

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS: GENDER INFLUENCE IN REPORTING AND READING NEWS

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ABSTRACT

One of the powerful media nowadays is the newspaper; everyday it is read by many people everywhere. Journalists are the main important factors for newspaper since what the journalists write convey meaning and also influence the readers who read it. Through this paper, the writers want to find out the influence of the gender in reporting news. How the female and male journalist writes and what are the differences. The writers here choose two local newspapers, that is Jawa Pos and Radar Surabaya. The writers will analyze two same news topic, but written by the different gender, one is written by the male and the other is by the female, in what way they write differently and what are the factors that influence them.

Keywords: news, reporting news, reading news, gender, stylistic

ABSTRAK

Salah satu media yang berpengaruh saat ini adalah harian. Setiap hari harian dibaca oleh banyak orang dimanapun. Jurnalis merupakan faktor utama yang penting bagi harian karena apa yang ditulis jurnalis menyampaikan makna dan juga mempengaruhi pembaca. Melalui artikel ini, penulis ingin mengetahui pengaruh jender dalam menyampaikan berita, bagaimana jurnalis perempuan dan laki-laki menulis dan apa perbedaannya. Penulis mengambil dua harian lokal, yaitu Jawa Pos dan Radar Surabaya. Penulis akan mengkaji dua topik berita yang sama, tetapi ditulis dengan jender berbeda, satu ditulis oleh perempuan dan satu lagi ditulis oleh laki-laki. Penulis akan mencari jawaban bagaimana mereka menulisnya dan faktor apa yang mempengaruhi mereka.

Kata kunci: berita, menyampaikan berita, membaca berita, jender, stilistika

INTRODUCTION

The mass media has become a principal means of communication through which people get the newest and latest information. The media which refers to the press, radio and television broadcasting is a powerful site of the society since they shape people's thoughts. Newspapers also deal with culture and linguistics; meaning that the language used in media represents a particular group of society. Newspaper, as a part of the press is also a communicative site whether it represents certain thoughts of its journalists and contributors.

For many years the linguist has been interested in ways of reporting news; how a story gets told and how male and female write them in the form of news (Thomas and Wareing, 1998:52). Although the male and female journalists get the same news from the same source, the way they write is different. Gender plays the most important role in influencing the process of writing. The differences may be seen in the topic development, word choice and other gender-stereotyped patterns such as lexical hedges, 'empty' adjectives, precise terms, intensifiers, 'hypercorrect' grammar, 'super polite' form, emphatic stress, etc. (Holmes, 1992 :314). This article will further explain why male and female journalists write differently although they get the news from the same source and what factors influence their way of writing.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In What Way Are They Different?

In speaking, it has been already proven that men and women have different style, whether it is in their choice of words, the grammar, the stress, and even the intonation. The same thing also happens when they write. They have to think, reinforce their idea and then expressing it in the text form. What makes it different is the outcome if it is speaking, then the outcome is utterances while in writing, the outcome is text form, but still they have been through the same process.

In doing their jobs, journalists have to contact their sources to get and dig the information as detail as possible, then write it in the form of news. Whether male and female journalists have the same information collected from the source, still the output or their news can be different, because they will find their own best angle. In this case, the choosing of angle is done through several steps, and one of the steps is finding the topic after that they can conduct their writing process.

However, the process of finding the topic is not as easy as it seems, as they have to think hard to choose it and the burden is getting weight when their editors ask them to find another topic that is different from the other newspapers. Journalist have to find the interesting angle that may attract their reader's attentions and how they support this topic with several additional information so that it becomes good news served to their readers. As a matter of fact, how male and female choose the topic development is different. Wareing (1998: 78) stated that women tend to have personal topics to be discussed such as family, friendship, and emotion. On the other hand, men prefer to have impersonal topics, based on factual or technical knowledge such as football, cars or home improvement.

There are also some points which differentiate the male and female languages Lakoff stated that woman's language have certain characteristics such as:

- (a) Lexical hedges or filler, e.g. *you know, sort of, well, you see.*
- (b) Tag questions, e.g. *she's very nice, isn't she?*
- (c) Rising intonation on declaratives, e.g. *it's really good.*

- (d) 'Empty adjectives, e.g. divine, charming, cute
- (e) Precise colour terms, e.g. magenta, aquamarine
- (f) Intensifiers such as just and so, e.g. I like him so much
- (g) 'Hypercorrect' grammar, e.g. consistent use of standard verb forms.
- (h) 'Superpolite' forms, indirect requests, euphemism.
- (i) Avoidance of strong swear words, e.g. fudge, my goodness
- (j) Emphatic stress, e.g. it was a brilliant performance.

