

## **Bias in Some News on the Issue of Tony Abbot's Spying Indonesia's Politic: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

**Ahmad Ridwan, Samudji, Riskia Setiarini**

English Department, Faculty of Letters, University of Jember (UNEJ)

Jln. Kalimantan 37 Jember 68121

email: samsamudji@yahoo.com.au

### **Abstract**

News text is one of media discourse that is used to inform an information in written. There are four chosen newspapers that become the data. All of them report the same issue about the spying issue of Australia to Indonesia. Most of them indicate bias to Australia, so they are not neutral in reporting the news. Therefore, Bias in the text of news report is the focus of this research. Since Bias has been phenomenal, the critical analysis to expose bias of news report. This study reveals how a news report served bias. The bias analysis is based on the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Moreover, this analysis of this research focuses on the transitivity of processes that is used in the text of news report. This study applies Mix-Method (qualitative and quantitative research) by Denscombe (2007). the result of investigation in transitivity by Fowler shows that the four chosen newspapers serve bias implied in the text of news report.

**Keywords:** News, Bias, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Systemic Functional Linguistics, Transitivity

### **Abstrak**

Teks berita merupakan salah satu media discourse yang digunakan untuk menyampaikan suatu informasi dengan cara tertulis. Terdapat 4 koran yang terpilih akan menjadi data yang semuanya membahas tentang isu penyadapan Australia terhadap Indonesia. Kebanyakan pemberitaannya mengindikasikan keberpihakan terhadap Australia, jadi pemberitaa tersebut tidak akan selalu netral. Oleh karena itu, Keberpihakan (Bias) dalam pemberitaan akan menjadi fokus dari penelitian ini. Sejak, Bias menjadi hal yang fenomenal, analisis kritis untuk mengungkapkan bias yang terdapat dalam pemberitaan. Penelitian ini mengekspos bagaimana suatu pemberitaan melakukan bias. Analisis Bias akan berdasarkan pada teori Analisis Kritis Wacana dan teori Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Selanjutnya, analisis pada penelitian ini akan fokus pada transitivity proses yang digunakan dalam teks pemberitaan. Dalam peneletian ini menerapkan Mix-Method (qualitatif dan quantitattif research) oleh Denscombe (2007). Hasil dari investigasi dalam transitivity oleh Fowler menunjukkan bahwa empat berita yang dipilih melakukan pembiasan berita didalam text secara tertutup.

**Kata kunci:** Berita, Keberpihakan, Analisis Wacana Kritis, Systemic Functional Linguistic, Transitivity.

### **Introduction**

News is new information or information about something happened and it is served in written, spoken or broadcast for public. News that I am going to investigate is on newspaper. Based on the third edition of Cambridge advance learner's dictionary, News is information or reports about recent events, so its function is to inform the information to readers. One of the news is about Tony Abbot's spying Indonesia coming into surface in July 2013. This became a hot issue, when a former employee of the

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and contractor for the National Security Agency (NSA), Edward Snowden leaks the information of spying secret to the media.

However, the news report of spying published in the headlines of many countries contains some opinion or implicit messages. According to Van Dijk (1988:79), much like other discourse types, news leaves many things unsaid. From that statement, it is clear that there are some opinions in the newspaper emphasizing the text implicitly and also the news report has been written objectively but the content of news report is ambiguous. In line with this, Fowler

(1991:10), what is being said is that, because the institution of news reporting and presentation are socially, economically, and politically situated, all news is always reported from some particular angle. The structure of the medium encodes significances which derive from the respective position within society of the publishing or broadcasting organizations.

The ambiguous news report is assumed that it will drive the readers into bias especially in the news report of spying, because the news media is viewed widely as biased (Shojaei, et al. 2013:858). During the news report published about spying, the media provide unbalanced news report in discourse of spying. There are some indications that the news report of spying uses language to enhance their power for a certain elite group, so Bias can be implied in the text of news report. Richardson (2007:8) declared, "Most of us think we can identify biases in news, or those instances when the journalist seems to have an agenda they're pushing".

