

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH
***QUEER & MUSLIM: NOTHING TO RECONCILE* BY BLAIR IMANI**

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining
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By:
Lula Wahyu Anindita
2010105005

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF ADAB AND CULTURAL SCIENCES
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF SUNAN KALIJAGA
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NOTA DINAS



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA
Jl. Marsda Adi Sucipto, Yogyakarta, 55281, Telp./Fax. (0274) 513949
Web: <http://adab.uin-suka.ac.id> Email: adab@uin-suka.ac.id

NOTA DINAS

Hal: Skripsi
a.n. Lula Wahyu Anindita

Yth.
Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Di Yogyakarta

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Setelah memeriksa, meneliti, dan memberikan arahan untuk perbaikan atas skripsi saudara:

Nama	: Lula Wahyu Anindita
NIM	: 20101050052
Prodi	: Sastra Inggris
Fakultas	: Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Judul	: A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Speech Queer & Muslim: Nothing to Reconcile by Blair Imani

kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang Munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb

Yogyakarta, 28/02/2024
Pembimbing

Dr. Muaidillah S.S. M.Hum
NIP: 19810416 200901 1 006

MOTTO

“Life can be heavy, especially if you try to carry it all at once, part of growing up and moving into new chapters of your life is about catch and release. What I mean by that is knowing what things to keep and what things to release. You can’t carry all things, all grudges, all updates on your ex, all enviable promotion your school bully got at the hedge fund his uncle started, decided what is yours to hold and let the rest go”

Taylor Swift



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper to myself and my parents



VALIDATION



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN KALIJAGA
FAKULTAS ADAB DAN ILMU BUDAYA
Jl. Marsda Adisucipto Telp. (0274) 513949 Fax. (0274) 552883 Yogyakarta 55281

PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

Nomor : B-486/Un.02/DA/PP.00.9/03/2024

Tugas Akhir dengan judul : A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Speech Queer and Muslim: Nothing to Reconcile by Blair Imani

yang dipersiapkan dan disusun oleh:

Nama : LULA WAHYU ANINDITA
Nomor Induk Mahasiswa : 20101050052
Telah diujikan pada : Jumat, 01 Maret 2024
Nilai ujian Tugas Akhir : A-

dinyatakan telah diterima oleh Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta

TIM UJIAN TUGAS AKHIR



Ketua Sidang
Dr. Ubaidillah, S.S., M.Hum.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 65f2769f0afe



Penguji I
Dr. Danial Hidayatullah, SS., M.Hum.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 65f29578d685f



Penguji II
Bambang Hariyanto, S.S., M.A., Ph.D.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 65f30467873e9



Yogyakarta, 01 Maret 2024
UIN Sunan Kalijaga
Dekan Fakultas Adab dan Ilmu Budaya
Prof. Dr. Muhammad Wikdan, M.A.
SIGNED

Valid ID: 65f2ca06a3b85

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I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

Yogyakarta, 28/02/2024

The signature,



Lula Wahyu Anindita
NIM: 20101050052

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YOGYAKARTA

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I thank to Allah who always gives his bless in my life, so I could stand in my final chapter in my college life and finish my graduating paper entitled **A Critical Discourse Analysis of The Speech *Queer & Muslim: Nothing to Reconcile* by Blair Imani**. Moreover, I would like to say thank you to all of people who always support and assist me in my process to finish my graduating paper, namely:

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The researcher,

Lula Wahyu Anindita

Student Number: 20101050052

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at identifying the three dimensions analysis, social cognition, and social context of Blair Imani's speech at the TED X Talk YouTube channel. It's important to recognize how Blair Imani's position as a black queer Muslim woman impacts her language and viewpoint. The theory used in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun A. Van Dijk. The data were in the form of the speech transcription and analyzed by integrating the three dimensions, social cognition and social context of Teun A. Van Dijk model in the unity analysis. The data were collected from the YouTube channel and supported additional data from the internet sources, such as journal to support the finding. The result shows that the phenomena of Queer depicted by the Sodom and Gomorrah as told as the act that caused trauma and pain is incompatible with the Quran verses. In addition, the language used by Blair Imani can contribute to the public in understanding queer phenomena. Furthermore, the larger social context in which Imani's discourse is situated reveals power relations. LGBTQ+ people still have to deal with systematic obstacles to equality, violence, and prejudice in many parts of the world. Imani's remarks can be interpreted in this light as a kind of resistance to prevailing discourses that aim to marginalize or erase LGBTQ+ voices.

