

A Critical Discourse Analysis on Fox News Reports 6 & 7 February 2012
(Analisis Kritik Wacana pada Laporan Fox News 6 & 7 February 2012)

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Abstract

Penelitian ini menganalisis dua artikel yang memberitakan perintah Amerika Serikat untuk membekukan aset-aset Iran, yang diterbitkan oleh Foxnews.com. Dengan menggunakan analisis wacana kritik, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana bahasa digunakan sebagai alat media untuk mengkonstruksi sebuah pandangan publik. Penelitian ini menerapkan gagasan Fairclough tentang analisis intertextual pada teks. Dalam hal ini, penulis ingin menunjukkan hubungan antara genre, suara para peserta wacana dan representasi di dalam teks tersebut. Deskripsi pada teks seperti analisis genre teks, digunakan untuk mendeskripsikan susunan pada laporan Foxnews. Melalui bentuk-bentuk genre, penelitian ini dapat menemukan tujuan utama kedua laporan tersebut. Hal ini diperkuat dengan mengidentifikasi agen-agen yang ada di dalam teks dan identitas agen-agen tersebut. Singkatnya, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa artikel-artikel tersebut mendukung keputusan Amerika Serikat untuk menjatuhkan sanksi baru terhadap Iran.

Kata Kunci: *Wacana, Foxnews, Genre, Suara, Intertextualitas, Representasi.*

Abstract

This research analyzed two articles which report United States' order to freeze Iran's assets published by Foxnews.com. Using a critical discourse analysis, this research explored how the language is used as the instrument of media to construct the public opinion. It applied Fairclough's notion about intertextual analysis of the text. Here, the writer wanted to reveals the relationship between genre, voice of the discourse participants, and the representation within the text. The description of the text such as generic analysis of the text was used to describe the pattern of Fox News' reports. Through the form of genre, this research could find the main goal of its reports. This was strengthened by identifying the representations of the text and the identities of discourse participants. In short, this research showed that the articles were giving countenance on United States' decision to impose new sanction on Iran.

Keywords: Discourse, Fox News, Genre, Voice, intertextuality, representation.

Introduction

By using language, media bring ideas, messages, and information for the masses. This idea can be called as a discourse. Discourse is mode of organizing knowledge, ideas, and experience rooted in language (Merriam-Webster, 2013). Sometimes, mass media share their opinion and assumption. They have manipulated their opinion or assumption as the information or knowledge for the society (Strydom,

2000:1). Sometimes, people take for granted the issues as the actual information (Fairclough, 2003:47). It means they do not want to gain more information about them. This is what Habermas called as a common sense (1989:120).

This research took two articles which report United States' new sanctions on Iran published by Foxnews.com as the data of analysis. They were (a) "*US Imposes Additional Sanction on Iran*"; this article was published on February 06, 2012 and (b) "*New US*

sanctions on Iran aim to head off Israel”; this article was published on February 7, 2012. Yet, Fox News’s reports indicated that they aligned to the U.S government. This opinion was taken from some research that accused Fox News had a conservative bias in reporting the information (Singh, Without Year), (Ackeman, 2001).

This research used critical discourse analysis to explore how the language is used as the instrument of the media to construct the public opinion. I analyzed the texts using a critical discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough. Critical Discourse Analysis itself is a study that is focused to explore the relationship between discourse, events and texts (Fairclough, 1995a:97).

In conducting a critical discourse analysis, Fairclough proposes three dimensional methods of discourse analysis. They are “analysis of language (spoken or written) texts, analysis of discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution and consumption) and analysis of socio-cultural practice” (1995a:97). In those three dimensional methods, this research focused on the second dimension. It is the analysis of discourse practice. In this dimension, Fairclough provides a tool to analyze media text which is called as an intertextual analysis of text. Intertextual analysis, in Fairclough’s view, is more interpretative (1995b:61). The analysis is “an interpretative art which depends on the analyst’s judgement and experience” (Fairclough, 1995b:77). The basic idea, in conducting the intertextual analysis, is about the assumptions and presuppositions; because, the text, for Fairclough, is always brought an event from the outside of a text (Fairclough, 2003:18)

By doing this analysis, this research showed how texts describe *orders of discourse*. The *order of discourse* can be known as the form of discourse in text which influences the meaning of text (Fairclough, 2003:207). They are genres, voices, discourses, and representations. Through analyzing the genres, I had determined the generic structure of the text reports. The structure was headline + lead paragraph + satellites paragraphs + wrap-up (Fairclough, 2003:75). Headline refers to the title of the media’s articles, whereas the lead refers to the opening paragraph of the articles. For the satellite paragraph, it is adding the detail of reports. They can change the organization of the reports without running the information within the reports. Then, wrap up paragraph gives the outcome of the events reported (Fairclough, 2003:75).

