

**MUTED GROUP IN RHETORICS DR. REISA, WOMAN AS  
SPOKESPERSON FOR INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT - EPIDEMIC  
COVID-19 (CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS SARA MILLS)**

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**Abstract**

*The government has a big role in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. In his duties, dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro provided information related to the development of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia in the form of speeches and questions and answers. In "The Second Stage", Friedan (1980) encouraged women to become women. Now women have obtained the same rights as men, one of which is in the public space. Cheris Kramarae (1981) states that the language of a particular culture does not support all speakers equally. The purpose of this study is to determine the existence of women's gender equality in the public sphere. Research using Sara Mills critical discourse analysis with rhetoric theory, this silent group theory concludes that in the rhetoric delivered by dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro still shows the clear dominance of male perceptions and then inhibits women's expression of the world. Female characteristics are not accepted by the public. This shows that women until now to be able to participate in society, they have to transform the model according to the male expression system even though the pathos, ethos and logos of women have evidence in rhetoric and rhetorical sensitivity. Ironically, silencing is not only from the dominant but also from fellow women. Even though there has been gender equality, there is still implicit oppression of silence.*

**Keywords:** Rhetoric; Covid-19; Sara Mills; Feminism; Muted Group

**Abstrak**

*Pemerintah memiliki peran yang besar dalam penanganan pandemi covid-19. Dalam tugasnya dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro memberikan informasi terkait perkembangan pandemik covid-19 di Indonesia dilakukan dalam bentuk pidato serta tanya jawab. Dalam The Second Stage, Friedan (1980) mendorong perempuan untuk menjadi perempuan. Kini perempuan telah mendapatkan hak yang sama dengan laki-laki salah satunya di ruang publik. Cheris Kramarae (1981) menyebutkan bahwa, bahasa dari sebuah budaya tertentu tidak mendukung semua penuturnya dengan setara. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengetahui eksistensi kesetaraan gender perempuan di ranah publik. Penelitian dengan menggunakan analisis wacana kritis Sara Mills dengan teori retorika, teori kelompok bungkam ini menyimpulkan bahwa dalam retorika yang disampaikan oleh dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro masih memperlihatkan jelasnya dominasi persepsi pria kemudian menghambat ekspresi wanita mengenai dunia. Sifat-sifat keperempuanan tidak diterima oleh publik. Ini memperlihatkan*

*bahwa wanita hingga kini untuk dapat berpartisipasi di masyarakat, mereka harus mentransformasi model sesuai dengan sistem ekspresi pria sekalipun secara pathos, ethos dan logos wanita memiliki bukti-bukti dalam retorika dan sensitivitas retorika. Ironisnya pembungkaman tidak hanya dari kaum dominan namun juga sesama perempuan. Meskipun telah terjadi kesetaraan gender namun masih terjadi opresi pendiaman secara implisit.*

**Kata Kunci:** Retorik; COVID-19; Sara Mills; Feminisme; Grup yang Dibungkam.

## INTRODUCTION

Communication is social interaction through messages which in this case is the construction of signs broadcast through television broadcasts. Social interactions occur at three levels: micro, meso, and macro (Sunarto, 2009). At the micro-level, social interaction takes place in the form of meaningful interactions embodied through texts that contain ideological traces of the interests of certain dominant groups (men and capitalists). At the meso level, social interaction occurs in the form of interactions between individuals (male and female agents) in television media organizations to produce the text which is manifested through communication between actors. At the macro level, this is manifested through social communication between television media and various social institutions in society.

Women are depicted by the mass media as experiencing violence and oppression by a network of power in various forms. Through its mediation function, the mass media shows the audience how all violence is known as it really is. Through the media, the public does not only receive information about the actual violence against women themselves, but also receives information about symbolic violence against women, discrimination, or limitations that show humiliation, discrimination, or limitation of social functions in society (Sunarto, 2009). In research on violence against women in television media, for example, it was found that Indonesia with strong patriarchy allows violence against women such as the many cases of abuse and murder against women, even committed by their husbands and television institutions that perpetuate this making women become objects (Dwirahayu et al., 2019). Even in other programs, such as television talk shows, which are moderated

