

**The Representation of The Judge Muhammad Daming Sunusi on His
Controversial Statement:
A Critical Discourse Analysis on Indonesian Online Newspapers**

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ABSTRACT

News tends to be manipulated by some people to control over other people because news shapes public opinions. Nowadays people can share news content easily in internet because internet becomes space where people can connect, communicate, and share everything easily. In line with that, this present research examined the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi concerning his controversial statement “women enjoy being raped” as evidenced in Indonesian Online Newspapers by using Sociosemantic approach from van Leeuwen (2008). This research employed descriptive qualitative method to describe the representation and its significance. The collected data were 6 online articles taken from *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribunnews*. The data were analyzed in the unit of words, phrases, and sentences to reveal the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi concerning his controversial statement. This research disclosed that, according to the text, Muhammad Daming Sunusi was represented as the one who should be responsible of his statement and he was also represented in a negative way since his case was considered as an insult to the rape victims. Hence, by sociosemantic and context analysis, the research revealed that *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribunnews* had the same pattern and thought in representing Muhammad Daming Sunusi.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Sociosemantic, Van Leeuwen, Representation, Muhammad Daming Sunusi*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, internet and information have structurally changed the way information is collected, transformed, and disseminated. It makes news media have undergone changes. Rafaeli et al (2008) stated that news media change from traditional modes by adapting and innovating conventions. Further, traditional media such as newspapers shift into online environment through generating new genres. Thus, as Tandon (2009) stated that the online setting will replace the traditional modes in the future in order to accept transparency, responsiveness, and efficiency.

Currently, people can share news content easily in internet because internet becomes space where people can connect, communicate, and share everything easily. News content is not only articles, but also pictures and videos. However, people might not notice and realize that news has a function as a meaning-maker, because it is constructed socially, culturally, and ideologically. News tends to be manipulated by some people to

control over other people because news shapes public opinions (Bonyadi, 2010). It may involve power abuse and reproduce inequality. There is also an opportunity to convey ideologies through the mass media. According to van Dijk (2006), manipulation is being exercised through text, talk, and visual messages.

Accordingly, a study on the language used by media is worth to be conducted. The way media represents social actor and action certainly is the main focus in this study. Beside representation, the signification of the representation from media can be analyzed through its language use. Representation of the social actor in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become one major point that has been investigated along the history of CDA. There are some previous studies related to different kinds of discourse, such as news (Bekalu, 2006; Connell, 1998; Erjavec, 2004), speeches (Post, 2009; Wang, 2010), reports (Wenden, 2005), and press conference (Bhatia, 2006) in social and political contexts. Those studies

were also used Critical Discourse Analysis in examining the discourse.

Within this context, the present study aims to investigate the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi, the judge who claims that women enjoy being raped, in the six related articles taken from Indonesian online newspapers, i.e. *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribunnews*. It explores the way the representation is realized in the text using sociosemantic approach introduced by van Leeuwen (2008). Furthermore, the inclusion-exclusion relation of social actor becomes the center of the analysis to see the representation in the text and reveal the signification of the representation in the news.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Fairclough (1992 as cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 164), text is semiotic dimension of social practices which constitute social fields, institutions, organizations called events. In addition, Fairclough (1992 as cited in Wodak and Meyer, 2009, p. 164) stated that discourse is semiotics way

of construing aspects of the world which can be identified with different perspectives of different groups of social actors. The analysis of discourse within a text could be analyzed further using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which aims to uncover ideology lies behind the text. CDA is an interdisciplinary approach which examines the use of discourse in a critical way. CDA scrutinizes the relation between textual structure and social function in several approaches. Paltridge (2006) and the social and political context in which it occurs. According to Fairclough (1995), CDA work is to map three different form of analysis to one another, namely: language text analysis, discourse practice analysis, and discursive events analysis. Salahshour and Salahshour (2012) stated that the goal of CDA is to help to diminish the opacity that might happen in the correspondence between discursive practice and social function.

“CDA views language as a powerful means through which specific ideologies, identities, and culture become dominant in a

society” Rahimi and Riasati (2011). CDA is used to reveal the power structure and uncover ideology. Ideology is shaped by power because a discourse contains ideology imposed by particular parties or social actors with power for any kinds of goal.

Because of the existence of discourse in media, it makes media and discourses are inseparable. A discourse which lies within media is called media discourse. In these early years, mass media have become an important part of social life. People can not be separated with media, such as television, newspaper, magazine, or internet where they can get recent news for some products. According to Machin & Leeuwen (2007), newspapers become one of media to inform things happened around the world and it becomes one of important tools for communication, including the political communication. However, most of people do not realize that mass media have shaped their way of thinking. They do not even think how mass media unconsciously form

their social, political, and cultural life.

