LESBIAN REPRESENTATION IN KIDS' YOUTUBE SHOWS ON THE GECKO'S GARAGE CHANNEL

Azizah Des Derivanti[1], Amartheo Rifi Pratama[2],
Communication Studies Faculty of Social and Political Science
[1,2] Universitas Nasional,
azizahdes@civitas.unas.ac.id

AbstracT: This paper discusses the research titled "Baby Truck Family Valentine's Day" on the Gecko's Garage YouTube channel, using two semiotic analyses, namely Roland Barthes and Charles Sanders Peirce. The aim of this research is to identify representations of sexual diversity in children's broadcasts. In this video, researchers found LGBTQ+ elements, particularly lesbian representation. This is shown through the parents, who are both women, and girls (not men and women), and then daughters celebrating Valentine's Day. However, this video may not be suitable for broadcast in Indonesia because it is contrary to cultural norms. There exist in Indonesia. If children watch this animation, there are concerns that they may follow LGBTQ+ activism in the future. At the very least, the impact is tolerating the presence of LGBTQ+ activism, especially in this animation, lesbians around them.

Keywords : YouTube, lesbian, semiotic analyses.

INTRODUCTION

The alpha generation is the first generation that was all born at the beginning of the 21st century. According to executive coach Elizabeth Pearson, what differentiates the alpha generation from other generations is that it includes children born during the COVID-19 pandemic, who have earlier access to electronic devices and the internet. This makes it easy for them to be directly involved in globalization and to share their experiences with anyone, regardless being bound by time and distance.

Their lifestyle is closely related to technology and digitalization, which adds value to their generation in terms of appreciating diversity and education due to their easy access to knowledge. They can learn and expand their friendships digitally on a global scale because the internet can overcome barriers of distance and time. Open internet access makes it easier for children to find career specializations earlier in life, and they can even stream at a young age. Of course, this requires parental support. According to data from the Central

Statistics Agency for 2020, digitalization has become an important factor in daily life, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, which saw the implementation of Community Activity Restrictions (PPKM), due to the increasing number of the Alpha generation. Technology and the internet have influenced the media consumption behavior of children from the Alpha generation, including their habits in accessing and interacting with digital content. As the number of children belonging to the Alpha generation increases, digitalization becomes increasingly important as a factor in an increasingly digital form of human life.

The significant increase in the number of the Alpha generation has encouraged the growth of digitalization in various fields, especially in the entertainment and media sectors. Many digital platforms, such as YouTube Kids, have grown rapidly due to the growing demand from children. On this platform, the presented content faces the risk of displaying LGBTQ+ content. Content creators have misused the YouTube Kids image for their personal/group interests.

According to several studies, a child's personality can be influenced by the knowledge they gain during the "golden period" (age 0 months to 5 years). The American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry states that children who are exposed to violent, sexual, LGBTQ+, and other harmful content tend to imitate what they see as adults.

The duration of gadget use in Riau Province, according to research by Ria Novianti, Hukmi, and Ilga Maria in the Educhild (Education & Social) journal "Alpha Generation - Growing Up with Gadgets in Hand," states that 64% of people in the Alpha generation use gadgets moderately, averaging 8 to 11 hours per day. 9.6% of people admit to never using gadgets. This data does not rule out the possibility that the Alpha generation in other areas also has a high intensity of gadget use, making children vulnerable to being exposed to information that does not comply with rules and norms (Novianti, 2019).