Keyword : *Critical discourse analysis, Queer and Muslim, and van Dijk theory*

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A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH *QUEER & MUSLIM : NOTHING TO RECONCILE* BY BLAIR IMANI

Oleh:

LULA WAHYU ANINDITA

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis pidato Blair Imani untuk mengungkap kontroversi terhadap fenomena Queer. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi analisis tiga dimensi, kognisi sosial, dan konteks sosial dari pidato Blair Imani di saluran YouTube TED X Talk. Penting untuk mengenali bagaimana posisi Blair Imani sebagai wanita Muslim queer kulit hitam memengaruhi bahasa dan sudut pandangnya. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teori Analisis Wacana Kritis oleh Teun A. Van Dijk. Data berupa transkrip pidato yang dalam proses analisis, data dianalisis dengan mengintegrasikan tiga dimensi, kognisi sosial dan konteks sosial model Teun A. Van Dijk dalam analisis kesatuan. Data dikumpulkan dari transkripsi saluran YouTube dan data pendukung tambahan dari sumber internet, seperti jurnal untuk memperkuat temuan. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa fenomena Queer yang digambarkan oleh Sodom dan Gomora seperti yang diceritakan sebagai tindakan yang menyebabkan trauma dan rasa sakit tidak sesuai dengan ayat-ayat Alquran. Selain itu, penggunaan bahasa oleh Blair Imani dapat berkontribusi untuk publik dalam memahami fenomena Queer. Lebih jauh lagi, konteks sosial yang lebih besar di mana wacana Imani berada mengungkapkan hubungan kekuasaan. Orang-orang LGBTQ+ masih harus menghadapi hambatan sistematis terhadap kesetaraan, kekerasan, dan prasangka di banyak bagian dunia. Pernyataan Imani dapat ditafsirkan dalam hal ini sebagai semacam perlawanan terhadap wacana yang berlaku yang bertujuan untuk meminggirkan atau menghapus suara LGBTQ+.

Kata Kunci : *Analisis wacana kritis, Queer dan Muslim, dan teori van Dijk*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Language is a medium to communicate the human idea. People could communicate their feelings and idea with meaningful words. Through these words, other people can get the point of the idea. In the communication process, there is an implicit purpose. According to that case, language is an important key to deliver the message. One of the ways to express the language is through speaking activity. Speaking is an oral activity through verbal utterance. We could convey a lot of information through the speaking activity, but we need other media to provide the information.

In the digital era, there are a lot of media that are used to share actual information, for example, YouTube. YouTube is a video streaming service that was created in 2005. YouTube the second biggest online video platform with an active user after facebook in 2024 (Dixon, 2024). There are more than 114 million active YouTube channels that include broadcasters, movie studios, record labels, and more (Shewale, 2024). It concludes that there is a lot of information that can be accessed from YouTube. YouTube provides an idea of an expert who is sharing their knowledge and perspectives about the different sub-disciplines. In that case, language is a media that is used to convey the meaning of the speaker through the video.

We can get the intention of the speaker through language. The speaker has to speak in front of the audience to share their idea, so the intention can be delivered to the audience. Its activity is called speech. Speech can be controversial because speech sometimes consists of ideology and people's beliefs. So it is debatable, especially a speech that is perceived as a sensitive and concrete statement, and it is constructed into a person's perspective (Castilo, 2022, p. 32).

In this research, the researcher chooses a speech from TED x Talks YouTube entitled *Queer & Muslim: Nothing to Reconcile*. This speech is delivered by Blair Imani, an American author, historian, and activist. Blair Imani has a scholarship background that focuses on intersectionality, gender studies, race and racism, sociology, and United States history, so she could give a speech about queer and LGBTQ+ (Dejai, 2024). She is the creator of the web series entitled *Smarter and Seconds*, which has become a viral web series in LA. She also gets a Bestselling author in the LA Times for his work, *Read This to Get Smarter* (Jackson, 2020). As a public speaker, Blair Imani has presented her ideas about women and gender at well-known universities, such as Oxford and Harvard.

The issue of gender and sexual orientation always being a significant issue that related to the right and status and connected to other social life, especially religion (Castilo, 2022, p. 9). Queer and Muslim are two different terms. Based on the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, the term queer means strange or unusual. In twenty century, it used as a connotation or derogatory label for homosexual. It refers

to same-gender relationships. In society, the sexual orientation commonly was man and woman, but in this case, it can be men and men, or women and women.

Based on Islam, the condemnation of the homosexual phenomenon is based on the story of the prophet Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah. These stories have diverse interpretations. One of the interpretations explained that the key point of Sodom and Gomorrah is the inhabitants beyond same-sex relations, such as inhospitality to strangers and sexual violence (Castilo, 2022, pp. 12–13). The story only mention the homosexually (the men and men sexual orientation). The phenomenon of queer Muslims is the controversial thing because based on the prophet Lot's story about Sodom and Gomorrah, Islam gives a forbidden to same-gender relationships although queer Muslims have an identity as Muslims that have a same-gender sexual orientation.

