

MOTHERHOOD IN PARENTING TABLOID

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Abstract

This article discusses on gender discourse found in parenting articles of on-line parenting tabloid. The articles tell about how to take care children at below five years old. Articles in parenting tabloid inform to young parents about children's and mother's health and growth.

The data are taken from caring children articles of Indonesian parenting tabloids. It focuses on articles on children's growth and health, which traditionally becomes mother's responsibility. Nowadays, there is change in caring children also used as slogan for some parenting tabloids and magazines that is parenthood. Caring children is not completely handled by mother, but father also should contribute his role in it. The data used are analyzed the contribution of mother or parents in caring the children as addressed subject in the articles. In fact, today supports parenthood as the ideal way caring children. Caring children based on gender give social impact. It creates defensive masculinity on men, and they defend the domination.

The data found still show motherhood in caring children, although the tabloids claim as parenting tabloids. Mentioning mother as the target to do what they suggest dominates the data. Some data present parents as the addressed in the beginning, but in the next paragraphs they address mother as the target of the articles. This tabloid has not left old paradigm in caring children into parenthood yet.

Key words: motherhood, parenting tabloid, caring, nurturing

Background of the Study

Recently, people cannot live without updating news which they get it from media. People and media cannot be separated because they know what happened outside by reading, watching or listening from media. Media has important roles in society whether they are printed or on-line. It may influence the way of life and the way of thinking. Media helps people get knowledge inexpensively than buying books to improve the knowledge. Moreover, internet makes people access information they need easily.

To share the information and news, media uses language which people understand. The languages used are considered to the readers who and what they are. It is the target of media. It means that the language will adapt to the title of the media. Diction and target are the main focus of language used, so that it is suitable to be consumed. Besides that, language used by media can shape public

opinion and it can also create it. One of opinion which is shaped is femininity from motherhood; caring children in family. Motherhood as one of femininities of woman is constructed by patriarchy (Walby; 1990:106). Here, language plays an important part in constructing the gender order (Holmes & Marra; 2010:2) where masculinity and femininity differ. It highlights the utterances which describe motherhood and how it puts woman in disadvantage positions. Motherhood, femininity, and domestication relate each other which need feminine virtues.

One of information people need is caring children and being parents. Media offers the information from pregnancy to caring teenagers. These media use some brand for tabloids or magazines they have. In Indonesia, we find Parenting Indonesia, Ayah Bunda, and Nakita. Information from media creates public opinion and shapes public opinion. Parenting or parenthood is the best way to care and rear children that father and mother have role in it to develop normal human personality (Dinnerstein; 1999). The information related to parenting use gendered discursive resources created by social control and expectation (Holmes & Marra; 2010:2). From the language used can create readers' opinions and they conduct what they write.

Methods

This paper uses two online parenting tabloids; tabloid-nakita.com and parenting.co.id. Twenty articles from the tabloids are selected. I only focused on gadget use for children articles which become topic for parents who have children to teenagers. Using gadget is a problem which emerges in this era when everybody needs it to work and to get information and entertainment. After selecting, reading is the next step done to know the parents' role (father and mother) in the problem. Then, I identified to the articles from (1) addressee or targets of the text and (2) activities when children and parents involve. Finally, analysis is conducted for each utterances found in the articles relating feminism theory.

Finding and Discussion

Recently, parenting tabloid or parenting magazine becomes trend to be the guide for parents to care and nurture children, especially young parents. From the name itself, it changes the nurturing paradigm which mother should be responsible for called mothering or motherhood. Today, feminists suggest applying parenting in caring and nurturing children to replace mothering. Parenting can cause good impact for children in growth mentally. Mothering has already been applied for centuries, then parenting replaces to create better generations.

This study used twenty articles of two parenting tabloids in Indonesia to find out the suggestive way used in the texts. It starts the investigation from the

addressee or the subject of the articles. The addressee or subject is important in this study, because it is to find out who the target of the articles is. Logically, if the name of the tabloids is parenting, it will use parent which means father and mother as the addressee or the subject. Twenty articles from the two tabloids show the target or addressee of the articles written. The articles mention parent which can be mother, mother-father or parent as the target of the articles to solve problems which parents have. First, the data shows that mother is targeted 29 times, mother-father is mentioned 4 times, parent is mentioned 12 times, and 'you' (Anda) is mentioned 4 times. Mother as mentioned in the articles becomes the main target of the articles because it shows the highest position. It means that the tabloids still put mother as the main figure to take care children. On the other hand, no father is mentioned in the article but 'father and mother' is mentioned as data above. 'You' (Anda) found as the addressee of the articles shows 'the safest' way to target the article to, because 'you' (Anda) can be meant reader (anyone, father, mother, or both of them).