**Research Methodology**

This research uses mixed method (qualitative and quantitative research). As stated by Denscombe (2007:108), the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches within a single research project is one of the characteristic features of mixed method approach. The qualitative research is applied in this thesis as it is needed to analyze the data in the form of text or based on interpretation while the quantitative one is used to count the amount of verb processes and participants used by the journalist to conclude which processes and participants always appear.

The object have been gotten from website of newspaper, they are as the source of data. There are four newspapers have been chosen, for instance: The Jakarta Post "Indonesian Leader Deplores Statement by Aussie PM" (Indonesia newspaper, published on November 19, 2013), The Guardian "Indonesian President Offers Australia Spying Truce" ( England newspaper, published on November 26, 2013), The New York Times "N.S.A Spying Scandal Hurts Close Ties Between Australia and Indonesia" (America newspaper, published on November 19, 2013), and, The Age National "Abbot Faces Indonesia Anger over Spying revelations" (Australia newspaper, published on November 23, 2013).

There are 18 clauses from the Guardian Newspaper "Indonesian President Offers Australia Spying Truce", 18 clauses from the Jakarta Post "Indonesian Leader Deplores Statement by Aussie PM", 20 clauses from the New York Times "N.S.A Spying Scandal Hurts Close Ties Between Australia and Indonesia", and then, 18 clauses from the Age National "Abbot Faces Indonesia Anger over Spying revelations" that have been analyzed. Total, there are 74 clauses sorted from each newspaper.

The data might present the same issue about the spying issue of Australia to Indonesia. The technique of data collection in this study applies the documentary method. Blaxter et al. (2006:154) states "documents are

using written materials as a basis for the research."The elements considered to be important or relevant, by grouping together these findings, or setting them alongside others considered to be related. Thus, bibliographical study suggests that the available data are categorized, classified, verified and analyzed.

**Result**

This research analyzes Bias implied in the text of news report of Tony Abbot's spying Indonesia's Politic. Fowler (1991:11) says that the news media select events for reporting according to a complex set of criteria of newsworthiness; so news is no simply that which happen, but that which can be regarded and presented as newsworthy. One possible tool Fowler advocates for the analysis of media text is Halliday's system of transitivity (Chen, 2005, 28). Related to transitivity, as what has been written in framework, verb process is one of major systems. Therefore, the most dominant processes that are used each newspaper is presented in the table reckoning of verb processes below:

Process type	Newspapers			
	The Guardian	The Jakarta Post	The New York Times	The Age National
Material	21	18	16	27
Mental	15	19	20	34
Relational	5	7	14	16
Verbal	17	19	14	8
Behavioral	0	2	1	7
Existential	1	0	1	1
Total	59	65	66	93

Most of the newspapers indicate to bias, because there are some finding in each clause that is implied bias. In the Guardian newspaper, the journalist uses material and verbal processes that always appear in the clause of news report. The tendency of bias in the guardian is seen implicitly, because the journalist drives the reader that the solution of this problem of spying is the signing of new code ethics from both countries. In the Jakarta Post, some clauses in the text tend to bias. The journalists of this newspaper used the same proportion process between mental and verbal processes which are the dominant process in the text. In the New York Times, Bias is found in the text that always portrays Australia best, because Australia does everything for Indonesia for example giving many scholarships for Indonesia students, or productive relationship. The last is in the Age National, its report defines bias by writing some sentences that focus to the media causes the bad tension of both countries emerged and also some reasons why Australia must do spying Indonesia. The journalist of the age National also uses some participants to reinforce his report such as

Australian spies, Australian exporters, Asylum seekers, two suicide bombers, analysts Pierre.

