

Gender Representation in Eastern Indonesian Songs: A Sara Mills Analysis and Its Implications in Indonesian Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine how power relations between men and women are portrayed in the lyrics of Eastern Indonesian songs and how the positions of the subject, object, and reader are constructed through Sara Mills' model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This study also explores the pedagogical potential of utilizing song lyrics in Indonesian language learning based on critical literacy. This study used a qualitative method with documentation techniques applied to four popular song lyrics performed by male and female singers, selected based on regional distribution and number of views. The analysis was conducted by identifying subject-object positions, language strategies, and ideological content within the lyrics. The findings show that women are often represented as social or sexual objects in lyrics sung by men; however, in several songs, women appear as active subjects who express their own will. Gender power relations are revealed through diction choices, sentence structures, and emotional language styles. This study also indicates that Eastern Indonesian song lyrics have the potential to be used as contextual, reflective, and relevant learning texts to develop social awareness and critical thinking skills in Indonesian language classrooms.

Keywords: gender, songs, Eastern Indonesia, Sara Mills, Indonesian language

INTRODUCTION

A song is not solely a form of entertainment, but a cultural text rich with social, political, and ideological meanings. As a cultural product, a song both shapes and is shaped by the social realities that underlie it. Song lyrics contain dominant narratives that reflect the values, norms, and power structures within society [1]. Such representations are evident in gender constructions: women are often portrayed in a subordinated manner as objects of love, symbols of loyalty, or passive figures who wait. Conversely, men more often appear as dominant subjects who are active and determine the storyline. Such a pattern is also found in songs from the Eastern Indonesian regions, such as Papua, Maluku, and Nusa Tenggara. On one hand, these songs contain the richness of local culture; on the other hand, their lyrics reproduce certain social perspectives. Therefore, songs need to be critically read as non-neutral texts and utilized in education to cultivate students' critical awareness of language and the social meanings contained within them.

Amid the strong current of popular culture, songs have become an inseparable part of the lives of the younger generation. Songs, especially those originating from Eastern Indonesia, are now increasingly favored for their musical beauty and the emotional closeness of their touching lyrics. However, this popularity has not

yet been optimally utilized in education, particularly in Indonesian language learning, which still regards songs merely as a form of entertainment. In fact, songs have great potential as teaching texts that are rich in meaning and closely related to students' daily lives. Reading lyrics critically can sharpen language sensitivity, broaden sociocultural understanding, and foster analytical reflection [2]. Through the framework of critical literacy, songs are not only understood as artistic expressions but also as ideological texts that shape views on social relations, including gender. Thus, their use in learning can enhance students' interest while cultivating a critical attitude toward social representations in popular media.

Research on gender representation in Indonesian popular music shows diverse dynamics. Several studies on contemporary pop lyrics have found constructions of masculinity that emphasize emotional, intellectual, and personal aspects in men [3]. Meanwhile, dangdut music often objectifies women through performances that highlight the body and lyrics that are suggestive [4]. Some artists offer different representations. Tulus, for instance, portrays women as strong decision-makers who are equal to men [5]. Conversely, an analysis of the dangdut song *Bojoku Galak* shows that women are positioned negatively as fierce and selfish figures, which contradicts the ideal image of femininity in Indonesian

tradition [6]. These findings reveal both diversity and contradiction in gender representation within popular music, reflecting the ongoing debate about gender roles and expectations in Indonesian society.

Several studies have discussed gender portrayal in Indonesian popular songs, particularly in pop, dangdut, and urban indie genres [7], [8], [9]. These studies generally use a liberal feminist approach to highlight the inequality of social roles or semiotics to analyze symbols and lyrical meanings. Some research also employs Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the positioning of subjects and objects in relation to power relations [10], [11]. However, these studies rarely combine Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with a pedagogical perspective and the utilization of song lyrics as learning resources. This is particularly true for research focusing on songs from Eastern Indonesia, even though works from this region contain distinctive cultural values and offer social constructions that differ from the dominant culture of major cities.