(quoted in Holmes, 1992:314)

In the news writing, the topic development also plays the most important part since the choosing of topic development between male and female journalists is different and it may result the different highlight of the news. Wareing (1998:78) stated that the topic chosen by women is different from men; women tend to select personal topics such as their life, their family, their emotion, and their friendships. While men, on the other hand, are said to prefer more impersonal topics, often based on factual or technical knowledge, such as football, cars, or home improvement

What Factors Influence the Difference?

Why female journalists' way of choosing the topic development and words are different with male journalists? There are several things that influence these differences. They are nature and emotion as the internal factors and social style, newspaper style, and affiliation as the external factors that influence their writing.

Internal Factors

Nature

Davies (1999:50) states that it is women's nature to have everything in proper and polite ways in doing something because they want to show their identity as a fragile and beautiful creature. In this case, women tend to use the proper grammar in almost of their writing process. The same thing also happens to the female writers when they write the news. They tend to have certain words that characterize themselves. Wareing (1998:78) said that it is the nature of women avoids the conflict and impolite words in their stereotype language. He also stated that women prefer to use forms which, by being less, allow disagreement to take place without explicit confrontation.

Women tend to use such euphemism to hide their real meaning or intention, for instance women tend to say over slim to a skinny girl to avoid offensive actions, but the actual meaning is 'so thin'. It is also shown in their writing that their language is a bit flowery than the male writer. Usually, she applies precise vocabulary to represent her news, for example when she say the colour term, she tends to use the accurate colour such as magenta, aquamarine, etc. (Holmes, 1992:314).

Male journalists tend not to use flowery words to deliver their idea. They prefer to use straightforward words and avoid some redundancy in their writing. Women also tend to use some words to support their idea but their existence does not seem to support their idea, in fact it makes their statement become redundant and wordy.

Another thing that becomes woman's nature is that they have difficulty to express something straightforwardly. They usually go around on certain topic first and finally come to the main topic. In the two news analysed above, it is obviously that female journalists apply their nature in their news writing, first, they do not come forward to the main topic, instead, they go around on certain introduction before discussing the main topic. Secondly, female journalists use proper words to indicate something which is less done by the male writers for example in mentioning the colour, the

situation and also the source's expression. It seems that female journalists described what happen in the mass- media more concrete.

Emotion

There are some obvious differences between men and women; the way they speak, deliver their thought, and even respond things. Wardhaugh (2002:314) stated that women have two X chromosomes while man has an X chromosome and Y chromosome. This is a key genetic difference and no geneticist regards that difference as unimportant.

So, it is normal if man and women responds things differently. It is shown when women talk to their friend, even their close friend, they will always maintain their language. She will not use any rude words to their female friends although she feels really bad about something. Instead, she will find other proper words to represent her feeling. It is mostly conducted by women because they have such a soft and delicate emotion. In return, she also expects that their opponents will do the same thing to them.

Man, on the other hand, seems to enjoy having such a casual conversation with their friends, and in his conversation or utterance, some rude words like insults and offences are easily found. This difference may also appear in the form of writing since women have their own language This also happens in the writing process, the female journalists tend to use their feeling or emotion in delivering news. The female journalists' writing usually longer than men's, as Holmes also stated that women's utterances (also in their writing) contains more non-essential elements (1992:323). Another important point which is influenced by the female mental state is that the female journalists tend to stress their emphatic or sympathetic feeling in their writing (Holmes, 1992:314).

External Factors

Social Life

Another thing that should be pointed out in this problem is women's social life. What society does to the women is quite different; the society treats them like the one who always needs a protection, honour and defence. This kind of protection is caused by the nature of women which is considered weak in the society. Wareing also stated that women is less confident than man and feel nervous about asserting anything to strongly (1998:78).

In the society, women are placed at the second stage after man. She also has to obey and accept without complaints when some rules are set by man. And if she rejects it, the society will see her as an impolite person. Since female journalists have less courage than male journalists (in terms of social life), their way of writing is also influenced by this condition. They will try hard to convince their readers by having such a long paragraph with some proofs included in their writing, however, those proofs are not quite enough since they lack essential parts and it results a kind of redundant and wordy writing.

