Situated Meaning in the Speech of Makdit Character in the Series of Islam KTP

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Abstract

This study was conducted to analyze the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech in the TV series of Islam KTP. When we speak or write, we design our language to fit the situation in which we are communicating. But in the same time, the way we speak or write creates that very situation. The writer used qualitative approach as the main tool. Eight video recordings of Islam KTP were analyzed based on Gee’s theory which is called seven building tasks to explain the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech that the TV series tries to enact. Thence, the study also wants to see how Makdit’s speech fits that situated meaning. The result of the study revealed that the TV series tries to convey Islamic values to its viewers in the way of satirical actions. The three topics described on the speech of Makdit are wealth, morality, and cultural promotion. In addition, Makdit’s speech is designed to fit the comical sense throughout the use of vernacular dialect and swear words or rude words. Based on the findings, the writer concludes that any piece of language has its meaning with considerations of contexts and situations. The situated meaning of language could be interpreted, one of the way, by Gee’s seven building tasks in discourse analysis.

Keywords: Islam KTP, Makdit’s speech, situated meaning, seven building tasks, TV series

Introduction

Indonesian television channels have already shown many TV series or sinetron which eventually become the most shown programs at night. Consequently Indonesian people are familiar with these kinds of television shows and even adore them. Providing religious story, Islam KTP becomes one of the most adorable TV series in Indonesia. The TV series, broadcasted by SCTV, has gained a great number of viewers and fans. Even though the TV series is full of religious values, it is performed in a satirical comedy. One of the most famous characters is Makdit’s Musyawarah. The viewers of Islam KTP often talk about his speech which is full of swear words and rude sentences. In accordance with language in use, many linguists have developed a study which is called as discourse analysis. According to Gee (2005, 2008, and 2011), language in use is not essentially independent, but it always comes fully attached to “other stuff”: to social relations, cultural models, power and politics, perspectives on experience, values and attitudes, as well as things and places in the world. Matheson (2005) added that language and human society are inextricable. Hence, one of the topics discussed in discourse analysis is language and context.

In conformity with language and context, Gee (2005:10) argued that language creates the situation and at the same time is designed to fit that situation. Makdit’s speech is designed to fit the situation that the TV series tries to build or construct. Indeed, Makdit’s speech also helps to create that situation. Therefore, there should be a situated meaning that the TV series wants to create through Makdit’s speech. Situated meaning is a term suggested by Gee (2005, 2011), to define specific meaning of words within the range of their meaning potentials based on given context. Griffiths (2006) also argued that people use language to convey meaning. Then the meaning may be interpreted with its context. Concerning with language and its meaning, Gee (2005:11) has suggested a theory which is called “seven building tasks”. He argued “Whenever we speak or write, we always and
simultaneously construct or build seven things or seven areas of reality”. The seven things are significance, activities, identities, relationship, politics, connections, and sign system and knowledge. These are partly what people want to build through language. With seven building tasks, situated meaning can be interpreted or explained. Gee (2005:94) explained that situated meaning is one of tools of inquiry that is possible to integrate other tools like seven building tasks. It means that in doing analysis of situated meaning, seven building tasks are really useful and applicable. Hence this study aims to analyze the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech that the TV series tries to enact. The theory of seven building tasks is used to find out what actually the film tries to build through Makdit’s speech and thence communicate it to the viewers. Then, by these seven building tasks, the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech could be construed. The study subsequently tries to explain how Makdit’s speech contributes to enacting that situated meaning.

The writer used qualitative approach as the tool of the study. It focused on the description and explanation. First of all, the writer had eight video recordings of Islam KTP where Makdit’s speech was apparent. The videos were taken randomly because Makdit’s speech is always the same in every episode. In analyzing the data, the writer started with the analysis of seven building tasks of Makdit’s speech. Some questions suggested by Gee (2011) were used in this analysis. After that, the result of seven building tasks was used to construe the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech. Thence, the writer continued with the explanation of how Makdit’s language is designed to fit that situated meaning.

**Building seven things or realities**

In this part of paper, the writer begins with the analysis of Makdit’s speech using seven building tasks. The findings are provided in turn based on the seven building tasks. Then after explaining those building things, the writer continues with the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech, that is, also as the intended meaning conveyed by the film to the viewers. The last is the explanation of how Makdit’s speech or language fits that situated meaning and how it contributes to creating the sense of humor in the film as further interpretation of the seven building tasks and situated meaning.