Different from previous studies that mostly examined pop and dangdut songs, this study specifically focuses on songs from Eastern Indonesia. These songs are important because they contain distinctive cultural values that are rarely studied and are very popular among the younger generation. This study uses Critical Discourse Analysis of Sara Mills, which focuses on gender power relations within the text, and connects it with critical literacy in Indonesian language learning. Thus, this study offers a new approach as well as a pedagogical contribution.

The model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Sara Mills is a feminist approach that highlights power relations within a text by examining the positions of subject-object and writer-reader [12], [13]. The subject is positioned as the one who interprets or frames reality, while the object becomes the one being interpreted or framed, often in a subordinated manner [14]. In addition, the reader's position is also taken into account, namely, how the text is directed to make the reader sympathize with, accept, or even judge the presented representation. "Sara Mills also focuses more on how the roles of the actor, reader, and writer operate within a text. The style of delivering news or information will eventually shape the side that leads to a position of acceptance (legitimacy) or rejection." [15]. This perspective emphasizes that language in a text is not neutral but is filled with ideology and power that can shape the reader's perspective on social roles, particularly those related to gender issues.

Language strategies from the perspective of Sara Mills play an important role in shaping and maintaining power relations within discourse. Certain word choices, sentence structures, and language styles serve not only aesthetic functions but also ideological ones. Passive sentences, such as "mistakes have been made," obscure the actor and weaken accountability, while impersonal expressions, such as "immediate action is needed," create an illusion of objectivity. Euphemisms, such as the use of "collateral damage" for "civilian killings,"

soften harsh realities to make them more acceptable to the public. Such strategies are also evident in political statements and advertisements, which implicitly shape public perceptions of power and authority [16], [17]. Thus, language in Sara Mills' perspective is an active tool in constructing and challenging unequal social structures.

The application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Sara Mills in the context of mass media reveals that women are often represented in passive or weak positions, or as objects of framing that emphasize their physical appearance, emotions, and social limitations. Conversely, the dominant voice is usually held by men or institutions that represent power. This CDA model also offers significant contributions to Indonesian language education, particularly in critical literacy-based learning, as it can encourage students to read texts reflectively and become more sensitive to social representations.

Based on this background, this study aims to reveal gender power relations in the lyrics of Eastern Indonesian songs, analyze the positions of the subject, object, and reader through Sara Mills' model of Critical Discourse Analysis, and explain the utilization of Eastern Indonesian song lyrics as a learning resource for Indonesian language education based on critical literacy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a qualitative-descriptive research using Sara Mills' model of Critical Discourse Analysis. The data consisted of popular song lyrics from Eastern Indonesian regions, purposively selected based on their level of popularity and appearance on social media. The research procedures included data collection, lyric transcription, identification of gender representation, and analysis of the positions of the subject, object, and reader. Furthermore, the results of the analysis were examined in relation to the objectives of Indonesian language learning based on critical literacy to determine the extent to which songs can be utilized as learning resources that promote awareness of social and gender issues.

The data in this study were collected using a documentation technique, specifically by gathering and transcribing the lyrics of popular Eastern Indonesian songs widely accessed on platforms like YouTube. These songs were purposively selected based on their popularity and lyrical content that present gender relations. Furthermore, the data analysis in this study was carried out by applying the Sara Mills model of Critical Discourse Analysis, which includes the identification of the positions of the subject, object, and reader within the text [18], [19]. To answer the first research question, the analysis focused on the representation of power relations between men and women as reflected in the choice of diction, sentence structure, and metaphors used in the song lyrics. The data were analyzed thematically to categorize patterns of gender representation, such as domination, subordination, resistance, or equality [20].

