



## Managing Accusations of Racism: A Discursive Psychology Analysis of Discussions on Yogyakarta's Land Ownership Instruction in Facebook

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the management of accusations of racism in online discussions on the enactment of Yogyakarta's land ownership instruction, banning non-indigenous from the rights to own land in this province. A discursive psychology is applied to analyze a wide range of data collected from Facebook, where its users have heated debates on this particular topic due to the court's dismissal of Handoko's lawsuit calling for the repeal of the instruction in question. The analysis reveals that Facebook users manage their accusations of racism by avoiding any explicit reference to racism, refraining from making direct accusations of racism, and making direct accusations of racism.

**Keywords:** Accusations of Racism; Discursive Psychology; Yogyakarta's Land Ownership Instruction; Facebook

### **Introduction**

More blatant, overt, explicit or obvious forms of social structures and practices defining ethnic discrimination, prejudice, or racism have become increasingly taboo in many societies, mostly in the Western. This taboo has nothing to do with the extinction of racism, but flourishes more indirect, covert, implicit or subtle forms of inequity and dominance, commonly referred to as the 'new', 'symbolic', 'modern', or 'contemporary racism' (Augoustinos and Every, 2007a: 124).

Van Dijk (1992) has investigated that denial is one of the extremely pivotal part of contemporary racism. There is a tendency for the more racist discourse to have disclaimers and other denials (van Dijk, 1992: 89). Critically analyzing different genres of discourse, for example, everyday conversation, press reports, and political debates about minorities in Western societies, van Dijk establishes that disclaimer, concession, mitigation, blaming the victim, reversal and other moves of denial are employed by dominant group members to deny racism.

A mainly ignored phenomenon that is closely related to racism denial is accusation of racism (Augoustinos and Every, 2007b). These authors have found that there has been an

increasingly taboo on making accusations of racism in the first place, and that therefore speakers, in dealing with this taboo, avoid accusing others directly as racist, and instead indirectly and covertly manage the accusations. Augoustinos and Every (2010) have also investigated that the delicacy of making accusations of racism in public discourse increases, and that speakers' moral accountability is managed when making accusations and denials of racism. In addition to this, Goodman and Burke have also found that speakers seek to determine the 'acceptable' discursive strategies to making racist accusations. For instance, supporters of asylum manage to not accuse their opponents of being racist, but rather being grounded on practical and financial rationales. This is so because such accusations, in every case, are not only challenged by strong denials but also resentment, and are oftentimes, if not always, considered more 'dangerous' than racist attitudes or actions themselves as they can damage the positive atmosphere of social interaction (van Dijk, 1992: 90).

Although forms of social structures and practices defining contemporary ethnic prejudice, discrimination or racism can be found in many countries on the planet (Gossett, 1997), numerous research on discursive accusation and denial of racism, as mentioned earlier, has been conducted in the Western liberal democratic countries wherein the 'white' populations dominate the 'non-whites'. It seems almost difficult to trace studies, if any, concentrated on discourse of contemporary racism that have been accomplished beyond the Western world, especially, in Indonesia. The present study, therefore, is an attempt at expanding the setting of the previous research on contemporary racist discourse.

To conduct study on the accusations and denials of racism in Indonesia, it is definitely important to ascertain the existence of racism in this country. Despite remarkable actions Indonesia accomplished to knock racism (especially against Chinese Indonesians) out of this country after the collapse of Soeharto's 32-year-old-regime (see Bertrand, 2004: 70), racism has not come to an end in Indonesia. Komnas HAM (the National Commission on Human Rights) has reported that in Yogyakarta province, the residents identified as non-indigenous (especially Chinese Indonesians) have been barred from owning land ever since the issuance the Instruction Letter Number K898/I/A/1975: it is only indigenous Indonesians having the rights to own land (Komnas HAM, 2017: 88). This instruction, according to the Recommendation Letter Number 037/R/Mediasi/VIII/2014 issued on 11 August 2014, shall be revoked by Governor of Yogyakarta as it is clear violation of a number of laws, for example, the Law Number 39 of 1999 about Human Rights and the Law Number 40 of 2008 about Elimination of Racial and Ethnic Discrimination (Kresna, 2016).

Recently, occurrences of discussions on the so-called land instruction have become intense, particularly, in online space, following the dismissal of Handoko's lawsuit calling for the repeal of this instruction by a district court in Yogyakarta, where in response to this dismissal, Handoko firmly confirms that his fight against the instruction, which he explicitly called discriminatory or racist, would continue (Himawan, 2018; Chandran, 2018). Netizens involved in such heated discussions in turn have engaged in making accusations of racism. Taking this into consideration, the present study, thus, is aimed at examining how such racist accusations are managed when issues related to the particular topic about the enactment of the instruction in question are debated.

