



Linguistics

The Discourse Movement Analysis of Hashtags Supporting the Legalization of Same-Sex Marriage

Aprilia Kartika Putri¹, Siti Fitriah², Anggi Triandana³, Ulil Amri⁴, Yoga Mestika Putra⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5}Sastra Indonesia, Universitas Jambi

SUBMISSION TRACK

Received: February 25, 2025
Final Revision: March 27, 2025
Accepted : April 3, 2025
Available Online: April 30, 2025

KEYWORD

discourse; discourse movement; BREAK theory

CORRESPONDENCE

E-mail: aprilakp@unja.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States on June 26, 2015 inflicted rooms for debates. The contra side included the conservative Christian groups. Meanwhile, the Pro side celebrated the ruling by waving rainbow flags in front of the Supreme Court building and using #LoveWins and #Pride hashtags in their social media, such as Twitter and Instagram. This paper describes the analysis of these discourses movements by using Sawirman's BREAK theory (2014; 2016). #LoveWins was considered as the primary discourse while #Pride as the secondary because of their political power. Both hashtags were used to show the joy and support for the gay community. As the time goes on, the secondary discourse is used more frequent than the primary, which is only used in the moments of equality of right between the gay and straight community.

INTRODUCTION

The United States Supreme Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage on June 26 2015 inflicted rooms to debate in the country (Ericssen, 2015). The opposing party included conservative Christians. Meanwhile, the faction in favor for the ruling celebrated by flying rainbow flags (a symbol of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer peers) in front of the Supreme Court building (BBC, 2015) as well as celebrating it on social media, like Twitter and Instagram, with various hashtags such as # LoveWins and #Pride. The hashtag #LoveWins was initiated by the official Twitter account of the President of the United States (POTUS – President of the United States) at that time, Barack Obama (Obama, 2015).

#LoveWins and #Pride are the two most popular hashtags used to show support for the verdict to legalize same-sex marriage (Laurent, 2015). According to McMahon (2021) the hashtag #LoveWins was first coined by the 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama. In connection with the United States Supreme Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage on June 26, 2015, Obama expressed his support in a tweet on the same day. On his official Presidential Twitter account (which at the time when he was still in office had the name @POTUS and is now @POTUS44-President of The United States the 44th) he wrote,

"Today is a big step in our march toward equality. Gay and lesbian couples now have the right to marry, just like anyone else. [#LoveWins](#)" (Obama, 2015)

On the other hand, the hashtag #Pride comes from the term *gay pride* which was popularized by L. Craig Schoonmaker, a member of the gay community in New York in 1970 (Polish, 2024). At that time, members of the gay community felt they needed a name to call their movement. Finally, one of them,

Schoonmaker, proposed “*gay pride*” after feeling “*gay power*” is not appropriate. This term is the one that continues to be used everytime there is a parade demanding or celebrating equal rights for homosexuals. This term was also eventually used as a hashtag to show support for homosexuals on social media.

In the field of linguistics, the hashtags #LoveWins and #Pride can be categorized as “discourse”. Yule (2012) states that the word “discourse” is usually defined as “language beyond the sentence.” He further explained that discourse analysis considers text and conversation. This opinion of Yule’s is in line with Johnstone and Andrus (2024).

They state that in discourse analysis, “text” includes a variety of materials, including audio transcripts, video interactions, written documents, texts spoken orally such as proverbs, speech in online communication, even images, gestures, gazes and other forms of capital. Furthermore, Johnstone and Andrus (2024) also explain that in analyzing a discourse, several things must be considered, such as: who says/writes the text, to whom the text is addressed, what the motivation behind creating the text is, what language is used in the text, and how the text is structured.

Meanwhile, regarding discourse movements, Sawirman (2014) states two laws regarding this. The first law is that the movement of discourse can be examined if there is a comparison with other related discourses. Then, the second law states that a discourse will not move or change without a natural or artificial relationship with other discourses, realities, phenomena, or bases.

Sawirman (2014; 2016) created BREAK theory based on the E-135 philosophy which he also created. The name of this theory is an acronym for *Basis* ‘Base’, *Relasi* ‘Relations’, *Ekulilibrium* ‘Equilibrium’, *Aktualisasi* ‘Actualization’ and *Keberlanjutan* ‘Sustainability’ (Sawirman, 2014). The first acronym, B, or Bases of Discourse is the first step in examining the discourse movement. In the Discourse Basis there are three features: discourse position, discourse configuration, and general type of discourse movement. In discourse position, the researchers determine both the primary discourse and the secondary discourse.