by fellow women, the position of women as objects is marginalized in the construction of a negative image of women (Kamilah et al., 2017). In advertising, which can be seen from the positions occupied by women, on the one hand, women emphasize the means of persuasion in the image of a product, and on the other hand, women are consumers who consume the products of capitalism. This aspect of communication places men as the center and women are only their shadow/men. Male domination occupies all public spaces, from decision-making to choosing the main actor, being placed on the front cover, having lots of opportunities, and having more time available. If the whole issue places men as the most dominant actor and owner of access, then it is women who are not aware that they have become mute (Riyadi, 2013). Another silencing of women also occurs in the film media. In the film "Pertaruhan" there is a silencing of women through dialogue and narrative, where the silencing of women is through language constructed by men. The contents of this film are a real depiction of how women are still being degraded and their existence in social life has not been taken into account much. The construction of language by men is only one aspect of the various ways to silence women's interests in society. The strong cultural elements of a community group that provide a considerable gap between the concept of gender between women and men also play a big part in silencing women (Sari, 2014).

"Ain't I a Woman" is a sentence from Sojourner Truth that contains resistance not only to male-female hegemony but also to dominate the middle class and highly educated in the feminist or women's movement. Sojourner Truth is of the view that women should look at their bodies and say according to their "womanhood", "female characteristics" and that does not prevent them from working, acting, and speaking (Tong, 2010). Friedan explains this in his book *The Second Stage* which encourages women to become women. This book encourages both men and women to work together towards an androgen future in which all human beings combine within themselves "masculine" and "feminine" mental traits and behaviors. In the past year, many have seen equality occur, women today have the right to education, the same

voting rights as men. Women have the right to appear in the public domain with the attributes they have.

In the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indonesian government used spokespersons to the public. This spokesperson has the duty to report the development of the pandemic in Indonesia which will be broadcast through electronic and digital mass media. It is known, President Joko Widodo appointed Achmad Yurianto as the Spokesperson for the Handling and Prevention of the Corona Virus on March 3, 2020. Yuri's job is to answer questions related to the coronavirus. He has been active in giving statements to the media crew, even since the coronavirus has not been detected in Indonesia. For 140 days every 15.30 WIB Yuri provided information on the development of daily data on the Covid-19 case which was broadcast live by television, radio, and government social media. The Covid-19 spokesperson is tasked with conveying information to ministries or institutions, local governments, agencies, communities, and/or other parties related to the implementation and control of strategic policy implementation related to handling Covid-19 based on directions from the Chair of the Policy Committee and/or Head of the Covid-19 Handling Task Force. Then Achmad Yurianto was replaced by dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro is part of the Central Task Force Public Communication Team who is asked to accompany Achmad Yurianto in submitting daily data on the Covid-19 case as of June 8, 2020.

Communication is a two-way process between the sender and receiver of the message. The communication process is incomplete if the audience does not send a response or response to the communicator to the message conveyed. This response or response is called feedback. Now in the digital era, feedback can happen right away without any delay like the traditional mass media of old. Public assessment of news, events can be recorded immediately. The comment column becomes a place for interaction between fellow audiences and an assessment of the communicator. Since the appearance of doctor Reisa Broto Asmoro as a government spokesman in the Covid-19 Pandemic, the public has been amazed and gave various opinions regarding its appearance. Even narrow drones identify this with the Reisa Effect. Social Network Analysis (SNA) on 'Reisa' in the drone emprit analysis shows a

cluster of netizens who are not from the pro-contra cluster (Fahmi, 2020). Tend to be positive (78%). The trend and volume of emotions shown were significant, showing aspects of trust and anticipation (hope). Doctor Reisa is a woman who has capabilities in the health sector in the public domain. In this case study Doctor Reisa is a subject that he is active in the public domain, but how does Doctor Reisa present herself in conveying the development of Covid-19 as a spokesperson? How is the feedback from the public and the media as part of Doctor Reisa's audience in the public sphere as a woman who is a spokesperson?

**RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is a qualitative study using Sara Mills critical discourse analysis. Mills's model of discourse analysis emphasizes how women are represented in the text. Sara Mill calls her analysis of Feminist Stylistics. Sara Mills said Feminist Stylistics aims to make the assumptions that exist in conventional stylistics clearer, by not only adding the topic of Gender to the list of elements analyzed, but using stylistics to become a new phase in discourse analysis (Umar Fauzan, 2014). To conduct discourse analysis, Sara Mills divides it into three levels of analysis, namely:

- a) Analysis at the Word Level
  - Sexism in Language • Sexism and It's Meaning
- b) Analysis at the Phrase / Sentence Level
  - Naming • abuse of women • compassion/stunting • refinement/taboo
- c) Analysis at the Discourse Level
  - Character/role • Fragmentation • Focalization • Schemata

Researchers use YouTube as a media discourse, including the following:

Table 1. Media Discourse Text

Tittle		Channel	Date		Link
Perkembangan COVID-19	Penanganan	Metrotvnews.com	8 Juni	2020	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7E7p0UEIHQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7E7p0UEIHQ</a>
Gugus Tekan Covid-19 di Tiga Provinsi	Tugas Covid-19 Fokus	Metrotvnews.com	10	Juni 2020	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_P2tmGGPLj8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_P2tmGGPLj8</a>

Tittle	Channel	Date	Link
Dokter Reisa Broto Asmoro Dampingi Achmad Yurianto Sampaikan Update Corona	Kompas TV	8 Juni 2020	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ujp9f34sfDo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ujp9f34sfDo</a>
LIVE: Keterangan Pers Juru Bicara Pemerintah dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro, 14 September 2020	Sekretariat Negara	14 September 2020	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CHMVzNRbY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3CHMVzNRbY</a>
Ini Pernyataan Jubir Yurianto Soal 19 Orang Positif Corona di Indonesia	Kompas TV	9 Maret 2020	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfdMot212MQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JfdMot212MQ</a>
Achmad Yurianto: Imbauan Jaga Jarak Harus Dipatuhi	Kompas TV	27 Maret 2020	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h17pOY88eU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6h17pOY88eU</a>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Rhetorical Evidence and Rhetorical Sensitivity

Doctor Reisa Broto Asmoro, since his appearance as a companion to the spokesperson for the task force handling the Covid-19 media, has increasingly explained her profile. In rhetoric, there are 3 important pieces of evidence, namely ethos, pathos, and logos. In the Ethos aspect, in the aspect of the doctor profile, Reisa is proven to have high intelligence with her education as a doctor. Reisa is a doctor as well as a model where she studied medicine at Pelita Harapan University and the University of Indonesia. After graduating and working at the Raden Said Soekanto Kramat Jati Police Hospital, in the world of forensics. Whereas the Pathos aspect, in every speech delivering the latest news related to the development of Covid-19, Doctor Reisa provides scientific evidence that is in accordance with the medical world. In addition to being a spokesperson, she also provides tips related to New Normal such as washing masks, healthy food. For example, Doctor Reisa said “a study was conducted by Lanset, the best physical distancing for Covid-19 prevention by keeping a distance of 1 meter. Especially when on public transportation, avoid holding live handrails. If it is not possible to wash your hands with water, you can use a hand rub... ..”. Meanwhile, in the logos aspect, Doctor Reisa has used emotion by choosing words, emphasizing, as well as a soft tone of voice and a good invitation. Besides that, in the aspect of understanding the target audience, Doctor Reisa also conducted a survey of her followers via social media. Wherewith this answer Doctor

Reisa will have an understanding of the information needs of the public about the development of Covid-19. Through her personal Instagram page, dr. Reisa feels sorry to see the increasing number of Covid-19 victims, especially in the medical community. "Too many medical personnel have died, friends, friends, colleagues, seniors, teachers, inspirers, fighters, educators, volunteers," wrote dr. Reisa Broto Asmoro from the @reisabrotoasmoro Instagram page on July 12, 2020.

### **Muted, Oppressed, and Marginal**

The election of Doctor Reisa as a companion to the spokesperson for the task force handling Covid-19 is one proof of gender equality that is currently happening, where women have taken roles in the public sphere. However, with all the rhetorical evidence that Doctor Reisa has she is still considered a non-fluent speaker and he is more concerned with physical aspects and beauty, not the content or rhetorical evidence that Doctor Reisa has. Like the comments of netizens: "What are you doing to scare you?", "Yes, cute if you want to be told to tell the public", "I think there is something different, just the same explanation is standard". As well as greetings and praise that with the presence of doctor Reisa they were even happier to see explanations related to the new normal and covid-19.

