# COHERENCE ANALYSIS OF RACIAL PREJUDICE IN THE ANSWERS TO QUORA APPLICATION'S QUESTION *WHAT IS THE MOST RACIST THING SOMEONE HAS SAID TO YOU*

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the coherence of answers by *Quora* application users that contain racist utterances. Answers from *Quora* users were analyzed for racial prejudice based on the theory from Blummer (1958) about feelings of empathy that represent racial prejudice. The four feelings referred to by Blummer (1958) are: feeling superior, feeling that the subordinate race is essentially different, the feeling of claiming ownership of special rights, and the fourth is that the subordinate race has hidden motives for the special rights of the dominant race. To analyze the coherence of user answers, the theory used is the theory proposed by Oshima & Hogue (2006) about four ways of achieving coherence. According to Oshima & Hogue (2006), there are four ways to achieve coherence, namely: repeating keywords, using pronouns consistently, using transitional signs, and arranging ideas in a logical order. The result indicates that from the five analyzed data points, four can be classified as the feeling of the subordinate group is different and alien, and one can be identified as the feeling of superiority. The answers are considered as coherence, the writers manage to make a repetition of the key noun, using consistent pronouns, using transition signals, and arranging the ideas in logical order.

Keywords: coherence, racism, discourse and racism, racial prejudice

## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis koherensi dari jawaban para pengguna aplikasi Quora yang mengandung ujaran-ujaran rasisme. Jawaban dari para pengguna Quora akan dianalisis dari sisi prasangka rasial berdasarkan teori dari Blummer (1958) tentang empat perasaan yang mewakili prasangka rasial. Adapun empat perasaan yang dimaksud oleh Blummer (1958) yaitu: perasaan superior, perasaan bahwa ras bawahan pada hakikatnya berbeda, perasaan pernyataan kepemilikan atas hak-hak istimewa khusus, dan yang keempat adalah bahwa ras bawahan mempunyai motif terselubung terhadap hak khusus dari ras dominan. Untuk menganalisis koherensi dari jawaban pengguna, teori yang digunakan adalah teori koherensi oleh Oshima & Hogue (2006) tentang empat cara mencapai koheren. Menurut Oshima & Hogue (2006) ada empat cara untuk bisa mencapai koherensi yaitu: mengulang kata kunci, menggunakan kata ganti secara konsisten, menggunakan tanda-tanda transisi, dan merangkai ide dengan urutan yang logis. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan, dari lima data yang telah dianalisis, empat dapat diklasifikasikan sebagai perasaan bahwa ras bawahaan pada hakikatnya berbeda, dan satu teridentifikasi sebagai perasaan superior. Jawaban pada penelitian ini dianggap koheren, di mana para penlis mampu untuk mengulang kata kunci,*

*menggunakan kata ganti secara konsisten, menggunakan tanda-tanda transisi, serta merangkai ide dengan urutan yang logis.*

*Kata Kunci: koherensi, rasisme, wacana dan rasisme, prasangka rasial*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of racism can occur anywhere. The case of George Floyd, who died as a result of police brutality in the United States in 2020, is only one of the many cases of racism that may not have not been exposed. The problem of racism is that affects various aspects of an individual or community in many forms, such as discrimination, denial of equal access to work, differential services, and even can affect mental health. Racism occurs due to racial differences. The race usually refers to the division of group differences based on physique such as skin color.

Meanwhile, the Oxford Dictionary (2008: 361) defines racism as an unfair treatment of other races and the belief that some races of people are better than others. This definition is in line with the feeling of superiority put forward by Blummer (1958) that the feeling of superiority is when the dominant group feels naturally better.

Blummer (1958) argues that four feelings represent racial prejudice: the feeling of superiority, the feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, the feeling of proprietary claim to certain privileges and advantages, and the fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race. Racial prejudice is an act of racism in the form of prejudice against a person or group based on inherent race.

Not infrequently, people do not realize that they also have racial prejudice against others. Lack of understanding and awareness of what racism is is one of the factors why racism continues. Ignorance and indifference of how bad and inappropriate racist utterances or acts of racism against others are important to eradicate.

Therefore, through this study, an analysis of racist utterances from *Quora* users will be presented where they share their real experiences of getting racist utterances through answers. Writing in the form of answers is data that will be analyzed based on the division of racial prejudice through Blummer's theory and then analyzed for coherence to ensure that users have written their answers well and the discussion is indeed discussing racist remarks to the question "*What is The Most Racist Thing Someone Has Said to You*?".

Writing is an important means of communication besides speaking. In this case, it is important to know how to write so that the idea or topic being discussed can be understood by others. One of the linguistic features that can study writing is coherence. Coherence in writing shows that the ideas in a paragraph deliver smoothly. Without coherence in a writing, the topic or idea to be conveyed is not easy to read and even makes no sense. The aim of being coherent in writing is not only so that each paragraph is conveyed smoothly but also to make the audience writing understand the content of the discussion.

## II. METHOD

The data in this study are answers taken from *Quora*, an online platform that can be accessed through an application or web browsers. The selected answers are written by several *Quora* users that share their experiences when they encountered racism. To compile the data, this research used the

note-taking method wherein the answers under the question What is The Most Racist Thing Someone Has Said to You is read. Secondly, the authors rewrote the answers that contain racist tendencies. Thirdly, data was analyzed and categorized based on racial prejudice and coherence. In analyzing the data, the researchers used the descriptive qualitative approach. Afterward, the data is presented in formal and informal methods. In the formal method, the data is presented through a table to show the percentage and the occurrence of the coherence. And in the informal method, the data is presented descriptively to describe the racial prejudice and the coherence.