Furthermore, through Sara Mills' framework, an interpretation was conducted on how power positions are constructed and directed toward the reader. The results of this analysis were then reflected in the context of Indonesian language learning, using critical literacy to address the third research question.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The songs analyzed in this study were selectively chosen based on representation from Eastern Indonesian regions, singer diversity in terms of gender, and song popularity, measured by the number of views on YouTube channels. The popularity of these songs is considered to reflect the extent to which the wider public consumes the lyrics and is likely to shape and reproduce social discourse in the public sphere. In addition, this selection was intended to present a

Table 1. Data Sources

| Title | Gender and Singer | Views (May 20, 2025) |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>Sa Janji Trakan Mabuk-Mabuk Lagi</i> | Male: Newgvme Ft Lampu1comedy | 68 million |
| <i>Nona Pu Goyang</i> | Male: Juan Reza | 71 million |
| <i>Baju Hitam</i> | Female: Macepurba | 29 million |
| <i>De Yang Gatal Gatal Sa</i> | Female: Deasi Agaki Ft Aldo Bz | 81 million |

This table serves as the data source containing the songs analyzed, complemented by the gender and names of the singers. This aims to ensure that gender representation as the main subject can be viewed from both perspectives. The table also explains the number of people who have watched these songs, recorded as of May 20, 2025. This was carried out to provide an overview of the songs' popularity, thereby representing the extent to which these songs may influence listeners. However, in this study, the complete lyrics will not be presented; instead, only selected excerpts that are considered interesting will be used as data.

1. The Song *Sa Janji Trakan Mabuk-Mabuk Lagi*

The song *Sa Janji Trakan Mabuk-Mabuk Lagi* presents a seemingly simple narrative: a husband promises not to get drunk again to please his wife. However, behind this simplicity lies a complex structure of power relations between men and women. The man appears as the narrative subject, becoming the character who controls the storyline and interprets the roles of others (his wife and his friends) without giving them a voice. Socially, the woman (wife) in this song appears to hold power. She is portrayed as a figure who can scold ("*sa maitua su marah-marah*" *my wife is already angry*), threaten ("*sa maitua ancam awas dapat bakar*" *my wife threatens to burn me*), and prohibit her husband's activities, such as going out at night or drinking ("*tra bole lama-lama*" *not allowed to stay out too long*). All of these illustrate a form of domestic authority and control over male behavior.

However, when examined through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis of Sara Mills, this power is just superficial because the wife appears only as the object of discourse, not as the speaking subject. She has no direct voice; the entire narrative is

balanced and contextual perspective in interpreting the discourse contained in the song lyrics. The term "Eastern Indonesia" in the context of this study does not refer to the national time zone divisions (Western Indonesian Time (WIB), Central Indonesian Time (WITA), and Eastern Indonesian Time (WIT)), but rather to the shared geographical, linguistic, ethnic, and cultural characteristics of communities from regions such as Sulawesi, Maluku (Ambon), East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), and Papua. These regions have a distinctive richness of musical expression and a strong use of local languages or dialects, making them important representations in examining the construction of identity, power, and cultural expression within song lyrics.

conveyed from the husband's (subject's) perspective. In Mills' view, "the subject in discourse not only speaks but also determines who can be spoken about and how they are framed." Thus, the wife does not truly possess linguistic agency; she merely becomes a character in someone else's story, without her own voice.

The language strategy used by the man creates an impression of remorse and submission. Sentences such as "*sa pun niat baik*" (*I have good intentions*) and "*mata kaca minta maaf*" (*teary eyes asking for forgiveness*) convey soft and reflective emotions that evoke the listener's empathy. However, there is never an explicit acknowledgment of wrongdoing, such as "I was wrong for getting drunk." This represents a form of personal euphemism, in which good intentions are used to conceal moral failure. This aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic power* [21], in which language becomes a tool for constructing reality and softening forms of domination. By expressing remorse indirectly, the actor (man) continues to maintain narrative control over a situation that should otherwise reveal his failure.

