, unintentionally (or not) excludes a gender". The word "gender" here can be either male or female. Mills (1995) also added that sexist language is the language that is used by people which may differentiate male or female consciously or unconsciously (p. 3). Therefore, many words that can be used to describe both genders, but the word itself contains only one gender, either male or female. In other words, people are able to show unfair treatment towards both genders, male and female, by using sexist language (Yenni, 2013).

Mills (1995) argues that to analyse sexist language, humans have to put their concern with the way they are able to analyse the use of language beyond the level of the word analysis (p. 128). Sometimes putting more attention on the vocabulary can give ones a certain perception of the meaning of the vocabulary. Some words have different meanings with its denotative meaning because of the history or the context that is used during the conversation. It makes people have their own interpretation on certain words. Therefore, to make the words make sense, it is also needed to pay attention not only on the vocabulary but also on the context of

the conversation. For example, the word ‘girl’ may have two different meanings. It can be neutral, not sexist, when it is used in a certain context, such as ‘She goes to a girls’ school’. However, when it is used in different contexts, such as ‘Don’t be such a girl’ the word ‘girl’ brings some kind of negative connotation (p. 128).

Method

The research used qualitative research. Qualitative research deals with collecting and analysing information in non-numeric forms (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 1996, p. 61). According to Myers (2009), qualitative research helps researchers to understand people, and the social cultural context where they live. This research explored and explained the denotative and connotative meaning of Indonesian sexist metaphors.

The researchers used content analysis or document analysis to answer the research questions. Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen (2010, p. 457) defined that “content or document analysis is a research method applied to written or visual materials for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the materials (textbooks, newspapers, speeches, television programs, advertisements, musical compositions, or any of a host of other types of document).”

To gather the data, the researchers did some steps. First, the researchers searched for the Indonesian sexist metaphors from various sources. After that, the researchers identified and made a list of the metaphors. Then, the researchers identified and took notes of the sexist metaphors. Next, the researchers classified the metaphors into two parts based on the sex (female and male). After that, the researchers looked up the denotative and connotative meaning of those metaphors. Finally, the researchers concluded the findings of the study.

Findings and Discussion

There were 32 Indonesian sexist metaphors that had been collected from various sources. 16 of which belonged to females and the other 16 to male.

Table 1. Sexist Metaphors

No.	Male	Metaphor	Female
1.	<i>Bapak Koperasi</i>		<i>Ayam Kampus</i>
2.	<i>Bapak Pembangunan</i>		<i>Dewi Malam</i>
3.	<i>Bapak Pendidikan Nasional</i>		<i>Ibu Jari</i>
4.	<i>Buaya Darat</i>		<i>Ibu Kehidupan</i>
5.	<i>Dewa Maaf</i>		<i>Ibu Kota</i>
6.	<i>Dewa Perang</i>		<i>Ibu Negara</i>
7.	<i>Kumbang</i>		<i>Ibu Pertiwi</i>
8.	<i>Lelaki Hidung Belang</i>		<i>Ibu Rumah Tangga</i>
9.	<i>Lelaki Mata Keranjang</i>		<i>Induk Semang</i>
10.	<i>Raja Copet</i>		<i>Kembang Desa</i>
11.	<i>Raja Hutan</i>		<i>Kupu-kupu Malam</i>
12.	<i>Raja Jalanan</i>		<i>Nenek Moyang</i>
13.	<i>Raja Judi</i>		<i>Perempuan Jalang</i>
14.	<i>Raja Siang</i>		<i>Putri Malu</i>
15.	<i>Tuan Rumah</i>		<i>Ratu Adil</i>
16.	<i>Tuan Tanah</i>		<i>Wanita Penghibur</i>

The Denotative and Connotative Meaning of the Sexist Metaphors

a. Male

Bapak koperasi (father of union) is a person who gives good attention to union. Indonesian '*bapak koperasi*' is dedicated to the first vice president of Indonesia, Mohammad Hatta, because he developed the economics in Indonesia.

Bapak pembangunan (father of development) is a person who brings huge impacts for a country's development.

Bapak pendidikan nasional (father of national education) means a founding father of national education.

Indonesians only use the word 'bapak' instead of 'ibu' for pioneers and leaders. The word 'bapak' represents authority and leadership. It is considered sexist, because there is no such term for female. In fact, there are also females who initiate and support Indonesian development in every aspect.

Buaya darat (land crocodile) connotatively means playboy. The term 'buaya darat' is used to describe a playboy, because a crocodile lives in two places, land and water. It is like a playboy who has more than one girlfriend from different places. They like to go from one girl to another.

