

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA FRAMING IN ONLINE NEWS ARTICLES ABOUT AHOK'S BLASPHEMY CASE

ANALISA WACANA BINGKAI MEDIA DI ARTIKEL BERITA DARING TENTANG KASUS AHOK MENGENAI PENISTAAN AGAMA

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the types and functions of media package device performed by *The Jakarta Post* and *Republika* online news articles about blasphemy case committed by an ex-Jakarta- Governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, more popularly known as Ahok. This research applied a combination of quantitative and qualitative method under discourse analysis approach. The main instrument was the researcher herself and data sheet was the secondary instrument. The source of data were 20 articles about the blasphemy case published during October 2016 - May 2017 in the official website of the two media. To gain the trustworthiness of the data, triangulation which involved some references, lecturers and two peer correctors were applied. The result of this research are as follows. First, all types of media package devices were found in the two media's selected articles. Root is the most dominant type found in *The Jakarta Post*. It is used by *The Jakarta Post* to present ground of the blasphemy case based on its view. The two least occurring types found in *The Jakarta Post* are metaphor and exemplar as it hardly uses figurative comparison and representative instance to affect the reader's understanding toward the issue. On the other hand, *Republika* attempts to influence the reader by using several values and therefore the most dominant type is appeal to principle. The two least occurring types found in *Republika* are consequence and depiction, since it does not apply many devices with negative sentiment in its articles. Second, in accordance with the result analysis of the function, the two media have different tendency in constructing the case. *The Jakarta Post* uses the device to package the blasphemy case as political problem. By contrast, *Republika* attempts to define the case as pure religious conflict.

Keywords: Media Package Device, Types, Functions, Ahok's Blasphemy Case

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa tipe dan fungsi perangkat kemasan media yang digunakan oleh artikel berita daring *The Jakarta Post* dan *Republika* tentang kasus penistaan agama yang dilakukan oleh mantan gubernur Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, lebih terkenal dengan sebutan Ahok. Penelitian ini menggunakan perpaduan metode kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Instrumen utama dari studi ini adalah peneliti dan lembar data digunakan sebagai instrumen kedua. Sumber data penelitian ini merupakan 20 artikel tentang kasus penistaan agama yang dilakukan Ahok, dipublikasikan selama Oktober 2016 – Mei 2017 di web resmi *The Jakarta Post* dan *Republika*. Untuk memperoleh tingkat keabsahan data, triangulasi dilakukan dengan melibatkan beberapa referensi, dosen dan dua korektor sebaya. Hasil penelitian ini adalah sebagai berikut. Pertama, semua tipe perangkat kemasan media dapat ditemukan pada seluruh sumber data. Akar permasalahan adalah tipe yang paling dominan di *The Jakarta Post*. Perangkat ini digunakan untuk menampilkan alasan mendasar dari kasus tersebut menurut pandangan *The Jakarta Post*. Dua tipe yang paling sedikit ditemukan di *The Jakarta Post* adalah metafora dan contoh karena media ini jarang menggunakan analogi figuratif dan contoh-contoh respresentatif untuk mempengaruhi pemahaman pembaca pada isu ini. Sementara itu, *Republika* berusaha mempengaruhi para pembaca dengan menggunakan beberapa macam nilai dan sebab itulah perangkat paling dominan adalah seruan prinsip. Dua tipe perangkat yang paling sedikit ditemukan di *Republika* adalah konsekuensi dan penggambaran karena *Republika* tidak menggunakan banyak perangkat dengan sentimen negatif dalam artikelnya. Kedua, berdasarkan hasil analisa fungsi dari perangkat tersebut, kedua media memiliki kecenderungan yang berbeda dalam menyajikan kasus Ahok tersebut. *The Jakarta Post* menggunakan perangkatnya untuk mengemas kasus penistaan agama ini sebagai masalah politik. Sementara itu, *Republika* berusaha mendefinisikan kasus ini murni sebagai konflik agama.

Kata kunci: Perangkat Bingkai Media, Tipe, Fungsi, Kasus Penistaan Agama

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, online news media which exist with its important roles to reach a large audience cannot be denied. People prefer online news more as it is easier to access anytime and anywhere as long as the online devices are available. News media themselves basically stand for two purposes: to convey information and to persuade people towards particular view (Durant & Lambrou: 2009). News media usually spread a real event in different focus which means that the facts on the articles are constructed. The audience would not be so critical to examine the difference as well as the underlying reasons behind the difference since they consider the presented facts as the most important things. As a matter of fact, news media use language as a tool to craft the articles in such a way so that at last the reader would observe a particular event in the same way media view the issue.