Then, after knowing the generic structure of texts reports, I analyzed the discourse of representations. This part was used to analyze the way of Fox News in reporting the event. Here, the writer

showed that the voices and representations of discourse participants had been integrated to fulfill the *orders of discourse*. Later on, the writer also showed that there were the other discourses which had been merged within the text reports. Moreover, this research gave contribution to show that there was an authority or power that controls the spread of information through the media texts, including news online text reports. This also proved that language analysis by involving social context will give more valid result.

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative. Cresswell notes that qualitative is “a form of interpretative inquiry in which researchers make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand” (Cresswell, 2009:176). During the process of research, I examined a qualitative documents. Later on, Cresswell mentions that a qualitative document “may be public document (e.g., newspaper, minutes meeting, officials reports) or private documents (e.g., journals, letters, email)” (Cresswell, 2009:181). Here, I examined two articles in Fox News’ webpage that have same issue as the data of analysis. The data are collected by using non-experimental sampling. This sampling method was used in a certain or an interesting case, such as the issue of U.S’ new sanctions on Iran that is reported by Fox News’s articles (Blaxter et.al, 2006:163).

In the form of Intertextual analysis, this research used three kinds of analysis, as it is proposed by Fairclough in “*Media Discourse*”. They are generic analysis of the text, the analysis of discourse representation, and analysis of discourses in text (Fairclough, 1995b:75). In conducting this analysis, this research did four steps. They were (1) analyzing the discourse types; this analysis was concerned with the schematic view of genre in media text. (2) Analyzing the discourse representations; here, this research collected and analyzed the identity of discourse participants, their voices and the representations that presented within the text. (3) Analyzing the discourse in text; here, this research focused on the words that represent the other discourse, but those words are still formed to strengthen the issue (Fairclough, 1995b:75). (4) Making conclusion.

Result

In Analyzing Fox News’ reports of United States’ new sanctions on Iran, the writer found that the main issue within those two text reports was the

sanction itself; whereas, the issue about nuclear program was a supplement in reporting the issue (United States' new sanctions). These assumptions were made as the result of the analysis of discourse types which focused on the generic structure of text reports. The structure was *headline + lead paragraphs + satellites paragraphs + wrap-up*. Each element which constructs text's structure were pointing to sanction as the main issue and nuclear program as the supplements in reporting the main issue. These all happened on both of text reports.

In other condition, the writer also found that the journalist's voice, in those text reports, and the reported voices of the discourse participants were not clearly confined. This condition was marked by indirect quotations which can make ambivalence or bias. It means that the utterances were not the real voices of the informant, but it was reproduced in order to make fit with the journalist issues on the the articles. Then, by seeing form the other elements of the *order of discourse* such as the voice of discourse participants (referring to the identity of discourse participants), this research shows that the ratio of U.S and Iran's voices are also imbalance within those two articles.

On the first article, this research found that there is only one voice which refers to Iran government; whereas, the United States' voice has thirteen voices. Then, for the second text, this research finds that there are four voices; those four refer to Iran itself. For the voices of U.S, there are ten voices. Those all voices refer to the way of being of each discourse participants in order to follow the *order of discourse*.

Discussion

The interpretation of the representations, in this research, was used as a tool to analyze the articles. This notion was taken from the second stage of Fairclough's notion about 'discourse practice'. Alongside with the interpretation, it was very useful to know how the operation of the generic structure of text reports in detail. Thus, the explanation below will give the detail in short.

The *Headline* of the articles are "*US imposes additional sanction on Iran*" and "*New US Sanctions on Iran Aim to Head Off Israel*". The first headline brings information about United States' additional sanction on Iran. Besides, the second headline shows the purpose of U.S' sanctions. The headline tries to give people information about the purpose of new United States' sanction on Iran. It has summarized all the information within the article. Each of the

headlines also has two lead paragraphs. They summarize the gist of the whole report.

Then, for the *satellites* paragraphs which are used to elaborate various aspects of the reports, they have their own idea or information, but they, still, have a correlation with the *headline* and *lead* paragraph. In the articles 1, the correlations are shaped by the coming of discourse participants (U.S European Union, Iran and Iran's banks). Here is the example,

"The U.S. and Europe want to deprive Iran of the oil income it needs to run its government and pay for the nuclear program. But many experts believe Iran will be able to find other buyers outside Europe" (Fox News, 2012).

the example of satellite paragraph above shows that U.S and Europe wants to hold Iran's economic conditions by depriving Iran's oil income. The words "*want to deprive*" are the action of United States and Europe on Iran; whereas, the phrase "*the oil income*" is the object of their action. On the other hand, sentence "*But many experts believe Iran will be able to find other buyers outside Europe*" shows an information that the United States and Europe's action do not affect on Iran's economic condition. This information is noted by the word "*but*". The word "*but*" is a conjunction which is showing a contrast. In short, the example above, which set up a paragraph, has a message about United States and Europe's action on Iran. The action is still referred to the sanctions of U.S on Iran.