One of the scholars in the fields of Critical Discourse Analysis who develops the notion of sociosemantic approach in revealing the representation of social actor in the text is Van Leeuwen. Van Leeuwen (2008) explained the conception of discourse as re-contextualization of social practice that all texts, all representations of the world and what are going on in it, however abstract, should be interpreted as representations of social practices. He defined social practice as socially regulated ways of doing things which have their own way and degrees. There are ten elements based on Van Leeuwen (2008) which can be included into a social practice led by that way and degrees.

The theory of van Leeuwen’s representation of social actors is called Sociosemantic Inventory. This approach sees the ways in which social actors can be represented and establish the sociological and critical relevance and how they are realized linguistically (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.

24). There are two major categories of representation proposed by van Leeuwen (2008), i.e. inclusion and exclusion. The category of inclusion is further divided into role allocation, personalization, and impersonalization. Meanwhile, in the exclusion, the social actors were excluded in two ways, i.e. through suppression and backgrounding.

The first category is inclusion. Van Leeuwen (2008) divided inclusion into role allocation, personalization, and impersonalization. Role allocation is the roles that social actors are given to play in representations, an aspect of representation which also plays a significant part. The roles of social actors can be active or passive. In activation, social actors are represented as the active one who does the activity. In personalization, the social actors are represented as human beings, as realized by personal or possessive pronouns, proper names, or nouns. Meanwhile, in impersonalization, the social actors are not represented through human characteristics, but by other means such as abstract nouns or

concrete nouns whose meaning does not include semantic feature of human.

The second category is exclusion. Van Leeuwen (2008) explained that a social practice needs specific sets of social actors. However, not all of the social actors are presented into the representation in representing reality into a context. Some might be excluded from the context. In the exclusion, the social actors were excluded in two ways, i.e. through suppression and backgrounding.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to reveal the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi on his controversial statement in three Indonesian online newspapers and the signification of the representation. To uncover the representation of social actors and its signification, in this case the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi on his controversial statement, several processes need to be conducted i.e. exploration, description, and interpretation. These processes can be conducted by using

a qualitative design. The qualitative design can help the researcher to explore and describe the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi (see Creswell, 2008). Since description process in a qualitative design is not enough in uncovering the representation, it needs to be supported by a descriptive design. In the descriptive design, a specific situation i.e. the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi on his controversial statement is studied, so the situation can be explained and interpreted (see Goddard and Malville, 2001). To uncover the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi and its signification, the explanation and interpretation process can be completed by a descriptive design. However, for deep and further interpretation, this study will use a case study. According to Creswell (2008), a case study is an in-depth study or exploration of a bounded system based on extensive data collection.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to reveal the way the Judge Muhammad Daming Sunusi is represented in three Indonesian online newspapers concerning his controversial statement. The analysis utilized the social actor framework proposed by van Leeuwen (2008). To conduct the analysis, the present study used *detik.com*, *kompas.com*, and *tribunnews.com* which are categorized as Top 3 Indonesian online newspapers according to Alexa (2013).

Based on the analysis, this study found that there were 232 clauses in the text. From 232 clauses, 7 social actors were identified, i.e. Muhammad Daming Sunusi, M Ihsan, Andi Azhar, Indra, Hajriyanto Y Thohari, Muhammad Daming Sunusi's Wife and Daughter, and Public or People. From the 7 social actors and 3 different online newspapers, the most emerging actor was Muhammad Daming Sunusi with 185 clauses (79.74%). Meanwhile, there were 47 clauses (20.26%) represented other social actors. It indicates that although each newspaper mentioned another social

actor in the articles, the topic was still about Muhammad Daming Sunusi. Mostly the six social actors had the same role in the text, i.e. giving a judgement to Muhammad Daming Sunusi concerning his controversial statement.

In the analysis of representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi based on social network proposed by van Leeuwen (2008), two main categories were identified i.e. inclusion and exclusion. In the inclusion, the social actors are included in the text. Meanwhile, in the exclusion, the social actors are excluded in the text..

From the analysis, there was same pattern in the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi in *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* online newspaper. It is indicated by the use of representational strategy used by the three online newspapers. The analysis found that there was a wide gap of frequency between the occurrence of inclusion and exclusion as the major types of representation of social actor in *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun*. The more occurrence of inclusion implies

that Muhammad Daming Sunusi was represented more explicitly rather than implicitly.

In inclusion, there were three subcategories, i.e. role allocation (activation and passivation), personalization, and impersonalization. From the three subcategories, it appeared that personalization was the most emerging frequency in *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun*. In this strategy, *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* also had the similar tendency of occurrences in personalizing Muhammad Daming Sunusi. There were only two subcategories of personalization which appear in the three online newspapers, i.e. determination and specification. Determination occurred with a total of 77 times (50.99%) in the articles. Meanwhile, specification occurs 74 times (49.01%) in the articles. This representation indicates that the authors mostly represented Muhammad Daming Sunusi in the way of personalizing him explicitly as a human being. Then, he was also represented through the individualization for his

controversial statement, so it was purely seen as his own action, not as group of judges' statement.

