

Conference Paper

Representation of Gossip Culture in the "Tilik" Short Movie on YouTube

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Abstract

"Tilik" is the title of a short film that tells the social reality of everyday life in Javanese society. This film received a lot of attention and appreciation, and was watched by millions of viewers on YouTube. Throughout the film, the contents of the story are dominated by gossip activities. This research aimed to describe the representation of gossip displayed in the movie "Tilik" and to reveal the function of gossip. Foster's study suggests four primary gossip functions: information, entertainment, friendship and influence. Descriptive qualitative method were used and the results were analysed using semiotic analysis by Roland Barthes. The results indicate that gossip activities in the film "Tilik" display, among other things, the function of information. This can be seen when the group that wants to meet up in the truck shared a story discussing gossip about Dian's character. Second, the entertainment function is also seen when talking about gossip: they are listening, enjoying and laughing. Furthermore, the friendship function can be seen in the sharing norms of in-group members. Finally, the role of influence can be seen from the main character, namely Mrs. Tejo, with her body language trying to convince and lead the opinions of group members. Yu Ning's character became an outsider because she disagreed with the sentiment. The message conveyed in this film is that people must start using technology and keep up with the changes. This film also describes the hoax phenomenon in society, where information that is conveyed is sometimes not true. So public education is needed to confirm the truth of the information circulating on social media.

Keywords: film, gossip, representation

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1. Introduction

The short movie entitled "Tilik" is one of the short movies that has gone viral after published on Youtube via Ravacana Films' Youtube account on August 17, 2020. The number of this movie's viewers on Youtube has reached 10 million viewers in a week, and the number continues to increase [1]. Before it becomes viral, the short movie "Tilik" actually has received several awards. The awards such as the winner of the Short Movie Category at the 2018 Maya Cup, becoming the Official Selection Jogja-Netpac Asian

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Film Festival (JAFF) 2019 and the Official Selection of World Cinema Amsterdam 2019 [2]. The virality and the success of “Tilik” movie, as mentioned by the director, maybe because this movie contains a storyline related to daily lives, especially for Yogyakartaans [3].

Films or movies are part of mass communication media that can represent the realities that occur in everyday life [4]. Baudrillard [5] seen movie can construct culture. He called it as simulacra. In the simulacra, there is a simulation process. The simulator tries to make the represented object looks real. In the movie-making process, real-life representation is imitated in the setting, dialect, and fashion that looks similar to real-life [6]. Unlike the other audio-visual media, a film can form an identity and become a medium for cultural representation. The director can represent a culture, and the audiences can see how culture works in society [7].

Culture is a way of life shared by a group of people and passed down from generation to generation [8]. Junida [9] stated that each individual's culture influences the communication process. Culture has responsibility for the meaning that each individual has and produces. Gossip is a culture that is unconsciously developed in society. Foster [10] stated that frequently people, either consciously or unconsciously, are involved in gossip activities. According to Foster [10], this is because humans require information about those around them to function effectively in a complex social environment.

There are already many studies that discuss how culture represented in a movie using Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis. Utami [6], Gunawan & Junaidi [11] also Renander [12] use Barthes's semiotic analysis to examine the cultural representation in the movie. Utami mentioned that Barthes's semiotic analysis could analyze media based on the assumption that media communicated by a set of signs.

This study describes how gossip, as a culture, represented in a short movie “Tilik” using a semiotic analysis of Barthes. As mentioned before, “Tilik” short movie has contents that describe how Javanese people live, which can be seen on signs in the movie.

2. Methodology

This study is a qualitative study with an interpretative approach. Researchers were collecting data by determining some scenes which considered represent the gossip culture in the movie. Barthes's semiotic analysis was used to analyze the data. There are three elements in Barthes's semiotic analysis, which are denotation (the real meaning), connotation (redefining denotation meaning which has an intrinsic message), and myth

(connotation meaning joining culture) [11]. Myth is how culture explains or understands several aspects of reality or natural phenomena. Myth is a product of social class that has dominated [6].

3. Results and Discussions

“Tilik” movie tells a story about a group of women from a village in Yogyakarta. They go to a hospital to visit their *Ibu Lurah* with a truck. On their way to the hospital, they have a conversation and talk about Dian. She is a girl who lives in their village, and she has a beautiful face. Many men like Dian and try to approach her. This group of women considers Dian as a threat and disturber for their family. In this movie, researchers interpret the conversation between the women in the group as gossip activities. In this study, we interpret aspects such as scene, picture, language, and body language used by actors in the movie. In this movie, actors use Javanese language or *bahasa jawa* as the main language.



Figure 1: The opening scene in “Tilik”

In the first scene we can see a truck come across the forest. The truck’s denotation is a four-wheel vehicle in a big size, usually used to carry goods. As for the connotation, truck in this movie means a vehicle that can be used to transport not only goods but also people. In some locations in Indonesia, many people are still using a truck as a public transportation. This situation can happen because the number of vehicles used to transport people is still limited. Besides, the geographical condition and the infrastructure in the province, district, or city are still not adequate.

The film “Tilik” depicts trucks as transportation of goods commonly used by Javanese people to travel in groups. The kinship relations in the village are still very close. When someone in a village is sick, many people from the same village want to pay a visit. This activity has become a tradition and a prioritized activity because they believe that this activity is a part of religious advice. In several Java areas, visiting people by truck has happened since long ago and still happening until today. As we can see in the movie, Bu Tejo and her friends have traveled a long way to visit Ibu Lurah. They are passing through rice fields, forests, and riversides. This kind of situation is not only depicted in

the film but also happens in reality. For villagers who live in the mountains, if they want to go to the hospital, they have to go down to the mountain's foot. The function of trucks has also become a means of social communication. In Indonesian society, there is also a culture to give a gift to people who are sick. In "Tilik" we can see that the group's women are collecting funds and putting it in the envelopes, and they will give it to Ibu Lurah, who is sick.



