

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents an introductory section of the study. It provides the background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, significances of the study, research methodology including data collection and data analysis, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper.

1.1. Background

Fear as a basic human emotion is pervasive today in popular culture, public discourse and the news media (Jim, 2008). The news coverage of terrorism, crime, disaster in television, newspaper and online news are part of people's life today. The television reality show such as *Fear Factor* and *Ardan* FM Radio horror program *Nightmare* are other examples of marketing fear in popular culture and public discourse. The previous examples are the evidences that "fear clearly sells" (Jim, 2008:2).

The mass media (newspaper, television, radio and internet) are the major contributors to the recent discourse of fear by marketing it in both news and entertainment (Altheide, 1997). Discourse of fear is then defined by Altheide and Michalowski (1999:3) as "the pervasive communication, symbolic awareness, and expectation that danger and risk that is a central feature of everyday life". The extensive uses and abuses of discourse of fear by the mass media have created a

belief that danger and risk affect every aspect of culture that may lead to the idea that fear is “acceptable, normal and natural (Altheide, 1997:4)”

In relation to the discourse of fear, there have been studies that discuss how the mass media become the contributor in constructing fear in the society. For example, Altheide et al (2001) revealed the multiple meanings of fear and victim in various news media to explore the substance of the news. The approach used in the study was Triangulated Qualitative Document Analysis (TQDA). The other studies by Altheide (2003, 2009) narrowed down the study of fear into a smaller aspect which is crime. These studies discovered that crime has been utilized by mass media in United States Newspaper and television news report as the source in creating fear and social control in the society.

In other aspect of media, Ling and Don (2010) investigated the fear factors in Malaysian Slimming Advertisements. They examined the fear tactics used in slimming advertisement in textual and visual presentation to represent the fat female body as the other and the skinny female body as the ideal. The visual social semiotics framework by Van Leeuwen and Kress (1996) was employed as the tool of analysis in the research.

To sum up, all these studies revealed that fear is exploited by mass media to achieve certain goals such as the creation of panic and social control (Altheide, 2009, Ling and Don, 2010). As mentioned before, the studies of discourse of fear have been investigated by many scholars. However, as far as the study is concerned, the investigation of fear in Indonesian disaster news articles has not

been explored. Thus, the study is interested in investigating the construction of fear that is contributed by disasters in Indonesian online news articles.

The study investigates the construction of fear in selected articles of *Kompas.com* and *Detik.com* online news about the most occurring disasters in Indonesia. The most occurring disasters in Indonesia are earthquake, tsunami, volcanic eruption, landslide and flood. The disasters are chosen as the object of the study since they are also the source of fear (Masumi, 1993). Furthermore, the online news websites (*Kompas.com* and *Detik.com*) are chosen since they can be a representative as Indonesian online news media. Both *Kompas.com* and *Detik.com* online news media are also the leading online news in Indonesia. The advantage of choosing *Kompas.com* and *Detik.com* as the source of the data is that their websites allows the readers to track back the news article from 2007. The data retrieved from the websites are also expected to be more various, comprehensive and grounded.

As for its framework for the study, the study draws on Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework in representing social action and actor. The framework is chosen since in constructing meaning (fear), language operates as the representational system (Hall, 1997). The representational system by Van Leeuwen (2008) is the most suitable since the social actors and action must be involved in constructing meaning (Fear) (Hall (1997), Altheide (2001), Beland(2003). Furthermore, the news which is also regarded as discourse (Van Dijk, 1998) is the recontextualization of the actual social practice (Van Leeuwen, 2008). It means

that the events of disaster are recontextualized and represented in the news. Therefore, by investigating these recontextualizations and representations may reveal how fear is constructed in the news and what the construction signifies. This theoretical view will be discussed later in Chapter II.

1.2. Research Questions

The research is geared toward answering the following research questions

- 1) How is fear constructed in the selected articles?
 - a) How are actors represented in the selected articles?
 - b) What actions are attributed to the actors in the selected articles?
- 2) What does the construction signify?

