

# CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "COURTROOM QUARREL MARKS STUDENT PROTESTER'S TRIAL"

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## Abstract

This research is intended to (1) to observe the process types used in this articles, (2) to investigate the circumstances typed described in this article, (3) to know the participants involved in the text and (4) to disclose the relationship between the text and the social context. In order to answer the aforementioned questions, the writer uses a descriptive qualitative (naturalistic) design, and the data of this study were taken from the samples of newspaper article entitled "*Courtroom Quarrel Marks Student Protester's Trial*" written in *The Jakarta Post*, Thursday, October 16, 2008). The text is analyzed using Functional Grammar Analysis (by analyzing the theme and rheme and the transitivity elements). The results indicated that the text is dominantly numbered by the material process explaining that doing words are very dominant, whereas, the types of participants involved are ranged from specific legal context such as lawyer, defendant, witness, the court, the trials, the officials, etc. The writer of the text seems to show that in Indonesia, the power relation between the new order era and the reformed era has changed in a number of aspects.

*Key Words: rheme, theme, transitivity, power relation, critical discourse analysis*

## 1. Introduction

Language is the primary means of communication through which the people can express almost unlimited ranges of meanings. In a certain communication situation, a person conveys only single meaning to other people, but, in other situation he/she can express a great number of meanings in one communication event. In a coffee shop, for example, a customer is ordering a cup of coffee and says "Coffee, please", to the waitress, the clause the customer utters is then appropriately responded by the waitress by bringing him/her a cup of hot coffee to drink. In this particular situation (context), the customer expresses single meaning (requesting a cup of coffee), the waitress responds by performing single action (bringing a cup of coffee not bringing, say for example, a cup of

coffee with a plate of food). In classroom situation, however, a lecturer explains the lesson to the students and delivers wide ranges of meanings. The students respond by performing series of actions like summarizing, re-explaining, discussing, doing some classroom project, etc.

When two persons are engaged in communication using a spoken language, they are involved in joint activities in order to attend mutual understanding. In a joint activity, the agents do reciprocal sequence of actions to establish and to maintain the agreed goals. The agents involved act in coordination with each other to produce and receive utterances directed at the same goal. When one acts as a speaker, the agent that produces the utterances, the other acts as a hearer, the one receiving the utterances. The speaker is trying to deliver the message and the hearer is trying to attend the meaning

across his/her mind. The two participants engaged in conversation do the so called joint activities (Clark, 1996). In relation to this point, Levinson (1992) suggests that joint activities are goal-centric and constrained in terms of setting, role, and above all, on the kind of allowable and appropriate contribution. Both Clark and Levinson seem to suggest that spoken language/discourse is dependent on context. In other words, the information the speaker delivers will be easily understood when it is supported with relevant context where the communication takes place.

In addition to the goals, settings, and roles that are involved in spoken language, the communication participants derive explicitly and implicitly a set of common beliefs about the activity, and they drive towards mutual understanding. In other words, the participants' acts in conversation are not free-values – the utterances the speaker produces is not only determined by the speaker but they also determined by several contingencies factors. Participants get implicitly or implicitly a common sense of (beliefs, thoughts, ideas, referents, etc.) about the activity, in that, they achieve to what we usually call mutual understanding as both parties coordinate and accept utterances each other.

In today's world, people use both spoken and written language equally well to engage communication with other people. They use the two modes to exchange information, to express ideas, to share feelings and emotions, etc. Like spoken language, written language is also used to deliver messages to other people and it occurs in various contexts (family, academic, social). Examples of written language include letters or e-mails, research projects, books, magazine, newspaper, etc. When people produce written texts, they act as authors or writers of the texts, and when people read the texts, they act upon as readers of the texts. When a person reads a piece of text, he/she often has different interpretation from what is expected by the writer. Even if when the text is simple which seems to convey a single meaning, the text is sometimes interpreted differently.

Different person might have his/her own interpretation depending on wide varieties of factors. For example, the sign "NO BICYCLES" cited from McCarthy (1996), is highly context-dependent. It may mean "All available bicycles are already hired/sold" or it may mean "It is forbidden to ride or to park a bicycle in this area". The meaning of the text is dependent on where the notice is located. The first interpretation may be the case when the notice is written in the store selling bicycle while the second interpretation may be true when the notice is found in the park. Context-dependency also applies to other written texts such as essays, reports, newspaper articles, instruction, letters whose meanings are sometimes clear to one reader but are still opaque to others.