Interestingly, within this dynamic, there is also an implicit impression that the man is afraid of his wife, even though it is never stated explicitly. The sentence "*bukannya takut tapi sa maitua ancam awas dapat bakar*" (*not that I'm scared, but my wife threatens to burn me*) implicitly confirms the presence of fear. In linguistic discourse, Fairclough refers to this as a *paradoxical negation*, an attempt to deny something that, in fact, reinforces its existence. This phenomenon shows that the representation of power does not always operate overtly but rather through concealed acknowledgment [22].

From this arises a representational implication: Eastern Indonesian women, particularly wives, are portrayed as tough, dominant, and fearsome figures. Although they appear socially strong, this portrayal does not automatically amplify women's voices; on the contrary, men's fear of women is used as a justification to construct a positive self-image as individuals who wish to change and deserve understanding. In Stuart Hall's terms [23], such meaning is the result of ideological work that is hegemonic in nature, directing the reader's interpretation toward sympathy for the dominant subject without recognizing the underlying structure of inequality behind it.

This becomes part of a complex mechanism of symbolic power: women appear to hold power within the content of the story, yet control over the discourse remains in the hands of men. Women do not become full subjects who speak for themselves but are portrayed as silent, controlling figures who exist only to motivate change in men. Thus, the gender representation in this song is not truly equal but is wrapped in a compromising narrative that conceals domination beneath the guise of emotion and remorse.

2. The Song *Nona Pu Goyang*

In the song *Nona Pu Goyang*, the positions of the subject, object, and listener are framed within a discourse structure that places men as the dominant subjects. The man acts as an observer, commentator, and producer of the narrative about women's bodies and behaviors, while the women (*nona-nona* from Ambon, NTT, and Papua) appear as silent, sensual objects who do not speak but are portrayed in a hyperactive and visual manner. This aligns with the concept of objectification in feminist theory, in which women's bodies are reduced to instruments of visual pleasure for men. In Laura Mulvey's terms, women in this song undergo a process of *to-be-looked-at-ness*, being presented to be seen rather than to speak [24].

Furthermore, analysis based on Sara Mills indicates that within discourse, power relations are determined not only by who speaks but also by who holds control over the speaking position. Lyrics such as "*nona goyang pata-pata*" (*the girl dances energetically*) and "*sampe page lupa pulang ruma*" (*until morning she forgets to go home*) portray women's bodies as physically active entities yet narratively passive ones. Although their actions appear to be free, their voices and meanings are, in fact, entirely shaped by the male perspective. This creates an illusion of agency within a discourse structure that remains patriarchal. Sara Mills emphasizes that in many popular cultural texts, women are often "presented as actors on the surface of the narrative but are structurally excluded from the speaking position."

Nevertheless, a more polysemic reading allows us to see moments of resistance. Dance movements, freedom of expression, and the presence of women from various regions of Eastern Indonesia

can be interpreted as forms of celebration of local identity and the body. Within Stuart Hall's framework of representation [23], meaning in cultural texts is always open, and readers have an active role in negotiating meaning. Therefore, it is possible that some listeners, particularly women, interpret this song as an affirmation of their cultural strength and bodily expression rather than merely as male consumption. However, Hall also warns that the "dominant meaning" often remains the main direction of interpretation, since the structure of production and dissemination of meaning continues to be controlled by dominant groups.

Thus, *Nona Pu Goyang* illustrates how popular culture can become an arena of tension between control and freedom. On the surface, this song displays the spirit and expressive energy of women. However, structurally, it still reproduces unequal power relations in which women's bodies are shown, judged, and commented on by male voices. Within the framework of critical discourse analysis, it is important to examine more deeply not only who appears in the text but also who holds the power to define meaning and who remains silenced through representation.