### Discussion

In the guardian newspapers, this media reports mostly used the material process with the percentage of 35,6%. It is proved by the quantitative analysis on the number of processes. Since the material process, the process of doing is the dominant one. The processes used signify some actions to respond the spying issue. There are approximately as many sentences with Yudhoyono and Abbot as actors respectively (8:5). Even though material processes are always used by the journalist, the description of what SBY does is disproportional to Abbot. So, the journalist reports the news that only shows some states of Indonesia president. The words 'appoint, draft, sign, continue, join, and hope' don't give some effects for Australia because all of them are only *states*. There are also verbs, and more often, adjectives, which imply no change or development, called *states* (Fowler, 1991:73). This implication of bias appears in this newspaper.

Moreover, the second process type mostly used is verbal process, process of saying. The number of clauses referring to the Yudhoyono as sayer is higher than Abbot which is as times as 8:1, meaning 8 for Yudhoyono and 1 for Abbot. There are also others participants that are mentioned in this process, such as Annifah Amar and the Indonesia trade minister (3:2). Furthermore, Fowler (1991:74) say politics and the law, which provide a substantial amount of the newspapers' copy, rely heavily on verbal action and verbal process for their operation. So that's why The Indonesia trade minister and The Malaysian Foreign Ministry show their verbal interaction in conveying important thing. It can be assumed that they only convey information and make decision. On the contrary, the media reports tend mostly to give solution of this spying issue in signing the ethics code. It is proved by the process of doing and of saying that refers to Yudhoyono and both processes provide space for bias.

In the Jakarta Post, there are two verb processes that are an equal order of the mostly used. They are mental and verbal process with the total of 19. In the verbal process, there are approximately equal proportions between SBY and Tony Abbot as sayer (6:5). This process of saying tends to the positive verbal process, because sayer also reflects the character. But, the journalist highlight the action of conveying information through different sayer, for instance: The sayer of the process is Greg Fealy because he is an expert and can give the explanation about the condition of both countries, so it means that it's not only the bad condition because of spying. Fowler (1991:98) states that people with authority are treated as subject (semantically, *agents*), while those with less power occur as object (patients, beneficiary). So it means that the journalist selects the analyst (Greg Fealy) as subject to show his authority through what he said, also refers to bias.

The same proportion process with the saying process in the text of the Jakarta Post is the mental process. As Halliday (1994:118) states the mental process enables

language to express thoughts, opinion, and feeling that help to identify the definition of reality. The transitivity result of the Jakarta Post mentions that there are two seners mostly shown in the text, they are Yudhoyono and Abbot (3:5). Moreover, the cognition of mental process mentions 11 proportions. Those cognition processes indicates the process of presenting idea, those processes express the intellectualty part of Yudhoyono and Abbot. From those processes, it can be defined that SBY and Tony Abbot serve authority, as stated by Levorato (2003:70) that mental process can represent a form power through cognitive ability. It is proved that the cognitive clause that presents the process of making decision such as: I *regard* President Yudhoyono as a good friend of Australia, why every government *knows* that every other government gathers information. The journalist also shows that Abbot respects Indonesia, such as in the clause: He regretted any embarrassment. Therefore, the bias implication appears too

The third newspaper is from the New York Times, there are 66 clauses appeared in the text of the New York Times. The mental process is one of the verb processes that mostly appear. Many participants as sener despite Yudhoyono and Abbot are shown in the text of it. Because the mental process also can represent the authority, the journalist wants to show many analysts give their opinion or idea, feeling, perception involved in the text, so it means that the reader will be driven by the comment of some analysts that is written in the text. This ambiguity tends to contain bias. From the text of reports, many clauses used mental process indicating that Australia underestimates Indonesia. It is proved by mental clauses, for instance: Australians *perceived* Indonesia as a raucous, dangerous backwater inhabited by Muslim extremists that *should be treated* with suspicion, I *think* it will obviously *blow* over at some stage etc.