Researcher interested in this research because it can be said that there are quite a lot of lesbian cases in Indonesia. An example of this is the women's march in Jakarta 2023. Initially, this event was only intended to voice aspirations for women's rights, but the facts on the ground turned out that this activity was used as an action to campaign for LGBTQ people, especially lesbians. Apart from that, researchers also found content with indications of lesbianism mushrooming on the TikTok platform,

Picture I.1 *Capture* Lesbian Content in TikTok

If you are feeling confused, just stay with lesbians and girls

The video content that is indicated as "lesbian" on Reyvasky's TikTok account has been viewed 3.2 million times and managed to get 132.2 thousand likes. There is a lot more lesbian content on TikTok, which has become a particular urgency for researchers to raise the issue of lesbian representation.
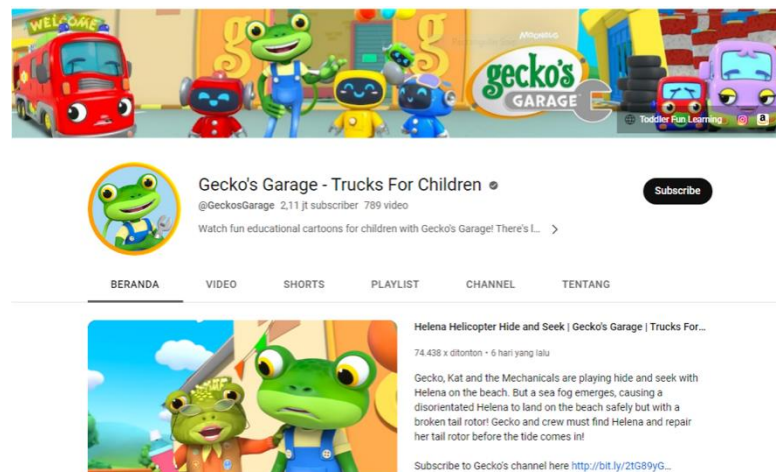
The researchers chose the title "Lesbian Representation in YouTube Kids Shows on the Gecko's Garage Channel" is that Alpha generation children watch YouTube Kids, despite though there are many scenes featuring lesbian representation.

Youtube Kids is related to cartoons that include pornographic scenes and other deviant acts, such as LGBTQ+, especially lesbians, which are not in line with Indonesian norms and culture in Indonesia. Researchers want to prove that there are 100,000 accounts on YouTube Kids that target Alpha generation children. This is a fantastic figure and is very dangerous for children a.k.a the Alpha generation. By exposing children to representations of lesbians in cartoons, children may follow and understand lesbians.

After the researchers searched more deeply on YouTube Kids, the researchers discovered the Gecko's Garage YouTube channel, which videos included promotions of support for

LGBTQ+ actions. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (or Questioning) is an abbreviation for LGBTQ, while the "+" sign in LGBTQ+ is to recognize sexual orientation and gender identity without boundaries. The cartoon content created by Gecko's Garage indicates the promotion of support for LGBTQ+, especially lesbians, which is very contrary to existing norms in Indonesia.

Researchers are also interested in choosing the Kids Gecko's Garage YouTube channel because the number of subscribers to this channel has reached 2.11 million subscribers. This number is a fantastic number and is starting to become popular among the digital community. The total number of videos that have been uploaded is 790 videos and has received a lot of viewers and likes, the highest number of viewers on the video reached 1.2 million viewers. Apart from that, the Gecko's Garage YouTube channel has also received verification from Youtube Kids.

Picture I.2 *Capture Channel Youtube Gecko's Garage*

The researcher chose the thesis title "Lesbian Representation in YouTube Kids Shows on the Gecko's Garage Channel" due to their interest in the cute cartoon animation with a sweet opening on YouTube Kids. The video contains LGBTQ representation, particularly of lesbians. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer cartoons are animated illustrations that clarify an essay or storyline. However, they often contain content unsuitable for consumption by children, such as actions supporting LGBTQ people, particularly lesbians.

Researchers consider this research urgent for the government, KPI, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission, and especially for parents, to raises awareness of the dangers that threaten children in cartoon shows on YouTube Kids that represent LGBTQ content. This

research focuses on children in the Preschool (0-5 years) and Younger (under 9 years) categories, which belong to the Golden Age and are considered the Alpha generation.

METHOD

In analyzing the data, the researcher used Roland Barthes' Semiotic Technique, which states that language requires certain conditions to become a myth, namely that it is semiotically marked by the existence of a level of significance known as the second-order semiological system, related markers. with the signified in such a way as to form a sign. The researcher also combined Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic analysis techniques with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to complement each other. The researcher will explore these signs more deeply for their correlation, which is then connected to the concepts described, to find a message. hidden in the Gecko's Garage YouTube Channel.