3. The Song *Baju Hitam*

The lyrics of this song present an interesting dynamic of gender representation by reversing the positions of subject and object within the love narrative. The subject in the lyrics is a woman who becomes an active narrator, observing, expressing desire, and taking the initiative to approach the man. The narrative object is the man, who is portrayed as an attractive figure and the center of the woman's attention. Furthermore, the man in this song becomes the object of the female gaze, in which the woman evaluates and judges him based on his visual and performative appeal. This is evident in phrases such as "*ko pu manis itu bos*" (*you are so sweet, boss*), "*masuk list idola*" (*you're on my list of idols*), or "*yang begini yang sa cari*" (*this is the kind of man I've been looking for*). This representation reverses Mulvey's concept of the *male gaze* [24], in which women are typically the objects of men's erotic gaze in film and popular culture. The position of the reader or listener is directed toward sympathizing with the woman and understanding her desire and courage in expressing her feelings. This serves as a reversal of the dominant narrative in popular culture, which often positions women as passive objects in romantic relationships.

The Sara Mills model of analysis, which views the positions of the subject, object, and reader as key elements in shaping meaning and power, is evident in the lyrics of this song. Within the framework of power relations, the song implies a subversion of established gender norms. Connell reveals that in patriarchal culture, men are generally portrayed as active agents, while women are portrayed as receivers or those who wait [25]. However, in this text, it is the woman who becomes the subject,

initiating the approach and expressing her interest. The phrase “please we jang tahan” (*please, I can’t resist*) represents a form of power negotiation that is not confrontational but effective. As stated by Lazar, feminist discourse in popular culture often takes subtle forms embedded in everyday expressions that may seem casual but actually carry strong ideological messages.

The language used also reinforces the authenticity of Eastern Indonesian women’s voices. Diction choices such as “sa,” “ko pu,” and the mixture of local languages with urban slang like “yaswar,” “yeskon,” or “insos” represent an identity that is fluid yet contextual. The lyrics of this song provide a space for Eastern Indonesian women to express themselves in a familiar, unpretentious manner, carrying strong representational value.

4. The Song *De Yang Gatal Gatal Sa*

In the lyrics of this song, the subject position is occupied by a woman who is accused of stealing someone’s boyfriend. The narrator takes a very active role, not as a weak or apologetic figure. She defends herself firmly, using direct expressions such as “Jujur sa su bilang kalau sa ni tara tau, sa juga tau diri tara mungkin sa mo ganggu” (*Honestly, I already said that I didn’t know, I also know my place, there’s no way I would interfere*). She is aware of her own boundaries and emphasizes that she has no intention of disturbing someone else’s relationship. Moreover, she counters her accuser with a sharp remark, “We jang bodok-bodok ka, otak itu pake bah!” (*Hey, don’t be so stupid, use your brain!*). From the perspective of Sara Mills’ Critical Discourse Analysis, the woman in this lyric is positioned as the dominant subject. Mills emphasizes the importance of examining how the positions of subject and object in a text often reveal unequal power relations between men and women. Yet, in this song, there is a significant reversal of roles.

Conversely, the object in this text is another woman, the one who acts as the accuser. This woman is portrayed as jealous, emotional, and even irrational. This can be seen in excerpts such as “Sekarang ko emosi baru ko mo rancang sa” (*Now you’re angry, and only then you want to confront me*) or “Mungkin ko kurang piknik, iyo to...” (*Maybe you need a little vacation, right?*). This portrayal places the other woman in an inferior position. A distinctive power relation emerges within the discourse

between women, in which the narrator positions herself as rational and composed, while her counterpart is portrayed stereotypically as “overly sensitive” and easily angered. This relationship illustrates a contestation of representation among women, which, according to Lazar [26] in Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis, it can be understood as part of intra-feminine power relations, in which women negotiate their positions within the patriarchal system through language.

The male character in this song remains completely silent. He is not given any space to explain or defend himself. However, implicitly, he becomes the cause of the conflict, as seen in the line “Baru mo bikin apa kalau memang de yang suka?” (*What can you do if she’s the one who likes me?*). Yet instead of blaming the man, the conflict is directed toward the other woman. This opens a space for critique of the structural bias in romantic relationships, which often overlooks the man’s role as an active subject and instead shifts the tension toward conflicts between women.

