

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves to introduce this study. It firstly discusses the background of the research. Moreover, it presents the purposes of the research, the research questions, clarification of key terms, a brief account of the research method, and the organization of the paper.

1.1 Background

In the mid of 2015, people living in certain regions in Indonesia experienced an increase in air pollution known as haze. Because of the haze, activities which are mostly done in the outside were disturbed and health problems such as acute respiratory infection had affected half a million people since July 2015 (McKirby, 2015). It all started when the illegal activity namely ‘slash-and-burn’ was conducted in the peat lands of Sumatera and Kalimantan for the need of palm oil, pulp and paper cultivation (Balch, 2015). As a result, forest fires occurred and thick smog spread over the lands. Due to El Nino effect as well, the smog or haze was even worse that as quoted from *BBC*, it spread to some Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Malaysia, the south of Thailand, and the Philippines, causing a significant deterioration in air quality. It was then revealed that the year of 2015 became the worst season on record, beating the year of 2013 for the same problem, haze, caused by Indonesia’s forest fires (Robert, 2015). Indonesia once again captured the public/media attention as the haze was caused by the country’s forest fires. In Western newspapers, for instance, Indonesia was placed in their headlines on the topic of Southeast Asia’s haze, showing how the country was quite responsible for such a circumstance.

In fact, Indonesia as the center of international attention at that time was represented in various ways by Western newspapers. Representation is the production of conceptual meaning of people’s minds that are conveyed through

Shara Monarizka, 2016

REPRESENTATION OF INDONESIA IN THE 2015 SOUTHEAST ASIA’S HAZE IN THE GUARDIAN AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

language (Hall, 1997). According to van Dijk (1988), representations in news reports are usually presupposed by “journalists and readers in one society, class, or culture” (p. 27). In other words, representations are shared by people who are socially and culturally connected.

Representation is further linked to ideology. Van Dijk (1995a) states that ideologies are “expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication” (p. 17). As the production of news reports is usually influenced by factors such as social values shared by a particular group of people, van Dijk (1995b) also adds that “ideologies feature a group-relevant, self-serving selection of fundamental sociocultural values” (p. 139). Due to such sociocultural factors, news discourse tends to be biased. The knowledge and beliefs of the audiences are directed to the biased information produced by the media (van Dijk, 1995c). Then, in order to critically examine the ideologies as well as the representations in news discourse, a critical analysis can be conducted.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is one of the appropriate tools to reveal the representations and the ideologies in news articles. It primarily considers the relation between discourse and its underlying social issues such as dominance, ideologies, or power. According to Fairclough (2012), CDA is a critical analysis focusing on a discourse based on its social elements (power, dominance, and inequality), and it contributes to the analysis of ideologies and power relations within the discourse. However, according to van Dijk (2009), those social elements do not directly relate to discourse, but need to be mediated by social cognition. Social cognition is “the system of mental representations and processes by group members” (van Dijk, 1995a, p. 18). Hence, his approach to CDA is known as the socio-cognitive model. Many critical discourse analysts have been using van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model to investigate news articles (Sheyholisalmi, 2001). According to van Dijk (2009), socio-cognitive approach to CDA includes some scopes of analysis, i.e. semantic macrostructures (topics), local meanings (lexical items), context models (setting, participants, ongoing social actors), and event models (coherence).

The studies of representations in linguistic fields have long been conducted. One of the earliest studies of representation was conducted by a French semiotician, Barthes (1977), who examined the contents in advertisements such as images which symbolized certain linguistic messages, denotational and connotational. However, in regard to discursive representation, it was van Dijk (1988) who initiated the study of representation in news discourse. Van Dijk's strategy of analyzing discourse, such as the analysis of how particular ethnic groups were represented at both national and international levels, is later developed as the ideological square as well as the socio-cognitive model.

For the past few years, van Dijk's notions of discourse analysis have been adopted by many analysts in order to uncover representations as well as hidden ideologies. Poorebrahim and Zarei (2013), for instance, applied van Dijk's ideological square combined with Said's (1978) orientalism to reveal the representation of Islam in Western media. Several researchers such as Tahir (2013) also examined Muslim representations in Western newspapers by applying ideological square; while Youssefi, Kanani, and Shojaei (2013) combined ideological square with Fairclough's (1992; 1995) concept of intertextuality.

