

## **Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers in Hong Kong in Two Articles of *South China Morning Post***

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This research is entitled “Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers in Hong Kong in Two Articles of *South China Morning Post*.” This research aims to analyze the elements used by *South China Morning Post*, a Hong Kong daily, in representing Indonesian female workers negatively on micro level in the macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure and to describe the negative representations attached to Indonesian female workers. The objects used in this research are two articles related to Indonesian female workers abuse case in Hong Kong from the news media *South China Morning Post* published on February 2015. This research is a descriptive-qualitative research using critical discourse analysis method of Teun A. van Dijk, which focuses on micro-level analysis. The result of this research shows that Indonesian female workers are represented negatively in macrostructure through the discourse elements of *headline* and *lead*, in superstructure through the discourse elements of *verbal reactions*, *main events*, and *background*, and in microstructure through the discourse elements of *level of specificity and degree of completeness*, *implications*, *presuppositions*, and *lexical style*. They are represented as less educated, weak, and labile figures in the two articles of *South China Morning Post*.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, negative representation, Indonesian female Indonesian female workers, news media

*Penelitian ini berjudul “Representasi Negatif Tenaga Kerja Wanita Indonesia di Hong Kong dalam Dua Artikel South China Morning Post.” Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis elemen wacana yang digunakan oleh surat kabar South China Morning Post, sebuah harian Hong Kong, pada struktur makro, superstruktur, dan struktur mikro dalam merepresentasikan tenaga kerja wanita Indonesia secara negatif dan mendeskripsikan representasi negatif yang melekat pada tenaga kerja wanita Indonesia. Objek penelitian yang digunakan adalah dua artikel South China Morning Post mengenai kasus kekerasan yang menimpa tenaga kerja wanita Indonesia di Hong Kong yang terbit pada bulan Februari 2015. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif-deskriptif menggunakan metode analisis wacana kritis Teun A. van Dijk yang berfokus pada tataran mikro. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tenaga kerja wanita Indonesia direpresentasikan secara negatif pada struktur makro melalui elemen headline dan lead, superstruktur melalui elemen verbal reactions, main events, dan backgrounds, dan pada struktur mikro melalui elemen level of specificity and degree of completeness, implications, presuppositions, dan lexical style.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The high availability of employment and salary rates as a household assistant abroad has attracted Indonesians, especially women to work in other countries. Based on the statistic data on the official page of *Badan Nasional Penempatan dan Perlindungan Tenaga Kerja Indonesia (BNP2TKI)*, a protection agency and the Indonesian manpower placement, the enthusiasm of lower-class economy in Indonesia to become a household assistant abroad is increasing every year. By working abroad, they hope to get a better life. In fact, working abroad as a household assistant brings many problems, one of which is violence. It is a commonplace for Indonesian female workers to be the victims of a violent case.

The Indonesian female workers (TKW) then becomes a topic that is discussed especially with cases that is popping up in printed and electronic media. It is not only widely reported in Indonesian mass media, but also reported in the mass media that employ many Indonesian female workers, which one of them is Hong Kong.

News analysis in the mass media becomes a new study in the world of linguistics and it is referred to as the analysis of critical discourse. Through critical discourse analysis, we can know how the content of media texts, and we know how the message is delivered to us through words, phrases, sentences, metaphors, and so on. These intentions ultimately lead to another perception of the reader. This is where Hong Kong's daily creates a representation of Indonesian female workers, which is tend to be negative. The term of representation is related to how a person or a group, an idea or opinion is displayed in a text. Thus, the report of Indonesian female workers who are represented negatively can be discussed.

From the explanation, the researcher formulated some of these following questions; (a) What discourse elements are used to demonstrate the negative representation of Indonesian female workers in two articles *South China Morning Post* on the issue of TKW violence in Hong Kong on macrostructures, superstructures and microstructures? (b) What negative representations are attached to Indonesian female workers in two articles *South China Morning Post* on the issue of

TKW violence in Hong Kong?

Based on the research questions, the objectives of the research are to analyze discourse elements used to demonstrate negative representation of Indonesian female workers and to describe negative representation that are attached to Indonesian female workers in two articles on the issue of TKW violence in Hong Kong in *South China Morning Post*.

This study is expected to be a benchmark for its readers to the extent to which we can understand a news that exists in a media, to see a news in the media critically, and to give contribution in the field of linguistics, especially about the representation

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to van Dijk (as cited in Schiffrin et. al. ed., 2001), critical discourse analysis is a study that discusses issues of power, supremacy, and discrimination produced by the text and is discussed through social and political contexts.