The use of informal address terms such as “ko,” “sa,” and “de” marks a sense of closeness with a specific audience group. This song targets female listeners from Eastern Indonesia, who are accustomed to a direct, straightforward, and expressive communication style. By employing everyday language that is expressive and emotional, the song creates an effect of emotional solidarity with its listeners.

5. The Application of the Sara Mills Analysis Model to Eastern Indonesian Song Lyrics in Indonesian Language Learning Based on Critical Literacy

The use of Eastern Indonesian song lyrics in Indonesian language learning opens a meaningful space for critical literacy. By applying Sara Mills’ discourse analysis model, students not only learn to understand language but also to deconstruct ideology, power relations, and gender representation in popular texts. This approach encourages students to become reflective and critical readers who are sensitive to the social issues around them.

The implementation needs to be directed and aligned with the curriculum. Therefore, the following section presents the relevant Basic Competencies (KD) for learning activities that use Eastern Indonesian song lyrics based on critical literacy.

Table 2. Basic Competencies Relevant for Analysis Using CDA and Eastern Indonesian Songs

| Basic Competency (KD) | Description |
|---|--|
| KD 3.4: Analyzing the structure and linguistic features of an exposition text. | Students can use song lyrics as material to analyze social issues (gender, power relations, stereotypes) and then develop arguments in the form of exposition texts. This is suitable for critical literacy, which emphasizes reflective and argumentative thinking. |
| KD 4.4: Constructing an exposition text by considering its content (issues, arguments, knowledge, and recommendations), structure, and linguistic elements. | |
| KD 3.2: Analyzing the content and linguistic features of an anecdotal text. | Certain songs contain humorous, satirical, or ironic stories (social anecdotes) that can be analyzed from sociolinguistic and social discourse |
| KD 4.2: Constructing an anecdotal text by paying | |

| Basic Competency (KD) | Description |
|---|---|
| attention to its structure and linguistic features. | perspectives. |
| KD 3.7: Analyzing the structure and linguistic features of a critical response text. | Song lyrics can be used as popular cultural texts for critical analysis. Students can evaluate the ideologies, social values, or representations that emerge in the songs. This is the essential essence of literacy. |
| KD 4.7: Composing a critical response text to current phenomena or popular cultural texts. | |
| KD 3.12: Analyzing the viewpoints and arguments of various parties in a debate. | Songs can be used as stimuli for debate: students can discuss representations of women, free association, or social dynamics reflected in the lyrics and develop arguments from different perspectives. |
| KD 4.12: Constructing oral or written arguments based on social issues from texts. | |
| KD 3.20: Examining the content and linguistic features of literary works (poems, songs, short stories, novels). | Song lyrics are positioned as modern poetry or forms of popular literature. Students are encouraged to explore meanings, language styles, cultural values, and the social contexts of the songs. |
| KD 4.20: Composing responses to the content and linguistic features of literary works. | |

The analysis of song lyrics using Sara Mills' model can be integrated into Indonesian language learning to strengthen critical literacy. Through this approach, students not only learn to understand language structure but also sharpen their social, cultural, and gender awareness. In the context of the curriculum, this material can be incorporated into various relevant basic competencies (KD). The benefits that can be achieved from this implementation are as follows.

