THE ROLE OF CULTURAL HEGEMONY IN *MARIPOSA* IN MAINTAINING GENDER COLOR ASSUMPTION

Nur Nabilah Fauziyah
UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang
correspondence: nabilahziyah@gmail.com

Abstract

The development of technology has a big contribution to creating cultural phenomena of global citizens. A movie as part of cultural products in this matter is not only considered as a cultural phenomenon, but it also can takes a significant role in shaping the culture itself. Specifically, this paper was conducted to discover denotative and connotative meaning of pink and blue color of school uniform in Mariposa and its relation of practicing hegemony in the context of gender color. In analyzing the meaning of color use in school uniform and the relation between pink and blue uniform with hegemony, the author uses Barthes' semiotic and Gramsci's hegemony as the theory. The data were collected from the images of movie scenes in Mariposa when the characters wear their school uniform. After analyzing the data, this study found that (1) The use of pink and blue color as a color of school uniform in Mariposa represents masculinity and feminity, (2) Mariposa movie is considered as a medium in operating hegemony, and (3) The hegemony is represented through pink and blue color of the movie characters' uniform.

Keywords: hegemony, gender color, semiotic

Introduction

In this globalization era, a movie as a form of the cultural product takes a significant role in society. As it has become a part of society's life, a movie might lead to massive impacts in the community. Happer and Philo (2013) assert that on a micro-level, the values of some movies have an impact on constructing individuals' beliefs about reality and even creating social change at the macro level. These phenomena are convinced to be a form of urgency for individuals as consumers of cultural products to comprehend a particular message that the movies want to share. To go even further, the fact that the message of a movie can be presented explicitly and implicitly also brings the cultural studies to the concept of semiotic. Briefly, semiotic is defined as a study of a sign that occurs in society (Hodge & Kress, 1988). This concept could be employed to examine the explicit and implicit meaning which are contained in a movie, costume, posters, etc.

The study of semiotic has been widely discussed in the study of culture. There are several previous studies that have discussed this topic. To illustrate,

Okadigwe (2016) explains that a costume in a movie represents the socio-cultural attributes of the character in the movie. By using semiotic theory, this study reveals that the shape, motifs, and color of the costume have its own meaning. The research of semiotic which conducted by Persada (2019) also reveals that the visual of Gundala's poster depicts a strong impression of the character in the movie. In addition, Rifa (2018) shares the fact about denotative, connotative, and myth of Starbuck logos. By relating to Barthes' semiotic theory, the research found out that the figure of Starbuck logo symbolizes elegance and the meaning of denotative and connotative of Starbuck logos have changed in every logo.

All of these studies show that semiotic in cultural studies is assumed as a crucial tool in examining the meaning of cultural phenomena. By concerning the meaning of a sign, semiotics could generate a particular meaning that might be not realized on the surface. The significance of semiotics also lies in the fact that this study encourages the researchers and society generally to critically view a sign that occurs in reality. Meanwhile, this study particularly attempts to examine the implicit meaning which is contained in the characters' costume of Mariposa movie. Mariposa, a movie based on a novel best-seller, is a romance-drama movie which is directed by Fajar Bustomi who formerly directed the most-viewed local movies, Dilan series. This movie has been anticipated by movie lovers in Indonesia, especially teenagers. With great attention that Mariposa has, I attempt to examine the cultural phenomena of the movie. By using Barthes' semiotic theory, this study was conducted to figure out denotative and connotative meaning that emerged from the characters' school uniform. To enrich the analysis of this study, Gramsci's hegemony is also implemented in this research. Hegemony theory is employed in order to discover the role of the movie as a cultural product in the context of gender color stereotype and its relation with the practice of hegemony in society.

Literature Review
Semiotic

The study of semiotic was originally introduced in 1916 by a linguist named Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure, as the father of modern linguistics, asserts that semiology has a huge impact to discover what denotes the signs and how the signs are determined (Saussure, 1966, p.16). This theory emerges from Saussure's assumption about the importance of putting linguistic signs into a more general theory. In Saussure's semiology, language has a significant role in explicating the meaning of the signs because it has a big contribution in constructing a reality that happens in society (Yakin & Totu, 2014). There are two elements of language in semiology, signifier and signified. A signifier is conceptualized with a material form of language such as sound image, whilst signified is conceptualized with a mental concept of the sign. This concept emphasizes the relation between the signs especially in a language with the process of cognitive in the human mind.