Researchers are trying to understand the hidden messages of support for the LGBTQ+ community on the Gecko's Garage YouTube channel on YouTube Kids. The researcher used Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis method at the language level, specifically the first layer of the semiological system, SIGNS relate to other signs to produce SIGNS. The researchers also attempted to collaborate with Roland Barthes and Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic techniques, which utilize symbols, objects, and interpretants so that this research can get more accurate results

The researchers used credibility techniques, such as extending participation, to obtain data and form a high level of self-confidence, ensuring accountability. The researchers also used diligent observation as another credibility technique while researching the Gecko's Garage Youtube Channel to understand any information related to the hidden message of lesbian support on the Gecko's Garage Youtube Channel. The researchers also used referential adequacy as a credibility technique to review and correct the research results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Video with the title "Baby Truck Family Valentines Day | Gecko's Garage | Trucks For Children | Cartoons For Kids" has a video duration of 2 minutes and 16 seconds, doesn't have much conversation between the characters in the animation, making it a little difficult for the writer to find LGBTQ+ representation. However, with the combination of Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic analysis that the author uses, the author found more signs and objects that represent LGBTQ+, especially the lesbian couple Mommy Truck and Mama Recycle in this animation. Some of the outlines that the author in analyzing this animated video include:

1. There is no LGBTQ+ representation in the video thumbnail, but only a representation of Valentine's Day. Here we don't know what kind of couple will celebrate Valentine's Day

Picture 3. Thumbnail Video

2. In the opening scene of the video, which is 8 seconds long, there is no representation of lesbians, but only the introduction of the main character, Gecko the mechanic.

Picture 4. Scene Opening

3. In the first scene using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, we begin to discover what kind of couple will celebrate Valentine's Day. It is a lesbian couple, namely Mommy Truck and Mama Recycle. Meanwhile, in Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic analysis, we can find signs and objects that represent lesbian couples. The signs and objects are Gecko's hand gestures which tell you to be careful in preparing for Valentine's Day for the lesbian couple and the red heart-shaped eyeballs of the gecko's yellow subordinate robot. This shows that he was very cheerful in welcoming the lesbian couple's Valentine's celebration.

Picture 5. First Scene

4. In the second scene, a representation of support for a lesbian couple is also found through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis. It can be seen through Gecko, the mechanic, who tries to keep Mommy Truck and Mama Recycle busy so that they don't find out about the Valentine's preparations prepared by Gecko's subordinate Baby Truck and Robot. Meanwhile, in Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic analysis, we can find signs and objects that represent support for lesbian couples. The signs and objects are colors that contain meaning and are linked to representations of support for the lesbian couple and Gecko who offers to keep Mommy Truck and Mama Recycle busy.

Picture 6. Second Scene

5. In the third scene, the author finds a representation of support for lesbian couples through Rolland Barthes' semiotic analysis. This can be seen through Gecko's continuous efforts to cover/distract the attention of Mommy Truck and Mama Recycle so that the Valentine's surprise for the lesbian couple goes smoothly. Meanwhile, in Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic analysis, we can find signs, objects and interpretants that represent support for lesbian couples. The sign and object are a heart logo on a tablecloth which will be used as a Valentine's celebration for a lesbian couple. Meanwhile, the author's interpretant is wearing a toque or chef's hat during the cooking scene. This hat comes from France, which is the city of love. The author is very sure that there is a deep connection to the animated scene which represents support for lesbians.

Picture 6. Third Scene

6. The following scenes are the same as the previous ones showing the efforts of Gecko and his friends' in preparing for the Valentine's Day celebration. And at the end of the scene, a surprise is revealed to the lesbian couple, Mommy Truck and Mama Recycle. Gecko also made sure to inform them that Baby Truck came up with the idea to make the lesbian couple proud.