Furthermore, this media reports, in the ratio of participants for sayer in verbal process, mentions other many participants despite of SBY and Tony Abbot. According to Halliday (1994:140) in verbal process, Sayer is defined as the person who is able to convey information or sayer is the person who has authority to say something, for instance: "Indonesia has to decide what the endgame is here," Professor Dupont *said*. Furthermore, the sayer from Dupont and Hyslum are taken by the journalist become the news report are the journalist's way to construe the view of spying positively. Both of them are participants that have authority to give opinion or comments about the spying problem. In line with this, Fowler (1991:75) states, "the term patient is generally used to refer to the role of an affected participant who/which is human or at least animate and who has something done to them". It means that their view of spying legitimately is really accessible by International public.

Moreover, this text mostly shows the relational process. The relational process reaches 14 processes the same as verbal process. The processes start with the description of Indonesia and Australia, for instance in the sentence: Australia *is* the largest donor of aid for Indonesia, Australia *is* also the No. 1 international study destination for

Indonesian university students, Indonesia is Australia's 13<sup>th</sup> largest trading partner etc. The journalist chooses the relational process to depict who Australia is, because the relational process is process of being. The relational processes that are used by the journalist in these clauses above are ways in which the journalist to highlight what Australia is. The relational process thus models our experience of the unfolding of events as "being" rather than "doing" (material proc) or "sensing" (mental proc), (Halliday, 1994:211). Therefore, this analysis of result by using transitivity, some clauses in the report of the New York Times refer to bias, so this news is not neutral.

The last analysis is the fourth newspaper, which is the Age National. Once again, it uses the mental process as mostly mentioned. Those processes describe the conscious of the senser. The senser process proportion is appropriated to Yudhoyono and Abbot (9:4), Yudhoyono as senser gets more proportion than Abbot in the mental process. The mental process reflects authority and it gives space bias, In line with this, Fowler (1991:73) asserts that both action and process relate to change in the world: movement, construction, destruction etc. there are also verbs, more often adjectives, which imply no change or development, these are called states. The verbs in the clauses of Age National, most of them are not only action but also states, such as *know, protested, noted, and regret*. It means that "Yudhoyono that is described by journalist has two mental action and one mental state. The journalist depicts Australia using mental process in these clauses. Australia is as senser, Most of the mental processes refer to mental action, such as *belittled, urged, apologize and eavesdropped*. It means that Australia always do mental action to involve the readers to have the same consciousness about what is happening.

The investigation of this text also find the material process that have been used with many participants despite of Yudhoyono or Abbot. Those participants are Australian spies, Australian exporters, Asylum seekers, two suicide bombers, analysts Pierre, etc. According to Halliday (1994:10) that the material processes refer to the process of doing something and the doing may be done to some other entities. In material process, those participants that are mentioned before defined as actor or doer which has power to do action. Those participants implicitly give space bias to Australia, because of their authority.

Another process in the text of the Age National is the relational process which reaches 16 processes. According to Halliday (1994:119), relational process is process of being. Its function is as the process of expressing and describing something. The attributive of relational process is mostly appearance than identifying process. Those attributive processes get 15 processes. Those express what attributes a certain object has, or what type it belongs to. The entity to which it is ascribed is Carrier and the quality is labeled as attribute (Halliday, 1994:120). It can be proved with the example of sentences that are newsworthy, for instances: Abbott *is* in the midst of a diplomatic crisis not seen since Australia backed East Timorese independence in 1999, The subtext *was* we are dealing with people who *are*

not rational, Australia's intelligence activities *were* to "help our friends and our allies, not to harm them", etc.

The following process in the text is verbal process. In this news report of the Age National, it mostly appears Tony Abbot and other participants as sayer, beside of this, SBY or Indonesia's President doesn't mention it. The journalist of Age National mentions many speakers completed with the names and specific identities as analysts. Then, this media convinces that the position of Australia is guiltless to do spying to Indonesia. Finally, bias opinion emerges and implies the text of this news and the readers as the receiver will get information from this news. The following investigation for the process involves in this news text, it is the behavioral process. Halliday (1994: 139) states that behavioral processes refer to psychological and psychological behavior such as coughing, smiling, breathing, laughing, crying, etc. the first participant is called behavior, which is often human, for instance: US President Barack Obama last month *defused* a similar scandal involving the tapping of German leader Angela Merkel's phone.

