

The representation of executed Indonesian migrant workers in *The Jakarta Post* News articles

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses how the representation of executed Indonesian migrant workers in the case of their executions in Saudi Arabia from 2015 to 2018 in The Jakarta Post news articles. This study is analyzed by using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which specifically uses the Social Actor Representation (SAR) theory from van Leeuwen (2008). In analyzing the data, this study is also supported by the theory of levels of analysis from Richardson (2007) to analyze the text producers' lexical choice and the theory of transitivity from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) to analyze the role allocation. This study shows that The Jakarta Post represents the executed Indonesian migrant workers negatively. It can be seen from the text producers' ways to include the executed Indonesian migrant workers in the representation. Moreover, The Jakarta Post also uses the words 'kill', 'knife to death', 'stab' etc. to describe the executed Indonesian migrant workers.

Keywords: Representation, news media, discourse, execution, Indonesian workers

Introduction

Indonesian government has sent large number of migrant workers to several countries such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia etc. Specifically, BNP2TKI recorded that there are 10,006 Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia during 2017. The greatest motivation of the Indonesian migrant workers to work abroad is to improve their family's quality of life. However, this did not go as well as the original plans and expectations. Urgent economic needs and lack of trainings put these migrant workers in trouble, for example many migrant workers are involved in criminal cases whether as victims or even as the perpetrators. The migrant workers who committed crimes in Saudi Arabia were convicted using Islamic law and some of them were sentenced to death.

Death penalty are usually implemented to punish serious crimes, such as murder. From 2015 to 2018 there were 4 migrant workers who were executed in Saudi Arabia for murder cases. The first was Siti Zainab who was executed in April 2015, followed by Karni in May 2015, then M Zaini Misrin who was beheaded in September 2018 and lastly followed by Tuti Tursilawati who was also put to death in November 2018. This death sentences triggered various strong responses from Indonesian and International human rights agencies. They argue that the death penalty is a form of human rights violations of the most

basic human rights, which is the right to live. In Indonesia, this strong responses were shown by human rights activists and the Indonesian public in the form of demonstrations as their protest to Saudi Arabia at the Saudi embassy. For example on March 20, 2018 human rights activists rallied against the execution of Zaini Misrin, and on November 2, 2018 rallies were also held to protest the execution of Tuti Tursilawati. Moreover, The Indonesian government under President Joko Widodo's era also sent the protest to Saudi Arabia for the executions of these migrant workers.

This phenomenon attracts many researchers and also the writers to examine how migrant workers are represented by the media. There are several studies examine this case. The first study was conducted by Citraresmana et.al (2018) entitled "Representation of Indonesian Labor in Indonesian Media: A Discourse and Cognition Study through Corpus Study". This study examines the Indonesian labor representation in Indonesian online media by using the theory of discourse and cognition from Graesser and Mills and theory of media discourse analysis from Eriyanto (2001). The data were obtained from ten Indonesian online news articles by using statistic descriptive as its method. The study found that 'government' is represented negatively in inference level and discourse strategy, meanwhile 'TKI' (Indonesian migrant worker) is represented positively as the weak party or the victim. The second study discusses the female

migrant workers representation in Malaysian and Indonesian daily newspaper. This study was conducted by Suganda et.al (2006) entitled "Representasi Sosok Tenaga Kerja Wanita Indonesia dalam Wacana Berita pada Harian Umum Utusan Malaysia dan Harian Umum Kompas Indonesia: Kajian Analisis Wacana Kritis". The aim of this study is to describe the representation of TKW (Indonesian female migrant workers) through language in daily national newspapers in Malaysia and Indonesia. This study uses the theory of social actor representation from Theo van Leeuwen (2008). The data were obtained from Kompas and Utusan Malaysia from 2004 to 2005 since there were some news releases related to the Indonesian female migrant worker issues in Malaysia. This study found that both media represented female migrant workers as marginal, powerless, uneducated, poor, stupid etc. since female migrant worker is frequently included in the discourse strategy to clearly show its negative representation. On the other side, the authority (employer, mass media, government) was frequently excluded in discourse strategy to protect the authority. The third study was conducted by Razzaq (2012) entitled "Discourse Analysis of the Representation of Migrant Workers in the Star Online Newspaper". The aims of this study are examining the representation of 'migrant workers' in the articles, and describing the argumentation strategies used to justify and legitimize the representation. This study uses the theory from Wodak (discourse-historical approach) and van Leeuwen (social actor representation). This study obtained the data from 103 Star online articles from 2012 to 2013. This study found that Star online articles represent the migrant workers in negative way, since they are considered as competitor for Malaysian and they are also represented as the threat to the social security. All of them studies above discuss the representation of migrant workers in news media generally (without knowing their role whether as victim or perpetrator in criminal cases news releases) since most of news releases related to migrant workers talk about their involvement in criminal cases. Thus, it encourages the writer to conduct the study about the representation of executed Indonesian migrant workers who has the role as the perpetrators. This study only investigates the news releases about Indonesian migrant worker executions from 2015 to 2018 with their role as perpetrators since they were accused to kill their employer/ employer's family. The writers use media (*The Jakarta Post*) as the source of data because the media has the potential to influence or control the reader's mind as a tool to carry out the power of practice (as cited in Fajri, 2016). It is in line with van Dijk (1995) who states "media has symbolic and persuasive power, which means that the me-

