



GENDER REPRESENTATION IN NUSSA AND RARA: A SARA MILLS' FEMINIST DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to find out how gender representation is implemented in Nussa and Rara animated series by using Sara Mills' Feminist Discourse Analysis. The data source of this research is one of the episodes of Nussa and Rara animated series entitled "Jaga Amanah". By using Sara Mills Feminist Discourse Analysis, the researchers analyze two aspects, namely subject-object position and reader position. The results showed that there is a subject-object position found that Nussa as a male character is more often presented as a dominant subject who has an active nature, easily judges someone, and easily makes decisions. Meanwhile, Rara, who acts as a female character, is represented as an object who has a submissive nature and does not express much opinion. So it can be seen that gender representation in the Nussa and Rara animated series tends to have traditional stereotypes that place men as strong characters while women are represented as soft and submissive figures. However, through reader position analysis, it can be concluded that women can have a dominant role if there are influencing factors such as mother-daughter relationships and circumstances in the story. This research is expected to be able to provide new contributions both practically and theoretically.

Keywords: *Gender Representation, Sara Mills Feminist Discourse Analysis, Nussa and Rara*

Introduction

Gender representation is the portrayal of the roles of men and women depicted in various forms of discourse, movies, advertisements, books, and so on. According to Indriyani et al., (2024) gender is a part of people's lives that can shape ideas and habits in people's daily lives. Meanwhile Montasseri et al., (2020) stated that gender representation is how men and women are portrayed in a medium and demonstrate the role of each character ideally. Gender representation has an important role because it can influence how a person views the roles of men and women in society. Not only that, with gender representation, a person will better understand how gender equality can affect the state of society. Animated series are one of the most popular media among the public. In this animated series, various stories of daily life are presented that seem light and can be enjoyed by every group, especially children. By presenting daily activities, the roles of men and women are clearly illustrated and can be used as learning materials for the audience. One of the famous animated series in Indonesia is Nussa and Rara. According to Afrilia (2020) the Nussa and Rara animated series is an animated series suitable for children because the language used is easy to understand wrapped in an Islamic educational concept and is very suitable for children's watching.

Gender representation in the animated series *Nussa and Rara* can be analyzed in several approaches. One common concept used to analyze gender representation is Sarah Mills' feminist discourse analysis. Mills (1995) states that feminist discourse analysis is conducted to find out that gender representation in a text can be motivated at certain times and can be represented in a predictable way. According to Ayustin & Christin (2022) Sarah Mills' feminist discourse analysis is an analysis that prioritizes the analysis of the player's position in the text or media. In this concept, Sarah Mills divides it into two parts, namely Subject-object position and Reader Position. This approach is used to find out how the position of men and women is constructed in the animated series *Nussa and Rara*.

A research on gender representation has been conducted by several previous researchers. A research conducted by Fitriawan et al., (2025) discussed misogynistic values in Indonesian horror films (CDA of Sarah Mills on the film *Rumah Dara*). This research focuses on the representation of women in an Indonesian horror film entitled "*Rumah Dara*". This research uses Sarah Mills' analysis which focuses on language, power, and ideology shaped by female characters in the film. The results of this study show that in the film, the perspective of the subject analyzed in the film also has a very important role.

Other research on gender representation has been conducted by Yuwono (2022); Gestos et al., (2018); Swastika et al., (2025) which focuses on the representation of women in video games. The results of this study show that the representation of women in some video games is not shown evenly when compared to men. In this study, women are represented in an exaggerated way, especially in terms of sexuality. Not only that, this research also shows that male roles are often shown as leaders compared to female characters.

Sara Mills' feminist discourse analysis has also been carried out in research conducted by Fadilla, Efendi, & Zamzani (2024) who analyzed the representation of women in the film "*Ipar is Death*". This research focuses on analyzing the roles of Nisa and Rani who are the female actors in the film. In the process of analyzing, researchers used Sarah Mills analysis to clearly see how the role of a woman is depicted. The researcher shows the results of the study in two parts, namely the subject-object position which shows Aris as Nissa's husband as the subject. Meanwhile, Nisa and Rani are the object. In the writer-reader position, the researcher concluded that the problems that occur in the movie *Ipar is Maut* come from gender discrimination, mental or psychological violence, gender bias, and stereotypes.

Based on the research that has been conducted by several researchers above, it can be seen that many researchers have analyzed gender representation in various media. Starting from movies to video games. So in this study, a similar study has been researched but focused on animated series, *Nussa and Rara*, using Sarah Mills' Feminist Discourse Analysis.

Research Methodology

This research is descriptive qualitative research. According to Nasution (2023) a qualitative research is research conducted to know the phenomena that occur around in depth. This qualitative research aims to explain a problem that cannot be measured using numbers. So in this study, a descriptive qualitative is used so that the researchers can present the results of the analysis related to gender representation in the Nussa and Rara animated series using Sarah Mills' feminist discourse analysis.