The last process is the existential process. As proposed by Halliday (1994:142) that existential process represents something that exists or happens. Tony Abbot expresses his regret, such as there *was* Abbot's well-intentioned expression of regret for the "embarrassment" suffered by Yudhoyono due to "media reports" of the spying. But this sentence implies media reports make Yudhoyono become the sufferer of spying. It means that if there is no news to report about spying, so the bad condition will not happen to yudhoyono. Those processes between behavioral and existential tend to bias reporting the issue spying. The report of the Age National absolutely resonates to the reader in getting information. This investigation of this news reflects bias to Australia, because its frame convinces that media report is the cause of bad condition from issue spying

### Conclusion

This study is aimed to answer the first question "what is the dominant verb processes used in four newspapers?" Clearly, it shows that the most dominant processes used each newspaper through the distribution of all processes are different percentages. The most dominant process used by the Guardian newspaper in the text of news is material process with percentage 35.6%. Next, the high percentage of participant is actor with 8 (34.8%) for SBY. For the second newspaper, the Jakarta Post has two most dominant processes in verbal and mental processes. Those processes get the ratio with percentage 29.2%. In the verbal process, there are approximately equal proportions between SBY and Tony Abbot as sayer (6:5). The mental process there are two sensers what have been mostly shown in the text, for instance Yudhoyono and Abbot (3:5).

Furthermore, the most dominant process in third newspaper for the New York Times is the mental process with percentage 31.8%. The high percentage of participant is senser with 10 (71.1%) for other participants despite of Yudhoyono or Abbot. Whereas, the last newspaper is the Age National, the process found the mental process as the most dominant process that emerges in the text. The mental

process gets in ratio 36.6% and the high participant proportion of senser is 42.9% for Yudhoyono.

Last, the answer of the second question which aimed to expose bias served by four newspapers that report about Tony Abbot's spying Indonesia's Politic. Therefore, the main report of those news is the tension both countries between Yudhoyono as representation of Indonesia's president and Abbot as representation of Prime Minister of Australia. This tension emerged, because of the spying issue, this condition absolutely involves some countries, some analysts, and others to view about this spying issue. Four newspapers such as the Jakarta Post, the Guardian, the New York Times and the Age National highlight the spying issue which is newsworthy. But, the news report of them has different view to portray it. Of course, the journalists have a superior position to writes the news report subjectively.

In the Age National, its report defines bias by writing some sentences that focus to the media causes the bad tension of both countries emerged and also some reasons why Australia must do spying Indonesia. The journalist of the age National also uses some participants to reinforce his report such as Australian spies, Australian exporters, Asylum seekers, two suicide bombers, analysts Pierre, etc. In the New York Times, Bias is found in the text that always portrays Australia best, because Australia does everything for Indonesia for example giving many scholarships for Indonesia students, or productive relationship. This implication of bias also can be seen in the relational process with the analyst participant such as prof. Dupont.

Bias of the Guardian can also be seen in the material process and verbal process which always appear in the text. The tendency of bias in the guardian is seen implicitly, because the journalist drives the reader that the solution of this problem of spying is the signing of new code ethics from both countries. The material process used by journalist in the text is to depict the seriousness of Indonesia in the new code ethics, Even though material processes are always used by the journalist, the description of what Yudhoyono does is disproportional to Abbot. So, the journalist reports the news that only shows some states of Indonesia president. The words 'appoint, draft, sign, continue, join, and hope' don't give some effects for Australia because all of them are only *state*.