dia has the potential to control and influence readers' or audiences' minds" (van Dijk, 1995, 10).

News discourse does not only represent the reported event but it also contains particular hidden ideology which is shared through language as its main instrument. Fowler (1991) also assumes that news is not only a reflection of value-free facts but it is also an articulation of particular ideological position. Moreover, Teo (2000) also describes that language and text are closely related to ideology since it used to be transmitted, enacted and reproduced through language. Therefore, Richardson (2007) sees discourse as argumentative discourse genre. As a genre, news is able to shape the audiences' experiences and values, and vice versa (as cited in Amer, 2015). In conclusion, media has a great opportunity to influence the reader's minds based on their point of view or their adopted ideology so that news discourse can have the power to drive the audiences to have the same understanding or perception with them.

This study is considered as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Van Dijk (2008) defines CDA as follows.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research the primarily studies the way social power abuses, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2008, p.85)

In addition, Fairclough (1995) states that CDA is combination of 1) text analysis; 2) analysis of text production, consumption and distribution processes; and 3) socio-cultural analysis on discursive event as a whole. In this study, the writers used Social Actor Representation (SAR) theory from van Leeuwen (2008). This theory states that a phenomenon can be represented differently or in other words it can be represented in several versions, where the differences are motivated by text producers' interest, knowledge and ideology. In other words, the execution of Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia could be represented differently depending on the adopted ideology and the interests held by text producers. Rycker (2014) states that van Leeuwen goes behind the grammatical process which focuses on semantic features of discourse such as 'exclusion' to represent the phenomenon so that Waugh et al (2015) adds that this model is based on the sociological categories (e.g agency) instead of linguistic categories (e.g. passive sentence) (as cited in Ali, 2007).

One of the aims of this study is to find out the representation of the executed Indonesian migrant workers in *The Jakarta Post* articles. Representation in a text can be seen from the choice of words, relations between sentences, photo assistance, and representations that are displayed as visual additions. Therefore, Eriyanto (2011) mentions that representation is a linguistic phenomenon. He also added that the reference used to form a representation refers to how a person, a group, a particular idea or opinion is displayed as it should, whether it is prioritized, marginalized or neutralized (Eriyanto, 2011, p.16). This is in line with van Leeuwen's Social Actor Representation (2008) theory which examines and analyzes how social actors are displayed (included) or excluded in a representation. This theory can also try to analyze the text producers' purpose in carrying out these strategies (excluded-included). This study also uses the levels of analysis theory from Richardson (2007) that focuses on word selection (lexical analysis) such as naming and reference and sentence formation. It is also supported by the theory of transitivity from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) to help the process of data classification, especially to determine the role allocation of each actor in a sentence. The use of the theories above aims to uncover how the text producers (*The Jakarta Post*) represent executed Indonesian migrant workers in their articles, especially when the issue of capital punishment always becomes one of the hottest issues in Indonesian and global society.

