Ethnic Othering in Indonesia: Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity in Public Documents

Susana Widyastuti*
Macquarie University

Rationale

- Ethnic othering of Chinese Indonesians can be represented as an ongoing socio-historical discourse from the perspectives of the Old Order, the New Order, and the Reform.
- This paper is part of a larger multiperspectival analysis involving discourse analysis, ethnographic accounts and social-psychological attitude analysis.
- The research specifically seeks to explain the dynamics of ethnic othering as it is discursively realized in public documents.
- Intertextual and interdiscursive analysis is central to mark the continuities and recontextualizations of the theme in such written texts.

Theoretical and methodological background

- The study of intertextuality is crucial for understanding social change.
- Texts incorporate within themselves evidences of histories of other texts.
- "Because of the principle of history, all communication is positioned within multiple, overlapping, and even conflicting discourses... borrow from other discourses and texts and are, in turn, used in later discourses."

Objective

To explore the historical perspective of ethnic othering through intertextual and interdiscursive relations within relevant government documents.

Data

48 central government documents legislating Chinese Indonesians in Indonesia through different regimes.

Results

a. Intertextual interrelatedness

The writers include other sources in their texts by:

- Drawing on prior texts as a source of meanings
- Providing general beliefs and issues
- Using noticeable phrasing associated with specific groups
- Bringing in other sources to provide background, support and contrast

The use of directives e.g. Menimban (to think of) Memperpanjang (to extend) Mencabut (to revoke)

Such analysis is vital in mapping the thematic and historical interrelatedness.

b. Thematic interrelatedness: interdiscursive practice of ethnic othering

- Against the background of othering, the current institutional order has legislated non-othering regulations.
- Othering related regulations were abolished and are no longer in effect (Law RI No. 40/2008 on November 10, 2008).

Conclusions

- Governmental documents reflect significant intertextual and interdiscursive relations connected with the theme of ethnic othering.
- Historical development of the documents evidence positive direction, i.e. given negative othering in the Old Order and the New Order, the current environment appears to be more inclusive.
- Further research will focus on the personal and group responses to experiences of 'othering' and will offer explorations of attitudes towards such othering.

References


* email: bless_jogja@yahoo.com, Department of Linguistics Macquarie University