Meanwhile, in discourse configuration, researchers identify the linguistic forms of both primary discourse and secondary discourse. Next, researchers need to determine the essence or meaning of the message contained in the primary discourse and secondary discourse. Then, the final stage in discourse configuration is determining the spirit of the primary discourse and secondary discourse.

After determining the discourse configuration, determining the general type of discourse movement is the next step that must be taken. The general types of discourse movement in BREAK theory are divided into convergent and divergent. This division is based on the essence and spirit of the two discourses being compared. Both discourses are considered to have a general type of convergent movement if they complement each other. Conversely, they are considered divergent if they have conflicting relationships. The second acronym, R, is Relations of the discourse. Relations of the discourse is the next step taken to analyze the discourse movement using BREAK Theory. In Relations, the relationship between discourse is seen textually, contextually, factually, logically and ideologically.

The third acronym, E, represents Equilibrium of the discourse. In Equilibrium, researchers conduct an analysis of the balance of primary and secondary discourse. In investigating the equilibrium or balance of the discourses, there are three things to take into consideration: discourse legitimacy, range of discourse balance, and balancing discourse. Legitimacy of discourse means that researchers take note to the truth of the discourse based on its scientifics, logic, conventions, and the like (Sawirman, 2014).

Meanwhile, the range of discourse balance is understood from the influence of the discourse in “social, ideological, behavioral, attitudinal, psychological, economic, political and other realities, the frequency of popularity of the discourse, variations in public opinion regarding the discourse, the ability of the discourse to influence the policy process, the ability of the discourse to trigger social, ideological, political, and cultural change, the status and availability of links with other discourses, and whether the discourse is in bargaining power or bargaining position” (Nasution, 2016).

The final stage in Equilibrium is the balancing discourse. It is a discourse outside the primary discourse and secondary discourse with the aim of achieving balance if the equilibrium level is low. It means that a balancing discourse is needed if there is a striking distance from the balance of the primary discourse and the secondary discourse. Then, the fourth acronym is A for Actualization. In studying the actualization

of primary and secondary discourses, researchers observe the discourses behavior and effects. Observing the discourse behavior means observing the influence of primary and secondary discourses on users of both discourses. Meanwhile, to observe the effects of discourse, researchers consider the short-term effects and potential effects of both discourses.

Furthermore, the final acronym in the analysis of discourse movements using BREAK theory is K. K is an acronym for *Keberlanjutan* or 'Sustainability' of the discourse. Sawirman (2016) states that in sustainability of the discourse, researchers provide scientific predictions regarding the sustainability of these discourses in the future. The survival of these two discourses in the future can be predicted from three things: the discourses adaptation, the discourses solutions, and the types of discourses changes.

As the name suggests, in discourses adaptation, researchers provide estimations about how both primary and secondary discourses can adapt in the future. Then, in discourses solutions, researchers provide solutions for the sustainability of the discourses in the future. Finally, in the type of discourses changes, researchers need to provide predictions regarding changes in these discourses in the future. This prediction is made based on discourses configuration patterns.

This theory of Sawirman's (2014; 2016) have not been found to be used in analyzing the discourse movement of #LoveWins and #Pride. However, the researchers did find similar studies regarding discourse movement analysis using BREAK theory (Sawirman, 2014, 2016). Adek (2016) uses this theory to examine a comparative analysis of discourse about President Jokowi during the presidential election campaign nine years ago. The research data were campaign discourse regarding President Jokowi obtained from Google from March 13 2014 to July 5 2014. By conducting an analysis using BREAK theory, Adek (2016) found that the primary discourse contained anti-communist ideology, nostalgic messages of militaristic leaders, and religious fanaticism which was manipulative, discriminatory and intimidating. Then, he also discovered that the secondary discourse contained egalitarian and democratic ideology, the idea of pluralism, as well as a spirit of togetherness and acceptance.

The second study was conducted by Sari Putri (Sari Putri, 2023). She examines the language style in the lyrics of Iwan Fals and Slank songs using Sawirman's BREAK Theory (2014; 2016). She found that these two musicians had song lyrics with denotative and connotative language styles that criticized the government. The song lyrics from Slank were designated as the primary discourse; meanwhile, the song lyrics from Iwan Fals were designated as secondary discourse. Then, the third research was conducted by Putri et al. (2023). They analyzed the discourse movement regarding the Agni case which was revealed in 2018. Putri et al. (2023) define the discourses that supports Agni as primary discourses and the discourses that opposes Agni as secondary discourses. These two discourses are contradictory.

