CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

A former prime minister of Australia, Gareth Evans, stated that "no two neighboring countries in the world are comprehensively different like Australia and Indonesia. We differ in language, culture, religion, ethnicity, population and differ in political, legal, and social systems" (Bilveer Singh, 2002). Differences between the two countries often lead the countries to face rough patches, such as during the cases of wiretapping of Indonesian officials, allegations of human rights violations in Papua, the Bali Nine case or drug trafficking.

A former prime minister of Australia, Paul Keating, added that the relations between the two countries are "full of misunderstandings." According to Hasnan Habib (1991), these tensions happen because Indonesia-Australia relations have never been close or very friendly. The main reason is the distrust built by former leaders who were later seen as a threat. This attitude is rooted in differences in philosophy, culture, values, and geography. The distrust was born from Australian statements that were arrogant, rude, and even looked down on various issues related to Indonesian domestic affairs, which ignored the feelings and sensitivities of Indonesian people (Habib H., 1991).

At the beginning of 2020, the condition of bilateral relations between Australia and Indonesia was stable, especially after the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) which both parties finally ratified. However, the relation between the two countries was a bit tense

1

after the World Health Organization (WHO) announced Covid-19 as a global health crisis. Each government's increasing protection of citizens also appears to increase prejudice against other countries whose geographic proximity, demographic conditions, and health infrastructure are deemed inadequate and will threaten national security. This is what Australia has done to Indonesia by repeatedly criticizing the Indonesian government in handling the coronavirus pandemic. The criticisms were not only made by state officials but also by the general public and the local media.

The first criticism from Australia began when the Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, found it hard to believe that Indonesia had not found a single coronavirus case until the end of February. The following criticism came in mid-March when the Australian Institute, the Lowy Institute, declared that the Indonesian government as unprepared and lacking transparency in controlling COVID-19, which began spreading in early March. One of the researchers and the Lowy Institute's Southeast Asia Program director, Benjamin Bland, considered that coronavirus has shown Jokowi's flaws in his tactical approach to politics and his govenment's lack of strategic thinking. Furthermore, one of the most frequent parties that criticize Indonesia came from the Sydney Morning Herald online newspaper, through their articles written by James Massola. He frequently writes criticism to the Indonesian government regarding handling the pandemic through his articles on the SMH official web page.

As a result of the continuous criticism from James Massola's writings, the Indonesian government finally gave its responses. Sufmi Dasco Ahmad, House of Representatives Deputy Speaker, stated that the Australian media has constantly criticized the Indonesian government for a long time and rarely praises anything

from the Indonesian government. The government's spokesperson for Covid-19, Achmad Yurianto, emphasized that the Indonesian government had done everything according to WHO procedures. Yuri then advised those who were in doubt about the absence of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia to ask the WHO directly. He also advised not to measure using Australian standards as Indonesia is not Australia, Australia is not Indonesia.

International relations observer from Padjadjaran University, Teuku Rezasyah, also admitted that Australia has reminded Indonesia. Still, it would be nice if Australia showed the personal evidence they had and offered strategic cooperation from earlier. Teuku also emphasized that Australian media was not sufficiently balanced when reporting on the handling of the coronavirus in Indonesia. He said an investigative report did not accompany the Australian mass media writing. Teuku said they should cover both sides. If they find negative tendencies in a certain thing, try to seek the views of Indonesian elites "From institutions in Indonesia, the local government in Indonesia then compared it with official reports in Indonesia. Thus, it will not create opinions that confuse the readers. There is no way out to the Australian media critics" he said (CNN Indonesia, 2020). Due to the number of responses from various parties, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Canberra eventually began to officially respond to the Australian media critics by writing an article on their official website expressing their disappointment with the articles written by James Massola. According to the news, James based his report on rumors and assumptions rather than scientific research on sensitive issues. The Indonesian Embassy encouraged James to achieve better reporting standards for the credibility of the media he represents. It is also written in the article that the

Indonesian Embassy has sent letters to express the disappointment of the Indonesian government several times, but SMH editors tend to ignore it. The speculations written by James Massola might be dangerous for readers because they can create a particular perspective of the Indonesian government in handling Covid-19. Moreover, according to Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur (as cited in Garfin, D. R., Silver, R. C., & Holman, E. A., 2020), during a stressful situation and times of uncertainty, like this pandemic of Covid-19, the public's reliance on the media may increase to acquire accurate, reliable, and up-to-date information.