## **Method**

The data come from Facebook in which topics about land ownership instruction in Yogyakarta are debated by its users. Facebook is an appropriate source of data because of having room for interaction, and therefore choosing it is helpful to conduct discourse analysis

scrutinizing ‘what is accomplished in interaction’ (Goodman, 2017: 145). The selection of Facebook as the source of data is aimed at investigating how members of the public in Indonesia talk about this instruction in such an online setting.

Facebook has privacy settings which enable its users to control who can see their posts. Once posts have been made visible for public, they definitely have entered public sphere. Being this so, every single value of information held by these posts, from ethical point of view, is publicly available to be used. Also, for ethical reason, the name Facebook users is presented in anonymous.

The data are collected by searching for posts—the area where debates commonly occur—which are related to the aforementioned topics in Facebook search engine. Generating data from the area where participants (in this study, Facebook users) communicate naturally will satisfy what Potter (2010) considers as ‘naturally occurring’ because the data ‘has not been influenced in any way by the researcher’ (Goodman, 2017: 146).

The data have been obtained from 50 posts over a six-month period, which are, of course, related to the Instruction Letter Number K898/I/A/1975. The representative posts have been selected based on the intensity of discussions taking place, which are proved by the number of comments in the selected posts. Considering this is definitely important as it is helpful to display how racist accusations are managed in such discussions. In addition to this, the selection of the posts has also been limited on the period between February and July in 2018 as massive talks about land ownership occurred in this period following the dismissal of Handoko’s call for the repeal of the so-called land instruction by Yogyakarta district court in 20 February 2018.

To analyze the data, this study employs an approach to discourse analysis, Discursive Psychology (DP). The employment of DP discourse analysis could help explicate the action orientation of text and talk and what is being accomplished in such instruction (Edwards and Potter, 1992). Extracts containing action(s) oriented to accusations of racism are identified. Rhetorical devices used to manage such racist accusations are in turn analyzed thoroughly. It is also important to note that extracts are more or less literally reproduced and translated since they were, respectively, written with spelling errors and in Bahasa Indonesia. Line numbers are also attached to assist the analysis.

## **Results and Discussions**

This section examines how Facebook users manage their accusations of racism in discussing the instruction Number K898/I/A/1975 banning the non-indigenous Indonesians from the rights to own land in Yogyakarta. It is identified that they employ three strategies in managing such accusations: (1) avoiding any explicit reference to racism; (2) refraining from making any direct accusations of racism; and (3) making direct accusations of racism.

### *Avoiding Any Explicit References to Racism*

Facebook users frequently use a number of words to name the so-called land instruction rather than explicitly referring it as racism. This is demonstrated in the following extract when U1 and U2 respond to the dismissal of the lawsuit filed by Handoko calling for the revocation of the aforementioned instruction.

### Extract 1

U1: Just choose whether you want to see Yogyakarta as a part of the Republic Indonesia by complying with the Law on the Specialty of Yogyakarta or agree with Handoko which in turn is potential to disunite Yogyakarta.

U2: I just don't agree with your statement allowing suppression on the ground of preventing disunity.

In this extract, U1 leaves other Facebook users with two contrastive options to be selected in regard with the lawsuit filed by Handoko: assumption (1) about the loyalty of Yogyakarta Province to the Republic of Indonesia if the Law on the Specialty of Yogyakarta is obeyed, and (2) about the potential of disunity if the society in particular and the government in general (including the court), approve Handoko's call for the repeal of the instruction. In response to this, U2 shows his/her disagreement by saying 'I just disagree with your statement allowing suppression on the ground of preventing disunity'. Here, U2 manages his/her subject positions as one who opposes the legitimacy of the instruction being discussed by making accusations of racism. In so doing, he/she constructs the accused, U1, as 'being tolerant of suppression' of the Chinese-Indonesians and other social groups considered as non-indigenous, for preventing disunity reason. Instead of naming the legitimate land instruction as racism or discrimination, U2 refers to it as 'suppression'. This clearly demonstrates that he/she manages to avoid making any explicit reference to racism, which may be seen as problematic, while at the same time calling the accused to be responsible for supporting racism (Augoustinos and Every, 2007a).