Even though they both use BREAK theory to carry out analysis, the three studies above have differences from the research that the authors conducted. The main novelty offered by this research is that there is no similar research that analyzes the tweets and captions with the hashtags in support for the legalization of same-sex marriage. Even after several years of the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States, the issue of LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, etc.) is still hotly discussed, including in Indonesia. Therefore, the researchers are interested to investigate the discourse movement of the hashtags supporting the legalization of the same-sex marriage in the United States.

METHOD

The data in this research are tweets and captions on Twitter and Instagram that use the hashtag #LoveWins and the hashtag #Pride. The data were obtained through field research methods by searching the hashtags on the two social media. Then, the found tweets and captions were documented and recorded. After that, the researchers analyzed the data.

The BREAK theory (Sawirman, 2014; 2016) was used to analyze the data found. Each data was analyzed based on their discourse base, discourse relations, discourse equilibrium, discourse actualization, and discourse sustainability. After the analysis was carried out, the researcher presented the results of the data analysis and drew conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Bases

Position of the discourse

Researchers chose #LoveWins as the primary discourse and #Pride as the secondary discourse. This election is based on the political strength of both. The hashtag #LoveWins was initiated by the 44th President of the United States, namely Barack Obama, via the official Presidential Twitter account (which at that time still had the Twitter account @POTUS and has now become @POTUS44).



Figure 1. Hashtag #LoveWins initiated by President Barack Obama on his official Twitter account

On the other hand, although #Pride in the context of the gay community comes from one of the figures in the movement supporting the gay community, L. Craig Schoonmaker, he does not have a political position in the United States government like President Obama. Thus, #LoveWins is used as the primary discourse and #Pride as the secondary discourse.

Configuration of the discourse

a. Existence

Judging from the linguistic features between #LoveWins and #Pride, they both have different syntactic structures. The hashtag #LoveWins is a clause composed of *Love* as an Actor, and *Wins* as a material process carried out by the Actor. *Love* is also a noun, and *Wins* is a verb. The hashtag #Pride, on the other hand, is not a clause. It consists of only one noun, namely *pride*.

b. Essence

Love in the clause of the hashtag #LoveWins represents the demand of gay people to be able to love other people even if the other person is of the same gender as them. *Wins* shows their joy at achieving their demands; that with the legalization of same-sex marriage, they can marry the person they love, just like straight people.

On the other hand, the noun *pride* literally means ‘a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one’s own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired’ or ‘consciousness of one’s own dignity’. Schoonmaker proposed *pride* as the name of the movement demanding equal rights for gay people because the word power was considered inappropriate (Polish, 2024). Gay people in the United States at that time often experienced intimidation from the police, so they thought their power was greater. However, pride is one thing they still have because they are proud and not ashamed to admit their identity as gay.

c. Spirit

The spirit of these two discourses is to show joy. #LoveWins shows the joy of gay people and their supporters that from now on throughout the United States, they have the right to marry the person they love and that marriage is considered as valid in the eyes of the law as those of people who are not gay. #Pride also shows joy. They rejoice because their pride or identity as gay people is recognized by the United States government.

Thus, the configuration of primary discourse (#LoveWins) and secondary discourse (#Pride) can be described in the table as follows.

Table 1. Configuration of #LoveWins and #Pride Discourse (adapted from Nasution, 2016)

Discourse Configuration	#LoveWins (Primary Discourse)	#Pride (Secondary Discourse)
Existence	Clause	Noun
Essence	'Love Wins'	'Pride'
Spirit	Showing joy because same-sex marriage is considered legal in the eyes of the law	Showing joy because the government recognizes their identity as gay people

General types of discourse movements

The results of the analysis of the general types of #LoveWins and #Pride discourse movements can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. General Types of #LoveWins and #Pride Discourse Movements (adapted from Adek, 2016)

	#LoveWins (Primary Discourse)	#Pride (Secondary Discourse)	Results
Essence	"Love Wins"	"Pride"	Convergent
Spirit	show joy	show joy	Convergent

It can be seen from the essence and spirit of the two discourses that the two are not contradictory. #LoveWins and #Pride have similar essence and the same spirit; they show joy over the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States.