**Building the significance**

People use language to make certain things significant. It means that when they are speaking or writing, they are intending to give things meaning or value in certain ways. The language of Makdit speech tries to make some significant things. Makdit is a rich man who has much money. How does Makdit make the fact that his wealth significant? This status could have been treated as unimportant and less significant to other people. However, Makdit treats it as a significant happening. Makdit portrays himself as the richest man and someone who always helps people when they are to do with money. He always repeats his special words “Ane Makdit Musyawaroh, orang terlanjur kaye yang ahli sodaqoh matinye dijamain masuk sorge” (I am Makdit Musyawaroh, inherently the richest man who loves to do charity and I assure to be in Heaven). In “terlanjur kaye” (inherently rich), Makdit uses “terlanjur” to give a claim that his wealth is a destiny or fortune. He wants to say that he is born to be a really rich man, nothing else. Makdit often declares his wealth by uttering such sentences as found in some other dialogues, which seem to have similar patterns. These words are repeated again and again anytime he meets other people. With this sentence, Makdit also treats his kindness as a significant deed. Almost in every scene he appears, he always talks about his kindness, which is, helping poor people and being generous man. He usually attributes himself with “ahli sodaqoh/sedekah” (the one who loves to do charity). He constructs this personality in order to make his kindness existed or recognized by people. He uses “sering” (often) to modify the word “sodaqoh” in order to give supporting explanation of how he can make his kindness significant. By using modifier “sering”, Makdit creates the relevance that his kindness is important because he often does it. Moreover, he uses the word “ahli” preceeding “sodaqoh/sedekah” to strengthen again that he is really the one who does kindly. “Ahli” means someone who is expert in. Furthermore, he always writes even every little detail of his kindness in his special book notes. All these things make the task clear that Makdit’s wealth and kindness are treated by him as a significant or meaningful fact.

36
Building the activities

People use language to get recognized by listeners as engaging in a certain sort of activity or what van Dijk (1997a, b) and Fairclough (1995, 2003, and 2006) called as ‘social practice’. Language builds an activity that people are dealing with. Then what is Makdit using language to do here? What social activity is he attempting to enact or perform? Makdit uses his language to construct or build a contrast between his status which is a rich man and others who are poor people. He wants to be different from poor people in any senses. He is really proud of being the richest man who is absolutely different from others. None is similar to him, especially his wealth and properties. This activity is described in how he address other people with “orang miskin”, “orang suseh”, “pemuda madesu”, and many others. Moreover, he always calls himself as “ane Makdit Musyawaroh orang paling terkaye di kampung ini” (I am Makdit Musyawaroh, the richest man in this village). In another occasion, Makdit also says to his addressees this sentence “Die orang suseh ane orang kaya.” Whenever he meets poor people he always praises himself and shows off his wealth. However he does this because he wants others to know that they are really different from him, so they are not supposed to be treated as rich people. Three things that Makdit always accomplishes in his speech are: social status, property (possession), and fate or destiny. He further always produces some swear words or rude words to enact an activity of mocking and insulting. He often produces, for example, “Bahul ente”, “merakbal ente”, “dasar kecebong amis”, “pemuda madesu”, “belangsak” and many other phrases. Ross in Crystal (1989:173) described swearing is an outburst, an explosion, which gives relief to surges of emotional energy. Makdit uses those words when he is annoyed by poor people who just beg money or foods from him. Indeed, he eventually gives them money or foods after mocking and insulting them. This way of speech gives him pleasure and happiness since he can laugh as loud as he wants when his addressees are offended.

Building the identities

People are attempting to build a certain identity through language that they use. When they use language, however they are to get recognized as taking on a certain identity or role. So, what identity is Makdit trying to take on or enact? Makdit enacts in his language an identity as a rich generous man. In addition, he contextualizes this good identity in term of his way of speaking and language that he formulates. Furthermore, he introduces himself as a Muslim who knows and understands Islamic values well. It is depicted in his repeated words “Astaghrirulohal ‘adzhim”; “Alhamdulillah”; “Assalamu’alaikum”; when he is speaking with other people. The response that Makdit gives to anyone giving him religious advices, “ente gak useh ngajarin ane, ane lebih tahu masalah agama ketimbang ente”, explains more about an identity as a good and knowledgeable Muslim that Makdit wants to construct. On the other hand, Makdit’s language also gives a clear contradictive identity. He often composes rude words when he is getting angry with someone or when he is insulting poor people. All those language completely set Makdit’s up in term of identity as an arrogant and rude man. Even he is not actually a good Muslim either. Further his addressees often respond with “sombong..sombong..” (arrogant) when Makdit is talking to them. All these details make the task clear that actually Makdit’s language leaves an implication that Makdit is not actually a good man. Beside all of these, Makdit also uses his vernacular, which is strong dialect of indigenous Betawi to get recognized by his listeners as regular Betawi man. Makdit often produces some Betawi vocabularies such as, merakbal, aronan, belangsak, ngegares, bunting, bini, ane, ente, and many other vocabularies.