Later on, *wrap up* paragraph, which consists of the final paragraph of the story. Sometimes, it offers some sort of resolution. The two articles, do not offer a resolution for the reader. For instances, in the article 1, it opens a new space for other issues, which comes side by side with the sanctions. The new issue offered by the article 1, comes from the voice of Obama's competitor "*Republican presidential candidates have accused Obama of being too timid in his dealings with Iran*". In this clause, it can be seen that Obama's decision on Iran has been commented roughly. On the other hand, the *wrap up* paragraph of article 2, offers an opinion about the new United States sanction on Iran. It indicates that the report has a skeptical argument on United States sanction. It can be clearly seen on the first sentence "*The skeptical of Iranian assets affected by the new order was not clear*". The skeptical opinion is signed by the word "*not clear*" that explains the effect of the new United States order on Iran's assets.

These all conditions are integrated with the way of reporting and representing the discourse participants within the text. In news article 1, the journalist's voice which reports and the reported voices are not clearly confined. This condition is marked by indirect quotations which can make ambivalence or bias. It means that the utterances are not the real voices of the informant, but it is reproduced in order to make fit with the journalist themes/issues on the text. The example is a sentence "Carney said U.S sanctions on Iran are already squeezing Iran's economy and have exacerbated tensions within the Iranian leadership". In the sentence, it is not clear, whereas this utterance is coming from Jay Carney or from the journalist.

Then, if the sentence is the result of the journalist's formulation, it allows the journalist to replace the words with the other word according to his/her background knowledge. The words "exacerbated tensions" arise the bad effect on the representation of U.S for the reader. On the next part, there is another representation which shows that U.S does not worry on Israel's plan to attack Iran. It is depicted by Carney's voices "There has been a steady increase in our sanctions activity and this is a part of that escalation" he said and "there is no question that the impact of the isolation on Iran and the economic sanction on Iran have caused add turmoil within Iran". These two citations make a sense that United States does not want to hold Israel's attack on Iran, but United States only focuses on its sanctions. It indicates that United States does not worry on Israel's plan to attack Iran.

In order to make sure about the issue before, the journalist puts Obama's voices. It can be seen on Obama's voice "I don't think Israel has made a decision on what they need to do.", there is coma which indicates a cutting process or a hedge in the sentence. The *hedge* itself indicates that the journalist to reinforce the issue. On the other hand, the clause also has shown that U.S does not think about Israel's plan. It is shown by the phrase "don't think" People as the reader know that Obama is United States president now. Therefore, the presence of Obama's representation, here, is used to lead the reader assumptions on United States additional sanctions on Iran and put the Israel's plan on one side. Overall, it can be simplified that the United States additional sanction are down to Iran as the result of United States worries on Iran's nuclear program and Israel's preparation to attack Iran's nuclear program.

Then, this article also shows imbalances information which is provided to the reader. There is lack information about Iran's argumentation or opinion

about its nuclear program. There is only one sentence which refers to Iran's voice. This is sentence which shows Iran's representation to defend its nuclear program from United States Israel, and Europe country's judgment "Iran says its nuclear program is peaceful and denounces sanction as aggression".

In article 2, there is also no limitation on the distinction between the journalist and the reported expression. This condition is marked by the showing of indirect speeches that can emerge ambivalence. It means that those speeches are not coming from the original speeches of resource person, but it is a product, transformation, and translation which are compatible with the journalist's voices or ideas.

The example of this condition can be seen in a sentence "Israelis officials have been open about their worry that Iran could be on the brink of a bomb by this summer and that this spring offers the last window of opportunity to destroy bomb-related facilities". Within this sentence, it is not clear whether the expression is coming from the journalist or from the Israelis officials.

Moreover, the resource person who becomes a source is not clearly mentioned by the journalist. It is only represented by *Israelis officials*. Then, if the expression is coming from Israel, do the choice of sentence with its words in "have been open about their worry that Iran could be on the brink of a bomb by this summer" and "that this spring offers the last window of opportunity to destroy bomb-related facilities" are coming from Israel?. If it is formulated by the journalist, the journalist can change the words which appropriates with their idea or theme. It indicates that the journalist wants to show Israel's feeling on Iran's nuclear program.

