ANALYSIS OF REFERENCE AND INFERENCE IN THE FILM "PEREMPUAN BERKALUNG SORBAN"

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the application of reference and inference as pragmatic aspects in the film *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* directed by Hanung Bramantyo. The study aims to investigate how these linguistic elements contribute to the construction of meaning, particularly in the representation of gender, power, and religious values. Using a qualitative descriptive approach and grounded in pragmatic theory, particularly the frameworks of Yule (1996), Levinson (1983), and Thomas (1995), the analysis examines selected scenes and dialogues to identify types of references and the inferential processes engaged by audiences. The findings indicate that both reference and inference serve not only to maintain textual coherence but also function ideologically to represent resistance, critique religious patriarchy, and affirm women's agency.

Keywords: Reference, Inference, Pragmatics, Gender Discourse, Perempuan Berkalung Sorban

INTRODUCTION

Language in film operates not just as a medium for delivering dialogue but as a central component of meaning-making. In particular, pragmatics offers powerful tools to understand how meaning is conveyed beyond literal expressions. Two critical elements within this framework are reference and inference. Reference concerns the ways linguistic expressions relate to real or imagined entities, while inference pertains to the listener's or viewer's ability to draw meaning

from implied or contextual information.

Films are a rich source of pragmatic data because they represent complex social interactions, cultural values, and ideological tensions through language and visual imagery. As a narrative medium, film offers a combination of linguistic and non-linguistic modes of communication that challenge the audience to engage inferentially. Every choice in dialogue, gesture, and cinematography may be a site of meaning, where viewers must connect explicit information with implicit knowledge to fully understand character motivations and thematic nuances.

The film *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* provides a fertile ground for such analysis. Directed by Hanung Bramantyo, the film portrays the journey of a young woman, Anissa, who challenges the gender-biased norms entrenched in her pesantren community. It raises critical questions about the role of religion in legitimizing patriarchal structures and the struggle for female agency within such constraints. These themes are not only constructed through the visual and narrative elements but also through linguistic features that demand close pragmatic attention.

In this context, reference and inference become essential in understanding how the film constructs its discourse. Referential expressions such as pronouns, definite descriptions, and names function to guide the audience through the story while also aligning characters ideologically. At the same time, inference allows viewers to grasp deeper meanings that are not explicitly stated, such as the emotional subtext of a scene or the socio-religious critique embedded in seemingly neutral dialogue.

Moreover, studying these aspects from a pragmatic perspective enhances our understanding of how films engage their audiences on multiple levels. Pragmatic analysis can reveal how discourse positions the viewer to interpret characters sympathetically or critically, and

how meaning is shaped through what is said and what is left unsaid. This is especially relevant in films like *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, which seek to challenge dominant discourses and provoke critical reflection.

This paper aims to analyze the mechanisms of reference and inference in selected scenes from *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, identifying how these linguistic tools support the film's broader ideological goals. The study hopes to contribute to the field of discourse analysis in film studies and provide insight into how language in film can reflect and resist social norms.

This qualitative study employs descriptive analysis to examine the dialogue and images in the film. The theory of feminism serves as the basis for Sara Mills's discourse analysis, which focuses on women. The research uses a combination of dialogue and image scanning to analyze the film's narrative and how it positions women.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative-descriptive methodology grounded in pragmatic and discourse analysis frameworks. The object of the study is the film *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, directed by Hanung Bramantyo, which presents a narrative embedded with gender, religious, and cultural discourses. The analysis focuses on how reference and inference are employed in the film's language and how they function in shaping meaning and ideology.

Data were obtained through repeated, close viewing of the film, with particular attention given to scenes that include significant dialogue, symbolic imagery, and narrative turning points. Transcriptions of selected scenes were created, and linguistic expressions were examined in detail. These expressions were categorized and interpreted using theories of reference (Yule, 1996) and inference (Levinson, 1983; Thomas, 1995).

The stages of the research process included:

- Identifying referential expressions such as pronouns, definite noun phrases, and proper names.
- Classifying references into anaphoric (backward-looking), cataphoric (forward-looking), and exophoric (context-dependent) types.
- Analyzing scenes that rely on inference for meaning construction, especially those involving indirect speech, visual symbolism, and character silence.
- Interpreting how both reference and inference contribute to the ideological messages of the film, particularly concerning gender relations, resistance, and religious discourse.

The research also considers the socio-cultural context of the film's production and reception. The audience's interpretive process is central to the pragmatic approach, acknowledging that meaning is co-constructed between the film and the viewer. Thus, this methodology enables a comprehensive understanding of how linguistic elements function within the filmic text and how they resonate with broader societal issues.

Ethical considerations are minimal in this study, as the data source is a publicly available cultural product. However, interpretive care is taken to ensure that the analysis remains faithful to the film's textual integrity and cultural specificity.