Relations

Textual Relations

When same-sex marriage was legalized in the United States, similar hashtags that were also popularly used on social media were #equality, #loveislove, #love, #lgbt, #gay, #marriageequality, #gaypride, and #pride2015 (Laurent, 2015). All hashtags have the same essence and spirit of discourse as #LoveWins and #Pride, explicitly they both show joy about the equal rights that gay people receive to love whoever they want to love. #LoveWins and #LoveisLove also physically have a similar form. They are both in the form of clauses.

Contextual Relations

The use of hashtags to convey social and political messages has been used since Twitter introduced a hashtag system to mark discussion topics between tweets. In the political realm in Indonesia for example, the most famous hashtags were #2019GantiPresiden '2019ChangePresident' and #Jokowi2Periode '#Jokowi2Period'. Both contained political messages like the hashtags #LoveWins and #Pride, one of which was initiated by a president and political figure.

Factual Relations

The reality is that under President Obama's tweets, apart from various tweets of support, there are also tweets opposing this decision. Based on the authors' observation, tweets that against the Supreme Court's decision came from Christians citing Bible verses that oppose same-sex sexual relations, and also from supporters of the conservative Republican Party. The same thing was also found when searching for the hashtag #Pride, although not as much under President Obama's tweet.

Logical Relations

Based on legal logic, with the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States, there is no bureaucracy that can prevent two homosexual people from getting married in the United States. Just like heterosexuals, this means they get the same services, rights, obligations, in marriage. Divorce and child adoption laws for normal couples will also apply to them.

Ideological Relations

These two hashtag discourses have the essence and spirit of a joyful celebration of equal rights for gay people, especially the right to marry. This is in accordance with the United States' ideology which upholds equal rights for all people and individual freedom. With the legalization of same-sex marriage, gay people also get the right to marry like straight people and gain their freedom to marry.

Equilibrium

Discourse Legitimacy

The hashtag #LoveWins, which was first popularized by the 44th President of the United States following the legalization of same-sex marriage in that country, certainly proves the justification for this discourse. The hashtag #Pride also became justified because of this hashtag always used by gay people and their supporters when holding or supporting gay parades.

Based on the data on Google and Instagram search engines, the hashtag #pride to show support for gay people is more popular to date than the hashtag #LoveWins. This finding therefore conventionally proves the justification of this discourse.

Range of Discourse Balance

As Laurent (2015) wrote, these two hashtags were very popular to show support for the decision of the United States Supreme Court. At that time, apart from these two hashtags, there was also a counter hashtag, namely #StraightPride, which was written by people who opposed the legalization of same-sex marriage. However, the use of the hashtag #StraightPride had a very low frequency compared to hashtags showing support. Furthermore, the balance range of these two discourses is described in Table 3.

Table 3. Range of Balance of Primary Discourse and Secondary Discourse (adapted from Nasution, 2016)

	#LoveWins (Primary Discourse)	#Pride (Secondary Discourse)
"Influence or effects of the discourse in social, ideological, behavioral, attitudinal, psychological, economic, political, cultural and other realities"	+++	+++
"Frequency of popularity"	++	+++
"Public opinion variations"	+++	++
"Ability to influence the policy process"	+++	++
"Ability to trigger social, ideological, political and cultural changes"	+++	++
"Status and availability of links with other discourses"	+++	+++
"Being in bargaining power or bargaining position"	+++	++

Balancing Discourse

Table 3 shows that the equilibrium of #LoveWins as primary discourse and #Pride as secondary discourse is balanced. The two discourses do not have a striking distance. Both have (+++) and (++). This shows that there is no need for a balancing discourse.

Discourse Actualization

Discourse Behavior

Users are influenced by both of these discourses. #LoveWins is a primary discourse that was popularized by the President of the United States, causing social media users to use and discuss this hashtag. Meanwhile, for secondary discourse, the hashtag #Pride is still continuously used after 2015. According to the authors' observation on Instagram and Twitter, it is used when users are at, see, or participate in gay parades.

Discourse Effects

Public figures such as political figures, celebrities, activists, are actively using these two hashtags to show their support and solidarity for the legalization of the right to marry for homosexuals. United States government agencies and private companies also use these hashtags to show their support. Until now, both hashtags are still used every time there is an incident related to gay people.