Method

This study examines *The Jakarta Post*'s articles regarding the execution of Siti Zainab, Karni, M. Zaini Misrin and Tuti Tursilawati which were carried out in Saudi Arabia. There are 15 articles analyzed. This study is a qualitative study since this study focuses on answering questions descriptively. The followings are the steps to analyze the data: 1) the writers categorize the data based on van Leeuwen (2008) Social Actor Representation theory (exclusion-inclusion); 2) The writers use the theory of transitivity from Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) to help the classification process to find the role allocation of the actor in the data (activated or passivated actor); 3) The writers analyze the lexical choices which are used by the text producers to represent the executed Indonesian migrant workers in the articles by using the theory of level of analysis from Richardson (2007); 4) The last, the writers conclude how the text producers represent the executed Indonesian migrant workers.

Results and Discussion

The executed Indonesian Migrant Worker is the most frequent social actor which is included by *The Jakarta Post*. In addition, it can be seen that *The Jakarta Post* mostly show the executed Indonesian workers as the passivated social actors in the representation. According to van Leeuwen (2008) passivation occurs when the social actors function as object in a representation. Van Leeuwen (2008) also describes that passivation is distinguished into subjection and beneficialization. The followings are the data which show how the executed Indonesian migrant workers are passivated by using beneficialization

- Data 1: The government has done its best to prevent Siti^{NOMI} from being executed by asking for a pardon from the victim's family members. (EXMI_TJP_15_04_'15_C)
- Data 2: The government also appointed professional lawyer Khudran al-Zahrani to provide legal assistance to Siti^{NOMI} in every trial hearing, the ministry said. (EXMI_TJP_15_04_'15_C)
- Data 3: Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi has maintained that the government expended considerable energy trying to save Siti^{NOMI} from execution. (EXMI_TJP_16_04_'15_A)
- Data 4: President Jokowi has requested that Zaini^{NOMI} and other Indonesians on death row in Saudi Arabia be granted clemency on at least three occasions: During his visit to Riyadh in September 2015, during King Salman's visit to Jakarta in March 2017 and through a letter sent to the Islamic kingdom in November 2017. (EXMI_TJP_19_03_'18)

According to van Leeuwen (2008) beneficialized social actors occur when the social actors are treated as the third party which got positive or negative benefit from the action. In other words, those data show that the executed Indonesian migrant workers are the parties who have got the positive/negative 'benefit' from the actions which are done by the actor/doer.

To analyze the parties who have got the 'benefit' from the action. Firstly, the writer needs to find the actor/doer. The actor/doer in all data above is Indonesian government which is realized by using 'the government' in data 1 and 2, 'Foreign Minister Retno LP Marsudi' and

'President Jokowi' in data 3 and 4. They are categorized as actors since they have activation role allocation or in other words they are activated by the verb/verb phrases 'has done its best to prevent' in data 1, 'appointed professional lawyer' in data 2, 'maintained that the government expended considerable energy trying to save' in data 3 and 'has requested' in data 4. After identifying the actors, the writers can analyze who has got the benefit from the actions which have been done by the actors. Based on the data above, the executed Indonesian migrant workers are the parties who have got the benefits from the actors' actions. To deeply analyze whether the benefit is positive or negative, the lexical analysis should be done to these data. From the data above, there are several *The Jakarta Post's* choices which are interesting to investigate such as in data 1 *The Jakarta Post* uses 'to prevent' which is added by emphasis 'has done its best' (data 1), 'to provide legal assistance' (data 2) which are highlighted by 'to save' (data 1) 'appointed professional lawyer' (data 2) and 'has requested be granted clemency' (data 3). According to Online Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, the word 'to prevent' means 'to stop something from happening' so that when it is combined with the emphasis 'has done its best', it can be interpreted that The Jakarta Post describes that the Indonesian government has done the greatest things to stop Siti's execution. For the data 2, the verb phrase 'to provide legal assistance' combined with 'appointed professional lawyer' can be interpreted as 'giving legal support or help by asking the lawyer to help the executed Indonesian migrant workers'. Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary also defines 'to save' as 'to keep somebody or something from death, harm, loss, etc' so that when it is collocated with 'expended considerable energy', it also means that Indonesian government has done great efforts to protect the Indonesian migrant workers in Saudi Arabia. Since *The Jakarta Post* uses positive words to describe the actions which are done by Indonesian government, it can be concluded that the executed Indonesian migrant workers got the positive benefit from the Indonesian government. In addition, it can also show the intention of *The Jakarta Post* for doing those strategies, which is to highlight and foreground the Indonesian government's efforts to protect the Indonesian workers in the representation.