## III. DISCUSSION

### Data 1
*In college, a group of friends and I were shouted at to "**go home n\*ggers**" by a group of white kids passing by in a pickup truck, as we walked to our dorm one evening from the dining hall. – (Mercedes Cruz)*

In the data above, the racist remark is marked in the bold sentence "**go home n\*ggers**." In the sentence, there is a racial slur "nigger" that refers to African-Americans. The writer, Mercedes Cruz has encountered the feeling that the subordinate race is different and alien to a group of European Americans. In that sentence, it is clear that the term is very often used to describe black people. The word is proof that how language has power, one word can have meaning and concepts that can even hurt others.

### Data 2
*"What do you mean, 'we'? You are half white. You can't be cute and pretty like us full Asian girls who are renowned all over the world for our babyface. We can't help it, we just look so young and cute. You can never have what we have."Quote from the first conversation with then 26-year-old Japanese female roommate (who had a lot of noticeable fine lines) in response to my very shy attempt to suck up to her and create a bond by agreeing that "we Japanese" are the best. – (Miki Ohara)*

The data above can be categorized into the feeling of superiority. It is marked in the sentence "**What do you mean, 'we'? You are half white. You can't be cute and pretty like us full Asian girls who are renowned all over the world for our babyface. We can't help it, we just look so young and cute. You can never have what we have.**" In this sentence, it can be seen that the writer experienced a feeling of superiority/inferiority just because she is half white so she can't be cute and pretty like the Asian girls that her roommate meant at that time. The female roommate believed that only full Asian girls can have babyfaces.

### Data 3
*"You guys look so good compared to some of the people in the streets here, they are dark-colored looking like monkeys with ugly facial features while you guys? I thought you were Europeans or something." Someone said it once to me and brother when we were going for a walk in the club, I couldn't decide whether say thanks or shame on you, It was half a compliment and half a racist insult, I just looked at that person nodding my head faking a smile and then completed walking. – (Bassel E. Helal)*

In the data above, 'someone' as meant by the author has been unconsciously racist. The sentence, "**You guys look so good compared to some of the people in the streets here, they are dark-colored looking like monkeys with ugly facial features while you guys? I thought you were Europeans or something**," describes how someone compared dark-colored people, who are most likely the author who also had a similar skin color. Someone with racist tendencies had clearly insulted dark-skinned people whose facial features are considered inferior. Even though someone with racist tendencies did not say that the author was just as bad, but because that individual was making a comparison, he was indirectly insulting the dark skin group and considering the dark race to be inferior. Therefore, the data above are grouped into the feeling of superiority.

### Data 4

*It was my first year in Germany and I used to visit a DHL shop run by a man along with his foto studio. I used to visit it frequently as there were a lot of documents I needed to post to India for tax and other admin reasons. The owner would be around 50–60, conversed in English, and was friendly. After 4–5 visits, he would greet me by name and we would talk about weather or how I am adjusting in Germany. One fine day, after I paid the postage, he said exactly "Why do you Indians talk like pigeons?" – (Geetika Sachdeva)*

The sentence, "**Why do you Indians talk like pigeons**?" shows that the author experienced the feeling of subordinate group as different and alien. The statement received by the writer in the bold sentence, explains how the man felt that Indians were strange because they spoke like pigeons. Pigeons in this sense mean that the Indians speak by moving their heads frequently. In the data above, it is certainly inappropriate to say sentences and compare the attitude characteristics of Indians with animals.

### Data 5

*This wasn't something that was said as much as it was implied. I was about 11 or 12, mindlessly looking around a clothing store (I had been dragged there by my mother to essentially be her baggage handler) when I realized that some kids (about my age or more likely younger) were following me around. I pretended not to notice them at first and kept on looking at clothes but after about five minutes, I grew significantly less comfortable with their presence. So I turned and faced them directly, as though to say "what do you want?" They smirked, looked at each other, and started jumping up and down while scratching at their underarms and torsos and making hooting sounds. I was a bit stunned and it took a few seconds before I understood what they were doing. **They were acting like chimpanzees**. In the middle of a shopping mall. Just to disrespect me. –Imo Emah*

In this data, Imo Emah, the writer encountered racial prejudice in the form of **feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien**. It is reflected when the writer was around 11 or 12 years old, some children **were acting like chimpanzees, jumping up and down, scratching their underarms, torsos and making hooting sounds**. What the children uttered was a form of insult to the writer as Imo Emah is a black man. Blummer (1958) described this form of racial prejudice expressed if the subordinate racial group is different and not of their kind.

**The Occurrence of Coherence**

| No. | Types of Coherence | Occurrence | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Repeating key noun | 11 | 15,94% |
| 2 | Using consistent pronoun | 33 | 47,83% |
| 3 | Using transition signals to link ideas | 21 | 30,43% |
| 4 | Arrange ideas in a logical order | 4 | 5,80% |
| Total | | 69 | 100% |

In analyzing the coherence in the data. All of the writers are managed to make a repetition of the key noun, using consistent pronouns and using transition signals to link ideas. Somehow, in arranging their ideas in a logical order, one data is not identified to use logical order as proposed by Oshima & Hogue. The second is the only data that does not include any logical order.

**IV. CONCLUSION**

In analyzing the racial prejudice, from five datapoints that have been analyzed, the data 1, 3, 4, and 5 are categorized as the feeling of the subordinate group is different and alien. This type of feeling is the most dominant feeling that represents racial prejudice. Data 2 is identified as the feeling of superiority. And in identifying the coherence in the answers, all of the writers are able to convey their racist experience through the answers very well. Although data 2 does not include any type of logical order as proposed by Oshima and Hogue (2006), but the answer remains comprehensible.

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