Figure 2: Gossip Scene as a form of information exchange

In Figure 2, we can see the denotation as a group of women who stand on an open truck. The women's faces are facing in many directions. Some women are facing to the right or left. In the middle, we can see that some women are having a conversation. They are facing each other. As for the connotation in Figure 2, a group of women is having a conversation. Some of them are involved in the conversation, and the others listen. There are also some of the women who are only enjoying the trip. Specifically, the conversation in the movie is gossip activity. As mentioned by Foster [10], there are four main functions of gossip. The first main function of gossip is information. Gossip is used to exchange information about something that is happening around society or the environment, so the people who live there have a broad perception. Gossip can give complete information. In gossip, we can know the public opinion about something, compare something, and know about things that are wanted or unwanted in a social group. In "Tilik" movie, the information's function, as one of the main functions of gossip, is seen when some of the group's women are talking about Dian, one of the characters in the movie.



Figure 3: Gossip scene as the form of entertainment function

For denotation meanings in Figure 3, some women see a handphone, which showed by the woman who is wearing a turquoise hijab. As for the connotation, we see a group

of women having fun looking at a photo after gossiping about something related to the photo. The photo becomes evidence that makes as if the gossip that they are talking about is a fact that can be verified. It is related to the second main function of gossip mentioned by Foster, the entertainment function. This function is seen when those women in the group are enjoying and laughing while gossiping. One of the myths said that people do gossip, usually, to have fun. Not to achieve a goal. The pleasure, when involved in gossip activity, is the reason why some people are enjoying gossip activity. In reality, we can see that since long ago, an entertainment show on television, which has gossip features, has the highest rating. Mass media also have gossip feature as a main article or show. Moreover, in today's digital era, we can see many gossip accounts on social media. This phenomenon can be because gossip attracts audiences, and it can boost the number of followers to that gossip account.



Figure 4: Gossip scene as the form of friendship function

In Figure 4, the picture's denotation is a group of women with a happy face while putting their hands together and saying *alhamdulillah*. The connotation meaning of *alhamdulillah* is to show grateful expression. There is a time when these women are close and friendly towards each other after having gossip activity. Related to the third Foster's main function of gossip, which is the friendship function, we can see in "Tilik" movie that the women in the group share norms. Norm is a pattern of exchanging ideas, feelings, and behaviors through a group or community. Norm shows the group what the dos and don'ts are applicable in the group [13]. Another myth about gossip is that people usually use gossip to 'attack' someone who does not follow the norms or believe in the same norms as the people who are gossiping. On the other side, especially on the gossiping group's side, gossip can make their relationship closer than before. As per Mc Andrew, Bella, and Gracia state in their research, gossip can improve friendship. Their research describes that for men, gossip can make their relationship with a woman closer. Meanwhile, gossip can make their relationship closer to women, either with a man or another woman [14].

The denotation in Figure 5 shows one of the actor's, named Yu Ning, facial expression. She looks gloomy. On the other side, it also shows Bu Tejo's facial expression, the one



Figure 5: Gossip scene as the form of influence function

who wears a turquoise hijab. In Figure 5, we can see that Bu Tejo looks arrogant. As for the connotation, the picture in Figure 5 depicts Yu Ning's feeling that thinks Bu Tejo's opinion could be valid. At first, Yu Ning always defends Dian, who has a close relationship with her. However, along with the ongoing conversation between Bu Tejo and other women in the truck, Yu Ning thinks that what people say about Dian is true. In "Tilik," Bu Tejo's character is depicted as a person who likes to gossip and talk about bad things about her neighbors. Based on the information on the internet and social media, Bu Tejo then conveys the information to the others. Moreover, Bu Tejo's character is also depicted as the center of attention. We can tell it from the fashion that she used in the movie. Clothes with bright color, turquoise, and gold ornament that she used in the movie make Bu Tejo as the center of attention.

For the influence function of gossip, in the movie, Bu Tejo, as the movie's main character, tries to convince and lead others' opinions. Bu Tejo uses verbal and non-verbal communication, such as her body language and words intonation, to convince other women in the group. On the other side, Yu Ning, who does not agree with the opinion or the gossip, becomes an outsider. Gossip can be used to attack people whom they do not like. In this case, it can be related to the function of gossip to influence people.

Myths also mentioned that the world demands people to compete with each other to be the best. As if we are competing with everyone for wealth, popularity, or position. Talking about other people's weaknesses sometimes can make us become more powerful and feel perfect. The social demand to become a perfect person sometimes makes us involved in gossip activity.

4. Conclusions

The culture of gossip is often found in everyday life because it makes people curious about the information. This gossip activity makes people willing to spend much time to gossip. Gossip activity can be done anywhere and anytime. As depicted in the movie,

the activity was held on the truck to visit Ibu Lurah. Gossip tends to be seen as negative information and even prohibited by religion. The positive sides of gossip are related to the dissemination of information. Gossip makes people know and aware of what society expects.

Along with the development of information and communication technology, the message that is willing to be conveyed through the movie is that people have to start using technology to check the validity of information and keep up with the changes. Besides, the movie also conveyed the message that is related to information literacy. Since access to information nowadays is easy, people have to sort the information, check the information's validity, and be selective to access information. Information literacy is needed when people want to access, use, and disseminate information they have, and they have to check the validity before sharing the information.

This movie depicts the hoax phenomenon that exists in our society. This hoax phenomenon shows that sometimes people access and share information that have not valid. Hoax, as we know, is massively happened in social media. The education-related to information literacy is urgently needed in our society.

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