The data from this research is taken from one of the episodes of the animated series Nussa and Rara entitled "Jaga Amanah" which consists of two parts. This episode tells about Nussa and Rara's relationship when Rara lost Nussa's favorite item, a toy rocket given by her father. This episode was chosen by the researcher because in this episode several scenes are shown that show the power possessed by Nussa as an older brother and Rara as a younger sister, as well as Umma who acts as a mediator between them and the story shown seems to be related to the situation of siblings in the real world.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out by observing the media that became the object of this research, namely the Nussa and Rara animated series. After making observations, researchers made data transcripts to make it easier for researchers to analyze and see discourse and be able to trace the context in the Nussa and Rara animated series. After getting the transcript, the researchers coded the topic or group the data based on the desired data. In this study, researchers looked deeper into how gender representation exists in the Nussa and Rara animated series.

Data analysis in this study used Sara Mills Feminist Discourse Analysis (FDA). As in previous studies, the researcher also divided the topic into two parts, namely subject-object position and reader position. This model was used in several previous studies. This model was the basis of analysis in data collection in this study. The following is the framework of Sarah Mills' analysis model.

Table 1. Sara Mills Analysis

Sara Mills Analysis	
Subject-Object Position	Who is positioned as the narrator (subject) and who is positioned as the narrator (object)?
Reader Position	How is the position of the reader displayed in the text? How does the reader position himself in the displayed text?

The table above is the framework used to analyze the discourse in the animated series Nussa and Rara episode “Jaga Amanah”. The researchers found out how the position of women as subject and object and the discourse and how the position of the reader in the perspective of Sarah Mills Feminist Discourse Analysis.

Results and

Discussion Results

Nussa and Rara is an Indonesian animated series produced by Little Giantz animation studio and 4Stripe Productions. The animated series launched their first episode in November 2018 on the Nussa and Rara YouTube channel. The animated series tells the story of the lives of siblings named Nussa and Rara. Nussa acts as the older sister and Rara as the younger sister. Nussa and Rara raise life stories related to everyday life wrapped in an Islamic concept. The story is presented when it is suitable to be used as educational material for children to know more about how religious life is packaged in an interesting and not boring way. This story is also supported by the role of Umma who acts as the mother of Nussa and Rara and Anta who is the pet cat of Nussa and Rara. In this study, researchers will analyze gender representation using Sarah Mills' Feminist Discourse Analysis in one of the episodes entitled “Jaga Amanah” which consists of the first part and the second part. The following are the results of the analysis of Gender Representation using Sarah Mills' Feminist Discourse Analysis.

a. Subject-object position

In this section, researchers examine how the position of women is represented in the animated series Nussa and Rara in the episode “Jaga Amanah”.

Extract 1

Nussa: Tunggu Ra.. (Wait Ra...)

Rarra: Hab?

Rarra: Iya kak Nussa.. (yes, Nussa.)

Nussa: Jangan lupa tutup pintunya.. (Don't forget to close the door.)

Rarra: Hhmmm.. (sambil menutup pintu) (Hhmmm... (while closing the door))

In the transcript above, it can be seen that Nussa plays the role of subject because she gives an order to Rara to close the door. This interaction shows that Nussa can give orders to Rara who is his sister. Then Rara only responded passively while following Nussa's instructions. So in this section it can be seen that the male role is more dominant than the female role.

Extract 2

Umma: Nussa..

Umma: Umma boleh bicara sebentar? (can I talk to you for a moment?)

Nussa: Boleh dong Umma.. (Yes Umma)

Umma: Nussa.. (Nussa..)

Nussa: Iya Umma.. (Yess Umma)

Umma: Umma minta tolong Nussa kali ini aja, untuk bantu tugas sekolah Rarra.. (Umma only asked Nussa for help this time, to help Rarra with her schoolwork...)

Nussa: Hhmmm..

Umma: Bisa ya... (Can you...)

Nussa: Hhmmm..

In the transcript above, Umma, who is the mother of Nussa, acts as the subject because she gives orders to Nussa to help Rara with her schoolwork. So that in the transcript Nussa acts as an object because she gets orders and emphasis from Umma. So in this section it can be seen that women can be the subject of a story and are more dominant than men. However, there are factors that influence it such as the mother-daughter family relationship that can make Nussa's position an object.

Extract 3

Nussa: Ya tapi mana? (Yes but where?)

Rarra: Beneran kak.. (Yess)

Nussa: Jadi roketnya beneran hilang Ra? Ah, kamu ngga amanah Ra.. Ini kalau bukan Umma yang minta.. Nussa ga mau minjem.. Dan bener kan nyatanya sekarang, roketnya hilang! (So the rocket is really missing Ra? Ah, you're not trustworthy If it's not Umma who asked... Nussa wouldn't want to borrow it. And it's true now, the rocket is missing!)