The methodological framework is chosen for its capacity to reveal the subtle and often implicit ways in which language contributes to meaning-making in film. It is particularly suitable for a work like *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, where much of the critical discourse operates beneath the surface of the spoken text.

FINDING AND DISCUSION

Referential Expressions in the Film The film *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* utilizes various types of referential expressions that help construct its narrative coherence and ideological stance. These references whether in the form of pronouns, names, or definite noun phrases serve to connect characters, objects, and ideas across scenes, creating both linguistic cohesion and ideological clarity.

Anaphoric references, which point back to previously mentioned entities, are employed to maintain continuity. For example, in the scene where Anissa recounts her suffering in the pesantren, she says, "Semua itu karena dia." Here, "dia" clearly refers back to her authoritarian father mentioned earlier in the conversation. This usage not only connects past and present but also intensifies the emotional weight of her experiences.

Cataphoric references, though less frequent, are used to build suspense or highlight dramatic revelations. One example is when Anissa states, "Yang ingin aku lakukan adalah sesuatu yang akan mengubah semuanya." The referent is introduced only afterward, drawing the audience's attention and building emotional intensity.

Exophoric references rely on the shared cultural knowledge of the audience. Words like "ustadz," "syariat," "pesantren," and "masyarakat" are not explained within the text but depend on viewers' familiarity with the Islamic socio-religious context of Indonesia. These references enrich the cultural setting and reinforce ideological boundaries between tradition and reform.

In many cases, reference is also used to signal power dynamics. For instance, male characters are often referred to with titles such as "ustadz" or "kyai," while female characters, particularly Anissa, are mostly addressed by name. This choice reinforces the theme of individual agency versus institutional authority.

Inferential Processes and Viewer Engagement Inference operates in the film as a bridge between what is said and what is meant, requiring the viewer to interpret meaning based on context, prior knowledge, and symbolic cues. In *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban*, this process is central to how viewers grasp the underlying critique of patriarchal values.

The film frequently leaves certain meanings unspoken, relying on visual symbolism, facial expressions, tone, and silence to guide interpretation. In a poignant scene, Anissa sits silently as her marriage is arranged by her father. Although she says nothing, the camera lingers on her tear-filled eyes and trembling hands, inviting the viewer to infer her inner turmoil, fear, and lack of agency.

Symbolism further deepens the inferential process. The titular turban (*sorban*) is not merely a religious garment but a representation of male authority. When Anissa eventually questions the very values symbolized by the turban, it signals a broader rejection of patriarchal interpretations of Islam. This layered meaning is not stated directly but inferred through repetition, visual emphasis, and thematic framing.

Moreover, the narrative structure itself demands inferential participation. Time shifts, fragmented memories, and dream sequences blur the line between reality and thought, requiring viewers to piece together the chronology and psychological development of the protagonist. These indirect storytelling techniques align with the film's intent to engage audiences in critical thinking, rather than passive consumption.

Reference and Inference as Tools of Ideological Construction Together, reference and inference serve as powerful instruments for constructing and communicating ideology. Referential patterns demarcate relationships between characters, distinguishing those aligned with patriarchal norms from those resisting them. Anissa's consistent self-reference using "aku" underscores her growing self-awareness and autonomy, while other characters—particularly male figures—are often referred to indirectly or collectively, minimizing their personal depth and emphasizing their symbolic roles.

Inference, meanwhile, enables the film to convey complex social critiques without resorting to overt didacticism. Rather than explicitly condemning traditional gender roles, the film uses inferential cues—contrasts between speech and action, symbolic imagery, and subtle irony—to challenge the audience's assumptions. This approach empowers viewers to reach their own conclusions, making the ideological message more impactful and personally resonant.

In conclusion, the results show that the film's use of reference and inference is deliberate and integral to its storytelling. These pragmatic devices not only maintain narrative cohesion but also advance the film's critical perspective on gender, religion, and authority. The synergy between language and ideology in *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* demonstrates the value of a pragmatic lens in film analysis, particularly in culturally rich and socially charged narratives.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the film *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* through the pragmatic lens of reference and inference reveals the powerful role language plays in shaping narrative, ideology, and audience perception. Referential expressions in the film help establish relationships, maintain textual coherence, and signal power hierarchies, while inferential processes allow viewers to uncover deeper meanings not explicitly stated in the dialogue.

These linguistic tools function beyond structural elements; they actively construct the film's ideological critique of patriarchy, religious authority, and gender inequality. By compelling audiences to infer meaning through visual symbolism, silence, and indirect references, the film invites active interpretation and critical engagement.

In essence, reference and inference are central to how *Perempuan Berkalung Sorban* communicates its feminist message, encourages reflection, and challenges conventional religious narratives. The findings of this study affirm the value of pragmatic analysis in film studies, especially for works addressing social transformation and cultural critique.

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