While most studies investigating representations and ideologies in discourse as exemplified in the previous studies above have focused on socio-political and religious issues, the environmental issue such as 2015 Southeast Asia's haze has not received much scholarly attention. The representation of Indonesia in news articles is somehow important to examine because the 2015 Southeast Asia's haze is a recurring problem caused by the country's forest fires, and Indonesia has been variously represented in Western media showing how the country is quite responsible for this problem. In fact, a comparative analysis of the representation of Indonesia in news articles had been previously conducted by Mahony (2008) by combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. However, a critical discourse analysis towards Indonesia in the 2015 Southeast Asia's haze has not been much discussed by many researchers. Therefore, by applying van Dijk's (2009) socio-cognitive approach to CDA, this study seeks to

explore the representations of Indonesia in Western media on the issue of 2015 Southeast Asia's haze and the ideologies underlying such representations.

1.2 Research Questions

In accordance with the background discussed above, the problems of this study are formulated into the following research questions.

- 1) How is Indonesia represented in the news about the 2015 Southeast Asia's haze in the *Guardian* and the *New York Times*?
- 2) What are the ideologies underlying such representations?

1.3 Purposes of the Research

In line with the research questions, the present research seeks to:

- 1) investigate the representations of Indonesia in the news about the 2015 Southeast Asia's haze in the *Guardian* and the *New York Times*, and
- 2) uncover the ideologies which underlie such representations.

1.4 Research Methodology

The present research aims to analyze the representations of Indonesia in the news about the 2015 Southeast Asia's haze in UK and US newspapers as well as the hidden ideologies behind the representations. A critical discourse analysis is applied since the present research is completed in a critical perspective. The data include several articles from the *Guardian* and the *New York Post* as the representative of UK and US, respectively. The articles discussing the news about the 2015 Southeast Asia's Haze, as well as Indonesia within it, are taken all for the data relevant to the present research. The data are further analyzed by applying the socio-cognitive approach to CDA framed by van Dijk (2009) to answer the two research questions. Further accounts of the research method are presented in Chapter III.

1.5 Clarification of Key Terms

In order to guide the analysis, particular terms need to be clarified in the context of this study as follows.

Shara Monarizka, 2016

REPRESENTATION OF INDONESIA IN THE 2015 SOUTHEAST ASIA'S HAZE IN THE GUARDIAN AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia | repository.upi.edu | perpustakaan.upi.edu

- **Representations:**

Representations include “knowledge, attitudes, and ideologies” that are socially received by particular group of people (van Dijk, 1993, p. 258).

- **Ideologies:**

Ideologies are the basis of “the social representations” (p. 8) shared by particular group of people, allowing the members to create social beliefs to which they act accordingly (van Dijk, 1998).

- **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):**

CDA is an approach to analyze critically how particular discourse produces dominance in a broader society (van Dijk, 2009).

- **The media:**

The media is every publishing means including newspapers, TV, radio, and so forth. The contents and headlines in the media newspapers may contain particular persuasion which influences the readers’ interpretation of the discussed topic (van Dijk, 1995c).

1.6 Organization of the Paper

This paper is organized into five chapters, and each chapter contains several subtopics that give further explanation. To begin with, *Introduction* (Chapter I) discusses the background of the research as well as the research questions, purposes of the research, research methodology, clarification of key terms, and organization of the paper. *Theoretical Framework* (Chapter II) describes the theories relevant to the research, including the explanation of representation, representation in CDA, socio-cognitive approach, and several related previous studies. *Research Methodology* (Chapter III) consists of the research design, data collection, as well as data analysis. Meanwhile, in *Findings and Discussion* (Chapter IV), the results of the analysis are presented and discussed critically. Finally, *Conclusions and Suggestions* (Chapter V) serves to conclude the present research and to present several suggestions, especially for further research.