7. The author also discovered that Baby Truck is a female baby. By involving her in Valentine's celebrations for lesbian couples, it is similar to teaching daughters to

follow the habits of their parents, who happen to be lesbian couples. This does not rule out the possibility that Baby Truck becoming a lesbian in the future or having an impact on the existence of lesbian activists around her.

8. Gecko and his subordinate robots represent Indonesian and global society, leading the way of supporting LGBTQ+ actions and activists. Meanwhile, Mommy Truck and Mama Recycle represent Indonesian and global society, as LGBTQ+ activists, particularly as lesbians.

9. Baby Truck represents young child victims in Indonesia and globally. Since childhood, particularly during the Golden Age and growing up, they have been taught to follow or understand the existence of LGBTQ+ activists, especially in this case, lesbians.

10. This video is not suitable for broadcast in Indonesia because it contradicts the existing norms in the country. If children watch this animation, there are concerns that they will follow LGBTQ+ activists in the future. Or the very least, the impact is tolerating the presence of LGBTQ+ activism, especially in this animation, lesbians around them.

DISCUSSION

There are many implied references to support for LGBTQ+ activists, especially in this video that supports lesbian action. It is also ironic that Baby Truck, a girl, celebrates her parents who are a lesbian couple. Indirectly teaching her to follow their habits of their parents who are none other than a lesbian couple. It is possible that Baby Truck may become a lesbian in the future.

The author hopes that there will be an Indonesian government agency that will filter the consumption of visual entertainment, especially entertainment intended for children. The author also hopes that there will be an Indonesian government agency that will receive reports regarding the world of film/animation which is not suitable for consumption by the Indonesian people.

The author also urges parents who already have children, especially children who are still growing and in their golden age, will be more aware of their children's consumption and take stricter precautions so that children are protected from negative content. However, the most effective way is for parents not to allow their children to consume digital content from the YouTube Kids platform which contains lesbian representation content.

The author also hopes that YouTube, especially YouTube Kids, will pay attention to the norms of other countries, particularly Indonesia, which rejects the existence of LGBTQ+. If there is a country like Indonesia, the author wants YouTube Kids to filter content that will enter that country. Indeed, YouTube Kids tolerates this, but it must still respect the norms

that exist in other countries. For academic purposes, it is hoped that there will be comprehensive research that represents all members of the LGBTQ+ (not just lesbians. This research should be conducted on channels such as Gecko's Garage channel or other YouTube Kids channels. Lesbian representation in children's cartoons should also take into account the influence of political policies and socio-cultural context. Here are some aspects to pay attention to:

1. **Political Policy Aspect:** Legal and Regulatory Influence: How political policies, including laws on human rights and gender equality, influence lesbian representation in children's cartoons. **Firmness of Government Support**: Is there support from the government or policies that encourage inclusivity in children's media, including the representation of lesbian characters. The role of the government in filtering lesbian representation in new media can vary greatly depending on a country's policies and cultural norms. Some countries may impose strict controls on media content to ensure that it aligns with desired values and social norms, while others may be more inclined to embrace a more open approach to diversity of representation. The government could establish a rating system that provides guidance on whether a show is appropriate for all ages or requires adult supervision. This can help parents and viewers make more informed decisions regarding what they choose to watch. Governments can employ censors to assess media content and ensure that it complies with applicable regulations. This may include removing or restricting content deemed to violate the rules. The government can play a role in raising public awareness about diversity and individual rights, including LGBTQ+ rights. This can be done through education and information campaigns aimed at changing society's attitudes towards LGBTQ+ representation. The government's role in filtering lesbian representation in new media must be balanced with policies that respect human rights, including the rights of the LGBTQ+ community.

2. **Influence of Media and Entertainment Industry:** The influence of Global Trends, such as how do global trends in the representation of LGBTQ+ characters in media, impact local children's cartoon production? Is there pressure to create more inclusive representation? The influence of Producers and Stakeholders: How do film producers and other stakeholders play a role in determining lesbian representation? Are there efforts to create content that reflects diversity and supports equality. So, the government can collaborate with the entertainment industry to develop guidelines and best practices for creating positive and inclusive representation. This can include open dialogue with media producers and content creators.