Texts, written and spoken mode, are produced through the choices made by the speaker or the writer. Both the speaker and the writer have certain degree of the so called "authoritative right" to choose the language corpora to express a unit of meaning which operates within a context. Meanwhile the reader or the listener interprets the text based on his/her existing knowledge of the world (schemata), the knowledge of huge language corpora and the connection of the text with the context. McCarthy (1996) supported that both spoken and written discourses are dependent on immediate contexts to greater or lesser degree. Failing to combine the aspects involved may result in incomplete understanding of the text. Fairclough (2003) suggests that there are three analytically separable elements in the process of meaning making: the production of the text, the text itself, and the reception of the text. He further says that the production of the text puts the focus on the producers, authors, speakers, writers; the reception of the text put the focus on interpretation, interpreters, readers, and listeners.

With reference to the aspects involved in a written text, in this essay, therefore, there seems to be in need of analyzing the newspaper article "Courtroom Quarrel Marks Student Protester's Trial" cited from The Jakarta Post, Thursday, October 16, 2008). The text concerns about the trial of the

students for assaulting the police officer in a violent demonstration protesting the increase of fuel price. In this particular occasion, the analysis will concern the position of the participant involved in the discourse whether they are in equal position or in unequal position. As The Jakarta Post is one of the daily newspapers written in English and it is read by mostly well-educated persons, this seems to imply that the newspaper release the discourse that depict how the social agents (the students, the police officers, the court officials) act upon in social events.

The text is then analyzed based on: firstly, Functional Grammar especially in terms of Theme and Rheme and Transitivity as suggested by Gerot's (1995) *Making Sense of Functional Grammar*. Secondly, the text is further analyzed based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspectives. Therefore, this discussion shall describe the terms such as

- 1.1. What the process types are used in the article?
- 1.2. What circumstances are found in the article?
- 1.3. Who are the participants involved in the text?
- 1.4. What is the relationship between the text and the social context?

## 2. Method

In order to answer the aforementioned questions, the writer uses a descriptive qualitative (naturalistic) design, and the data of this study were taken from the samples of newspaper article entitled "*Courtroom Quarrel Marks Student Protester's Trial*" written in *The Jakarta Post*, Thursday, October 16, 2008). Lynch (1996) suggests that the most common methods for gathering and recording the data in a naturalistic program evaluation are observation, interview, journals, questionnaire, and document analysis. The text is analyzed using Functional Grammar Analysis (by analyzing the theme and rheme and the transitivity elements).

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Generic Structure

This text is taken from one of the articles released by Jakarta Post on Thursday, October 16, 2008. After reading through the words, clauses and sentences that make up the text, it can be inferred that the text is categorized into NEWS ITEM entitled "Courtroom Quarrel marks Student Protester's Trial". This text informs the readers about the trial of student named John Irvan who was claimed for assaulting one of the police officer, Second Insp. Henrico Manurung in a violent demonstration protesting the government to for the increase of fuel price. The police officer was reported to suffer from bruise all over the body.

### 3.2. Material Process Type

The absence of a key witness **in the trial** (circ:loc:place) of student John Irvan (Participant: Actor) for **assaulting** (process: material) a police officer (Participant: Goal) **triggered** (process: material) heated arguments between the lawyer and the protestor. The hearing **was scheduled** (process: material) to start **at 1 p.m. on Wednesday** (Circ: Time) but it **turned into courtroom drama**. And the lawyer **walked out** (process: material) of the room and student (Participant: Actor) who **came to support** (process: material) John **held** (process: material) rally outside the court. The trial was then **adjourned** (process: material) for several hours until **5 p.m.** when Manurung **arrived** (process: material). The defendant claimed Manurung had **turned up** (process: material) because the team of lawyers **pressurized** (process: material) the court officials participant: Goal). Manurung **was reported** (Process: verbal) to have bruise all over his body. As is indicated in Table 1, the results of the analysis show that the article consist of 28 material process making the element the most occurring one, and subsequently followed by verbal process (8), mental process (6) and relational process (6). There are nowhere found in this text behavioral, existential, and meteorological process type.

Table 1 Process Type

No	Process Type	Number of Occurrence
1	Material	28
2	Behavioral	-
3	Mental	6
4	Verbal	8
5	Relational	6
6	Existential	-
7	Metecrological	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>

### 3.3. The participant

The result of the analysis of participant is depicted in Table 2 below. The analysis involves WHO (actor, sener, sayer, token, and carrier) and TO WHOM (goal, phenomenon, verbiage, value, and attribute). In the case of WHO, the text involves 16 actors who occupy the most frequent participant to occur, and subsequently followed by 6 sayers, 3 tokens, 3 sensors, and 3 carriers. In the case of TO WHOM, the text involves 18 goals who enjoys the most occurring participant and successively followed by 5 verbiages, 3 values, 3 phenomena, and 3 attributes. The typical type of participant in legal context ranges from specific terms such as lawyer, defendant, witness, the court, the trial, the officials, the hearing, and the client. Examples of these are found in "The trial (Participant: Goal) was adjourned until next Wednesday to hear other witness" Though there are some common terms found such as the student, the group, personal pronoun (we), names of persons.