Regardless of Saussure's focus on language in semiology, there are still many various kinds of signs in semiotics. To illustrate, sounds, images, and gestures might be used as the object in the analysis of semiotic (Chandler, 2017, p.2). These examples signify that semiotics could be implemented to analyze a movie, poster, advertisement, etc. The scope of semiotics might not only focus on what we called as a sign, but it also can be employed to various objects that might

be used to represent something else. Pierce (1965) in his theory of semiotic states that something can be categorized as a sign if someone interprets it as a sign, regardless of the fact that there is no intended meaning at the beginning. Pierce's theory also affirms that the concept of sign in semiotics doesn't stand alone, but it is a part of the sign system. Semiotics in this matter does not only focus on exposing the meaning of the sign, but further than that, it could be employed to understand how the meanings are constructed and how reality is conveyed through the signs (Chandler, 2017, p.2).

Furthermore, semiotics also has a tight relation with the concept of communication. The fact that communication involves a symbol activity indicates that sign in semiotics is a part of communication. Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) specifically state that semiotics encompasses non-verbal communication. This statement emphasizes on the fact that the analysis of semiotic covers various types of communication. In specific, Barthes (1968) distinguished the analysis of semiotic into two types, verbal and non-verbal communication. The verbal communication highlights on the component of the text such as the title on the poster as the main object of semiotic analysis, while the non-verbal communication focuses on the images that can be analyzed. These signs later will be divided into two levels of meaning, denotative and connotative. Denotative meaning is defined as something that people see on the surface and it is not related to the context of culture, society, ideology (Bouzida, 2014). On the other hand, connotative is defined as something which portrays the emotion and culture's values of signs (Fisk, 1992).

Hegemony

The term hegemony roots from ancient Greek *hegemonia* which is interpreted as a form of domination of one element to another in the social order. This concept is popularized by an Italian named Antonio Gramsci who associated the concept of hegemony with the power of the state. According to Gramsci, hegemony only can be exercised if there are cooperation, consent, and surveillance from every element of the state (Barret, 1997, p.239). This definition affirms that the practice of soft power with a persuasive way in the context of hegemony has an important role in constructing a common interest of society (Nye, 2003). In other words, the practice of hegemony in the state or in the global context requires great power from the ruler class to influence and create a consensus about norms and values in the society.

The domination of the ruler class in hegemony context also denotes that there is a hierarchy in the social order. In fact, the concept of hegemony cannot be separated from Marxism theory which focuses on the discrepancies of social class. Generally, marxism theory concerns on the class domination by the bourgeois class over the proletariat class as an effect of capitalism in the aspect of political, economic, and ideological (Jessop, 2004). The practice of domination that occurs in society is predicted by Marxism to bring a class struggle and revolution class in the future. The revolution in this case can emerge from the proletariat class because of the emergence of awareness from the working class about the reality in society. Responding to this matter, Gramsci reveals that the bourgeois class still can prevent the revolution of the proletariat class by two means, coercion and consent (Herrmann, 2017). Coercion is interpreted as a power that is exercised by

applying violence, while consent is defined as a power which practiced by creating a consensus among the bourgeois and the proletariat classes.

Maintaining the power of the state with a consent way which defined as hegemony is known to have different sources in each era. To illustrate, a great population is considered as the main source of hegemony in the 17th and 18th centuries because of its big impact on agricultural economic (Yilmaz, 2010). Then, in the middle of the 20th century, the source of hegemony changed into the military force. These facts show that the source of hegemony might change by considering the situation of the society at that time. Meanwhile, in this globalization era, technology is considered as the main source of hegemony. With the development of technology in this era, hegemony could be implemented in many aspects of society, such as political, social, economic, and culture. Specifically, culture and its products have a big contribution in exercising hegemony. Cultural products such as magazines, newspapers, film, music, and social media have a significant role in influencing hegemonic discourse due to the fact that society will always consume cultural products. This fact also indicates that a cultural product might have an impact on persuading society's perception of reality and preserving the hegemony of the dominant group.