Dewa maaf (god of apologizing and forgiving) is used to describe people who like to apologize and who are very forgiving. 'Dewa' is the term for god, and 'dewi' is the term for goddess. Men are associated with apologizing and forgiving, because men tend to say sorry and forgive easily to make things less complicated. Besides, they also do not really get emotional or angry easily.

Dewa perang (god of war) means a military commander. A military commander is a man, since he has strong power. Men are also considered a fast decision maker and a great thinker.

Kumbang (beetle) is used to call a man/boy. 'Kumbang' is an insect that likes to suck nectar from a flower. Beetles help flowers in the reproduction process. Beetles are associated with men, while flowers are with women.

Lelaki hidung belang (man with stripes nose) is a type of man who likes to tease and flirt with girls a lot younger than him. It is included as a sexist metaphor, since it is only used for men instead of both men and women, even though women might also do the same.

Lelaki mata keranjang (man with basket's eye). 'Lelaki mata keranjang' is used to describe a man who enjoys spending time and flirting with women. It is because usually a basket has lots of holes. These holes are used as the tool to peep women without their consent. That is why the term 'mata keranjang' is used for men.

Raja copet (king of pickpocket) a person who is good at pickpocketing and almost never gets caught. The term 'raja' describes the power or ability in doing a pickpocket. It is included as sexist, because there is no term 'ratu copet' for female.

Raja hutan (king of jungle) means lion. 'Raja' or king is a man who rules a kingdom. In the term 'raja hutan', it is used to describe an animal which rules the jungle. The use of 'raja' is to emphasize that usually the one who is the strongest and able to control a kingdom or country is a king, not a queen.

Raja jalanan (king of the road) is a term for calling some big and fast vehicles in the road. The term 'raja jalanan' is considered sexist since there is no queen of the road.

Raja judi (king of gambling) means a person who is good at playing poker or always wins in gambling. The term 'raja judi' means someone that has power or ability to win in gambling. It is included as sexist because there is no 'ratu judi' term.

Raja siang (king of the day) is used to describe the sun. The word 'raja' is associated with a strong man who can control his territory, a man who can rule his kingdom. The sun was called 'raja siang' since it is the strongest thing that holds power in a daytime. The sun gives heat, energy, and its power for the entire earth.

Tuan rumah (master of house) is the term for a house owner. 'Tuan' (master) is used to describe a house owner since men are the head of the household. This term is considered sexist because there is no term for *nyonya rumah* (mistress of house), even though the house is owned by women.

Tuan tanah (master of land) is a landlord or person who has some spaces of land, especially when the land is bigger than the others. The word 'tuan' means a person who has authority on something. In 'tuan tanah' term, the word 'tuan' describes his status as the important person and the master of the wide space that is rent by other people to live.

b. Female

Ayam kampus (campus chicken) describes a beautiful and attractive female university student who works as a prostitute. The word "chicken" is used to show the mating habits of chicken (excessive and keep changing partners). It also shows what one can "enjoy" from the chicken is the meat (body). In short, this metaphor tells about a woman who makes use of her beauty to attract men in a negative way.

Dewi malam (goddess of the night) actually means moon. The moon shines so brightly that it is likened to the beauty of a goddess that radiates at night.

Ibu jari (mother of fingers) means thumb. The word *ibu* or mother is used to describe the thumb, because it is the biggest finger from all fingers. Mother is usually associated with the one who takes care of the children. Other fingers are associated with the children. *Ibu jari* is considered sexist, since there is no term for *bapak jari* (father of fingers).

Ibu kehidupan (mother of life), a woman who takes control in life. *Ibu kehidupan* uses the term 'ibu' because it is related to a person who gives good lives. It is considered as sexist since there is no term for *bapak kehidupan* (father of life).

Ibu kota (mother of city) means the capital city. The term *ibu* is used to describe something that is big and mobile. Usually *ibu kota* is associated with the big city that is more advanced than the other cities.

Ibu negara (mother of country) is the first lady or the wife of the president. It is considered sexist as we do not have the term *bapak negara* (father of a country) if the president is a woman.

Ibu pertiwi (motherland) means a nation. *Ibu pertiwi* is used to describe the motherland in Indonesia. The islands were called *ibu pertiwi* because *ibu* or mother always gives the good lives for her children. Just like mother, *ibu pertiwi* gives a good life to the people living there.

Ibu rumah tangga (mother of household) means a housewife. *Ibu* is used to describe someone who can control the household and take care of the activities

inside the house, especially the children. The term *ibu rumah tangga* is used to describe the one who takes care of the household. It is considered sexist because Indonesian has no term for father of the household.