The second rank of emerging frequency of subcategory inclusion in *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* is role allocation. For role allocation, *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* used the same tendency of occurrences of the activation and passivation. Muhammad Daming Sunusi was more represented by using the active role which appeared with a total of 110 occurrences (79.14%). It indicates that Muhammad Daming Sunusi was represented as an actor or an active participant who did actions and utterances in the three online newspapers concerning his controversial statement. Meanwhile, passive role was evidenced with 29 occurrences (20.86%) in the articles, 16 times (11.51%) were subjected and 13 times (9.35%) were beneficialized. It indicates that although Muhammad Daming Sunusi was mostly represented in an active role, the authors of *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* also included another social actor as a third party who had a role as a judge in giving opinion

concerning Muhammad Daming Sunusi's controversial statement.

The lowest frequency of subcategory inclusion is impersonalization. In this strategy, only *Detik* and *Kompas* used impersonalization to represent Muhammad Daming Sunusi. Both of them also had the similar tendency of the occurrences. *Detik* only had 4 times occurrences of impersonalization, meanwhile *Kompas* had 10 times occurrences of impersonalization. It indicates that the authors of *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* preferred to show Muhammad Daming Sunusi explicitly as a human being rather than to conceal his identity concerning his controversial statement.

There must be some thoughts and point of views underlying the representation. These thoughts are manifested in a form of ideology that may be traced in the text. In this study, the ideology also may be traced through the traces of the strategy of representation evidenced in the text.

The representation leads to the identification of the ideology underlying the representation. Since *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* had the same pattern in representing Muhammad Daming Sunusi, the ideology inserted was also equal, i.e. Feminism and Democracy.

The first ideology is Feminism. Feminism is a belief that women and men should have equal rights and opportunities. In this case, Muhammad Daming Sunusi made a very controversial statement, i.e. “women enjoy being raped”. It really hurts the rape victims, so does Muhammad Daming Sunusi’s wife and daughter. The statement does not make women have equal rights, because here the victims are women. As a judge, Muhammad Daming Sunusi should be in women’s side. Also, he should punish the perpetrator. In accordance with that, *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* were in women’s side by making the articles which were against Muhammad Daming Sunusi’s statement. To make feminism emerge in the text, *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* used partiality in represented Muhammad Daming

Sunusi. It blew Muhammad Daming Sunusi only in one side, which was the bad side. The authors tended to use negative choice of words such as *melukai*, *tidak meloloskan*, *tidak memilih*, *tidak mempunyai*, and *menuai kecaman*. The articles blew the case of Muhammad Daming Sunusi’s controversial statement up several times and it made Muhammad Daming Sunusi resigned from the court because the urge of public too.

The second ideology that can be inferred from the representation is Democracy. According to Lincoln as cited in Keane (2004), democracy is a system which has the rule of the people by the people and for the people. This definition describes that democracy gives freedom and rights to people to express their opinion. In this case, the authors used their democracy right to represent Muhammad Daming Sunusi in their own way. It influenced the authors’ interest of choosing the words. Mostly, the words attached were in negative ways. To prove their opinion, the authors of *Detik*, *Kompas*, and *Tribun* also inserted

some people which had power in the government to express their opinion towards Muhammad Daming Sunusi concerning his controversial statement.

In conclusion, the ideologies of Feminism and Democracy had influenced the authors in making choice to represent Muhammad Daming Sunusi in the articles. At the end, the authors tended to represent Muhammad Daming Sunusi in a negative way since his case was considered as an insult to the rape victims.

CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that the three online newspapers tended to have the same pattern in representing Muhammad Daming Sunusi and the same ideology behind the representation. For the case of an insult of the rape victims, Muhammad Daming Sunusi was represented more explicitly rather than implicitly. It was realized through the use of inclusion which had the most emerging frequency than the use of exclusion. Also, he was represented through the negative

ways which can be seen from the words choice of the authors, for an instance *melukai, tidak meloloskan, tidak memilih, tidak mempunyai, and menuai kecaman*. In addition, he was represented as the one who had to be responsible by his own action which had hurt public, especially the rape victims. It was realized by the use of personalization and the role allocation of activation which had the most emerging frequency.

Since *Detik, Kompas, and Tribun* used the same pattern of the representation of Muhammad Daming Sunusi, the ideology used was also equal. There were two ideologies identified from the text, i.e. Feminism and Democracy. The two ideologies had the same influence in representing Muhammad Daming Sunusi which led to represent him in the negative ways.

Based on the finding of the present study, it can be concluded that representation of social actor is an important part of CDA since it examines the transformation of social practice into text which cannot be separated with power, critique, and ideology (see Wodak and Meyer,

2009). In representing social actor in the text, inclusion and exclusion strategy can be utilized since the strategy can reveal the way the social actors are treated in a text. Also, representation can be used to

interpret ideology in the text since the aim of CDA itself is to help reveal some hidden and often out of sight values, positions, and perspectives (see Paltridge, 2006).

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