Table 2 Participant

No	Participant Type	Number of Occurrence
1	Actor	16
2	Goal	18
3	Behaver	-
4	Range	-
5	Senser	3
6	Phenomenon	3
7	Sayer	6
8	Verbiage	5
9	Token	3
10	Value	3
11	Carrier	3
12	Attribute	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>

### 3.4. Circumstances

Circumstance answer the questions as when, where, why, how, how many. They realize meaning about time, place, manner, causes, accompaniment, and matter. As is indicated in Table 3 below it can be reported that circumstance of place occurs 14 making this element the most frequent, and subsequently followed by 6 time, 5 manner, 4 cause, 2 matter, 1 accompaniment.

The most typical type of circumstance of place in legal context are the courtroom, Jakarta District Court, in the trial, Jakarta Legal Aid Institute, court building. For example in the sentence "Later, the lawyer walked out of the courtroom (Circ: Loc: Place) and students who came to support John held a rally outside the court (Circ: Loc: Place)"

Table 3 Circumstance Type

No	Circumstance Type	Number of Occurrence
1	Time	6
2	Place	14
3	Manner	5
	3.1. Means	3
	3.2. Quality	2
	3.3. Comparison	-
4.	Cause	4
	4.1. Reason	3
	4.2. Purpose	1
	4.3. Behalf	-
5.	Accompaniment	1
6.	Matter	2
7.	Role	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

### 4. Critical Discourse Analysis

Working on Critical Discourse Analysis is doing on the project of linguistic and social context. It deals with relating the text as defined by Widdowson (2007) as actual use of the language produced for communicative purposes and the social context. Fairclough (1995) points out that critical discourse analysis, therefore, means investigating discourse "with the eye to their determination by, and their effect on, social structure". Based on the analysis, it is found that the text

is dominantly numbered by material process explaining that doing words are very dominant. The text expresses the notion that some entity physically does something (actor) and other entity receives the doing from the actor (goal). As is shown in the first sentence "The absence of a key witness in the trial of student John Irvan for **assaulting** a police officer **triggered** heated arguments between the defense lawyers and prosecutors", the doing word "assaulting" means the actor who is also a student named John Irvan (actor) commits an assault that cause bruises to the police (goal).

The meaning making depends upon not only what is explicit in a text but also what is implicit – what is assumed. Relating the text to what society commonly accepts that "assaulting" is usually done by the stronger to the weaker, by the person who has more power to those not in power, or it may be the case by someone whose social and economical status is higher to those whose class are lower. Say for example, "The soldier assaults the farmer", or "The rich assaults the poor" or "The foreman assaults the worker". The stronger assaults the weaker. Power is about relations of difference, and particularly about the effect of difference in social structure (Wodak: 2000).

In the era of Suharto, Indonesia's second president, Indonesia's Armed Forces had powerful authority to safe and to secure everything that threatened the peace and order of the country including kidnapping any suspected individuals and/or groups. The leader's words had high degree of legitimacy so that the armed forces could take measures of action for the sake of security and unity of the country. Henry and Tator (2002) supported that opinion of leaders, courts, government, editors, even family and consumer scientists, play crucial role in shaping issues and in setting the boundaries of legitimate discourse. In this situation discourse was written based n the interest of those who speak, and words were politically made up. Van Dijk (2000) in McGregor (2008) said that the words of those in power are taken as "self-evident truths" and the

words of those, not in power, are dismissed as irrelevant, inappropriate, or without substance.

However, this text shows the phenomenon that is very far different from the current expectation. The writer of the text seems to show that power relation has changed and it is especially the case in the country like Indonesia whose social and political condition is under the turbulence. No things are fixed, everything is subject to a change. It is sort of shifting about the discourse of "security and order of the country. Comparing this era as partly depicted in the text to Suharto era, in Suharto era the government, the armed forces and the state apparatus firmly controlled the discourse. As the shift goes on turning to reformed era (*era reformasi*), the authority of the officers holding the power of the country, including the police officers, seems to slowly weakening. The country's control over the force of grass root demanding the salary rise, the decrease of fuel and liquid gas prices becomes loose. Violent demonstration, student brawl, mass rally, and criminal are this country's biggest scene.

## 5. Conclusion

Taking a closer look at the text from the perspective of critical discoursed analysis involves relating the text with social contexts. Critical Discourse Analysis is necessary for describing, interpreting, analyzing, and critiquing social life as reflected in the text itself. As social changes discourse changes, depending on who control the discourse. Critical Discourse Analysis is studying the text in order to reveal the source of power, dominance, inequality and bias and how this sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced.

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