Newspaper Style

Newspaper style gives another contribution to the different writing of male and female journalists. Usually each newspaper has its own characteristics which differentiate it with other newspapers. It can be in the term of physical medium such as the setting, pages, design, print, typical 'utterances' include memoranda, reports, manual etc., person characteristics. Socioculturall, the difference can be seen in the print connoting formality and authority, speech suggesting, informality, and solidarity (Fowler, 1996:59). These factors will influence how the journalists writes that the female and male journalists have to adjust their way of writing to the newspaper style. She or he

cannot merely use their 'natural' style (gendered-style writing), they have to cope with their newspaper style. Even in the typography, each newspaper has different style.

Fowler (Fowler, 1996:62) states that newspapers employ many different type faces on the same page to suggest variation of stress, tone and pace, some papers in a lower key use dots and dashes to break their sentences to tail the pregnant points. Further, he said that the formation of news events and the formation of news values, is in fact a mutual or common, a dialectical process which is influenced by the stereotypes of the journalists (Fowler, 1996:94). The press writing is not constructed neutrally, in their natural structure, as it were because the news must be transmitted through some medium with its own structural feature and these structural features are already impregnated with social values which make up a potential perspective on events (Fowler, 1996:25).

Affiliation

The other aspect that influences journalists when they deal with their work is affiliation. Female or male journalist usually find difficulties when they sit in front of their computers as they have to decide which affiliation they use: whether they will use male or female affiliation. If she conducts her writing in female news, it means that her writing will be constructed by the feminist consciousness-raising which is also supported with some stereotypes of feminist way of writing (Mills, 1992:194).

Further, Nair (1992: 230) stated that the feminine or 'the name of woman' is a kind of pre-logical destabilizing of texts, a writing which subverts logic and the traditional history of binary metaphysics. However, a text or writing which is constructed in the form of femininity in particular way will be made understandable because it is reinforced by a range of other texts and discourses on femininity. Without these other discourses, the text would be difficult to understand or maybe incomprehensible (Mills, 1992:191).

Analysis

To prove that women's language is different from men's language, the writers analyse the written language used in the local newspapers, *Jawa Pos*, *Surya* and *Radar Surabaya*. In those local newspapers, the writer found some differences in words choosing, emphatic stress, emotion showing, empty adjectives, standard verb form, intensifiers using, precise term using, and also topic development. The writer also found that these things are mostly used more by the female writers than the male writers, especially the word choice and the stereotypes produced by the female writers.

As Holmes (1992:314) stated, there are several stereotypes produced by women, they are *lexical hedges* such as sort of, well, 'empty' adjectives, *precise colour term*, *intensifiers*, 'hypercorrect' grammar, 'superpolite' forms, e.g., euphemisms and also *the empathic stress*. These things are often shown in the female journalist writing, for example in the *Radar Surabaya*, Saturday, 28 June 2003, news entitled 'Ramai-Ramai Pelajari Balet Rusia' (Learning Russian Ballet Together), the female journalist of *Radar Surabaya* wrote emphatic stress such as 'Uniknya, tehnik Vaganova style bisa dikolaborasikan....' (Uniquely, the Vaganova technique style can be collaborated....) 'Sayangnya, dari segi penampilan....' (Unfortunately, from the appearance of....) more often compared to the male writer of *Surya's* journalist (the same news), as a matter of fact, the writers do not find any emphatic stress in the *Surya's* male journalist. His writing told more about the technique of the Russian ballet such as the amount of people who join the workshop, and the process and practice of the ballet; 'Tidak seperti workshop yang selama ini di gelar di hotel atau di gedung mewah yang menggunakan banyak kertas, Mr Zielinski hanya membawa kaset,' (Unlike the common workshops held at the splendid and expensive hotel and used a lot of papers, Mr. Zielinski only brought a cassette) and 'Peserta yang mengikuti workshop hanya berbekal celana lentur.' (And the workshop participants only bring their tight pants).

The female journalist from *Jawa Pos* also put more emphatic stress in their writing such as 'Balet memiliki banyak aturan yang harus di pegang *teguh*' (Ballet has so many rules that are need to be strictly followed) and also 'Gerakan yang ditampilkan Zielinski memang tidak seperti balet yang *sesungguhnya*'. (Indeed, the ballet movement performed by Zeilinski does not look like the original ballet) Empty adjective are also found in female journalist's news, such as '...dibuat *lebih santai*' (is made to be more relaxed), '...ballerina yang *sukses*' (the successful ballerina), and also found in other news entitled *Pernikahan Massal...*(Mass Wedding) "...Bapak sudah saya anggap kakak saya" aku Sutini *polos*'. (...I have considered daddy as my brother," said Sutini naively. While the hypercorrect grammar and lexical hedges are also found more frequently in the female journalists writing.