On the other hand, the article also provides direct quotations from resource persons which are written by the journalist. Within this article, the journalist puts Israel and U.S voices more than Iran's voices. There is only one voice which represent Iran in paragraph ten;

"In Tehran, Ramin Mehmanparest, the foreign ministry spokesman, dismissed the sanction as "propaganda". He said Iran's central bank has no financial transactions with the United States and would not be affected by the measure. "Many of these (United States) activities are in the sphere of psychological war and propaganda, and they cannot affect our work", he said" (Foxnews, 2012)

The voice of Ramin Mehmenparast, here, is used to give a space for the reader to think about Iran's opinion. Within expression, it can be seen that Iran does not feel any worry on United States and Israel's annoyance. Iran's feeling is represented by the last clause of Ramin Mehmanparast "*they cannot affect our work,*".

The word "they" refers to United States sanctions on Iran's programs. Through the quotation, the journalist also shows the representation of Iran. It shows that Iran does not worry on the new United States sanction. On the other hand, this quotation also indicates Iran as an arrogant country which does not obey on United States warning to terminate its nuclear program. This condition is only shown by a single expression taken from Iran's foreign ministry spokesman "they cannot affect our work.". The "coma", here, is used to make a hedge on the reader's opinion about Iran.

The articles also shows Israel's argument about the sanctions that is imposed on Iran;

"Nonetheless, the sanctions were endorsed Tuesday by Israel's hawkish foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman "We appreciate the very crucial decision regarding the sanctions," Lieberman told reporters in Washington, in between meetings with U.S senators "We are awaiting that the Iranians, they will give up their nuclear program ambitions," said Lieberman, who also met with secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton". (Foxnews, 2012)

The voice of Avigdor Lieberman, here, is used to represent Israel's desire. Israel is still waiting for Iran's decision to end their nuclear program up and follow new United States sanctions. By the voices of Israel's hawkish foreign minister, it indicates that Israel may do a movement while Iran's disobey the new United States sanctions. This condition is market by the word "*awaiting*". This word indicates that there is always a probability for every strict condition to fall.

Moreover, as it is noted by Fairclough (1995b:94), discourses are constructions or significations of some domain of social practice from a particular perspective. Thus, it is possible to mix up the other discourse in another one. In conducting the news reports, the journalist may use the other "*words*" which are belonged to the other discourse, to express the reality or to complete the reports. These conditions are founded on those two articles.

Article 1 is a discourse of economic sanctions. It is clearly seen on the first (*lead*) paragraph "*Targeting Iran's economy, the U.S ordered tough new penalties to further pinch the country;s financial system*". This research finds such formulation in article 1, which refers to the discourse of economic sanction, along with the expression such as "*to further pinch the country's financial system*". This expression represents an event as a dispute between two countries (U.S. and Iran). There are the other vocabularies which link to this discourse; *assets, money, oil income, pay, buyers, import, to sell, oil prices, exports, world financial system, banks, dollars, global economy, and so on.*

Later on, article 2 also has the same characteristic as article 1 (a discourse of economic sanctions); but, the article 2 also can be classified as the discourse of military action too. It is clearly seen on the first (*lead*) paragraph "*Additional U.S. sanctions on Iran are more significant for their timing than their immediate effect an Iran's economy*" and "*Israel should hold off any military strike on Iranian nuclear facilities*". In these two clauses, article 2 brings two different discourses; but, both of them are completed each other as the continuity of the report.

This research finds such formulations In article 2, There is a formulation which refers to both of discourses; such as, "*their immediate effect on Iran's economy*" (the discourse of economic sanction) and "*any military strike on Iranian nuclear facilities*". These expression represent the events that describe by article 2. there are the other expressions which link to the discourse of economic sanction and military attack. The vocabularies, which are linked the discourse of economic sanction, are *money, economy, financial transaction, business, and so on.* Then, for the discourse of military attack, the vocabularies are *strike, destroy, bomb, nuclear, military strikes, attack, and so on.*

Conclusion and Suggestion

In conclusion, through its structures of sentences, the reports placed Iran's nuclear programs as the new information which caused the imposition of United States sanction on Iran's government. This issue has effect with the other issues which are laid in the texts. There are Iran's nuclear program and Israel's plan to attack Iran's facilities. This assumption was obtained from the headline of each media texts. The headline put United States' sanction as the subject, whereas the other issues were put as the object.

The real goal of the articles was to construct the public opinions on United States movement. It made

the public admitted that the imposition of United States sanctions on Iran is something required. This assumption was strengthened by the words that relates to Iran's nuclear program. They are *nuclear, bomb, dangerous*, etc. It showed that they walked aside with the United States government and its allies to fight against Iran's nuclear programs.

Yet, the Foxnews reports about the new United States sanctions on Iran also produce a bias. Even those two texts only put the Iran's voice once and fourth. From the explanations above, as the reader, people should actively read the media text. It means that they should criticize the information provided by the text. They neither have to agree nor taken for granted the information as their common sense.

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