

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an introductory section of the present study. It covers the background of the study, research questions, objective of the study, and significance of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The study of language phenomena occurs in a variety of ways and results. One of language study that has attracted several language researchers is the study of linguistic phenomena in the news media. Online news media has become a credence media in the society which provides a large scale of news across the world. Since 1998 the use of online news media in Indonesia continue to evolve until recent years to access exclusive information. There are more than 160 million internet users who access online media from 1998 to 2018 for various purposes (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia [APJII], 2018). The online news media covers various news, such as the news of politics, culture, entertainment, to the news of massive events and incidents which appealing to society.

The news of death is one kind of news that seizes a large amount of concern in society with miscellaneous issues such as death news with the variation across geographic region, social class, environmental condition, and cause (Clarke, 2006, p. 155). The broadcasting of news in online media can be considered as the process on delivering stories within a certain perspective. In this context, online news media sustain a system of values, belief, and morality which create and control the attention and interest of the target society.

The target society gets the stories of death from the media through the portrayal of death delivered by the media. Hall (1997, p. 17) explains representation as the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. Representation is the link between the concept of language which enables us to refer to

either the real world of objects, people or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people, and events. One of the media in which the production of meaning occurs is in online news media. Online news media is media that provides a variety of news online so that people can easily find it using their gadgets. News text represents a particular concept of objects, people, and events in the form of sign and symbol which is generally delivered to society. The portrayal of death means the way death is presented in specific media which can influence the mindset of the society regarding the meaning behind the death itself. In Indonesia, the reporting of death is widely reported through various news media. These reports are generally accessible to the public to satisfy curiosity about the information available.

There are considerable amounts of literature on how people talk about death. Several works have been conducted to analyze the portrayal of death in the media using a variety of theoretical perspectives and research methodologies. Research by Clarke (2006) analyzed the frames/discourses used in the portrayal of death in the highest-circulating mass print media available in English in Canada using critical discourse analysis. He found that the portrayal of death obfuscates the real lack of control most North Americans, particularly those who are poor or racialized, have over the timing or circumstances of death. The other research about death in the media conducted by Florea & Rabatel (2011) in two volumes of the interconnected journal. The first research was about the re-presentation of death in the information media, and the secondary research was about media representations of death and the issues involved in the construction of the event. These researches utilized discursive and semiotic concepts to explore the representation of death and the issue involved in the construction of the event. They proposed that there are two kinds of media in representing death; new media and traditional media. New media portray death depend on the proximity of the place of the death which can make the reader feels the death as it happening to them someday. While traditional media play on sensationalism to portray the death of the other.

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One of the research theories that can be used to analyze the portrayal of death in the media is the theory of transitivity. Transitivity analysis has been widely utilized to study the language's function and purpose used by the speakers and writers. Eggs (2004, p. 2) propounds that Halliday's functional grammar, in this case transitivity analysis not only cope with the structural organization of English clauses, phrases, and sentences but also the meanings of language use in a textual process of social life. Mehmood, Amber, Ameer, & Faiz (2014, p. 79) assert that transitivity analyzes sentence structure represented by processes, participants, and circumstances. The study of transitivity varies in the content of analysis; there are many research studies that have been conducted to analyze both spoken and written languages using transitivity analysis.

Researches on transitivity analysis have been carried out using different media as a source of data. For example, transitivity analysis on television (Zhang, 2017), short stories and novel (Ezzina, 2015; Goatly, 2008; Júnior, 2005; Landa, 2017; Mehmood et al., 2014; Nguyen, 2018) social media (Banda, 2016; Fu et al., 2017; Suparto, 2018), musics (Liamas, 2010; Lutfianto, Rizal, & Laila, 2017; Zahoor & Janjua, 2016), plays (Agwa Fomukong, 2017), textbook (Castro, 2006; Esmaceli & Arabmofrad, 2015) local newspaper (Asiru, Ogutu, & Orwenjo, 2018; Bello, 2014; Seo, 2013; Tang, 2018).

The analysis of transitivity on media also varies in terms of the issues. There are a large number of issues that have been investigated by linguistic enthusiasts across the world. There are the researches of transitivity analysis on a political issue (Bello, 2014; Cheikh, 2017; Haig, 2012; Seo, 2013; Yujie & Fengjie, 2018; Zhang, 2017), language and literature issue (Agwa Fomukong, 2017; Goatly, 2008; Holland & Leinhardt, 1971; Ichihashi & Linn, 1991; Julien, 2016; Mwamwenda & Mwamwenda, 1989; Nau & Pakerys, 2016), language and education issue (Castro, 2006; Nazhirin, 2013; Rashidi & Hosseini, 2018; Senjawati, 2016), gender issue (Cafazzo, Lazzaroni, & Marshall-Pescini, 2016; Esmaceli & Arabmofrad, 2015; Júnior, 2005; Nguyen, 2018), environmental issue (Lima-Lopes, 2014) social issue (Fu et al., 2017; Richters

& Peixoto, 2011). Besides, the previous related studies of transitivity analysis focused on unveiling the representation of a certain person (Yujie & Fengjie, 2018; Zhang, 2017), certain event (Clarke, 2006; Lima-Lopes, 2014; Mulae & Mahdi, 1999; Rabatel & Florea, 2011), languages (Agwa Fomukong, 2017; Julien, 2016; Landa, 2017; Nau & Pakerys, 2016), and headlines (Ong'onda, 2016; Seo, 2013; Tang, 2018).