Kuypers (2009) argues that the facts of real event in the social life remain neutral before news media frame them. Therefore, how public receive, manage, and interpret the issue depends on how news media frame some features of reality. News media make a particular part and actor of an event more salient. Then, the real event appears as a systematic news with a particular version.

Framing is a design of real event constructed by media to influence the reader's perspective toward the event. In other words, news media frame the idea to promote an interpretation based on their perspectives which determine what facts to present and what

information to omit. Over the same fact, different media can present news with distinct reality constructions based on a certain framing style.

This study analyses how online news media frame a controversial issue about Ahok, an ex-Jakarta's Christian governor. He was found legitimately and convincingly conducted a criminal act of blasphemy against Islam due to his statement about Al-Maidah verse 51. This verse prohibits Muslim to elect a non-muslim leader. He mentioned that his rivals in the 2017 Jakarta governor election might use the Quranic verse to trick people to reject him as a governor. Several Islamic organizations staged a series of massive rallies to demand the Government to jail Ahok immediately. After a long legal process, on May 2017, the judges sentenced Ahok to two years in prison.

By the number of people joining the rally and the number of media discussing this issue, it became hot news for few months. Additionally, online media having unlimited scope played a major contributing factor in making this topic so widespread. Among them are *The Jakarta Post* and *Republika*, two big Indonesian media which also produce English online news articles. In 2016, www.4imn.com, a site of ranking newspaper worldwide, published a list of top newspapers in Indonesia by web ranking. *The Jakarta Post* ranked at number two and *Republika* got the third place. Also, both of which received several awards for their coverage. For that reasons, the two media have already been considered as reliable sources by mass media consumers.

Nonetheless, the two media have different fundamental value in covering news. As claimed by *The Jakarta Post* in its editorial column, it upholds the principle of democracy in reporting news. On the other hand, *Republika* tends to prioritize Islamic value in its coverage (Hamad in Badara: 2012). Accordingly, there might be distinct framing strategies performed by these media in covering Ahok's blasphemy case. Hence, this study aims to reveal how actually they frame Ahok's blasphemy case to win public's interest and trust under the discourse analysis approach.

RESEARCH METHODS

Type of Study

The problem of this study was media framing in news articles in which majority of the data are all in form of words. The findings were obtained by describing, explaining, and interpreting the data. There was also the use of numbers to describe the comparison of media package devices found in the source of data. The numbers help the researcher in interpreting the data. Thus, this study used the combination of quantitative and qualitative method.

Time and Place of The Study

This study is conducted from September 2017 to September 2018 in Yogyakarta.

Subject of The Study

The subjects of this study were 20 selected online news articles about Ahok's blasphemy case taken on www.thejakartapost.com and republika.co.id.

Data, Instrument, and Data Collection Techniques

The form of the data were package devices about Ahok's blasphemy case in online news articles published by the two media during October 2016 – May 2017 in their official website. The main instrument in the study was the researcher herself supported by the data sheets.

Data Analysis

The analysis of this study refers to theory of media package device introduced by Gamson and Modigliani (1989) and function of framing proposed by Entman (1993).

DISCUSSIONS

A. Types of Media Package Device

According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), media discourse is as a set of an interpretive package that constructs and gives meaning to a particular issue. The media package selects a particular part of a real event and make it more accessible, memorable, and salient. Media package consists of two main structure: framing and reasoning devices. The former devices are metaphor, exemplar, catchphrase, depiction, and visual image. They are used to illustrate media's view toward a problem. Meanwhile, the latter are logical reasons employed to justify the view constructed by framing device. The reasoning devices are root, consequence, and appeal to principle.

a. Metaphor

Metaphor is a particular phrase or expression that is used to replace a principal phrase/expression by using an analogy. Thus, metaphor should not be interpreted literally.

