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REPRESENTATION OF JESSICA KUMALA WONGSO IN TWO ARTICLES IN THE JAKARTA POST RELATED TO A MURDER TRIAL: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

The purposes of this research entitled "Representation of Jessica Kumala Wongso in Two Articles in The Jakarta Post Related to a Murder Trial: A Discourse Analysis", are for analyzing and describing the representation of Jessica Kumala Wongso from two articles in The Jakarta Post in March 2016. The articles were published by The Jakarta Post when Jessica Kumala Wongso was named as the murder suspect of her friend, Wayan Mirna Salihin, who died after drinking cyanide-tainted coffee at Olivier Café, Grand Indonesia Mall on January 6th. The research analyzes what kinds of strategies were used by the author, besides describing the possible strategies' implemented by the author. This research utilizes syntax level from Theo Van Leeuwen's *Representing Social Actors* (2008) descriptive-analysis method. Moreover, it concludes that The Jakarta Post represents Jessica Kumala Wongso in a negative perspective, by using inclusion strategies such as back grounding and suppression, also exclusion strategies with role allocation, determination, nomination, genericization, identification, nomination, and categorization.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, Theo Van Leeuwen, representing social actors, Jessica Kumala Wongso.

INTRODUCTION

The death of Wayan Mirna Salihin after drinking cyanide-tainted coffee in Olivier Café, Grand Indonesia Mall on January 6th, 2016 has generated a lot of public attention since it made headlines in the media. Several newspapers and television channels raised it as headline news, particularly after Mirna's friend Jessica Kumala Wongso, was named as a murder suspect by the Jakarta Police on January 29th 2016. One English language daily newspaper in Indonesia, The Jakarta Post, has published at least a hundred articles about the case, hence the public are easily able to read about this case in the news. Moreover, as every media provider has various techniques to present the news whereby the authors bring forward opinions about a person or persons/groups, which show in their reporting (Eriyanto, 2000, p. 113). As the Jakarta Post is able to insert or filter the participants opinions or responses which will be shown in the articles, such as those from Jessica, Jessica's lawyers, the Jakarta Police or Mirna's family. Therefore, The Jakarta Post can construct many different representations of Jessica including a negative representation whereby she is likely to be marginalized; thereby it can give Jessica a negative public image.

This research discusses how Jessica Kumala Wongso was represented in two articles in The Jakarta Post whether it was positive or negative from a Discourse Analysis point of view. Discourse Analysis analyses data based on social practices and relationship issues as set out in the model proposed by Theo Van Leeuwen in *Representing Social Actors* (2008). Also, in Van Leeuwen's opinion, the language used to describe a social action/practice can form a representation of the social action/actor itself. Thus, by realizing that a reader's views can be formed based on the representation-constructed by the author, the

reader may be wiser to assume or respond skeptically to an issue in the media. So, this discussion and its results will focus on the research question: “What social actor strategies were used by The Jakarta Post to represent Jessica Kumala Wongso?”

METHODS

The subject of this research is two articles In The Jakarta Post which relate to Jessica Kumala Wongso being named as the suspected murderer of Wayan Mirna Salihin. These articles were published on 21st and 22nd March 2016. The articles are: (1) ‘Jessica has a long criminal record in Australia: Police’ (Wijaya, March 21, 2016) and (2) ‘Jessica has an extensive criminal record in OZ’ (La Batu, March 22, 2016). The two articles will be analyzed to describe the representation of Jessica Kumala Wongso by using Theo Van Leeuwen’s Representing Social Actors theory. Moreover, the method used in this research is qualitative-descriptive observation.

The descriptive method aims to make a systematic description using factual and accurate information about the data, properties and relationships of the phenomenon under study or the theoretical foundations that have been determined. The qualitative method is a procedure that produces descriptive data in written and oral language communities. The approach involves the community that is directed at the background of the individual concerned as a whole, seen as part of a coherent whole (Djajasudarma, 1993, p. 10). After grouping the data from the articles, it will be described in the form of an explanation. Then, at the end of the study the conclusion will be explained from all of the data analysis that has been done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As this research will focus on the representation of Jessica Kumala Wongso, there are two main strategies which are able to identify the representation using Van Leeuwen’s Social Actor theory namely exclusion and inclusion. Furthermore, we will divide the data into exclusion and inclusion data in which there are various types: suppression, back grounding, role allocation, nomination-categorization, functionalization-identification, genericization-specification, determination-indetermination, assimilation-individualization, personalization-impersonalization, and association-disassociation.