Although the other researches on transitivity have been conducted in written texts from local and printed media, it is common nowadays for people to use online news media to obtain general information they need. Besides, the previous related studies were conducted using a combined theory of critical discourse and transitivity in analyzing the data. Meanwhile, the current research is intended to explain another kind of social issue with more details of transitivity analysis as a single grand theory to attain the gratifying result in identifying the portrayal of death in Indonesia online news media. One of the most conspicuous issues in this globalization era is the issue of death. The news of death appears in many different circumstances underlying the issue. The scope of this transitivity analysis on death in online media diverged into three categories of circumstances underlying the death they are; the news of death due to murder, accident, and death due to suicide. These three categories determined by the most popular news of death viewed by people in general.

There are two motivations of the researcher in conducting this research. The first one is to propose that the linguistically oriented approach can be helpful to the journalism studies on media coverage of a particular event. The second one is to provide rigorous linguistic evidence for illuminating media coverage of the death because it is reasonable to argue that people today still mostly rely on online media to get information which unwittingly influences their mindset regarding the death news. Hence, the researcher intended to conduct a transitivity analysis on the portrayal of death in Indonesian online news media to raise the social awareness about the importance of presenting the proper news to society and the importance of filtering all information obtained before concluding a particular thing.

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1.2 Research Question

Related to the background above, the question in this present study will be focus to find out how is death portrayed in online news media based on the result of transitivity analysis which consists of two sub-questions as follows.

- 1) How is death portrayed through transitivity system in Indonesian online news media?
- 2) How is the comparison of death portrayal based on three causes of death; murder, accident, and suicide?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to find out the portrayal of death in online news media detik.com through transitivity systems and to reveal how is the portrayal of death differs based on the causes of death. Moreover, this study aims to show the distribution of transitivity elements in portraying death on media.

1.4 Significances of the Study

Based on the objective of this study, the significances can be procured theoretically to inform other linguistics enthusiasts regarding the transitivity analysis used in exploring how linguistically oriented approach can be helpful to the journalism studies of media coverage of the certain event. This study also hopefully can provide rigorous linguistic evidence for illuminating media coverage of the death because in this age the majority of people mostly rely on online media to get information which unwittingly influences their mindset regarding certain news. Besides, this study also aims to raise social awareness about the importance of presenting the proper news to society and the importance of filtering all information obtained before concluding a particular thing.

1.5 Definition of Terms

The following is some definition of terms used in this research:

- 1) **Representation** is the production of meaning of the concepts in our minds through language. It is the link between the concept of language which enables us to refer to either the real world of objects, people or events, or indeed to

imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people, and events (Hall, 1997, p. 17). In this research, representation means the way death is presented in specific media, which can influence the mindset of the society regarding the meaning behind the death.

- 2) **Systemic Functional linguistics** is one of the linguistics disciplines that introduce systemic theory. In SFL, language refers as a text and as a system, as sound, as writing and as wording, as structure configuration of parts, and as a resource of choices among alternatives (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 19). In this research, systemic functional linguistic is a useful theory for analyzing representation on media.
- 3) **Transitivity** is one of a popular tool in SFL for analyzing language as a system of representation. It is used to describe the use of lexicogrammatical choices used in the text and establish the kinds of experience involved in the text (Eggins, 2004, p. 210). In this research, transitivity utilized as the key to unveiling the representation of death in online news media by finding the distribution and contribution of the processes, participants, and circumstances used in the news text.
- 4) **News Media** in this research defined as the media information that presents the variety of news online so that people can access it generally. (Matheson, 2005, p. 15) defines news as the act of conveying information from a variety of sources to the public. While media is a forum related to the press, radio, television, and the record industry which interflow under the heading “mass media” (Bennett, 1982, p. 26)

1.6 Thesis Writing Structure

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction that presents the background of the study, the research questions which are the focus of this study, the purposes of the study, the significances of the study, the definition of terms, and the structure of the thesis writing. As for chapter 2, it explains the theories used in this study, namely the theory of representation in systemic functional linguistics, the theory of transitivity, and theories related to the news media. Chapter 3 explains the research design, sources and data collection, and examples of data analysis. In chapter 4 the findings and discussion present the results of data analysis used to answer research questions. Chapter 5 is a chapter containing research conclusions and suggestions for further research. In the final sheets of this thesis, the appendixes related to this research are attached.