Rarra: Maaf kak Nussa.. (Sorry Nussa)

The transcript above shows Nussa taking on a full subject role. Nussa showed a very high emotion towards Rara's attitude who had lost the toy loaned by Nussa. While Rara's position in this situation can only be silent and apologize, even when Nussa tells Rara that she is not trustworthy of the items she borrowed. So it can be seen that Nussa's position as a man is very dominant over Rara because Nussa freely judges and blames Rara while Rara only obeys and accepts the words given by Nussa.

Extract 4

Rarra: Hhmmm.. Umma, roket kaya punya Kak Nussa belinya dimana ya? Harganya berapa ya Umma? (Hhmmm... Umma, where did you buy this rocket? How much does it cost, Umma?)

Umma: Hhmmm.. Rocket? Beli dimana ya Ra, eh coba deh nanti Umma tanya dulu ya sama Abba.. (Hhmmm ... Rocket? Where did they buy it, Ra, uh try it, Umma will ask Abba first ...)

Nussa: Mahal, itu Abba belinya jauh.. (It's expensive, Abba bought it far away ...)

Rarra: Hab? (huhh)

Nussa: Lagian roketnya limited edition, ngga bakal ada yang kaya gitu lagi.. (The rocket was a limited edition, there won't be another one like it...)

The transcript above shows that Nussa acts as the dominant subject and has strong emotional power when explaining about Rara's impossibility to get the same items. It is also implicitly explained that Umma has confidence in Abba's character about where the rocket was obtained. So it can be seen that the male role in this section is very dominant and is the subject who has full control over the object. Rara and Umma act as objects in this section because Rara is only represented as a curious figure. While Umma shows her dependence on the figure of Abba (father). So in the transcript above, it can be seen that the role of men is very dominant compared to women.

Extract 5

Nussa: Astagfirullah, maafin Nussa ya Ra.. Ternyata kamu bener-bener ngga sengaja jatubin roketnya.. Dan berkat selebaran kamu, roket Nussa kembali lagi.. Makasih ya Ra.. (Astagfirullah, forgive Nussa, Ra... It turns out that you accidentally dropped the rocket ... And thanks to your flyer, Nussa's rocket is back again ... Thank you, Ra.)

Rarra: Iya sama-sama, lain kali jangan diulang ya.. (Yes you're welcome, next time don't repeat it...)

This transcript shows that Nussa acts as the object who apologizes and admits the mistake of accusing Rara of removing her rocket. Rara acts as the subject who gives a warning to Nussa not to repeat the mistake made by Nussa. So in the transcript it can be seen that women can also act as subjects in a condition and can reflect power and direct something to men who act as objects.

b. Reader Position

In this section, researchers will analyze how readers or viewers can respond and understand how characters, scenes and gender representations in a discourse. In the animated series Nussa and Rara episode "Jaga Amanah", the male character, Nussa, is portrayed as a strong character who is emotional and seems to be in charge. Meanwhile, the female characters, Rara and Umma, are portrayed as meek and submissive and do not issue many arguments. So that the

The reader's position of this animated series will reflect to the reader that men have a dominant and stronger nature than women. However, the position of women can change to be dominant compared to men when influenced by family relationships such as mother-daughter. Where the child (Nussa) must obey the words of her mother (Umma). So the reader or audience is positioned to see that the position of male and female gender representation in this animated series can change if there are supporting factors. These factors include a mother-child relationship or circumstances that require male characters to follow orders from female characters.

Discussion

a. Subject-Object Position

Based on the results of the transcript analysis on the Nussa and Rara animated series episode “Jaga Amanah” that has been carried out by researchers. There are several things found by researchers related to gender representation using Sarah Mills Feminist Discourse Analysis. As a result of the analysis, the researcher found that Nussa's position as a male character often appears as the subject or controller in the story. In the episode “Jaga Amanah” Nussa is represented as an older brother who has more power than Rara, Nussa's younger sister. This is shown in several scenes, namely when Nussa gave orders to Rara to close the door then Rara just shut up and followed Nussa's orders without any rebuttal.

Another scene that shows that Nussa as a man is represented as a dominant subject is when Nussa states to Rara that she is “not trustworthy” or cannot maintain the trust of others. then Rara can only apologize and remain silent when Nussa says this to her. This scene can represent that Nussa as a man has judged and stated that Rara cannot maintain the trust given to Rara. Nussa gave an absolute decision to Rara without finding out what really happened. In this case, Rara is represented as a weak woman who can only apologize without any defense of what she has done. So in this section Rara again becomes the object and Nussa acts as the dominant subject.