1.3. Aims of the Study

Based on the research question stated above, the aims of the study are:

- 1) To investigate the construction of fear in the selected articles through the representation of the social actors and social actions in the selected articles.
- 2) To find out the signification of the construction of fear in Indonesian News Articles

1.4. Significances of the study

Socially, this study is expected to make the readers think critically to any news they read since the news is never reported straightforwardly, there always

ideology and power asymmetry in the news (van Dijk, 2005). Theoretically, this study is expected to expand the study of fear from the critical discourse analysis approach. Furthermore, the greater significance of the study is expected to invoke the concept of Critical Language Awareness (CLA). Through CLA, the readers are expected to have critical awareness to the language phenomenon since critical awareness is a requirement to the effective civilization and nationality (Fairclough, 1992 in Lukmana et al, 2006)

1.5. Methodology

1.5.1. Research Method

This study employs descriptive qualitative method with a quantitative method element in the form of percentage of the categorizations of the social actors and actions. It is mainly centered in describing, interpreting, analyzing and criticizing the construction of fear in selected online news articles. Van Leeuwen's (2008) framework in representing social actor and action has been chosen as the framework of analysis. In addition, Van Leeuwen & Kress (2006) theory on Reading Images is also used to analyze the image texts where they are present accompanying the news.

1.5.2. Data Collection

The data were collected from the online news article texts downloaded from *Kompas.com* and *Detik.com*'s website retrieved on April, 10th 2012.

First, the online news articles were downloaded and stored in a hard disk. The selected online news are five online news about catastrophic natural disasters from the *Kompas.com* and the other fives are obtained from *Detik.com*. Afterward, the online news articles were converted into word text in order to ease the analysis. The unit of analysis of the linguistic text is sentence. Each sentence is, then, counted as a part of data. Additionally, the image texts that accompany the linguistic texts were also downloaded and stored in hard disk. The collected pictures are also counted as part of image texts data. The data Analysis will be described in the next section.

1.5.3. Data Analysis

The data for the study are in the form of news article and pictures accompanying the texts. The data in the form of linguistic text (news) are then categorized based Van Leeuwen's Networks in representing social actors and action (2008). Additionally, the data in the form of pictures (images text) are analyzed using Van Leeuwen & Kress Theory on Reading Images (2006). The data are analyzed to reveal the construction of fear in the online news. After the construction is revealed, the study then leans on the notions of critique, power and ideology proposed by Van Leeuwen (2008) to make meaning of what the construction signify.

1.6. Clarification of the Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the following is the clarification of the terms used:

- (1) Fear is defined as the basic human emotion to sense the upcoming dangers or threats and also the ability to face or runaway from those dangers and threats (Masumi, 1993, Furedi 2006, Altheide, 2007, Jim, 2008, Albretch, 2008).
- (2) Disaster is an event or a chain of events that threaten and disrupt the lives and livelihoods which are caused either by environmental factors and/or non-environmental factors or human factors to human casualties that resulted environmental damage, loss of property, and psychological impact. (Law no. 24, 2007)
- (3) Online news: The electronic version of a newspaper stored at website. Usually the newspaper consists of content found in a conventional newspaper supplemented by devices such as mailing list, e-mail, dynamic content, interactive competitions, and banner adverts. (Ince, 2001)
- (4) CDA: Paltridge (2006) elaborates Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the examination of the use of discourse in relation to its socio-cultural phenomena. It examines the way language is used in the discourse and social and cultural situation where it occurs. Distinctively, Van Dijk explains that CDA is a type of discourse analysis which studies “the way

social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. (2008:85)”.

(5) Social Actors are the participants in the social practices in one of a number of roles which are as agents (doers of actions), patients (participants to whom actions are done) and beneficiaries (participants who benefit from the action in positive or negative way) (van Leeuwen in Wodak and Meyer, 2009)

(6) Social Actions are the core of social practices which may or may not be performed in specific order (van Leeuwen in Wodak and Meyer, 2009)

(7) Visual “Grammar” is the resources for encoding interpretations of experience and forms of social interaction in visual images / pictures (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006)

(8) Image text is one of semiotic mode mediums where meanings are expressed through the choice between the uses of color or different compositional structures (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2006)

1.7. Organization of the Paper

The paper is organized as follows:

CHAPTER I

This chapter contains background of the study, research questions, aims of the study, significance of the study, clarification of the terms, and organization of the paper.

CHAPTER II

It consists of theoretical review that provides a basis for conducting the research problems.

CHAPTER III

This section contains the research methodology, discussing the steps and procedures of the study, and the data resources in conducting the study.

CHAPTER IV

In this part the result of the research will be presented. This chapter contains the research findings and discussion.

CHAPTER V

This last chapter contains the interpretation toward the result of the research in a form of conclusion and suggestion for further research.