Discourse Sustainability

a. Discourse Adaption

The researchers predict that #LoveWins and #Pride will still be used in tweets or Instagram captions every time there is discussion about gays, gay parades, discrimination against gays, or same-sex marriage. The hashtag #Pride has become a more popular hashtag than the hashtag #LoveWins since 2018. The hashtag #LoveWins is still used when there are regulations legalizing same-sex marriage.

b. Discourse Solutions

It cannot be denied that in the future there will be more orthographically concise hashtags to show support for gay people. This can be seen from the fact that the hashtag #Pride is the hashtag that is currently used more on social media today, compared to the hashtag #LoveWins in 2015. The author suggests using more concise hashtags if the aim is to increase awareness of this movement.

c. Type of Discourse Change

The use of hashtags to indicate certain discussion topics and show support for certain movements has been and is still being done on social media. The primary discourse #lovewins became popular because it was first used by the leaders in the United States when same-sex marriage was legalized. Meanwhile, the secondary discourse #pride has previously been used to show support for gay people. According to the authors, the secondary discourse #pride will continue to be used while the primary discourse #lovewins will only be used when there is an event of equality between gays and non-gays.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of hashtags on social media to express support for certain movements is commonplace, including the use of the hashtag #LoveWins when the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States occurred. The hashtag #LoveWins became the primary discourse due to its greater political power, where it was initiated by the President of the United States at that time, Barack Obama. The secondary discourse is the hashtag #Pride which has already been used but does not have as much political power as the hashtag #LoveWins. These two hashtags both show joy and support for gay people for having gained the right to marry in the United States. As it develops, secondary discourse is used more frequently compared to primary discourse which is only used when there are events that show equal rights between gay and straight people happen. This finding implies that the political power behind the primary discourse (#LoveWins) does not necessarily make it more popular than the secondary discourse (#Pride). Social media users prefer to use hashtags without political elements to express their support for the legalization of same-sex marriage.

REFERENCES

- Adek, M. (2016). Analisis Perbandingan Wacana Kampanye Hitam dan Putih Tentang Jokowi pada Pilpres 2014 dan Pergerakan Wacananya. Universitas Andalas.
- BBC. (2015, June 27). US Supreme Court rules gay marriage is legal nationwide. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-33290341>
- Ericssen. (2015, June 26). Mahkamah Agung Amerika Legalkan Pernikahan Sesama Jenis. Kompas. <https://internasional.kompas.com/read/2015/06/26/23073761/Mahkamah.Agung.Amerika.Legalkan.Pernikahan.Sesama.Jenis>
- Johnstone, B., & Andrus, J. (2024). Discourse analysis (Fourth edition). Wiley Blackwell.
- Laurent, O. (2015, June 30). 35 Million Shared Their Pride on Instagram This Weekend. Time. <https://>

time.com/3942588/instagram-pride-weekend/

McMahon, J. (2021, October 28). #LoveWins—An Example of Digital Activism. Medium. <https://medium.com/@mcmah392/lovewins-an-example-of-digital-activism-a4a92acdd9be>

Nasution, S. (2016). Pergerakan Wacana Simbol Pinokio: Analisis Teori BREAK. Tugas Akhir Matakuliah Bahasa Dan Ideologi. Universitas Andalas Padang. Utama.

Obama, P. (2015). @POTUS44's Post [Social Media]. <https://x.com/POTUS44/status/614435467120001024>

Polish, J. (2024, February 21). What The History Of Pride Month Means For Celebrations Today. Bustle. <https://www.bustle.com/life/pride-month-origins-history>

Putri, A. K., Triandana, A., Fitriah, S., Amri, U., & Putra, Y. M. (2023). Analisis Pergerakan Wacana Kasus Agni. *Kajian Linguistik Dan Sastra*, 2(2), 233–244. <https://doi.org/10.22437/kalistra.v2i2.24690>

Sari Putri, T. O. (2023). Teori BREAK: Gaya Bahasa dalam Lirik Lagu Iwan Fals dan Slank. *Jurnal Hata Poda*, 1(2), 79–90. <https://doi.org/10.24952/hatapoda.v1i2.6717>

Sawirman. (2014). *e135 reader: Media meliput teror (Cetakan pertama)*. Pusat Studi Ketahanan Nasional, Universitas Andalas.

Sawirman. (2016). *Filsafat Wacana*. Erka.

Yule, G. (2012). *The study of language* (4. ed.; 5th. pr). Cambridge University Press.