Nussa as a subject is also represented in the scene when Rara asks about the price of Nussa's rocket. Nussa answered with confidence that the rocket was an expensive item and difficult to obtain. This made Rara silent as she listened to Nussa's statement. So in this section Rara is considered as the object and Nussa as the dominant subject. Umma is also represented as an object because it is implicitly shown that Umma has a dependency on Abba, who is Umma's husband. Umma said that she would ask Abba about the rocket. So it can be seen implicitly that Umma is very dependent on her husband even in small things like the price of rockets. So it can be seen that in this section Nussa and Abba become the subject while Rara and Umma again become the object.

The representation of men as the dominant subject does not always apply. This can change if there are other factors that can affect the subject-object position. This can be seen in the scene when Umma asks Nussa to help Rara lend her rocket. It can be seen that Umma acts as a subject and has full control over Nussa, so that Nussa acts as an object. So it can be said that the family relationship between mother and daughter can make women play a dominant role compared to men. This is because Umma as Nussa's mother has the power and role where Nussa must obey and follow her mother's words.

Women as subjects are also represented in the scene when Nussa apologizes to Rara then Rara gives a warning to Nussa not to repeat this. This part represents that women can also give admonitions and advice to men. This happens when women are in full control of the story. As Nussa has been guilty of accusing Rara without clear evidence. So it can be concluded that women can also be the dominant subject in various circumstances such as when between men and women have a strong emotional relationship such as between mother-daughter and when men are in a guilty position, women can take full control and become the dominant subject.

b. Reader Position

Based on the results of the reader position analysis in the animated series Nussa and Rara episode “Jaga Amanah”, the audience is implicitly directed to understand that male characters have more roles and more power than female characters. This can be seen from the representation of Nussa as a firm, controlling character who judges Rara as unable to keep the mandate. The audience is invited to agree with Nussa's attitude of judging Rara because in the story Nussa lost a toy caused by Rara's carelessness. Then Rara is only given a little space to apologize without any more self-defense. So that these representations can shape readers' views that men are more rational and have the right to judge and direct women. However, the position of men as the dominating gender can shift depending on the emotional or family relationships that exist between male and female characters. So that readers can be directed to think that women can dominate the story compared to men but only in certain contexts or circumstances.

The results of this analysis are in line with the results of research conducted by Alsaraireh et al., (2021); Indriyani & Wenerda (2024) who conducted research on Gender Representation of Male and Female Characters in the Animation Movie, FROZEN and Representation of Liberal Feminism on the 2020 Mulan Movie. The study also examined how gender representation in animated films favored by children, namely Frozen and Mulan. The results of the study show that women can have a bigger role than men. In the analysis, this happens when women have a higher social status compared to men. So this is in line with the current research. Women can be the subject or have a greater role than men when there is a close relationship or a difference in social status between female and male actors.

Research conducted by Daalmans et al., (2017); Dwirahayu et al., (2019) which analyzes violence against women in television media. The results of the study show that in the subject-object position women are always victims of violence and also patriarchal culture. Then, in the reader's position that efforts to reduce violence against women require education and awareness about the importance of protecting women. Based on the results of this study, it can be seen that Sara Mills' analysis is an analysis that can be used to see the position of women in various contexts. Most of the results of the analysis state that women have a weaker role than men. As shown in the results of gender analysis in the animated series *Nussa and Rara* when Nussa considered Rara as a careless and unreliable woman.

The practical implications of this research provide insight into the importance of fair and equal gender representation. With the difference in treatment between men and women, it will indirectly affect the audience's perspective on the roles of men and women in everyday life. Therefore, stories that display gender equality and do not overemphasize one party are needed. As for the theoretical implications based on the results of the analysis using Sara Mills feminist discourse analysis, it shows that the position of women in the animated series *Nussa and Rara* is not always an object and can change according to the context of existing relationships and situations.

This study has limitations, researchers only analyzed one episode in the *Nussa and Rara* animated series, namely the episode “Jaga Amanah” so that the results of this analysis cannot be generalized for all existing episodes. Therefore, it is highly recommended for future researchers to add or select several existing episodes to see further how gender representation is displayed in the *Nussa and Rara* animated series.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, researchers can conclude that using Sara Mills Feminist Discourse Analysis (FDA) in analyzing gender representation in the animated series *Nussa and Rara* episode “Jaga Amanah” is done with two main aspects, namely subject-object position and reader position.

In the subject-object position, it is found that Nussa as a male character is more often presented as a dominant subject who has an active nature, easily judges someone, and easily makes decisions. Meanwhile, Rara, who acts as a female character, is represented as an object who has a submissive nature and does not express much opinion. So it can be seen that gender representation in the *Nussa and Rara* animated series tends to have traditional stereotypes that place men as strong characters while women are represented as soft and submissive figures. However, through reader position analysis, it can be concluded that women can have a dominant role if there are influencing factors such as mother-daughter relationships and circumstances in the story.

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