Besides passivation-beneficialization, the executed Indonesian migrant workers are also realized in the form of passivation-subjection-participation, which means that *The Jakarta Post* represents the executed Indonesian migrant workers as object in representation. It is in line with van Leeuwen (2008) who describes that this strategy occurs when the social

actors function as object in a representation, or as goal in material process, phenomenon in mental process etc (in transitivity analysis). In terms of lexical analysis for this role allocation, *The Jakarta Post* tends to passivate the executed Indonesian migrant workers by using 'sentenced to death', 'executed' and 'beheaded' which all of the actions are referred Saudis government. According to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, the noun 'sentence' means 'the punishment given by court' so that 'sentenced to death' means 'giving the death punishment'. From all the data, it is noted that The Jakarta Post uses 'sentenced to death' to passivate the executed Indonesian workers in the nomination category for nine times, for example

- Data 5: Siti^{NOM1}, who was working as a domestic worker in Saudi Arabia, was sentenced to death for killing her female employer, Nourah binti Abdullah Duhem Al Maruba, in 1999. EXMI_TJP_15_04_'15_A
- Data 6: In 2013, a Saudi Arabian court sentenced Karni^{NOM1} to death for allegedly killing her employer's four-year-old child in 2012. EXMI_TJP_16_04_'15_B
- Data 7: Tuti^{NOM1} was sentenced to death in 2011 for beating her employer to death with a stick in self-defense against attempted rape. EXMI_TJP_30_10_'1

In addition, *The Jakarta Post* also passivated the executed Indonesian migrant workers with the verb 'executed' seven times. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the word 'execute' means 'to kill somebody, especially as a legal punishment'. The followings are several data which show the executed Indonesian migrant workers who are passivated with the verb 'execute'.

- Data 8: The interior ministry said Siti Zainab^{NOM1} was executed after being convicted of stabbing and beating Saudi woman Noura al-Morobei to death. (EXMI_TJP_14_04_'15)
- Data 9: She was the second Indonesian migrant worker executed by Saudi authorities, following Siti Zaenab binti Duhri Rupa^{NOM1}. EXMI_TJP_08_05_'15
- Data 10: Jakarta was recently "shocked" by the news that Riyadh had executed M. Zaini Misrin^{NOM1}, an Indonesian driver convicted of murdering his Saudi Arabian employer, last Sunday in Mecca without any prior notification sent to Indonesian officials in the country. EXMI_TJP_21_03_'18

Data 11: Indonesian migrant worker Tuti Tursilawati^{NOMI} was executed in Saudi Arabia on Monday. EXMI_TJP_31_10_'18_B

The next verb which passivates the executed Indonesian migrant workers is 'behead'. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines the word 'behead' as 'to cut off somebody's head especially as a punishment'. In this nomination category, it is noted that *The Jakarta Post* uses this word twice as follow.

Data 12: Karni's execution came only two days after another Indonesian migrant worker, Siti Zaenab^{NOMI}, was beheaded in Medina on Tuesday. EXMI_TJP_16_04_'15_B

Data 11: She was the second Indonesian migrant worker executed by Saudi authorities, following Siti Zaenab binti Duhri^{NOMI} Rupa^{NOMI}. EXMI_TJP_08_05_'15

As we can see, *The Jakarta Post* mostly use passive voice construction to inform the executions of Indonesian migrant workers as can be seen in data 5 (Siti,was sentenced to death), data 7 (Tuti was sentenced to death....), data 8 (Siti Zainab was executed), data 9 (the second Indonesian migrant worker executed by Saudi authorities) etc. Basically, the use of passive voice enables the text producers to exclude the actor/doer of the action (passive agent deletion). Passive agent deletion also means that the actor (Saudi Arabia) is not presented in the representation. According to van Leeuwen (2008) the main goal of doing this strategy is to drive the audiences' attention to another one, but the use of this strategy can also be interpreted as the text producers' efforts to avoid redundancy in the text.