Gender Color

With a complex identity of individuals, the possibility of the emergence of social stereotyping is inevitable. In fact, there are many stereotypes that flourish in society currently. One of the examples of social stereotyping which still exists and develops is a gender stereotype. A gender stereotype is generally illustrated with an assumption and belief about how a certain gender must think and behaves in their community. This stereotype might appear at the individual level due to cognitive reasons. Fiske and Neuberg (1990) explain that in the aspect of social psychological, individuals tend to do a classification about their interlocutors. It indicates that the possibility of social stereotyping might already exist in everyone. Further, gender stereotypes might also come to the community because of cultural reasons. In a wider context of society, the cultural background of someone is considered to be tremendously effective in influencing gender stereotypes. This stereotype commonly associates a certain object or behavior with the representation of masculinity and femininity (Cunningham, 2011).

Specifically, one of the notable examples of gender stereotype emerges from gender color. Gender color, for example in pink color, frequently be related to a certain gender because of many factors. Sanad (2018) asserts that the development of technology, culture, and economy has a big contribution to governing the color of gender in society. By relating to the history of color preferences, it is found that a certain color at the beginning doesn't represent a certain identity such as gender, but it evolves across the time due to various events that occur in society. In the prehistoric period, the evidence of gender color especially in the industry of clothes is not found in the community, but it starts to develop in the medieval period. In the medieval period which characterized by Renaissance events in Europe, Gage (1978) mentions that men tend to wear blue and yellow colors for their clothes, while women tend to wear vermilion red color. This phenomenon arises along with the development of science and technology in Europe and shows

that there is a tight relation about what happens in society with the stereotype of gender color.

The stereotype of gender color also progressively develops at the beginning of the 20th century. There are various events which occurred at that time and World War is one of the major factors which contributes to constructing gender color assumption. The fact that the aspect of social, political, and economic experienced significant changes in society also indicates that World War could influence the fashion preferences of consumers, including color preferences. This assumption is reinforced by the fact that Nazi Germany with its big power at that time emphasized that a pink color is a form of femininity. In addition, the stereotype of gender color might also be recognized as a result of hegemony. Uncu (2018) reveals that gender color, for example in pink color for girls and blue color for boys, originally introduces by westerners and it was also expanded around the world by western countries with their big influence in social and economic circumstance. In this case, by glorifying their success in the Industrial Revolution, western countries were able to construct society's perception of gender color especially in the fashion industry.

Method

This paper is conducted by using descriptive qualitative research as the design in order to comprehensively describe denotative and connotative meaning of color use in Mariposa's school uniform and the role of pink and blue color of school uniform in exercising hegemony in the context of gender color. This study positions Mariposa movie as the primer data source and other studies about hegemony, semiotic, and gender color as the secondary data source. The images from Mariposa movie scenes that represent the pink and blue color of school uniforms are recognized as the data of the research. In the process of collecting the data, this research uses a documentation and observation technique. The data were collected by observing the movie in order to find denotative, connotative, and the hegemony that the movie wants to present from the characters' school uniform. Specifically, the images of the movie scene are selected by connected the images with Gramsci's and Barthes' theory in the context of gender color. After collecting the data, then the data are analyzed by implementing Barthes' semiotic and Gramsci's hegemony theory and it is written with a descriptive analysis form.

Findings and Discussion

The concept of wearing uniform in school has already been adapting by many schools over the world. Many countries, especially in Asia, require their students for wearing uniform in school. This fact denotes that the concept of wearing uniform in school is considered as an essential thing for society. To go even further, the use of uniform in a complex society is even depicted as a form of identity of individuals. As a form of their identity, individuals tend to believe that their uniform is a representation of their existence in the group. Specifically, wearing uniform at school might lead the students to a certain perspective about how they must view themselves and others (Dussel, 2001). All of these facts indicate that there is intended meanings that someone wants to show to others while wearing uniform. In this matter, wearing a uniform can be interpreted as a

form of the group's existence, a symbol of the group, or even as an expression of equality.

Semiotic Analysis of School Uniform in Mariposa

In a semiotic dimension, the color might perform as a sign of a certain object. Caivano (1998) explains that color might have a function to substitute a physical entity and have a relation to the aspect of the psychological and culture of individuals. Specifically, the choice of pink and blue color in the school uniform of Mariposa's characters also can be interpreted with a semiotic perspective. In this case, the pink and blue color of the uniform denotes the variation of school uniform based on their gender The visual sign of pink color is seen to be used in order to show that the uniform represents female students, while the blue color is implemented to represent male students. By interpreting the colors in the level of denotation meaning, it is known that the use of pink and blue color in the school uniform of the movie's characters might be only seen as an ordinary thing and it doesn't encompass a certain meaning.