3. **Socio-cultural Aspect**: Social Tolerance and Diversity: The extent to which society's level of tolerance and acceptance of lesbians influences the way these characters are portrayed in children's cartoons. The role of family and religious norms in the representation of lesbian characters. Cartoon films should strive to balance cultural values and diversity. The level of societal acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community can influence the extent to which cartoons depict lesbian characters in a positive or negative light. In a more inclusive society, cartoons may be more inclined to create LGBTQ+ characters in a supportive and positive way. Changes in society's view of lesbians and LGBTQ+ people as a whole may be reflected in cartoon content. This process can influence how cartoon creators choose to design their characters and stories. Public education and awareness efforts about LGBTQ+ issues can shape public opinions and attitudes. Cartoons can be an essential tool for conveying inclusive messages and educating viewers, creating a more welcoming and accepting environment. Audience response to lesbian characters in cartoons can provide valuable feedback to producers. If audiences respond positively, producers may be more inclined to continue creating inclusive representations. It is essential to remember that these social factors are dynamic and can change over time. While society as a whole may be becoming more open to LGBTQ+ representation, challenges and controversies still exist across regions and cultures.

4. **Changes in Public Opinion:** The public plays an important role in determining whether there has been a change in society's view of lesbians, and how this is reflected in the representation of children's cartoons. The public in this case is the inner circle of children, namely parents who are important in providing their opinions on shows that have LGBTQ+ elements, then there must be efforts to educate children and shape children's opinions, which then this becomes public opinion as a whole through children's broadcast media. child. The role of the Equality and LGBTQ+ Movement reflects how equality and LGBTQ+ groups play a role in changing the representation of lesbian characters in children's cartoons.

5. **Empowerment education through media:** To what extent can children's cartoon films can be a tool to empower children in understanding and accepting diversity, including lesbian representation. The role of education is to integrate the concepts of equality and diversity into the educational curriculum, by using children's media as educational tools. Children's education should aim to foster a positive understanding of diversity, equality and human rights. It is important to create a learning environment that supports children's emotional and social development while avoiding discrimination or prejudice. Here are some educational approaches

that can help children understand and respect diversity, including issues related to sexual orientation:

a. Open Dialogue: Teach children to ask questions and voice their thoughts. Open a space for open and friendly dialogue so that children feel comfortable discussing their questions or lack of understanding.

b. Positive Behavior Model: Model positive behavior by demonstrating respect for all people, regardless of sexual orientation. Children often imitate the behavior of adults around them.

c. Importance of Friendship and Empathy: Teach children about the importance of friendship and understanding their friends' feelings. Focusing on empathy and understanding can help them form positive attitudes towards people who are different.

d. Addressing Bullying and Discrimination: Provide an understanding of the dangers and consequences of harassing or discriminatory behavior. Teach children to deal with bullying and develop healthy conflict skills.

e. Age-Justified Sexual Education: Present sexuality information in an age-appropriate manner and according to children's development. Avoid stereotypes and ensure that sexual education includes diversity in sexual orientation.

f. Equality Education Activities: Include activities that support children's understanding of the concepts of equality and diversity. This could include group discussions, art projects, or plays that reflect inclusive values.

g. Involving parents and guardians: Involve parents and guardians in children's education. Support from home can reinforce the positive messages children receive at school.

h. Understanding child development: Consider children's developmental levels when presenting information. Understanding a child's developmental stage will help teachers and parents convey messages that are appropriate to their cognitive level.

i. It is important to create an educational environment that supports children's positive development, while ensuring that the materials and methods used do not discriminate or promote prejudice. This approach will help children grow up with a positive and inclusive understanding of diversity and equality.