Building the relationships

Through language people can signal what sort of relationship the speakers have, want to have, or are trying to have with their listener(s), reader(s), or other people, groups, or institutions about whom they are communicating. Thereby people use language to build social relationships. What relationship is Makdit trying to enact in regard to his addressee? From what have been said so far it is clear that Makdit is enacting a distanced relationship. In addition, he always tries to perform deferential relationship in regard to his addressees, especially to beggars and poor people. He wants people
respect and honor him as much as possible. As the result, it could set him up as superior while the others are inferior. The names that are used by Makdit to call his addressees clarify further the relationship between him and others. Almost all people interacting with him have a nick name which is actually the creation of him. Look at the way he calls poor people with “kecebong amis”, “pemuda madesu”, “merakbal”, “gondes”, “komat (kotoran marmut)”, and other names. However Makdit’s language is working; that is, his addressees call him with a quiet good name “Bang Makdit”. It is well known that words “Bang” is used to respect the addressee. One of Makdit’s addressees greets him with “Assalamu’alaikum Bang Makdit!” Furthermore, Makdit also tries to build relationship between him and the institution he is dealing with, that is village government. He is positioning himself at the highest position. Even he could constitute anyone he wants as governmental officer like Pak RW. In this context, Makdit uses his language to build “authority relationship” to his institution namely his village. Albeit he is not officially a governmental official, he could get his authority just again by his money and wealth.

Building the politics

What is meant by politics here is not the political affairs that are working in the government. The politics here means the distribution of social goods, like power, status, interaction, affiliation, values, and so forth, which are distributed in social communities. People use language to convey a perspective on the nature of the distribution of social goods, that is, to build a perspective on social goods. What are the implications for the distribution of social goods does Makdit’s language have? One of politics built in Makdit’s speech is “face needs”. Gee (2011:119) explained that “face” is the sense of worth or dignity each of us has and wants to be honored by others in society. There are positive and negative face needs. What means by “negative face needs” is people want their privacy respected and they do not want others to impose on them. On the other hand, “positive face needs” want to belong and to be involved, and thus do not want people to leave them out. Makdit is valuing positive face needs more than negative face needs almost in every scene he appears. He often expects positive face needs (needs of involvement) to operate his social interaction and communication because he believes that his deed and status is good. Each time he meets other people, he always invites them to involve in his affairs. Another social good at stake regarding to Makdit’s speech is his reputation as a rich man. He also treats his wealth as a power that his society should realize. He uses his wealth to discriminate poor people and authorize himself among others. The use of swear words and rude sentences, for instance, is the fact that explains that Makdit considers his wealth as everything. Thus, he may do everything he wants, including to insult others. People also could not fight against his wealth as they still need money. Money is one of perceptible social goods among them. Those who have much money will lead and win the game (even though not all the time).

Building the connections

Language is also used to build connections or relevance. People use language to render certain things connected or relevant (or not) to other things. What connection is built by Makdit through his language? How is he connecting things or making them relevant to each other? It is clear by now how Makdit renders his wealth and his “arrogant” actions connected and relevant each other (“ane Makdit Musyawaroh orang teranjur kaye, ahli sodaqoh, matinya dijamin masuk sorge”). In addition, Makdit’s language implies that since he is the richest man of the village, so he has rights and authority to insult and offend poor people and beggars. He deserves to set himself up at the highest status in his social community. Here is the pattern of connection Makdit wants to build: wealth \(\rightarrow\) authority (power) \(\rightarrow\) respect and admission \(\rightarrow\) happiness \(\rightarrow\) arrogance.

Building the sign systems and knowledge

There are many different communicative systems that people use in this world, such as different languages, dialects, symbols, and many others. People always make knowledge and belief claims within those systems. They can use language to make certain sign systems and certain forms of knowledge and belief relevant or privileged, or not, in given situation. Looking further at Makdit’s speech, Betawi dialect seems to be privileged one. He makes Betawi dialect privileged or built up.
He also often uses such Arabic words as bahlul, syukron, Astaghfirulloh, Alhamdulillah to build up his knowledge and belief as a Muslim. He believes that as a Muslim talking in Arabic is really a pride. By using some Arabic terms, Makdit also builds up his knowledge about Islam and its affairs.

It is clear now that all building tasks are integrally linked to each other and often mutually supported by the same words and phrases. Those are partly what Makdit is trying to build through his language. In this case, it is also what the film (director and producer) tries to build through Makdit’s speech. The findings of seven building tasks analysis above are used to interpret further the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech that the film tries to convey and communicate to its viewers.