It's important to recognize how Blair Imani's positionality as a black queer Muslim woman impacts her language and viewpoint. Her speech is informed by intersectionality, deepening the examination of the power relations therein. Blair Imani's speech and viewpoint are significantly affected by her positionality as a black queer Muslim woman. The term "intersectionality," first used by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, p. 140), recognizes how social identities are intertwined and influence how people experience privilege and oppression. In Imani's instance, the intersections of her identities as a woman, a Black queer Muslim, and an experienced black person have shaped her activism and perspective. Navigating the intersections of racism and sexism, she is a black woman who faces prejudice based on both race and gender, as well as institutional hurdles. Her Muslim faith adds

even another level of complexity, especially in situations where she is marginalized and excluded from heteronormative society systems, in addition to her queer identity.

Imani's intersectional identity informs her own experiences and how she approaches LGBTQ+ rights advocacy and conversation. Her recognition of the various facets of her identity serves as a reminder of the value of diversity in social justice campaigns. Through her actions, she hopes to raise the voices of underrepresented groups and show how intertwined the fights against different types of oppression are. Imani's intersectional viewpoint also draws attention to the many needs and experiences of those with intersecting marginalized identities, challenging popular narratives within LGBTQ+ advocacy that frequently foreground the experiences of privileged groups.

Furthermore, Imani challenges established power structures in both LGBTQ+ communities and the larger society as a black queer Muslim woman. Being a part of several oppressed groups, she questions prevailing narratives and gives voice to those who are frequently ignored or silenced. Her campaign asks for unity across crossing axes of oppression in addition to the recognition and acceptance of LGBTQ+ people. By doing this, Imani's discourse becomes a potent instrument for opposing structural injustices and advancing the creation of a more just and inclusive society in which every person is recognized and cherished for who they are, regardless of the intersections of their identities.

According to the background above, the researcher applies the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun A. Van Dijk. The theory of Van Dijk is explained as consist of three dimensions analysis, social cognition, and social context. In the three dimensions analysis that consist of macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure examine how the structure of the discourse and become the strategies are used to emphasize particular theme. At the level of social cognition, the learning process of the news production involves individual cognition from the audience. While in the social context is the aspect of studying discourse building that develops in society will be a problem.

1.2 Research Question

1. How is the construction of the discourse in the speech of Blair Imani toward the controversial issue of Queer?

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objective study of this research is to reveal the ideology of Blair Imani about the Queer as a perspective of Muslim women.

1.4 Scope of Study

This research focuses on Ideology theory and it is specified in Teun Van Dijk's Critical Discourse study of Ideology. The researcher analyzes all of the opinions used in Blair Imani's speech about Queer Muslim.

1.5 Significances of Study

The result of this research expected to give the beneficial for the researcher and the reader to understand a text speech using critical discourse analysis (CDA), especially to all of the English department students of State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga. This researcher aims to apply a CDA approach in analyzing a speech from Blair Imani in TED x Talk YouTube channel.

1.6 Literature Review

This research focuses on analyzing the ideology of Blair Imani in her speech *Queer & Muslims: Nothing to Reconcile* based on the theory of Teun Van Dijk, Critical Discourse Analysis. This research uses four sources as a selected study that has a related theoretical framework and research focus. It aims to prove that this research is original and there has not been a scientific paper that analyzes the speech of Blair Imani in TED x Talks. These are the prior research that are using the same material object about Queer Muslims and formal object with Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun Van Dijk.

The first research is a journal by Shahid & Arshia (2021) that studies LGBTQ Muslims in Canada by looking at the tension of religion and sexual orientation that occur in Canadian Muslims. The intersectional theoretical perspective applied in this research to analyze the tension phenomenon with descriptive qualitative method.. The data were collected by interviewing the respondents that are Muslim guys from the several communities in Greater Toronto Area which consist of three women and three men 22-29 years old. The result of the research shows that the respondent told of the stress, denial, and some cases

substance abuse that comes out from their parents and family that know about homosexual identity. This research also found that the respondents experienced exclusion from their community because of their sexuality. That case affects the respondent's mental health. The respondent feels the isolation and fear of being Muslim LGBTQ in Canada. The respondent said that being a guy in Canada is better than being in their countries of origin. The respondents shared that their parents were blaming their children's sexuality for being contaminated by western culture. This statement raises a paradox about the immigrant experience. In conclusion, the researcher said that this intersectional phenomenon of being a guy in Canada, especially with a Muslim identity cannot represent all of the LGBTQ experience in general.