The addressee "Mama" or mother mentioned 29 times has role to take care the children who have 'problem' with gadget. The data shows that motherhood is the best way to solve the problem. For instance, mother has to educate the children and she also acts as the controller. Motherhood needs creativity to educate the children. As Walby states that women's labour is expropriated in marriage, their fertility is controlled, their creativeness is cramped with persecution and knowledge is withheld from them (1990:121). To take care children, mother should be creative to distort their attention from playing gadget all the time. She is insisted to arrange children's schedule to do some outdoor activities such as doing sport and making handcraft. These activities can distract them from playing gadget. The articles ask mother to do some activities as mentioned as follows '*Mama perlu mengganti waktu bermain gadget dengan bermain bersama dengan keluarga*', '*Mama bisa melakukan kegiatan sederhana seperti keluar rumah dua hingga tiga kali sehari*', and '*Ada berbagai ide kreatif yang bisa Mama lakukan untuk si kecil seperti mencari serangga atau bermain petak umpet*'. These statements tend to ask mother to be creative, and it looks that creativity is a must for mother to care and nurture children. There is no father's role in the texts which urge him to be creative with children.

In one of the articles mentions parent's role which means father and mother. In this article states '*Gadget tersebut dibeli oleh Mama dan Papa dan dipinjamkan untuknya.*' This sentence shows that father exists to fulfill property for the child, although it does not omit mother's existence. But in the next statement, mother comes to make the rule stated in '*Mama juga perlu mengatakan bahwa orangtua masih punya hak untuk mengetahui apa yang ia lakukan dengan gadgetnya*'. The task to explain what the rules are is mother's task. It means that the concept of father as the male breadwinner in an ideal nuclear family runs in

this article. Here, it is clear there is a job division between woman and man in a family written in it. Moreover, the first sentence states that mother and father bought the gadget, it means that mother also earns money. It also implies that it adds the attribute of the woman as a housewife cannot leave her. According to Gershuny et al (1986) and Morris (1984) as cited by Walby (1990:82) men were unemployed and their wives employed, this did not lead to any significant increase in housework by the men. Woman will not do less housework, if she works in public.

Nakita tabloid wrote one online study from AVG Technologies in ten countries which discussed children's technological skill and life skill to the age of mother. In one paragraph states '*tetapi, anak-anak dengan ibu berusia 35 tahun ke atas lebih memiliki kecakapan hidup daripada anak-anak dengan orangtua yang lebih muda. Sebanyak 40 persen batita mampu menuliskan nama mereka sendiri dengan ibu mereka berusia di atas 35 tahun, sedangkan anak-anak yang ibunya berusia 34 tahun ke bawah hanya 34 persen yang bisa menuliskan nama mereka sendiri.*' It means societies from ten countries still consider that woman or mother has responsibility to the children's growth. The survey used mother as the representative of parent to educate the children in writing. But, in a different case, a psychologist states as cited by Parenting.co.id does not blame mother as the cause of miss-educating children. It wrote as follows '*Saya sangat menyayangkan sebab kenyataan di lapangan sehari-hari cukup banyak menunjukkan bahwa anak-anak yang mengalami keterlambatan tumbuh kembang, seperti keterlambatan bicara atau gangguan social emosional lain, ditengarai karena orang tua terlalu dini mengenalkan dan membiasakan anak menggunakan gawai.*' The psychologist stated 'parent' as the cause of the problem.

The inconsistency occurred in the tabloids especially in the title of tabloid as parenting tabloids and the addressee of the articles. Moreover, inconsistency also is found when in article mentioned not only parents or mother-father, but it also targeted mother. Five articles are written in inconsistent target from beginning to the end. But, these articles will not leave mother as the main target of activity mentioned in the article. For instance, in one of articles, the addressee changes from mother (mama) into parents (orangtua), but the activity is to control children using gadget. First states '*Mama perlu menjadi sosok pengawas bagi anak*', but then it changes into '*Menjaring informasi menjadi salah satu tugas orangtua.*' (www.tabloid-nakita.com). Although mentioning parents in the articles, these articles still put mother as the main addressee to conduct what they suggest to take care the children. In one article of Tabloid-Nakita.com states '*Mama mungkin cenderung membiarkan anak karena anak biasanya jadi lebih diam tidak banyak ulah dengan gadget.*' This statement implies blaming mother in caring children, because it uses mother (mama) as the subject.