Avoidance of explicitly referring to racism as such is also obvious in Extract 2 when U4 responds to U3 seeking to justify the legitimacy of the so-called land instruction in Yogyakarta on the basis of the specialty status of this province.

### Extract 2

U3: <sup>1</sup>Yogyakarta is a special region.

U4: <sup>2</sup>Yes, it is. But, it doesn't have to violate the law.

<sup>3</sup>Don't think that because of its specialty, Yogyakarta can be abusive.

In this extract, U3 shows his/her support toward the aforementioned instruction by stating 'Yogyakarta is a special region special region' (line 1). In the next line, U4 responds to this by admitting the status of Yogyakarta as a special province, but then accusing (the government of) Yogyakarta of violating the law as in 'But, it doesn't have to violate the law' (line 2). The use of conjunction 'but' suggests that U4 attempts to show dispute with U3, that is, the law violation is not justifiable on the basis of Yogyakarta's specialty status. From this, it is clear that U4 manages his/her subject position as one who is against the so-called land instruction.

In addition, U4 also warns (the government of) Yogyakarta not to be abusive on the basis of its specialty status (line 3). Here, U4 suggests that violation of the law is equated with 'being abusive'. The employment of the repertoire of 'violating the law as being abusive' to label the enactment of instruction in question suggests that U4 manages to avoid explicitly discussing this instruction as racism or discrimination. This, therefore, is a clear display of U4's orientation toward the taboo on making accusations of racism (Goodman and Burke, 2010: 333; Burke and Goodman, 2012: 25).

Extract 4 and Extract 5 below also portray how Facebook users manage their accusations of racism through the employment of euphemisms for racism.

### Extract 3

U5: <sup>1</sup>This is a stupid instruction.  
<sup>2</sup>I'm just wondering why this instruction is still being enacted.

### Extract 4

U6: <sup>3</sup>The instruction that differentiates between indigenous and non-indigenous  
<sup>4</sup>is the most foolish one throughout the history of Indonesia.  
<sup>5</sup>Don't you think that because of Sultan's command,  
<sup>6</sup>then we can tolerate something conflicting with human rights.

It can be seen from these extracts that the instruction, which differentiates the rights of indigenous Indonesians from those of non-indigenous in owning land, is labeled as 'stupid' and 'the most foolish' one, respectively in Extract 3 and Extract 4. Using these euphemisms for racism allows both U5 and U6 to mitigate the serious effect of naming the instruction under discussion as such. This way of making accusations of racism has also been evident in Riggs and Due's (2010) investigation. That is, by naming racism as 'something else', the speakers make racism 'continue unchecked' (Riggs and Due, 2010: 269).

Showing his/her negative stance toward it, U5 hardly believes that 'this instruction is still being enacted' (line 2). This implies that such 'stupidity' was typical product of the past Indonesia—say, for example, the New Order—and therefore should have been revoked in the context of post-reformation Indonesia. Meanwhile, U6 displays opposition to this most foolish instruction by equating it with 'something conflicting with human rights' (line 6). Here, by inference, he/she constructs supporters of such 'foolishness' as those tolerating human rights violation, and thus positions him/herself as a defender of human rights (lines 5-6).

In addition to this, a display of ideological dilemma is also obvious in lines 5-6. U6 manages such dilemma by changing from his/her employment of second pronoun 'you' to the inclusive 'we' (in Bahasa Indonesia: kita)—pronoun referring to both the speaker and the addressee. Here, despite having a negative position toward what he/she call as the most foolish instruction, U6, according to Chiang (2010: 287), seeks to "limit the extent to which" its supporter(s) "could be held personally responsible" for violating human rights, by using the first plural pronoun 'we'. In other word, U6's change to the inclusive 'we' displays his/her attempt at holding collective duty with the supporter(s), and other people, to combat 'something conflicting with human rights'.

### *Refraining from Making Direct Accusations of Racism*

In addition to attempts at managing their accusations of racism by not labeling racism as such, it is also identified that the words 'racism', 'discrimination' and the like are in used when Facebook users make such accusations. However, in this strategy, as illustrated in the following extracts, they refrain from making any direct accusations of racism.

### Extract 5

U7: <sup>1</sup>Pemuda Pancasila states that the notions of indigenous and

<sup>2</sup>non-indigenous Indonesians are no longer accepted;

<sup>3</sup>there is only term of Indonesians citizens.

<sup>4</sup>Then why does the province of Special Region of Yogyakarta still enforce

<sup>5</sup>discriminatory instruction against the ethnic Tionghoa in owning the land?