The second research is the journal by Mohsin, Hamed, Surinderpal, Rashid Asghar, and Sahira (2019) that studies the statement of anti-Muslims that was delivered by Donald Trump during the Presidential Elections in America in 2016 by looking at the history of Donald Trump as an anti-Muslim politician in America. It was supported by several pieces of evidence about the history life of Donald Trump. This research applies the Critical Discourse Analysis by Van Dijk which focuses on the ideological analysis. The result of the research shows that there are sentiments of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim statement delivered by Donald Trump. In Donald Trump's point of view, the Muslim community, especially in America is a terrorist and anti-democratic. So, the researcher concludes the ideology of Donald Trump that was seen during the Presidential Elections in

America in 2016 is a discriminatory ideology because there are many hateful and negative statement.

The third research is a graduating paper by Ahamad Syamwiel (2018) from the State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. He focuses his research on identifying the linguistics side of the inaugural speech of Donald J. Trump, especially about the word organization of the speech that it could change the audience's mindset. The researcher found that Donald J. Trump tried to persuade the audience to make a good image of himself in the presidential election era. The result of the research also found that Donald J. Trump applied the politeness strategy in his speech. This research has a similarity to the subject of research. It used the van Dijk analysis model to analyze the speech. On the other side, the research is different because both of them used different objects of research.

The last research is the journal (Maghfiroh & Triyono, 2020) that studies the ideological embodiment of Nadiem Makarim toward his speech on National Teacher's Day by looking at the pros and contras of his speech, so the researcher would like to research it deeply through this paper. This research used a descriptive qualitative method and used the model of CDA by Van Dijk to analyze the problem. The result of this study found that the representation of the ideology was grouped into several structures, such as macro, supra, and micro. In macrostructure, Nadiem Makarim declares the mission of Indonesia's Education Change. He used the ideology lies to make all of the educators involved in the education side and make the audience believe his expectation about the Indonesian education system in the future. In supra structure found that Nadiem Makarim told the speech based on the

organization of the speech which contain an opening, content, and closing statement. He explains about the old curriculum that can't give an improvement. Then, he links it to his mission to improve the education system. In the microstructure, the researcher is concerned with the analysis of the lingual units. As result, he implicitly wants to show that he put himself as equal to the audience by applying personal pronouns like *Anda* and *Kita*.

1.7 Theoretical Approach

This research analyzes the ideology of Blair Imani toward her speech “Queer and Muslim: Nothing to Reconcile” because of her support to the queer Muslims. This speech became controversial because Blair Imani as a Muslim woman shows her support to the queer phenomenon, so the researcher is willing to analyze the ideology of Blair Imani and how she constructed the ideas in her speech. This research will apply the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun Van Dijk that includes the ideology as a multidisciplinary approach. Ideology as a multidisciplinary approach aims to describe and explain belief in social practice in general and discourse in particular (Van Dijk, 2012, p. 27).

Based on the van Dijk ideology theory, the analysis of the text involved the three dimensions of analysis (microstructure, macrostructure, and superstructure), social context, and social cognition analysis. The social analysis used to indicate the societal structures, institutional or organizational structures, group relation, and group structures. Social cognition aims to know sociocultural values, ideologies, system of attitudes, and sociocultural knowledge. Discourse analysis is the part to engage the ideological concept that is expressed in the text. The discourse analysis

also could help the researcher to know the construction of the text and the persuasive communication of the ideological meaning (Van Dijk, 2012, p. 22).

Critical Discourse Analysis usually used to look at the relation between the language used with the social context and social phenomenon. Mostly, the Critical Discourse Analysis applied to issues such as social controversy including gender, religion, and ideologies. This theory focuses on the construction of the discourse to get the intention and influence the society to the linguistic side. It could reveal the social dominance in the society. So, the Critical Discourse Analysis becomes a tool to analyze a text in linguistics based on the social context.

CDA theory by van Dijk is an appropriate theory to this research because the discourse analysis is not only to be based on the text. The text has to be observed deeply by looking at the practical production behind the text. As this research wants to know how the speech by Blair Imani was constructed. The speech criticism of this research has to know the behind motive of the speaker.

The Critical Discourse Analysis by Teun A. van Dijk talks about the dimension of the text, social cognition and social context. There are three level structures of critical discourse analysis by Teun A. van Dijk, such as Macrostructure (thematic structures), Superstructure (schema) and Microstructure.

1.8 Method of Research

In this section, the researcher divides the part of method into four parts, such as the type of the research, source of data, the technique of analyzing data, and research data analysis.