CONCLUSION

After the author conducted semiotic research with further analysis of Roland Barthes and Charles Sanders Pierce in the Gecko's Garage Channel with the title "Baby Truck Family Valentines Day | Gecko's Garage | Trucks For Children | Cartoons For Kids" which has a duration of 2 minutes and 16 seconds. Researchers found LGBTQ+ elements in the video, but it only represented lesbian elements. Lesbianism itself is sexual attraction and romance between women. The government's role in filtering lesbian representation in new media must be balanced with policies that respect human rights, including the rights of the LGBTQ+ community.

REFERENCES

Barthes, Roland. (2017). Roland Barthes Elemen-Elemen Semiologi. Yogyakarta: BASABASI.

Budiman, Kris. (2016). Semiotika Visual Konsep, Isu, dan Problem Ikonisitas. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.

Eksan, Dadi Purnama. (2019). Seni Komunikasi Kapan Saja & Dimana Saja. Yogyakarta: C-Klik Media.

Endah A, Vivitri. *Warna dalam Design Grafis*. Materi Pengantar Design Grafis Universitas Nasional.

https://ameera.republika.co.id/berita/rv72m7414/asalusul-bendera-pelangi-jadi-simbol-lgbt-part1

https://hellosehat.com/parenting/anak-6-sampai-9-tahun/perkembangan-anak/mengenal-anak-generasi-alfa/

https://lifestyle.kompas.com/read/2023/03/14/072411520/generasi-alpha-generasi-baru-yang-siap-mengubah-dunia-kerja?page=all#page3

https://senikomunikasi.com/pengertian-komunikasi-digital-contoh-dan-peluang-karier/

https://tirto.id/apa-itu-lgbtq-singkatan-arti-macam-macam-penjelasannya-grZq

https://validnews.id/kultura/waspada-konten-negatif-di-youtube-kids

https://www.bps.go.id/indicator/12/2133/1/jumlah-penduduk-hasil-sp2020-laki-laki-menurut-wilayah-klasifikasi-generasi.html

https://www.detik.com/edu/detikpedia/d-5841848/gambar-ilustrasi-pengertian-fungsi-dan-jenis-jenisnya

https://www.rancakmedia.com/tekno/30522/komunikasi-digital-menurut-para-ahli/

https://www.reprodukasi.org/id/memahami-lgbtq

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/OxksT46EMwA

J. Moleong, Lexy. (2017). Metede Penelitian Kualitatif. Bandung:PT. Remaja Rosdakarya

Jandy, Luik. 2020. Media Baru Sebuah Pengantar. Surabaya : Kencana

Juwitaningrum, J. D., Prakoso, C. T., & Boer, K. M. (2020). "Analisis Semiotika pada Video Eksperimen Sosial 'Slap Her: Children's Reaction' oleh Fanpage.It di Youtube tentang Kekerasan Terhadap Perempuan." E-Journal Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Mulawarman, 8(3), 97-111. ISSN=2502-5961, E-ISSN=2502-597x.

Miller, Michael. 2009. Sams Teach Yourself YouTube in 10 Minutes.United State of Amerika: SAMS.

Novianti, R., Hukmi, & Maria, I. (2019). "Generasi Alpha – Tumbuh dengan Gadget dalam Genggaman." Jurnal Educhild (Pendidikan & Sosial), Prodi PG Paud FKIP Universitas Riau, 8(2), 65-70. P-ISSN=2089-7510.

Puspitasari, D. R. (2021). "Nilai Sosial Budaya Dalam Film Tilik (Kajian Semiotika Charles Sanders Peirce)." Jurnal Semiotika, 15(1), 10-18. P-ISSN=1978-7413, E-ISSN=2579-8146.

Putra, Y. S. (2016). "Theoretical Review: Teori Perbedaan Generasi." Jurnal Among Makarti, 9(18), ISSN=1979-7400, E-ISSN=2774-5163.

Rohman, J. N. A., & Husna, J. (Year). "E-Jurnal Situs Youtube Sebagai Media Pemenuhan Kebutuhan Informasi: Sebuah Survei Terhadap Mahasiswa Program Studi Ilmu Perpustakaan Universitas Diponegoro Angkatan 2013-2015."

Sugiyono. (2016). Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R&D. Bandung: PT Alfabet