- a. The analysis of power relations and representation in song lyrics helps students understand how language shapes social inequality and gender stereotypes, in line with the critical literacy approach [27].
- b. Developing Analytical and Argumentative Skills
Students are trained to evaluate meanings, formulate critical opinions, and construct arguments based on current issues that appear in the lyrics, which are relevant for exposition and debate texts [2].
- c. Understanding Language Variation and Social Context (Sociolinguistics)
Songs introduce students to the diversity of language varieties and the sociocultural realities of Eastern Indonesian regions. This teaches that language is contextual and reflects social identity [28].
- d. Bringing Learning Closer to Students' World
Because they align with students' musical preferences, hobbies, and speech styles, songs become a contextual, enjoyable, and age-appropriate learning medium [29].
- e. Serving as a Means of Emotional and Social Education
Songs with themes of love, conflict, and remorse can serve as discussion materials on relational ethics, the prevention of free association, and the development of healthy attitudes toward emotions and differences of opinion.
- f. Strengthening Multicultural Perspectives and Marginal Languages

Songs from Eastern Indonesia present local cultural values that are often marginalized while enriching students' understanding of the diversity of expressions and life experiences across the Indonesian archipelago.

This study reveals that although women in some Eastern Indonesian song lyrics appear socially dominant, such dominance is often superficial because the language of the lyrics is still controlled by the male voice. For instance, in the song *Sa Janji Trakan Mabuk-Mabuk Lagi*, the woman appears as a controlling figure, yet only from the perspective of the man who seeks to restore his self-image. This indicates that the symbolization of women's power is, in fact, used to reinforce the position of men through euphemistic and symbolic language strategies. Thus, power relations in the song are not determined solely by the roles played but by who holds the authority to frame meaning. This is the new narrative being offered: power is not about the content of the story but about who speaks and how other voices are silenced.

The main findings show that the two songs performed by male singers position women as passive, sexual, or silent social control objects ("*Sa Janji... Nona Pu Goyang*"); the two songs performed by female singers, on the other hand, display resistance and an active voice that frames men or other women as narrative objects (*Baju Hitam, De Yang Gatal-Gatal Sa*); the position of the reader is directed toward sympathizing with the male subject.

Several factors influence these findings, including the local culture of Eastern Indonesia, which features a direct and emotional linguistic expression that allows explicit articulation of power while remaining controlled by patriarchal narrative structures; language strategies such as euphemism, paradoxical negation, and the omission of active agents create an illusion of empathy that still benefits the dominant subject (men); social media platforms (YouTube, TikTok) also play a role in disseminating and reinforcing dominant discourses,

as viral content tends to maintain mainstream narrative structures.

The strengths and weaknesses of this study are as follows. The strengths of this study lie in the use of Sara Mills' Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a perspective for examining song lyrics. The Sara Mills CDA model is the most appropriate framework for analysis from a gender perspective. The texts used as data sources are taken from regions that are rarely discussed in studies of gender and music. This study directly integrates discourse analysis with pedagogical applications (curriculum basic competencies).

However, it should be acknowledged that the weaknesses of this study include the absence of an empirical examination from the perspective of reader or student responses (the reception aspect); the limited number of songs analyzed (only four), which does not yet cover a broader spectrum of representations from the Eastern regions; the analysis remains interpretative; and there has been no triangulation with interview or classroom observation data.

The position of this study aligns with the research trend that highlights the subordination of women in Indonesian popular music. However, this study is different because it focuses explicitly on Eastern Indonesian songs that possess distinctive cultural and linguistic characteristics. In addition, this study combines discourse analysis with critical literacy for Indonesian language learning, an approach that has not yet been widely explored.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of four Eastern Indonesian song lyrics using Sara Mills' model of Critical Discourse Analysis shows that gender representation is not always subordinate. Women are sometimes reduced to objects of men, yet in some songs, they also appear as active subjects who control the narrative. This affirms the existence of dynamics and shifts in gender power relations within the popular culture of Eastern Indonesia.

The results of this study also show that the positions of the subject, object, and reader within the song lyrics construct diverse discourses while simultaneously guiding readers to reflect on the inequalities that emerge. These findings have pedagogical implications: Eastern Indonesian song lyrics can be utilized in Indonesian language learning based on critical literacy to develop students' social sensitivity, gender awareness, and analytical skills.

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