On the other hand, there are statements which support parenting from Nakita-Tabloid.com. It states '*Mama dan Papa harus mengajak berbicara pada anak jika merasa ia mulai membuka situs atau konten yang tidak sesuai. Mama dan Papa tidak perlu memarahinya sebab hal ini terjadi karena tidak ada batasan dalam teknologi.*' The statements urge parents to control what their children do. The way parents use as suggested in the article also shows the affection of parent to the children. It does not put parent in higher position, and it can create good relationship between parent and children which can influence children's mental development. The children are not taken-care by mother, but father also comes to help them.

Woman is created with physical distinctions from man. She delivers and feeds the baby which man cannot do it. These physical distinctions bring impact to her responsibility further. These conditions are also described in the two parenting tabloids, although it is not stated as the impact of the biological process for women. The close relationship between mothers and children cannot be separated, although the children grow up into teenagers.

Parenting tabloids discuss on how to take care and nurture children by parents. One of problems parents have is relating technological development which everybody enjoys it today. Talking about taking care and nurturing children is not as simple as washing, cooking, and sweeping which are also categorized as domestic job. They may finish in hours, but caring and nurturing need emotional quality. Educating is a part of caring and nurturing children, especially creating discipline. Parenting tabloids still focus the tasks as women's jobs found in the language style used. People use their own ways of speaking to reflect certain social image, and it will identify what group they belong to (Graddol & Swan; 2003:216).

Today, people cannot leave technological development. It helps to make life easy. Children have already known technological development because their parents introduce it. Technological development that is invented gadget can improve knowledge and information, and entertain people. It must have good impacts and bad impacts. Especially for children, gadget is most used to entertain themselves whether playing games or watching video. As people who live in this era we cannot leave without it, but it is not good if every time children spend the time by playing gadget and they do not have social life to interact with others. Gadget freak is not good attribute for children who always spend time in front of the screen. As immature creatures, they still need to be accompanied when they use gadget. In patriarchal society, woman has important role to take care the children. This condition is also reflected in the articles of parenting tabloids. These articles present mother's job at nurturing children.

The gadget freak problem emerges when children grow up and they do not need mother to feed them anymore. It means that they can interact with other

people and father as another close-figure in family can contribute his role in this problem. But, the tabloids present motherhood which becomes patriarchal model in caring and nurturing children. Mother has big responsibility in gadget freak problem. The articles suggest mother to arrange the rule, the schedule, and she becomes the controller for her own children. Most articles vanish father's role and responsibility in this problem. These articles show that women stay at the private are that is family to bear and rear children (Walby; 1990). From the diction of words used, it shows that language in the texts is to deliver the thought and meaning what they communicate (Graddol & Swan; 2003:213). The articles of the tabloids use dictions such as explain, say, change the time, and make rules, and those words relate to the subject that is mother (mama). It means that these articles deliver the thought that women are responsible to caring and nurturing children.

The portrayal of femininity of women can be found in parenting tabloids relating to caring the children. Here, mother still has important role and good model to nurture children. Society still needs feminine values of mother to solve problem on children.

Conclusion and Suggestion

Two online parenting tabloids; Nakita-tabloid.com and Parenting.co.id are publications which help young parents to take care and nurture children from infant into teenager. These tabloids as parenting tabloids have not left the old paradigm in caring and nurturing children yet, especially Nakita-tabloid.com. The old paradigm of caring and nurturing children is on only mother who is responsible for, called motherhood. It is found on the articles on using gadget by children, from the addressee or subject as the target of the article. The dictions used reflect that mother is the most important agent to change children behavior in using gadget. The articles focus the addressee of the text on mother or woman, they seldom mention father or male figure, especially to care and nurture children. The inconsistency found in the addressee of the texts return to mother or woman as the subject in caring and nurturing.

The tabloids should support the new way of caring and nurturing children, that is parenting. It puts father and mother in the same position in front of the children. The addressee changes, because addressee can provoke readers to imitate what write on it. The publications can consider using the appropriate addressee or subject of each article written.

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