The Jakarta Post defines the news report is not in the neutral position, some clauses in the text tend to bias. The journalists of this newspaper used the same proportion process between mental and verbal processes which are the dominant process in the text. They depict some feelings of Abbot and Yudhoyono to face this spying issue and their news report exhibits the positive verbal to respond this problems. In the mental process, it is proved by the cognitive clause that presents the process of making decision such as: I regard President Yudhoyono as a good friend of Australia, why every government knows that every other government gathers information. Therefore, the bias implication is appeared too.

Conclusively, after the investigation of bias in this study, it turns to the result of this study. Bias in the text of

news report for this research supports Australia, and bias sometimes describes about something that inappropriate to the fact. It is expected to contribute a better conception in understanding bias which is implicitly cited in the certain text of newspapers. I hope it can be useful as the reference of the study about critical Discourse Analysis when it is aimed to analyze bias in the text of news report. It is also hoped that this analysis can support further analysis in the similar study.

## References

- Allard, T, and Bachelard, M. *Abbott Faces Indonesian Anger over Spying Revelations*. <http://www.smh.com.au/national/2013/11/22>.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. 2006. *How to Research: Third Edition*. New York: Open University Press.
- Cochrane, J. *N.S.A Spying Scandal Hurts Close Ties between Australia and Indonesia*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/20>.
- Denscombe, M. 2007. *The Good Research Guide for Small-Scale Social Research Projects*. Poland: Open University Press.
- Dey, I. 1993. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Cited in Gray, D.E. 2004. *Doing Research in the Real World*. London: Sage Publication
- Eggs, S. 1994. *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics*. London: Pinter Publisher Ltd.
- Fairclough, N. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.
- Fairclough, N and Wodak, R. 1997. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publication
- Fowler, R. 1991. *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1994. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Second Edition. London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday, M. A. K and Matthiessen, C. M.I.M. 2004. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. Third Edition. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Hornby, A. S. 2000. *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*. Sixth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Izadi, F. 2007. *A Discourse Analysis of Elite American Newspaper Editorials (the case of Iran's nuclear program)*, Hakimeh Saghaye-Biria, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.
- Kotarumalos, A and McGuirk, R. *Indonesian Leaders Deplores Statements by Ausiee PM*. <http://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2013/11/19>.
- Mackey, A and Gass, S. M. 2005. *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated.
- Martin, J.R., Matthiessen, C.M.I.M., & Painter, C. 1997. *Working with Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold
- Matthiessen, C.M.I.M. 2012. *Systemic Functional Linguistic as Applicable Linguistics.*" *Social Accountability and Critical Approaches.*"
- McCarthy, M and Carter, R. 1994. *Language as Discourse: Perspective for Language Teaching*. London: Longman
- Nunan, D. 1993. *Introducing to Discourse Analysis*. London: Penguin Group.
- Richardson, J. E. 2007. *Analysing Newspapers: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmilan.
- [Rusbridger, A. Indonesian President offers Australia Spying Truce. http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/26.](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/nov/26)
- Shojaei, A., Youssefi, K., & Hosseini, S.H. 2013. "A CDA Approach to The Biased Interpretation and Representation of Ideologically Conflicting Ideas in western Printed Media". *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol. 4 (4) PP: 858-868.
- Sudaryanti. 2013. *A Critical Discourse Analysis on Fox News Reports 6 & 7 February 2012*, Faculty of Letter, Jember University.
- Tabrizi, F and Nabifar, N. 2013 "A Comparative Study of Ideational Grammatical Metaphor in Health and Political Texts of English Newspapers". *Journal of academic and Applied Studies*, Vol. 3(1) PP:
- Thompson, G. 1996. *Introducing Functional Grammar*. Great Britain: Arnold.
- Universitas Jember. 2011. *Pedoman Penulisan Karya Ilmiah*. Jember: Jember University Press.
- van Dijk, T.A. 1993. *Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.
- van Dijk, T.A. 1998. *News as Discourse*. Hillsdle. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associate.
- Wodak, R and Meyer, M. 2001. *Method in Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage Publications.
- Yule, G. 1996. *The Study of Language: Second Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