Table 1. The frequency of the social actor strategies found in the articles.

No.	Social actor strategies	Types	Frequency
1.	Exclusion	Suppression	2
2.	Exclusion	Back grounding	2
3.	Inclusion	Role Allocation	8
4.	Inclusion	Nomination/Categorization	3
5.	Inclusion	Functionalization/Identification	7
6.	Inclusion	Genericization/Specification	2
7.	Inclusion	Determination/Indetermination	2
8.	Inclusion	Assimilation/Individualization	1
9.	Inclusion	Personalization/Impersonalization	1
10.	Inclusion	Association/Disassociation	1

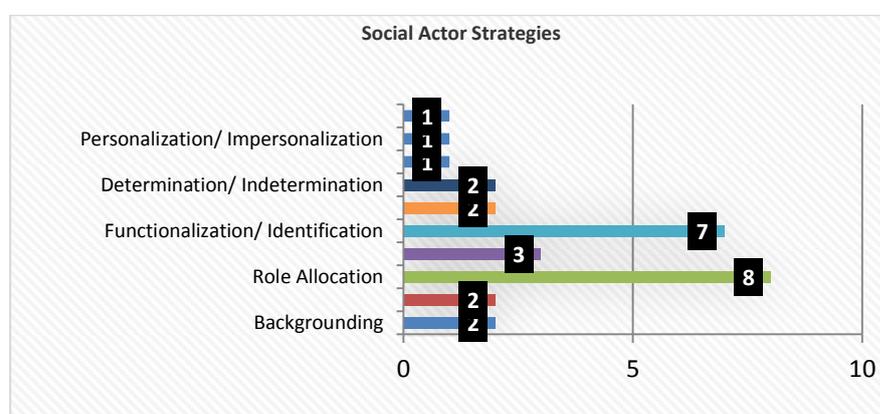


Figure 1. The percentage of social actor strategies found in the articles.

The detail of the results can be seen in the table below:

Table 2: Analysis of the results of the Social Actor Strategies.

No.	Data	Excluded/included actors	Types
1.	'Jessica who <u>has been charged</u> with violating article 340 of the Criminal Code'	Police Investigators	Exclusion-Suppression; passive agent deletion
2.	'She <u>was believed to</u> have committed the acts that were included on the criminal record'	The Sidney Morning Herald	Exclusion-Back grounding
3.	'Mirna died after sipping a Vietnamese iced coffee which <u>was allegedly ordered and paid for by Jessica</u> '	Jessica Kumala Wongso	Inclusion- Role Allocation; activation
4.	' <u>Murder suspect</u> Jessica Kumala Wongso has a long police record in Australia'	Jessica Kumala Wongso	Inclusion- Categorization
5.	'Jessica's <u>lawyer</u> Yudi Wibowo Sukinto doubted the validity of the information from the AFP'	Yudi Wibowo S. (Jessica's lawyer)	Inclusion-Functionalization
6.	'Jessica is the <u>sole suspect</u> in the murder case of her friend'	Jessica Kumala Wongso	Inclusion-Specification
7.	' <u>The Indonesian government</u> has given an assurance to the <u>Australian government</u> '	The Indonesian government and Australian government	Inclusion- Indetermination
8.	'We have received tip-offs from the Australian Federal Police and they surely strengthen our existing evidence,' <u>Jakarta Police Spokesman Sr. Comr. Mohammad Iqbal</u> said.'	Sr. Comr. Mohammad Iqbal (Jakarta Police spokesman)	Inclusion- Individualization
9.	'they surely strengthen our <u>existing evidence</u> '	Jakarta Police's accusation about Jessica	Inclusion-Impersonalization
10.	'We have received tip-offs from the <u>Australian Federal Police</u> and they surely strengthen our existing evidence'	Australian Federal Police (AFP)	Inclusion- Association