Critical discourse analysis sees text as a form of interaction where the text is seen as something that has aims, for example to influence, persuade, and argue, and so on. In a text, it can be seen whether the text is on the side of the author or on the side of object being talked about, so the critical discourse analysis here serves to reinforce what the author wants to convey to the public. In addition, critical discourse analysis is also used to find out the structure, strategy or other elements used both in text and in verbal communication that play a role in building representation (van Dijk, 1993: 250).

### Critical Discourse Analysis of van Dijk

In the critical discourse analysis van Dijk, there are three levels discussed. They are macro level (social context), meso level (social cognition), and micro level (textual level). However, this study focuses only on micro-level analysis. In the micro level, the aspect that are analyzed is the use of language in a text. Van Dijk distributes micro level into three parts: macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. The macrostructure includes the global meaning of a theme or topic. These topics are usually manifested in *headline* and *lead* elements (1993: 113). Superstructure includes a text scheme. The scheme consists of elements as follows: *summary* (which contains *headline* and *lead*), *main events*, *backgrounds* (which contains *context* and *history*), *verbal reactions*, and *comments* (van Dijk, 1988: 114). The microstructure includes analysis on semantic through *level of specificity and degree of completeness* (detail element), *implications*, as well as *presuppositions*, syntactic, stylistic (*lexical style*), and rhetorical aspects. However, this study focuses only on analysis on semantic and stylistic aspects.

#### 1. Macrostructure

According to van Dijk, the main topic or common theme in a news is usually expressed through *headline* elements and news *leads* (1993: 113). This main topic has an important role in influencing the reader, considering the topic is the theme of the discourse, although it could be possible that the main topic does not appear in the headline. In other words, the topic has an important role in displaying the information you want to "highlight" by storing it in the headline and storing the

"really important" information not in the headline (1993: 113).

## 2. Superstructure

In general, a text or discourse has a plot or scheme consisting of certain elements. The elements are the beginning part to the end part of the text or discourse: *summary* (which contains *headline* and *lead*), *main events*, *backgrounds* (which contains *context* and *history*), *verbal reactions*, and *comments* (van Dijk, 1988: 114).

### a. *Summary*

*Summary* is the most important part of a news text. *Headlines* and *leads* are part of the *Summary*, which generally shows the theme put forward in a news (van Dijk, 1993c: 113).

### b. *Main events*

*Main events* are a part that plays a role in forming news content. This element describes the story of an event. In addition, main events also provide details or more information about the topic.

### c. *Backgrounds*

*Backgrounds* are the parts that are usually present after the main event. This element usually shows the events that underlie the main events to form a context so that the news will be clearer when it is delivered to the reader. In addition, backgrounds also provide information about a similar incident that happened before (history), for example when an accident occurred on the highway, usually in the news will be reported also about the incident that ever happened before (van Dijk, 1988: 115).

### d. *Verbal reactions*

*Verbal reactions* are the explanatory part of the parties involved in the news. Such reactions are usually positive or negative comments or opinions (van Dijk, 1988: 115).

### e. *Comments*

*Comments* are part of the conclusions given from the various opinions of the figures involved directly or indirectly in the news.

## 3. Microstructure

The microstructure of van Dijk analyses the meaning of a text based on the word choice, sentence and style used in the text. Analysis of this microstructure consists of various aspects, but in this study, the author focuses only on microstructure analysis on semantic and stylistic aspects for both aspects have a significant role in building the negative representation of Indonesian female workers in the two articles of *South China Morning Post*. On the stylistic aspect, the author uses the analysis of *Lexical Style*.

### a. Semantic Aspects

In the semantic aspect, the author uses the analysis of *level of specificity and degree of completeness* (detail element), *implications*, and *presuppositions*. The detail is an element that serves to clarify an information. If the text wants to show that a party is in the right side, then the text will provide detail which supports the information. *Implications* are similar to the detail element. In the detail element, information that gives a party benefit will be defined in long detail. *Implications* see information that will give a party benefit will be defined clearly and vice versa. *Presuppositions* is used to support a text or in other words it is used to support an opinion that gives a trusted premise.

### b. Stylistic Aspect

On the stylistic aspect, the author uses the analysis of *Lexical Style*. Analysis on stylistic is related to *Lexical Style*. Word choice has a function as both a positive and a negative evaluator (van Dijk, 1993b: 264). Word choice is very influential in determining how an event in news is displayed. The word choice is important in signifying a representation, as explained by van Dijk (1993c: 106)

## Negative Representation

Representation discusses how a person or a group is presented or described in the text, whether the text is in favour of a particular group or not and whether the group is shown properly or badly. According to Van Dijk (1993b: 275) there are two strategies for describing a person, group or idea in text media. The first strategy is by saying positive things (positive self-presentation) and the second is by saying negative things (negative other-presentation).