In contrast with the previous interpretation, the visual sign of pink and blue color in Mariposa's school uniform can evoke a certain meaning in the level of connotation. By relating it to the socio-cultural phenomena in society, pink and blue color are found to have a certain meaning. In specific, pink color is interpreted with a form of playful and sensitivity, while blue color is interpreted with a form of responsibility and loyalty (Cerrato, 2012). This interpretation is generated by society with various factors especially in the context of culture. Frassanito (2008) mentions that *Funny Face* movie as one of the cultural products contributes to preserving the stereotype of colors in community. At this point, pink color is even associated with the concept of femininity, while the blue color is associated with the concept of masculinity. These facts show that the concept of pink and blue color in Mariposa's school uniform represents masculinity and femininity.

'Mariposa' as a Medium in Operating Hegemony

In Indonesia context, the uniform was firstly introduced during the Japanese occupation. At that time, all schools were required to have a uniform in order to make the students be more easily directed and regulated (Moser, 2008). Based on this fact, it can be seen that there is a power exercising by the Japanese governor when the uniform was first worn in Indonesia. The power exercising in this matter is shown by the fact that the Japanese used their soft power in creating the rules about the obligation of wearing a uniform in school. The fact that the use of uniform was massively implemented by all of the students in Indonesia also indicates that there is a connection between power exercising and school uniform in the history of Indonesia education.

Further, in the era of the massive use of technology, practicing hegemony also be more emphasized on the concept of cultural hegemony. One of the media that can be used in preserving hegemony is a movie. A movie as a product of culture has become an inseparable part of the community. It is confirmed by the fact that the number of cinema viewers already reached 50 million viewers in 2019. Meanwhile, a movie is also assumed to have a great impact on creating and preserving hegemony due to the fact that movies as a cultural product can

influence society's perception of reality. The fact that there are many viewers of the movies which assume that the movie scenes portray the issue in reality also indicates the importance of movie in maintaining the domination of a particular culture. This domination later can be used as a tool to construct the ideology in society.

As was previously stated, the growth of cinema viewers in Indonesia signifies that Indonesia's movie industry has a pivotal role in constructing or reconstructing social order. One of the movies that might have a great impact on society is a movie with the title *Mariposa*. As a movie which based on popular *Wattpad* and novel best-seller, *Mariposa* is predicted to be one of box office movies in 2020. Relating to this matter, it is found that *Mariposa* in the context of cultural studies can be connected to the concept of hegemony. In Gramsci's theory of hegemony, it is mentioned that the domination of one group over the others might be constructed by taking the consent of the subordinate groups. In this case, *Mariposa* is classified as one of the media in operating hegemony by creating a particular perception of gender color. In fact, this movie has a significant role in glorifying the concept of color classification based on gender which has a relation with the culture of western countries as the dominant group in the movie industry.

The Use of Pink and Blue Color as a Representation of Gender Color in 'Mariposa' and Its Relation with Hegemony

In Mariposa movie which frequently sets in school, the director particularly illustrates the characters by wearing a uniform in school. The characters' uniforms are divided into two colors, pink and blue. On the surface, the concept of uniform by wearing pink and blue color is understood as a common thing. However, if it is connected to the concept of gender color, the uniform will be not considered as a neutral thing again. In the cultural context, the description of pink color as a girl uniform and blue as a boy uniform can be interpreted as one of the examples of exercising hegemony. The fact that the concept of gender color as a common stereotype was popularized by the dominant groups who have power in persuading society in the global context to consent with the ideology also indicates that there is a practice of hegemony in the movie. In this matter, western countries that are part of the Industrial Revolution have a great impact on persuading others to assume pink color as a representation of girl and blue color as a representation of boy.

Additionally, the fact that Mariposa movie still implements the concept of pink and blue color as a representation of gender color also indicates that the concept of gender color is still relevant until this modern era. In this era, a cultural

product such as movies certainly has a big effect on creating society's assumptions about reality. In the context of hegemony, Mariposa movie is known to have a pivotal role in persuading society about the fact that the boy must be represented with blue color as a form of masculinity and girl must be represented with pink color as a form of femininity. Therefore, Mariposa can be categorized as the medium in operating hegemony of western countries and it might have a significant role to reinforce the concept of pink as a girl color and blue as a boy color on global citizens.