^[1] **Jakarta heats up** as anti-Ahok rally begins

The phrase **heats up** is categorized into metaphor because it could not be taken literally which means Jakarta's temperature becoming hot or warm at the moment. However, *The Jakarta Post* uses **heats up** to illustrate how tense and critical situation in Jakarta on 4 November 2016, when the demonstrators gathered to voice their aspiration to the blasphemy case.

b. Exemplar

The Jakarta Post and *Republika* provide some examples to support their main idea related to the religion of defamation case. The example could be an event that happened in the past or present.

^[2] He mentioned the al-Maidah verse because the verse **is often used by his political opponents to encourage people not to vote for him.** Ahok's opponents have used this line of attack against him **since he started his political career in East Belitung in 2003.**

The extract is categorized into exemplar since Ahok recalled his past experience in 2003. His political rivals used the verse to influence people for not voting for him. He assumed that it happened again in 2016 where his political rivals used the verse as tool to defeat him in the 2017 Jakarta's gubernatorial election.

c. Catchphrase

Catchphrase is a catchy phrase which is frequently used to represent a person, idea or particular important part in news article.

^[3] **Action to Defend Islam III (212 rally)** was organized to be more than just a rally.

The phrase **Action to Defend Islam III (212 rally)** is classified as catchphrase because it is used to regularly by *Republika* to summarize meaning of the demonstration. *Republika* gives

more emphasis on religious purpose by naming the protest with religious element.

d. Depiction

Depiction is a phrase or sentence that is used to modify the principal subject or event. The characterization tends to build negative image.

^[4] Thousands of **Hard Liners** March Against Ahok (**9/M1/A3**)

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2013), **hard line** refers to a strict person who owns an extremely fixed beliefs and unwilling to negotiate the beliefs. It can be realized that *The Jakarta Post* tries to depict protesters negatively as a strict group. Thus, it is categorized as depiction.

e. Visual Image

An image is essential to visualise the principle subjects of news article.



^[5]

The image demonstrates 212 rally that was held on 2 December 2016. The extreme long shot was employed to involve other elements in the surrounding of 212 rally. From the picture, it can be seen how massive the protest was. The density of protesters symbolizes that Muslims in Indonesia are cohesive and supportive to each other. To sum it up, *Republika* tends to glorify the spirit and the power of Islam reflected by 212 rally.

f. Root

Root is a framing device which analyses cause and effect of a problem.

[6] Ahok, a Christian and Indonesian of Chinese descent in the Muslim-majority country, **sparked uproar among Islamic groups and communities after he made a comment on verses in the Quran during his visit to Thousand Islands regency in late September. The police have received around a dozen reports regarding the case.**

The cause of problem is Ahok's comment on verses in the Quran. As a result, there was public uproar among Muslims in Indonesia. Additionally, Ahok was reported with the blasphemous accusation. Ahok himself is a part of minority. He is Christian with Chinese descent living in a Muslim-majority country yet he dare to interpret the Quran by his own way. Thus, his comments that were directed at his rival politicians became controversial.

g. Consequence

This device refers to predicted outcome might happen in the future. It also could be outcome that already happened.

[7] The police have received around a dozen reports regarding the case. **Ahok risks losing his candidacy in the 2017 Jakarta gubernatorial election should he be named a suspect in the case. A number of leading Muslim figures have accused law enforcers of protecting Ahok in the case.** Ahok, who previously served as deputy Jakarta governor, replaced President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo after the latter won the presidential election in 2014.

Since the problem occurred, Ahok's candidacy for the election is very risky. The risk would happen if Ahok was named a suspect in the blasphemy case. Here, Ahok's failure in the 2017 Jakarta governor election is presented as the consequence of the blasphemy case.

h. Appeal to Principle

This device presents arguments which contain various values, such as moral, societal, cultural, constitutional and theological value.

[8] Furthermore, MUI said **every Muslim should believe the truth and accuracy of surah Al-Maidah verse 51 as a guidance in choosing a leader.** "It is haram to say Al Maidah verse 51 as a false guidance and it is a religious blasphemy of the Quran," Ma'ruf underlined.

In the extract above, *Republika* shows the principle of Islam. All Muslim must believe whatever written in the Qur'an, including the Surah Al-Maidah verse 51. In other words, *Republika* justifies that if a Muslim choose non-Muslim leader, it shows that the person actually does not follow message of the Quran.