Then doctor Reisa was elected, which is an achievement for women to be able to speak out in the public sphere. Gender equality is not only about men and women having the same opportunities, but also about remaining as women with their femininity. However, at the appearance of doctor Reisa, many audiences gave judgments related to the rhetorical technique being carried out that were not suitable as spokespersons for the Covid-19 task force in Indonesia. The feedback that occurred, among other things, highlighted the way Doctor Reisa's rhetoric was seen as telling stories, being too gentle, like reading advertisements, making you sleepy, and so on. Even though this is one of the characteristics possessed by women in everyday speaking. That this is inherent femininity. This means that in the public sphere, women's femininity has not been fully accepted as a way for them to be present.

This verbal oppression becomes a reflection of how the closure occurs in women, not infrequently even among women. This becomes a social reflection that muting does not only occur from dominant groups against minorities. The muted group is considered not very good at speaking by the language system of the dominant group. The muted group emerges due to the pressure and oppression of a group in the form of race, gender, occupation, and others. This dominant group occurs between the dominant (men or bourgeois capitalists) against the minority (women or the proletariat). However, now there is silence not only from the dominant but also from fellow minorities, women, and the proletariat because of certain factors that make them want to silence women in the public sphere. This factor can be psychological, or social.

In fact, despite being given a role in the public sphere, it turns out that the naming of doctor Reisa's role is not a full spokesperson, but the media and the dominant people use the term "companion". Example in the title "Doctor Reisa Broto Asmoro Accompanying Achmad Yuriyanto Deliver Corona Update". That the role of doctor Reisa was not full, she was present to convey to the public in some parts and others, Ahmad Yuriyanto continued to convey it. Here, it can be seen that Reisa's role is not like the previous claim of "replacing" but only as an accompaniment to the screen for such feedback posed by the public and the media. In other words, the appearance of doctor Reisa makes evidence that women are still a secondary subject. Not only that, on the next occasion, Doctor Reisa only delivered sub-chapters related to the domestic or women's realm. Examples relate to health protocols in beauty salons, foods that must be consumed (4 healthy 5 perfect), washing masks, etc. Furthermore, Doctor Reisa was never again on the screen, replaced by Ahmad Yuriyanto and Prof. Wiku. Meanwhile, Doctor Reisa no longer has a title as a spokesperson, but the Public Communication Team for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19. There is instability in the role of women in the public sphere due to dominant pressure and they are still considered not fluent and proper.

The language structure used by doctor Reisa also shows that the language used by her is the same male language used by Pak Ahmad Yuriyanto. This happens



because the language was created by the dominant and used by women to be accepted in the public sphere. Doctor Reisa's initial rhetoric is the same. Many then criticized that Doctor Reisa was only repeating what Ahmad Yurianto had said so that there was a need for novelty messages. Because indeed the most important thing about rhetoric is the message itself. In other words, it can be seen that there is control exercised to silence women.

## **CONCLUSION**

Nowadays women have many equality and rights. They work in the public sphere develop themselves, are highly educated, and even take important roles. One of them is the appointment of doctor Reisa Broto Asmoro, who is said to be the spokesperson for the Covid-19 task force for the Indonesian government. Good feedback was heard after Doctor Reisa appeared on the television screen. Even identified as the "Reisa Effect". However, the appearance of Doctor Reisa is not good news about women in the public domain. Like Sojourner Truth's words about middle-class women who remain oppressed even though they are educated, this also happens now even though implicitly. One of them is seen in this case study. Whereas, although Doctor Reisa has rhetorical evidence of ethos, pathos, and logos and has rhetorical sensitivity Reisa is still considered not fluent and there is the instability of role. Besides, in other feedback, the public does not accept Reisa's feminine rhetoric. So, as Friedan said, gender equality can have implications for negating women's femininity. Furthermore, the gender equality that was sought and realized in the field did not happen. The word used to describe the role of doctor Reisa was "accompanying", this shows that his role as a secondary subject. However, what also stands out is that silencing is not only carried out by the dominant group against women but also by fellow women. Of course, this is very unfortunate because when women try to get up their fellowmen tackle themselves. Silencing by the same gender can occur with many factors, including psychological, economic, and social. So, thus until now, although it seems that gender equality has occurred everywhere, in fact, there has been an implicit opening.

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