Negative other-presentation is a way used by participants to describe or represent others with a negative outlook or by saying negative things. This can be the addition of negative details.

## Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers Category

This category may vary, for example, a category that shows important characteristics of a person such as religion, status, physical form and so forth. In doing the analysis, the writer must be critical in seeing how a group is represented negatively by giving bad categories or labels or details. Information about the category or label or bad detail may cause certain prejudices when it is read by public. To be noted that the categories to be highlighted in the news often become valuable information to know the ideology of the media concerned (van Leeuwen, 1996).

## METHOD

The method used by the authors in this research is descriptive-qualitative method. This method aims to generate a systematic, factual and accurate description about the data and the relationship of phenomena being observed through the foundations of the theory that has been determined (Djajasudarma, 1993). Qualitative research method is a technique that delivers descriptive data either in the form of written or spoken of object being observed (Baxter in Litosseliti, 2010: 117).

Based on the description above, the author uses descriptive-qualitative research method by

collecting data in the form of articles related to the negative representation of Indonesian female workers (TKW) from Hong Kong daily, *South China Morning Post*, [www.scmp.com](http://www.scmp.com). Afterward, the author chooses two articles to represent cases of violence against Indonesian female workers in Hong Kong. After the data has been collected, the author will classify them based on the critical discourse analysis theory of van Dijk. Then, the author analyses the two articles on violence issue against Indonesian female workers. After that, the author explains the results of the analysis in writing.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers in Macrostructure

After analyzing the article that becomes the object of this research, it can be seen that the global topic or the headline is the title of the article itself and it is “Language and Cultural Barriers Leave Hong Kong's Indonesian Maids 'more vulnerable' to abuse”. Moreover, it can also be seen that the lead is ‘Use of abuse by employers to go unchecked”. The headline indicates that the violence occurred were caused by the language and cultural barriers experienced by Indonesian female workers (TKW) themselves. It builds the representation that Indonesian female workers (TKW) are less educated figures. In addition, the existence of the proposition ‘more vulnerable’ has given a negative representation to Indonesian women workers (TKW) according to the Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (2008) dictionary. sThey are represented that they are weak. In the meantime, the lead section of this article supports the common topics that the writer of the news wants to emphasize the headline. The lead of this article reiterates that language and cultural barriers have resulted in violent acts perpetrated by the employer until it is uncontrolled.

### Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers in Superstructure

Meanwhile, the global meaning represented in the topic is constructed well in the text. This article uses *verbal reactions* the most in representing Indonesian female workers negatively. *Verbal reactions* used are in the form of opinions from some people who have power and high position. The opinions are quoted either into the form of direct or indirect quotes. The use of the quotation by the writer has a purpose. In this superstructure analysis, the Indonesian female workers are represented as less educated person and weak figure. The use of *summary (headline and lead)*, *verbal reactions*, *main events*, and *backgrounds* are the elements that support each other. All of these elements represent the Indonesian female workers negatively.

For more details, the news scheme in the article can be seen through the table below:

Paragraph	Scheme Category	Negative Representation
<i>Headline</i> dan (1)	<i>Summary</i>	Less educated
(2)	<i>Main Events, Verbal Reactions</i>	Less educated

(3)(4)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	Less educated
(5)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	-
(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)	<i>Backgrounds</i>	-
(11)	<i>Main Events</i>	-
(12)(13)	<i>Verbal Reactions, Background (History)</i>	-
(14)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	Weak
(15)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	Less educated
(16)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	-
(17)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	Less educated
(18)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	-
(19)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	Weak
(20)	<i>Verbal Reactions</i>	Less educated

## Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers in Microstructure

### 1. Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers through Semantic Aspects

There are several elements used in the texts to represent Indonesian female workers (TKW) negatively through semantic aspects. The elements are *level of specificity and degree of completeness* or detail element, *implications*, and *presuppositions*.

In the *level of specificity and degree of completeness*, the author analyses the element in the form of detailed information displayed by news writer which ultimately builds a negative representation of Indonesian female workers. *Level of specificity and degree of completeness* is found in the second paragraph of the first article that is being research data.