**Situated meaning as conveyed message**

Meaning is very complicated concept. Words could have different meanings in different given contexts and situations. They must in context actively “make up” (guess) the meanings of the words and phrases they hear. Hence, Gee (2005, 2011) suggested what is called as “situated meaning”. It is meanings that people usually negotiate in the time they are speaking. The seven building tasks are working to negotiate the meaning people convey here and now. As the writer has argued previously that situated meaning is possibly integrated to seven building tasks. Situated meaning is meaning of words that people want to convey to their listener(s), reader(s), or viewer(s).

Based on analysis of seven building tasks, the writer has found three topics that are considered as the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech. They are wealth, morality, and cultural promotion. Islam KTP is trying to convey Islamic values and belief to its viewers since it is a religious TV series. Throughout Makdit’s speech, it tries to give example of a rich man who is controlled by his wealth or money. This is actually the bad example of Muslim that is not to be followed. The film treats wealth as the most apparently social good that is distributed and thought over in Islamic society. Makdit’s speech also wants to convey another Islamic value which is morality. It is clear now that Makdit’s speech is full of swear words and rude sentences. This is also the example of bad moral or attitude, which is the use of swear words to insult others. Lastly, Islam KTP tries to socialize Betawi and Islamic culture. Makdit always speaks in Betawi dialect. His speech is also designed to fit Betawi society. In addition, Islam KTP describes Islamic society as it can be seen from the way its actors wear clothes, the way they interact, and their environment. All of those are identified as Islamic culture.

In sum, the situated meaning that the film tries to convey or enact through Makdit’s language is the rules or descriptions of how a real Muslim should behave, act, and appear. It enacts what beliefs and knowledge that a real Muslim should have. The film constructs the conveyed messages in the form of satirical examples. Islam KTP gives the satirical facts about Muslims society nowadays. Makdit’s is the reflection of Muslim’s life in real society where they are living. There are many Muslims who neglect their Islamic identities and abandon Islamic values, norms, and beliefs in their life. That is what is called by “Islam KTP”; their religion is only written in their residence identification cards. Thence, seven building tasks analysis actually has explained further how Makdit’s speech is designed to fit the situated meaning. In accordance to satirical comedy, Makdit’s language contains humorous words which contribute to fitting that situation.

**Humorous words**

Hughes (2006:3) argued that abbreviation is one of swear words forms. It has been used in English since the late nineteenth century. At that time, abbreviation was found amused in Victorian anecdotes. Based on Hughes’ opinion, it can be inferred that swear words such as abbreviation is ever used in the context of comedy. In addition, Ross (2005:51, 54, 61) analyzed forms of humorous language, and he found that mockery, taboo language, and regional dialect were some forms of language that used in humor or comedy. In Makdit’s speech, it is found that he often uses abbreviation to swear or insult others, for examples ‘komat’ (kotoran marmut), ‘amis’ (anak miskin), ‘madesu’ (masa depan suram), and many other abbreviations. Based on seven building tasks, it is clear that Makdit also often uses swear words such as merakbal, belangsak, bahlul, maghrom, to mock or insult his addressees. Ross (2005:58) called this kind of humor as “self deprecating”, that is self-insulting. All of those contribute to the sense of humor that the film constructs. In addition, the use of Betawi vernacular
dialect is also one of the ingredients of humorous sense. Holmes (2001:74) argued that vernacular is also often associated to regional dialects. In here, Betawi dialect is the example of how regional dialect used in context of comedy. It is clear that Makdit’s speech is designed to fit “satirical comedy” of the TV series.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the writer found that Makdit’s speech was designed to make his wealth and kindness significant and relevant. It was also used to get recognized as engaging in activity of making contrast between him and poor people, and also insulting activity. The identities that Makdit’s speech builds are an everyday Betawi man, a rich Muslim, and even a greedy man with ‘bad’ behavior. Thence, Makdit’s language also builds deferential distanced relationship and being respected. The political things built in his speech are faces, reputation, and wealth or money. He uses language also to make connections between wealth, authority, respect and admission, happiness, and arrogance. The last, his language is privileging Betawi dialect and knowledge as Muslim. Based on those findings, the situated meaning of Makdit’s speech reveals that the film tries to convey Islamic values or beliefs in the way of satirical pictures of Muslim’s life. Three topics that are involved in the conveyed messages are wealth, morality, and cultural promotion. Hence, Makdit’s speech is designed to fit those things. Finally the use of vernacular dialect and swear words or rude words really contributes to creating the sense of humor in the film.

**References**