<sup>6</sup>Such instruction is no longer relevant to be enacted because of

<sup>7</sup>the potentiality of disadvantaging social justice for all Indonesians.

Here, to begin his/her statement, U7 quotes Pemuda Pancasila (English: the Pancasila Youth)—an organization aimed to preserve and maintain the norms and values of Pancasila—saying that (according to the law) the notions of indigenous and non-indigenous Indonesians are no longer accepted, but that of Indonesians citizens (lines 1-3). In the next lines, U7 continues to accuse authorities in Yogyakarta of enforcing a discriminatory instruction against the ethnic Tionghoa (the official name of Chinese Indonesians) in land ownership matter, by means of rhetorical question (lines 4-5). Here, U7 seeks to associate the disobedience of prohibition on differentiating the rights of indigenous from those of non-indigenous Indonesians with the enactment of the so-called land instruction.

By inferring from what Pemuda Pancasila has claimed, U7 personally avoid making direct accusation of racism. In doing so, he/she constructs the so-called land instruction as ‘being discriminatory’ as it and privileges the indigenous, and unfairly disadvantages the ethnic Tionghoa, one that is labeled as non-indigenous Indonesians. U7 also manages the ideological dilemma of attempting to hold the government of Yogyakarta responsible for enforcing such discriminatory instruction without being fully responsible for making such accusation. In this case, the responsibility of making accusation of racism is partially put on Pemuda Pancasila. Furthermore, in the next lines, to consolidate his/her opposition toward the instruction under discussion, U7 suggests that it is irrelevant to be enforced because of having potentiality of violating the last principle of Pancasila (English: the Five Principles), social justice for all Indonesians (lines 6-7). Moreover, constructing the enforcement of this instruction as ‘being irrelevant’, as Goodman and Burke (2010) and Burke and Goodman (2012) assert, portrays orientation to the notion that ‘racism is unreasonable’.

Extract 6 below also demonstrates how Facebook user explicitly uses the word ‘discrimination’ when making allegation of racism. However, as demonstrated in the previous extract, this user manages to personally avoid directly alleging other(s) of being racist by attributing such allegation to coming from ‘somewhere else’.

#### Extract 6

U8: <sup>1</sup>Whatever you say, this is discrimination, indeed.

<sup>2</sup>The fact is that Komnas HAM has urged Yogyakarta to revoke this

<sup>3</sup>instruction as it conflicts with human rights.

<sup>4</sup>So, for those supporting discrimination, if someday you find yourself being

<sup>5</sup>discriminated against, please don’t feel oppressed.

In this extract, U8 strongly objects all justifications for the legitimate land instruction coming from those backing it up, by stating ‘whatever you say...’ (line 1). What follows this objection is strong allegation of racism—which is marked by the employment of word ‘indeed’ purposed to emphasize something—that U8 makes to refer to the enactment of the instruction in question, as in ‘...this is discrimination, indeed’ (line 1). To defend such objection and racist allegation, U8 is obviously required to provide strong evidence too. In doing so, U8 acknowledges the fact that the Komnas HAM (English: National Commission on Human Rights)

has strongly voiced that the so-called land instruction is in clear violation of human rights, and therefore the government of Yogyakarta is urged to revoke it (lines 2-3).

Here, U8 positions his/herself as opponent of the so-called land instruction and so as anti-discriminatory person by making accusations of racism. In spite of using explicit reference to racism (e.g. discrimination), U8 manages to locate the racist accusation as coming from a third party, in this case, Komnas HAM. In so doing, U8 attempts not to take full responsibility for the prior accusation he/she made while partially blaming authorities in Yogyakarta for legitimating instruction which ‘conflicts with human rights’ (line 3).

Also, in Extract 6, it is important to note the employment of the repertoire of ‘discrimination as oppression’ when U8 closes his/her argumentation about the legitimate land instruction by stating ‘So, for those supporting discrimination, if someday you find yourself being discriminated against, please do not feel oppressed’ (lines 4-5). This, again, exhibits the problematic nature of discrimination or racism. Here, by implication, those affected by the so-called land ownership instruction are constructed as being unfairly treated, and its supporters are portrayed as those supporting such unfair treatment.

In this extract, the ideological dilemma is also displayed. The extract begins with U8’s position as one opposing discriminatory practice, which is clear when he/she names the legitimate land instruction discrimination on the ground of violating human rights. Later, in the end of the extract, U8 also maintains his/her tolerance to form of discrimination by prohibiting those defending this instruction from raising voice when facing such a bad experience in the future.