Induk semang (landlady) means a woman who owns and leases an apartment, houses, etc. The term *induk* is associated with someone who can control something and have the right of the things inside it. It is considered sexist metaphors, since there is no term for a man.

Kembang/bunga desa (village flower) portrays a virgin young girl from a village who is liked because of her gorgeous look. The word “flower” shows that it is the beautiful part of a plant and it smells good. Whereas the word “village” means a place full of natural beauty, and is related to innocence.

Kupu-kupu malam (night butterfly) a woman who works at night as a prostitute. The word *kupu-kupu* is used to describe beautiful and flower lovers which are related to girl things. The word *malam* is used to describe the work time for a prostitute. There is no Indonesian term for male for the same occupation that is why this metaphor is included as a sexist metaphor.

Nenek moyang (ancestors) means a person that is related to us that lived long time ago. It is considered a sexist metaphor since there is no term such as *kakek moyang* for male.

Perempuan jalang (wild woman) means a prostitute. In other words, it is a woman who engages in sexual activity for money. It is viewed as a sexist metaphor because in Indonesian, there is no *laki-laki jalang* (wild man) even though there is also a male prostitute.

Putri malu (shy princess) is a kind of plant that closes whenever we touch it or as soon as the night falls. *Putri malu* is used to describe a girl who is really shy. *Putri malu* is associated with a girl because most girls are shy. *Putri* itself means girl. This metaphor is sexist since it only has one gender, and it stereotypes that girls are always shy.

Ratu adil (queen of justice) is a woman who is very fair. *Ratu adil* is used to call a person who is very fair. *Ratu* means queen. It uses the word queen since queen or woman is usually considered fair.

Wanita penghibur (female entertainer), a woman who works as a prostitute. The term *wanita* is associated with a person who is entertaining and beautiful. The society has stereotypes that prostitutes are mostly women. That is why the term for prostitutes uses *wanita penghibur*. It is sexist since there is no term for *lelaki penghibur*.

Conclusion

The conclusion is used to sum up the answers of the research questions. Since there were two research questions, the conclusion was divided into two parts. The first part was the answer of the first research question, which were the examples of the Indonesian sexist metaphors. The second part was the answer of the second research question, which were the connotative and denotative meaning of the Indonesian metaphors.

Based on the research, the researchers found 32 metaphors from various sources. There were 16 metaphors belonged to male, and 16 metaphors belonged to females. Those metaphors were found based on the theories applied in this study. The phrases were considered metaphor since they compared one thing with

another thing which had similarity. The researchers found that these metaphors were sexist because they excluded one sex.

In addition, the second conclusion was about the connotative and denotative meaning of the metaphors. The denotative meaning was the literal meaning of the metaphor. The researchers analysed the denotative meaning of the metaphor by the literal translation from Indonesian to English. In analysing the connotative meaning, the researchers used qualitative analysis. The researchers identified the connotative meaning by determining the meaning and correlating the relationship between two words based on the contexts and conditions.

References

- Arp, T. R. & Johnson, G. (2009). *Perrine's literature* (10th ed.): *Structure, sound, and sense*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to research in education*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (1996). *How to research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Jati, L. J. (2018). *An analysis of metaphors found in Bring Me the Horizon's selected song lyrics*. Yogyakarta: Teacher Training and Education Faculty, Department of Language and Arts Education, English Language Study Program, Sanata Dharma University, Retrieved May 20, 2019, from repository.usd.ac.id
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphor we live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mills, S. (1995). *Feminist stylistics*. New York: Routledge.
- Mooij, J. J. A. (1976). *A study of metaphor: On the nature on metaphorical expression with special reference to their reference*. Amsterdam: North-Holand.
- Myres, M. D. (2009). *Qualitative research in business management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Nneka, U. O. (2012). Linguistics sexism: An overview of the English language in everyday discourse. *An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies*, 1-17.
- Parera, J. D. (2004). *Teori semantik* (2nd ed.). Jakarta: Erlangga.
- Silverman, K. (1983). *The subject of semantics*. New York: Oxford.
- Wilden, A. (1987). *The rules are no game: The strategy of communication*. London: Routledge.
- Yenni. (2013). *Gender stereotyping shown by sexist language in Phyllida Lloyd's the Iron Lady*. Yogyakarta: Faculty of Letters, Department of English Letter, English Letters Study Programme, Sanata Dharma University, Retrieved in May 23, 2019, from repository.usd.ac.id.