From the data in nomination category, we can also see how *The Jakarta Post* represents the executed Indonesian workers especially in this case, they have status as perpetrators. The data also shows that *The Jakarta Post* foregrounds the crimes which were done by the migrant workers seventeen times from total 46 data which nominate the executed Indonesian migrant workers in the representation, such as

Data 12: The interior ministry said Siti Zainab^{NOMI} was executed after being convicted of **stabbing** and **beating** Saudi woman Noura al-Morobei to death. EXMI_TJP_14_04_'15

Data 13: According to Indonesian newspaper Kompas, Zainab^{NOMI} was convicted of **killing** her employer in 1999, despite concerns about her mental

health. EXMI_TJP_14_04_'15

Data 14: Zaini^{NOMI}, who worked as a driver, was sentenced to death on Nov. 17, 2008, after being found guilty of **murdering** his employer, Abdullah bin Umar Munammad Al Sindy. EXMI_TJP_19_03_'18

From all the data above, we can see that there are some words which describe criminal status of the executed Indonesian migrant workers such as 'stabbing', 'beating', 'killing', 'murder'. According to Online Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary the word 'stabbing' means 'to push a sharp, pointed object, especially a knife, into somebody, killing or injuring them', the word 'kill' means 'to make somebody/something die' and the word 'murder' means 'the crime of killing somebody deliberately'. All of the words which are used to describe the executed Indonesian migrant workers have negative meanings since those words show cruel, brutal and terrible characters. When *The Jakarta Post* decides to use these words to describe the executed Indonesian migrant workers, it will give negative impression to the readers related to the executed Indonesian migrant workers representation in the text. Therefore, from this analysis it can be seen that there is any tendency for the *The Jakarta Post* to do negative representation of the executed Indonesian migrant workers, although the data also shows that *The Jakarta Post* hides the executed Indonesian workers' crimes in twenty seven other data. Although the data which do not show the crimes of the executed Indonesian migrant workers is higher than the data which show their crimes, it does not mean that *The Jakarta Post* tries to background or to hide the criminal status of the executed Indonesian migrant workers to the audiences, because it is also possible that the text producers want to avoid redundancy in the discourse. Moreover, this study only uses fifteen articles from *The Jakarta Post*, so that seventeen data (sentences) are more than enough for *The Jakarta Post* to foreground the criminal status of the executed Indonesian migrant workers. Besides foregrounding the crimes which were done by the executed Indonesian migrant workers, *The Jakarta Post* also presents the executed migrant workers' excuses, as follow

Data 15: The death sentence, which was immediately met by criticism from human rights and migrant worker protection activists, took place despite Zaini^{NOMI} having requested a Saudi Arabian appeals court **to undertake a case review**. EXMI_TJP_21_03_'18

- Data 16: According to Indonesian newspaper Kompas, Zainab^{NOMI} was convicted of killing her employer in 1999, despite concerns about her mental health. EXMI_TJP_14_04_'15
- Data 17: Tuti^{NOMI} was sentenced to death in 2011 for beating her employer to death with a stick in self-defense against attempted rape. EXMI_TJP_30_10_'18

From the data above, *The Jakarta Post* also tries to show the migrant workers' excuses to the audiences by saying that Zainab (one of the executed Indonesian migrant workers) has got mental illness which means that it is much possible that Zainab did not do the crime consciously. Meanwhile, *The Jakarta Post* also states that Zaini (one of the executed Indonesian migrant workers) is requesting for review which means that he still has chance to do another legal effort and he still has a chance to escape from the execution. According to law dictionary 'review' means 'A reconsideration; second view or examination; revision; consideration for purposes of correction'. In addition, the seventeenth data shows that the crime which was done by Tuti was her effort to protect herself from the rape. Although *The Jakarta Post* also shows the excuses for the executed Indonesian migrant workers to do the crimes, the number excuses are not as much as the criminal descriptions, so that it can be seen that in this nomination category, *The Jakarta Post* represents the executed Indonesian migrant workers negatively.

Conclusion

The analysis above shows that *The Jakarta Post* represents the executed Indonesian migrant workers negatively. It can be seen from the text producers' ways to include the executed Indonesian migrant workers in representation. Moreover, *The Jakarta Post* also uses the words 'kill', 'knife to death', 'stab' etc. to describe the executed Indonesian migrant workers. On the other side, *The Jakarta Post* uses passivated role allocation to represent the executed Indonesian migrant workers to show and to emphasize the positive representation of Indonesian government, since Indonesian government is represented as the actor who tried hard to save the Indonesian migrant workers from death penalty.

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