Attribution of racist allegation to a third party is also evident in Extract 7.

#### Extract 7

- U9: <sup>1</sup>I once ever heard that there’s a racist verdict too,  
<sup>2</sup>which bans the ethnic Tionghoa from owning land in Yogyakarta.  
<sup>3</sup>And according to the information I received, this verdict has been issued  
<sup>4</sup>by Yogyakarta Sultanate.  
<sup>5</sup>At the time, I doubted the civilized Yogyakarta legitimates such verdict.  
<sup>6</sup>However, by referring to marvelous racism that Papuans encounter,  
<sup>7</sup>I have no wonder that it does exist.

This extract presents Facebook user’s response to a post narrating forms of racism encountered by Papuans in the special region of Yogyakarta. This user then link them with his/her current belief in the occurrence of another racist practices in this province, for example, the enactment of the land instruction. Here, instead of directly declaring that he/she regards the legitimate verdict prohibiting the ethnic Tionghoa from owning land in Yogyakarta as racist, U9 puts it as ‘I once ever heard that there’s a racist verdict too, which bans the ethnic Tionghoa from owning land in Yogyakarta’ (lines 1-2). The employment of the word ‘too’ (line 1) suggests that U9 attempts to put emphasis on other Facebook user’s narration about racism against Papuans. That is, another form of racism also takes place in this province.

What is interesting here is that U9’s use of the past tense ‘heard’, which indicates that he/she, in the past, received the information about this racist verdict from somewhere else. In this case, U9 refrains from making direct accusation of racism by positioning, strictly say, unspecified other person as the accuser. In addition to this, U9 also seeks to indirectly accuse the authorities in Yogyakarta of being racist because of issuing such a racist instruction. It is indexed in ‘...

according to the information I received, this verdict has been issued by Yogyakarta Sultanate' (line 3-4). U9's use of 'according to the information I received' (line 3) portrays that he/she relies on the information he/she gathered from unspecified person when making such a racist charge. This way of managing accusations of racism, according to Riggs and Due (2010), allows the speaker to locate him/herself as an 'intermediary' between the accuser (the unspecified person) and the accused (authorities in Yogyakarta). In regard with this, the onus is on this person to make accusation of racism. This suggests that U9 indirectly perceives the so-called land instruction as racist without being responsible for the accusation. Therefore, by constructing the unspecified person as the accuser, U9 attempts to avoid him/herself from being blamed for making accusation of racism.

It is also important to note in this Extract 7 that U9 manages the ideological dilemma of admitting that he/she once doubted the enactment of the so-called racist verdict while maintaining that he/she is currently convinced that it is enacted. Here, U9's doubt about the legitimacy of such racist verdict (line 5) is due to his/her positive evaluation about Yogyakarta (the government in particular and its people in general) as 'civilized' community. Meanwhile, U9 constructs his/her current conviction about this legitimate verdict by referring to (another) massive forms of racism experienced other group of people in this region (lines 6-7).

#### *Making Direct Accusations of Racism*

Along with the aforementioned strategies of avoiding making any explicit reference to racism and refraining from making any direct accusations of racism, it is uncovered that Facebook users also seek to make direct accusations of racism. The following extract shows Facebook user's response to the comment of the so-called land ownership instruction supporters who commonly identify themselves as indigenous.

#### Extract 8

- U10: <sup>1</sup>What loss that the so-called indigenous Indonesians, like you and I suffer  
<sup>2</sup>if this discriminatory instruction is revoked?  
<sup>3</sup>There is no such thing; unless you embed envy and hatred in people whom  
<sup>4</sup>you consider different.  
<sup>5</sup>If that is the problem, then it will always be.

U10 expresses resentment that the revocation of this discriminatory instruction is claimed to put the so-called indigenous Indonesians at a disadvantage, through the use of rhetorical question (line 1-2). Here, U10 explicitly names the instruction under discussion as 'being discriminatory' (line 2). It is obvious at this point U10 constructs him/herself as one who is against this instruction. Furthermore, it seems that self-identification by U10 as an indigenous Indonesian (line 1), enables him/her to contrast his/her negative position on the so-called land instruction from other indigenous Indonesians' positive attitude toward it.