B. The Function of the Devices to Frame Ahok's Blasphemy Case.

The framing devices do not merely exist without a purpose. They have a specific purpose to frame a certain part of news item. Therefore, the second objective of this research is to explain how the devices function to frame news articles.

a. To Define Problem

No problem means no news. News is a text that informs an important event. News media have a specific design to package the problem. The package will affect the perspective of the reader. Thus, the first purpose of media package device is to define problem.

[9] Jakarta Heats Up **Anti-Ahok Rally** Begins

The catchphrase '**Anti-Ahok**' demonstrates that the rally was actually an action of opposition. It illustrates that the existence of Ahok as Jakarta's active governor is the main problem. *The Jakarta Post* attempts to depict the

rally as a part of political movement to reduce the electability of Ahok as a good leader. The rally is intentionally managed to show that Ahok should not be elected in the election. In short, the term '**Anti-Ahok**' denotes that political direction in Indonesia is now driven more by conservative Islamic groups who bring political mission.

b. To Diagnose Causes

A problem would not be clear without explanation of the cause and effect. Therefore, the second function of framing/reasoning device is diagnosing causes. This function identifies a person or thing which acts as the ground of problem.

^[35] **Ahok is currently being tried for alleged blasphemy that angered conservative Muslim groups.** The case triggered at least two rallies considered among the largest protests the country had ever seen, on Nov. 4 and Dec. 2 last year.

The first statement shows that the root of this problem is the fury of conservative Muslim groups. The conservative Muslims are those who hassle to put the case in court. They asked repeatedly for the trial of blasphemy allegation toward Ahok.

c. To Make Moral Evaluation

The two previous functions focus on what and how the problem could occur. The next function of media package device is to make moral evaluation. This function evaluates moral value that is embedded on the device.

^[13] The Coordinator of GNPf MUI's legal team Kapitra Ampera said **that the government could not banned the upcoming even '313 rally. He said it would violate the resolution of the Assembly No. 7 year 1998 about Human Rights.**

The Coordinator of GNPf MUI's legal team, Kapitra Ampera, asked the President not

refuse 313 rally. He said that the rally just aims to deliver aspiration. Every citizen has freedom of speech but it must be delivered according to law. Hence, if the rally was banned, it symbolized that the President had violated law of freedom of speech.

d. To Provide Treatment Recommendation

The last function of the device is to provide the solution. Media provides a particular treatment which is considered as the best way to solve a certain problem.

^[14] The Deputy Chairman of the National Movement to Guard the Indonesian Council of Ulama's Fatwa (GNPF-MUI), Zaitun Rasmin, **said Muslims involved in 'Aksi Bela Islam' only demanded law enforcement** on the alleged blasphemy case committed by Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok.

In the expression above, *Republika* implicitly recommends the law enforcement as the most appropriate treatment on the alleged blasphemy case.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

All types of media package device can be identified in 20 selected articles of *The Jakarta Post* and *Republika*. There are 44 data found in *The Jakarta Post*. Root is the most frequent type among the data. It indicates that *The Jakarta Post* focuses on presenting the causal analysis to build the package. The two least dominant types are metaphor and exemplar since *The Jakarta Post* rarely presents figurative analogy and representative instances to strengthen its package. On the other hand, 40 data are found in *Republika*. Appeal to principle is the most dominant type. This fact proves that *Republika* does indeed use the religious values as priority to

cover news because the religious value is a part of appeal to principle. Consequence and depiction are the two least occurring types because it was hardly found the expression with negative meaning in *Republika*.

In accordance with result analysis of the function, *The Jakarta Post* uses the devices to define Ahok's blasphemy case as political issue since majority of the devices tend to highlight the political interest than religious interest. In contrary, *Republika* has its devices to portray the issue as pure religious conflict.

Suggestion

Regarding a study in media discourse, the following portrays two suggestions addressed to two parties.

For the students of English Language and Literature study program, especially those concerning on linguistics, are suggested to gain more knowledge and information about media discourse. Media play major role to persuade and to convince people about particular issue. Therefore, analysing language in media is worth to do. A researcher studying media discourse would not only understand the role of language in media discourse, but also can learn how to use language for framing and rhetorical purpose.

Conducting a study about media discourse would be always essential due to the influence of media themselves. There are so many specific topics could be identified in media discourse, such as rhetoric, framing, media storytelling, etc. This study only focuses on what frames which are constructed by using media package device. Hence, it is recommended to conduct an advanced study which aims to reveal

the power or ideology behind the framing by using critical theory.

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