From the second paragraph, it can be seen that the news writer uses indirect quotation and gives the word 'leading' and 'most horrific', as the element of *level of specificity and degree of completeness* to emphasize the negative representation of Indonesian female workers (TKW) Indonesia. The use of an indirect quotation marked by the proposition 'a leading human rights figure has said' indicates that the news writer wants to feature the speaker, a prominent human rights figure. While it may be possible that what the news writer quoted is not exactly what the human rights figure said. The use of this indirect quotation leads the reader to take for granted that the acts of violence that are even three of the most egregious acts of violence in Hong Kong over the last thirteen years do occur because of the language barriers and cultural differences experienced by Indonesian female workers (TKW) themselves. In other words, the details on this data are trying to lead readers' opinions. Moreover, the existence of 'leading' that modifies the 'human rights figure' makes the readers believe what the media said. In addition, the use of 'most horrific' that modifies 'abuse cases' also builds the negative representation of Indonesian female workers. It seems that the cause of the most severe, horrific and shocking cases of Hong Kong citizens is the language and differences culture experienced by Indonesian female worker. Thus, the sentence shows the negative representation of Indonesian female workers. They are represented as less-educated figures.

Furthermore, Indonesian female workers are also represented negatively in semantics aspects

through *implications* element. *Implications* are the information that implicitly conveyed by the news writer. The information implicitly implies aims to hide other information, thereby it builds a negative representation of Indonesian female workers. It is said that the language and cultural obstacles make Indonesian maid 'vulnerable' to this kind of violence act by the employer. This indicates the use of *implications* elements to represent the Indonesian female workers negatively. By looking at the proposition 'more vulnerable', then there is an implication that Indonesian female workers have been represented as weak figures from the beginning. According to Oxford Learner's dictionary Pocket Dictionary (2008) the word 'more' means 'to a greater extent than something else; to a greater degree than usual', while the word 'vulnerable' means weak. Then the use of 'more vulnerable' which is attached to Indonesian female workers (TKW) displayed by the news writer in the text emphasizes the negative representation of Indonesian female workers (TKW). The weak Indonesian female workers are getting weak due to the obstacles in language and culture they have experienced by themselves. They will be more vulnerable to acts of violence committed by their employers because of these language and cultural barriers.

Moreover, *presupposition* elements are also used by the news writer to provide trusted premises. It is said in the article that the obstacle in language and cultural differences may tell why the Indonesian maids involved in three worst abuse cases in the past thirteen years according to the human rights figure in Hong Kong.

The data belongs to the *presuppositions* elements in the form of quotation. The quotation used by the news writer emphasizes the negative representation of Indonesian female workers. It indirectly represents Indonesian female workers negatively. They are represented as less educated figures. The indirect quote is put forward by a prominent human rights figure to argue that the obstacles in language and cultural differences experienced by Indonesian female workers may explain why they could be trapped even in the three most horrific cases of violence in the last thirteen years in Hong Kong. However, the existence of the proposition 'may' above shows that the cause has not been proven true. According to Oxford Learner's dictionary Pocket Dictionary (2008) the word 'may' means '*used to say that something is possible*'. The causes mentioned above may be true or may not be because the reality has not been proven. The cause of the case is still based on presupposition.

Negative representation of Indonesian female workers are not only shown in semantic aspects, but also in stylistic aspects through *lexical style*.

## **2. Negative Representation of Indonesian Female Workers through Stylistic Aspects**

In the fourteenth paragraph, the writer prefers to use the word '*vulnerable*'. The use of the word 'vulnerable' gives the meaning that Indonesian female worker is a weak figure according to Oxford Learner's Pocket Dictionary (2008). From the definition, it shows that the word 'vulnerable' gives a negative impression on the Indonesian female worker. If the word 'vulnerable' is replaced by 'more at risk of abuse', then the meaning will be different even though they both state 'weak' and equally indicate a negative thing. The proposition of 'more at risk of abuse' gives a negative impression on Hong Kong people, because it is as if they like to torture. If the news writer uses the 'more at risk of abuse' proposition, then what will emerge is a negative representation of the employer, not a negative representation of Indonesian female worker. It will be different if the news writer uses the word "vulnerable", then what emerges is a negative representation of Indonesian female workers. They are represented as weak figures.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis on macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure of Teun A. van Dijk in the two articles *South China Morning Post* on the issue of TKW violence in Hong Kong, it can be concluded that Indonesian female workers (TKW) are represented negatively. They are represented as less educated, weak, and labile characters in macrostructures, superstructures, and microstructures using the discourse elements. In macrostructure, Indonesian female workers are represented negatively through *headline* and *lead* elements of the news. In the superstructure, they are mostly represented negatively through *verbal reaction* elements. In the microstructure, Indonesian female workers are represented negatively through the *level of specificity and degree of completeness or detail element, implications, presuppositions, and lexical style* elements.

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