Directly after formulating the rhetorical question, U10 suggests that these indigenous Indonesians are supposed to not lose anything if the aforementioned instruction is revoked (line 3). U10 then continues with direct accusation of racism by stating '...you embed envy and hatred in people whom you consider different' (line 3-4). Managing racist accusation as such allows the accuser to directly hold the accused accountable for inciting racism (Chiang, 2010). In this case, U10 is able to suggest that these indigenous Indonesians are directly blamed for defending this instruction, and more importantly, the authorities in Yogyakarta for legitimating it. Also, at this point, the ideological dilemma is displayed. U10 manages such dilemma by switching from

his/her use of the combined pronoun ‘you and I’ (line 1) to the ‘you’. Using ‘you’ rather than ‘you and I’ (or ‘we’) indicates that U10 attempts at directly accusing the second party (the ‘you’) of promoting racism whilst excluding him/herself from being evaluated as such. That is, it is not ‘me’ being envious and hateful toward people from different ethnic, but ‘you’. Furthermore, naming people of being envious and hateful instead as calling them racists, again, proves that there is a taboo on making accusations of racism (Augoustinos and Every, 2007a; Goodman and Burke, 2010; and Burke and Goodman, 2012).

Another way of making direct accusation of racism is also tangible in Extract 9.

#### Extract 9

- U11:      <sup>1</sup>As a member of the ethnic Toinghoa, I don’t agree with Handoko.  
<sup>2</sup>But, I feel extremely dejected seeing thousands of comments of people  
<sup>3</sup>embracing racism.  
<sup>4</sup>These people hate the ethnic Tionghoa  
<sup>5</sup>just because the later are from different ethnic.

This extract begins with U11 declaring that despite coming from the same ethnic as Handoko does, the Tionghoa, he/she is against Handoko’s call for the repeal of the land ownership instruction (line 1). It seems that by constructing him/herself as a member of Tionghoa opposing Handoko (which, by inference, supporting this legitimate instruction), U11 tries to distance him/herself from the mainstream assumption that opposition to this instruction is vehemently voiced by members of this ethnic. The extract then continues with U11 (again, as a member of Tionghoa ethnic) showing his opposition to racism by directly accusing other Facebook users of being racist, as in ‘But, I feel extremely dejected seeing thousands of comments of people embracing racism (lines 2-3). U10’s use of ‘but’ formulation displays his/her attempt at contrasting the act of opposing Handoko’s call for the repeal of the instruction, which is considered disadvantageous to non-indigenous Indonesians (for example, the ethnic Tionghoa), with the opposition to racism against the ethnic Tionghoa. In this regard, U11 seeks to manage the ideological dilemma of opposing Handoko, and hence backing this instruction up, while maintaining opposition to racist people.

It is also of value to note in this extract that U10 uses the interpretative repertoire of ‘being hateful to others’ on the ground of ethnic difference to refer to racist individuals (lines 4-5). Here, the word ‘just’ is said (line 5). Goodman and Burke (2010: 336) clearly put that ‘just’ is employed to portray ‘racism as a simplistic argument that is resorted to by people who should know better’, that is, persons are racists because of their hatred of other people who are considered different.

#### **Conclusions**

This study analyzes the management of accusations of racism in talks on Yogyakarta’s land instruction, prohibiting non-indigenous from owning land in this region. The result shows that such accusations are managed through avoidance of making any explicit reference to racism. In this way, racism is not named as such but instead as ‘something else’. Here, the legitimacy of the instruction under discussion is constructed as ‘suppression’, ‘being abusive’ (because of violating law), and ‘stupidity’ as well as ‘foolishness’ (because of conflicting with human rights). The employment of this strategy indexes orientation toward the taboo against making racist accusations (Goodman and Burke, 2010: 333; Burke and Goodman, 2012: 25). It also serves to make racism remains unchecked (Riggs and Due, 2010: 269).

The management of accusations of racism is also displayed through restraint on making any direct accusations of racism, for example, by attributing racist allegations as coming from a third party. Here, the speaker constructs other (unspecified) person as the accuser; moreover, he/she takes a role as what Riggs and Due (2010) call ‘an intermediary’ between the accuser (the unspecified person) and the accused (authorities in Yogyakarta). Being an intermediary enables the speaker to avoid him/herself from being blamed for making accusation of racism.

Making direct accusations of racism is another way of managing racist accusations. Here, opponents of the so-called land ownership instruction explicitly name it discrimination, and directly accuse those supporting it of being hateful and envious of people who are perceived different. The use of this strategy is also reported in Chiang’s (2010) study. He maintains that it enables the accuser to directly put the responsibility for promoting racism (Chiang, 2010: 287). This, therefore, suggests that the accuser is able to directly hold defenders of this instruction and the government of Yogyakarta accountable, respectively, for defending and legitimating it.

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