The female journalist in the news described the situation of the mass-marriage in such a beautiful way; '*Alunan musik yang mengiringi puji-pujian terdengar sangat merdu...*' (*The sound of music that followed the praises sounded so beautiful*) It is quite contrary to the male journalists which begin his writing by describing the mass-marriage in a simple way. He began his writing with..' *Dengan baju pengantin ala kadarnya, Sutino mengenakan jas lusuh warna hitam...*'. (*With the simple and plain wedding gown, Sutino wore black-faded jacket*) It seems that the female journalist want to emphasize more her feeling (emphatic stress) in her writing that marriage deals with something beautiful, sacred and happy. It is quite contrary to the male journalist who seems more realistic; he wrote how the marriage process went on by describing the factual scene that the couples are not from the rich family, that they are wearing simple cloth since they cannot afford to buy the gown and tuxedo.

Another news about a family winning a car entitled "Kirim 20 Kupon, Didoakan Sang Ibu' (20 Coupons Sent, Prayed by the Mother) taken from *Jawa Pos*, Friday, 10 October 2003, shows emphatic stress and intensifiers that are less used by the male journalist. He simply told his readers how this family won the lottery and what efforts that they have done. Although he also applied some emphatic stress, it is not as much as the female journalist. He wrote ..*Benar-benar surprise dan hampir tidak percaya....*(*I was completely surprised and I could not believe it*), in the beginning of his writing to give empathy to the family's winning, but he did not use any other emphatic stress in this following writing. The female journalist from *Radar Surabaya* (the same news), on the other hand, showed more of her feeling by applying emphatic stress "*Sungguh saya saat ini masih tidak percaya,*" kata Hendra dengan penuh haru ("Until now, I still cannot believe it" said Hendra dengan haru) and "*Habis sholat subuh, saya memang masih ngantuk, lalu tidur lagi...E..nggak tahunya mimpi itu,*" kata Juliana dengan ekspresi wajah yang gembira. ("After morning pray, I'm still sleepy and go back to sleep again...And I dreamed it," said Juliana happily.)

The female journalist also uses intensifiers in this sentence "*Sungguh....*" In her sentence to emphasis the meaning. Female journalist also tends to include her feeling more to the her writing, the example is found in the news "*Kisah-Kisah Menarik dari Perkawinan Massal di Gereja Bethany*" where the female journalist wrote '*Yang menarik, '...,'Malah...,' Uniknya..., 'Sayangnya.....', etc.,* Although male journalists sometimes use these kinds of words the frequency is not as frequent as the female journalists. As a matter of fact, these differences usually appear in the news. At the beginning, their writing are quite similar but when the writers browse more deeply, these differences show up and the female journalist use them more frequently than the male journalist, as a matter of fact these are the major differences which simply differentiate their (male and female journalists) news writing.

There is also a difference in the topic development. A news entitled '*Kisah-Kisah Menarik dari Pernikahan Massal di Gereja Bethany, Ada Yang diantar Istri Pertama*' taken from *Jawa Pos*, Saturday, 28 June 2003, the female journalist of this newspaper conducted their writing by choosing the personal life of the oldest couple. She tended to explore more in their personal life such as how they meet and maintain their relationship until they get married. On the other hand, male journalist from the *Radar Surabaya* tended to focus his highlight on their profession. The news entitled '*Sutino-Lasmi, Pengantin Tertua dalam Nikah Massal di Gereja Bethany, Tujuh Tahun Kumpul Kebo, kini*

Berharap Momongan', stated that the oldest couple occupation is as a garbage collector. Further, he explained that the marriage happened because of this profession, then, they decided to get married.

CONCLUSION

The fact that the female and male journalist speaks differently also happens in their writing. From the analysis above, it is shown that the different gender does influence the journalists to write. Their style and choices of words are different, the way the emphasis and see the points are also different.

Moreover, there are two factors that influence the journalists writing, the internal factors and the external factors. The internal factors here include the nature and the emotion while the external factors here include the social life, the newspaper style and the affiliation. Even though the gender does influence the journalists they still have to adjust their writing style to the kind of newspaper companies they work for. It is because each newspaper company has their own style and image that it wants the society to recognise it. Thus, the external factor is as strong as the internal factors in influencing the journalists writing.

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