Conclusion

Mariposa as one of the popular movies in Indonesia is not only considered as an entertaining movie in the study of culture. In fact, the visual sign of the movie is discovered to be the representation of masculinity and femininity. The classification of color based on the gender in *Mariposa* also indicates that there is a relation between *Mariposa* movie with the context of hegemony. In this case, pink and blue color in uniform that is presented in the movie is considered as one of the examples of hegemony that western countries have. The movie has a role in glorifying the concept of gender color that western countries bring, and the movie can be classified as one of the media in exercising hegemony.

References

Barthes, R. (1968). *Elements of semiology*. New York: Macmillan.

Barrett, M. (1997). Ideology, politics, hegemony: From Gramsci to Laclau and Mouffe, Mapping Ideology, Ed. Slavoj ZIZEK.

Bouzida, F. (2014). The semiology analysis in media studies: Roland Barthes Approach. In *International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities, Istanbul, 8*(10).

Caivano, J. L. (1998). Color and semiotics: A two-way street. *Color Research & Application: Endorsed by Inter-Society Color Council, The Colour Group (Great Britain), Canadian Society for Color, Color Science Association of Japan, Dutch Society for the Study of Color, The Swedish Colour Centre Foundation, Colour Society of Australia, Centre Français de la Couleur*, *23*(6), 390-401.

Cerrato, H. (2012). The meaning of colors. *The Graphic Designer*.

Chandler, D. (2017). *Semiotics: The basics*. New York: Taylor & Francis.

Cunningham, S. J. & Macrae, C. N. (2011). The colour of gender stereotyping. *British Journal of Psychology*, *102*(3), 598-614.

Dussel, I. (2001). *School uniforms and the disciplining of appearances: Towards a comparative history of the regulation of bodies in schooling* (Doctoral dissertation, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison).

Ferdinand, D. (1966). *Course in general linguistics*, *16524*. McGraw-Hill Humanities Social.

Fiske, S. T. & Neuberg, S. L. (1990). A continuum model of impression formation, from category based to individuating processes: Influences of information and motivation on attention and interpretation. In M. P. Zanna (Ed.), *Advances in experimental social psychology* (pp. 1–74). San Diego, CA: Academic Press

Frassanito, P. & Pettorini, B. (2008). Pink and blue: The color of gender. *Child's Nervous System*, *24*(8), 881-882.

Gage, J. (1978). Colour in history: Relative and absolute. *Art History, 1*(1), 104-130.

Happer, C. & Philo, G. (2013). The role of the media in the construction of public belief and social change. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, *1*(1), 321-336.

Herrmann, A. F. (2017). Hegemony. *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, 1-6.

Hodge, R. & Kress, G. (1988). *Social semiotics*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.

Jessop, B. (2004). Developments in Marxist theory. *The Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, 7.

Leeds-Hurwitz, W. (1993). *Semiotics and communication: Signs, codes, cultures*. London: Routledge.

Moser, S. (2008). *Performing national identity in postcolonial Indonesia* (Doctoral dissertation, National University of Singapore).

Nye Jr, J. S. (2003). *The paradox of American power: Why the world's only superpower can't go it alone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Okadigwe, M. N. (2016). Semiotic reading of costumes in Nigerian video films: African Bride as a paradigm. *Creative Artist: A Journal of Theatre and Media Studies*, *10*(1), 82-108

Persada, S. I. P. (2020). Semiotic Analysis of Gundala Movie Poster. *International Conference on Business, Economic, Social Science, and Humanities–Humanities and Social Sciences Track (ICOBEST-HSS 2019),* 133-135. Atlantis Press.

Peirce, C. P. (1965). Basic concepts of Peircean sign theory. *Semiotics*, *1*.

Rifa, N. (2018). *Roland Barthes' denotation, connotation and myth in the change of four Starbucks Logo: A study of Semiotics* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Darma Persada).

Sanad, R. A. (2018). Gender-specific colours of textile and clothing products throughout history. *International Journal*, *6*(1), 67-77.

Uncu, G. (2018). Gender of color: When did girls and boys start to wear pink and blue? In R. Yilmaz, G. Löschnigg (Eds.), *Studies on Balkan and near Eastern social sciences*, (pp. 281-287). Berlin, Peter Lang.

Yakin, H. S. M. & Totu, A. (2014). The semiotic perspectives of Peirce and Saussure: A brief comparative study. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *155*, 4-8.

Yilmaz, S. (2010). State, power, and hegemony. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, *1*(3).