It can be seen from the Table above that the Social Actor Strategies used in the articles in The Jakarta Post for representing Jessica Kumala Wongso were:

- (1) Exclusion strategy which is used by The Jakarta Post is suppression with passive agent deletion type. The use of these types create an agent that acts as excluded social, what I actors, namely the police who investigated Jessica Kumala Wongso missing from the text. So the main focus of the reader refers to Jessica Kumala Wongso who allegedly violating Article 340 of the Act, as well as to make the reader believe that Jessica Kumala Wongso judged to have violated article criminal by the public, not just the police who investigated the case alone.
- (2) Exclusion strategy of back grounding type, which excludes other social actors (The Sydney Morning Herald). Furthermore, this will make the reader focus on the social actor Jessica Wongso Kumala, having negative attributes 'believed to have done criminal acts during her stay in Australia in 2007-2015'. In fact, the sentence is a statement from the newspaper The Sydney Morning Herald.
- (3) Inclusion strategy with role allocation type of activation technique, because Jessica Kumala Wongso is shown as an active and dynamic social actor, with a role as a subject. But it is accompanied by the negative representation by adding the clause "who has been charged with violating article 340 of the Criminal Code", which manifests itself as a violator of the criminal code.
- (4) Inclusion strategy with categorization type. It categorizes Jessica Kumala Wongso with the negative phrase 'murder suspect'. According to Hornby (2008), 'murder' and 'suspect' defines the crime of killing someone deliberately and makes one think that somebody mentioned might be suspected of committing the crime of murder on someone.
- (5) Inclusion strategy with functionalization type. The data shows the function of the lawyer for the defense giving guidance to Jessica's personal problem. The definition of a lawyer is a person who is trained and qualified to advise people about the law (Hornby, *ibid*).
- (6) Inclusion strategy with specification type, which can be seen through the use of simple present tense in the clause 'Jessica is the sole suspect in the murder case of her friend'. Different with other tenses in the article: The Jakarta Post only used one simple present tense sentence. This strategy may represent the social actor Jessica Kumala Wongso negatively. Because, by using the simple present tense, The Jakarta Post media can only intend to present it as a fact or thing that should be known by the reader.
- (7) Inclusion strategy with indetermination type. That is because social actors, 'The Indonesian government' and the 'Australian Government' are not detailed appearing in the text. The social actors can be explained as the governments of Indonesia and Australia only, not annotated or clause as explanatory whom the government gives a guarantee that, such as president, the police, etc. This

strategy can be used when journalists at the media do not know in detail which party gives such assurances. This can make the reader judge only in outline, as the government throughout Indonesia and Australia; though that was decision from certain parties. It may purpose to provide information for the readers that the social actors Jessica Kumala Wongso, which is found guilty of premeditated murder in the issue, will not receive the death penalty as a result of the agreement. This could bring the reader a feeling for the demands of justice, though Jessica Kumala Wongso has not been proven guilty and is still the only suspect.

- (8) Inclusion strategy with individualization type. That is because social actor Mochammad Iqbal was appeared in specific person, not a community or social group, such as the Australian Police Federation.
- (9) Inclusion strategy with impersonalization type. That is because 'evidence' (noun) was represented as a person, who has a power to strengthen the police's accusation.
- (10) Inclusion strategy with association type. Social actor 'we' which refers to the Jakarta Police was related and supported by Australian Federal Police, the extensive social actor that makes the readers imagine a larger imaginary group.

CONCLUSION

According to the research question what social actor strategies were used by The Jakarta Post in representing Jessica Kumala Wongso, we analyzed it by using Theo Van Leeuwen's Social Actor Theory and found that the articles used many strategies both Inclusion and Exclusion type strategies: The types of the Exclusion strategies used were suppression and back grounding, and the Inclusion strategies used were eight (8) types: role-allocation strategies, nomination-categorization, functionalization-identification, genericization-specification, determination-indetermination, assimilation-individualization, personalization-impersonalization, and association-disassociation. Every type of strategy used has its own purposes for implementation for representing the social actor Jessica Kumala Wongso in a negative perspective, whether by directly indicating negative attributes to Jessica, or implicitly by showing opinions or information from people who have control or power connected with Jessica's case.

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