1.8.1 Type of Research

The type of this research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is a method to examine the people's experience detailed with the several method, such as an interview, group discussion, observation, etc (Hennink et al, 2020). This method looks at how people interpret their experience, construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experience. Therefore, from TED X Talk YouTube channel, this study used a qualitative method to analyze the feature utterance of the Blair Imani's speech.

1.8.2 Data Sources

The data sources of this research is the transcription of the speech by Blair Imani in TED X Talk YouTube Channel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8IhaGULmO_k as a main data. In addition, the researcher used additional data from the commentary section of the TED x Talk YouTube channel as the supporting data to look at the public reaction against the speech as the data sources of the social cognition. The TED X Talk YouTube channel is an open public channel, so the speech by Blair Imani is accessible to everyone.

1.8.3 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher used observation techniques to collect the data of research. The observation techniques focused on the understanding of action, roles, and behavior to collect the data of the research (Walshe et al, 2011). After find the object of the research on the YouTube channel, the next process is closely watching and listening the speech in order to make easy on identify the word, phrase, sentence,

and paragraphs becomes the transcript. In spoken text of the Discourse Analysis, the transcript of the video is important because it becomes part of the research analysis (Leeuwen, 2008; Litosseliti, 2010; Hariyanto, 2023). After collecting the main data, the researcher observed the pro and contra comment on the commentary section of YouTube channel as the supporting data. This data were used to see the public response toward Blair Imani's speech.

1.8.4 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis of this research is divided into the several steps. The first steps is selecting the data based on the transcript of the speech by Blair Imani on the YouTube channel of TED X Talk. Then, the researcher makes a table to classify the speech into the generic structure of the speech (opening, content, and closing). The next steps is observe, analyze and interpret the data by applying the theory by Teun A. van Dijk, Critical Discourse Analysis that consist of three dimensions analysis (macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure), social cognition, and social context. In the end of the study, the researcher concluded the ideology of Blair Imani based on result of the analysis.

1.9 Paper Organization

This research is organized into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that discuss the background of the study, scope of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significances of the study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, type of research, data sources, data analysis technique, and paper organization. The second chapter contains the

biography of Blair Imani and the theoretical framework. The third chapter is the discussion that contains the explanation of the data analysis based on the three dimensions, social cognition, and social context. The fourth chapter is conclusions and suggestions.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusions

In this research, the researcher analyzes a speech of Blair Imani on the TED X Talk entitled *Queer & Muslim: Nothing to Reconcile* based on Teun A. Van Dijk Critical Discourse Analysis theory. From the analysis of the problem, the researcher conclude that the idea that LGBTQ+ identities are fundamentally legitimate and worthy of equal rights and acknowledgment is one of the main presumptions of Imani's speech. This presumption goes against social norms that have historically deprived LGBTQ+ people of their rights and privileges. Imani subtly challenges existing power structures that aim to marginalize or delegitimize LGBTQ+ identities by bringing this assumption to the forefront.

In addition, Imani's remark probably fits into a discourse that values openness and diversity by promoting tolerance and honoring a range of gender identities and sexual orientations. There might be a tacit assumption in this conversation, though, that inclusivity is always constructive and naturally progressive. This presumption ignores the complicated power dynamics that exist within LGBTQ+ communities, including issues of ableism, sexism, racism, and classism. These dynamics may be seen in movements that advocate for LGBTQ+ visibility and rights.

Imani's speech also demonstrates power dynamics under her role as an advocate and speaker. She has the authority and platform to reach a large audience by presenting TED talks. Her speech has credibility and influence in the conversation about LGBTQ+ representation and rights because of this power dynamic. It is imperative to critically analyze the privileged voices and marginalized experiences in this conversation. Although Imani speaks from her personal experience as a black queer Muslim woman, for example, her viewpoint might not accurately reflect the range of LGBTQ+ experiences.

Furthermore, the larger social context in which Imani's discourse is situated reveals power relations. LGBTQ+ people still have to deal with systematic obstacles to equality, violence, and prejudice in many parts of the world. Imani's remarks can be interpreted in this light as a kind of resistance to prevailing discourses that aim to marginalize or erase LGBTQ+ voices.

4.2 Suggestions

At the end of this research, the researcher realized that there are many things that could be developed from this research. First, the analysis of Critical Discourse Analysis could explore many topics in society, such as gender and equality. Second, this research that examines the topic of gender-loving relationships can be investigated from another relevant theory, such as an intersectional theoretical perspective. The researcher hopes that the future researchers can analyze more detail and deeply perhaps based on the speech of Blair Imani for instance in the aspect of the feminism perspective.

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