These days the common media that we frequently access in searching for information is a media that is based on the internet such as in an online newspaper, news blog, and social media since we no longer rely on paper-based media even broadcast news as in the printed newspaper, printed magazine, radio, and television. A study by the institute Niel son Co confirms that smartphones are winning over television, and television started losing its popularity, especially for viewers aged 18-34 years. Many people replaced the habit of watching television or listening to the radio through conventional devices with mobile devices, streaming services such as Netflix, and web services such as YouTube. Further research conducted by Pew Research Centre (2000, as cited in Gunter, B., Campbell, V., Touri, M., & Gibson, R., 2009) stated that the internet has emerged as an essential news source. An online media presence has been built by both major and minor news organizations. Growing numbers of internet users are steadily tuning in for their news information online because internet-based media like online news is quicker to update the latest news and easier to access. This then leads online news like the Sydney Morning Herald has become a reliable source of information which then influenced the rapid growth of the online news

itself. One of the manifestations of its growth is the expansion of its scope to an international scale, as it is capable of overcoming existing obstacles related to the speed which it takes to convey information to the public thus the public can receive information regarding international issues faster than before.

However, there is also the downside of online news. Media, including online news, produce representations of the social world, images, descriptions, explanations, and frames of social realities to illustrate how the world works and why it works as it is said and seen to work. According to Happer and Philo (2013, as cited in Kulaszewicz, Kassia E, 2015), the media, like television, the press, and online, play a central role in communicating to the public what happens in the world. In those cases where audiences do not possess direct knowledge or experience of what is happening, they become particularly reliant upon the media to inform them. In addition, Coban (2016) in his journal *The Role of the Media in International Relations* stated that the media itself has a role in selecting, regulating, and determining what phenomena are important for public discussion. The media cannot force people to think, but media can influence the public's perception of certain phenomena that can persuade or manipulate the public. Hill (2003) further added that they have the capability to put a phenomenon on the priority agenda, so it can be said that the shaping of the public's perception towards certain phenomena depends much on how the media presents the narration.

The use of language that appears in repeated online news can build a version of reality that is believed and becomes part of the life of a society. Mulyana (2012) stated that through the use of language as the main symbolsystem, journalists can create, maintain, develop, and even destroy a reality. He

further added that news does not just inform but also creates meaning. The use of words, phrases, clauses, sentences in discourse has a huge role in creating a text. Mulyana further stated that language give a specific accent to an event or action by emphasizing, sharpening, softening, glorifying, harassing, deflecting, or covering an event or action. Various choices of words and sentence construction in the mass media as in online news will form a "version of reality" that will be presented as common knowledge for the public. This "version of reality" is frequently understood by readers as reality. To conclude, the representation in online news will form a discourse that the public believes if it continuously appears and eventually forms a reality that the public believes in.

Recently, the Indonesian government under President Joko Widodo has been the target of criticism of foreign local media for several times, especially in handling the Covid-19 outbreak. Several countries besides Australia criticized the Indonesian government in terms of handling the pandemic through their online media, including the USA and UK. Still, Australia is the only country that has repeatedly criticized the Indonesian government in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic. There are numerous news articles from the Sydney Morning Herald online newspaper, written by James Massola criticizing how Indonesia handles the COVID-19 outbreak. By analyzing these two news articles, the writer believes that this study aims to fill a small gap in cultural studies by focusing on how the Sydney Morning Herald sees the Indonesian government in handling the pandemic.

Two news articles from The Sydney Morning Herald online newspaper will be analyzed in this study. The first news article was published on March 16th, 2020, entitled *Joko Widodo 'did not want to stir panic' but Indonesia is now*

playing coronavirus catch-up. The second news article was published on June19th, 2020 which entitled *The world's next coronavirus hotspot is emerging next door*. The data of this study are the words, phrases, and images attached in the twonews articles written by James Massola which will be analyzed further using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory by Norman Fairclough that will be used to analyze the representation of Indonesia in the Sydney Morning Herald online newspaper in handling Covid-19.

Fairclough (1995) defines CDA as an interdisciplinary approach applied in socio-linguistics and takes concern with how power relation is embedded in the language. In looking at language as discourse and social practice, Fairclough points out it cannot be analyzed from the text only, not just analyze the process of production and interpretation but also analyze the texts, processes, and the social conditions. He defines processes of analysis which are textual analysis, discursive analysis, and socio-cultural analysis. First, the textual analysis discusses the verbal and visual of the text. Second, the discursive analysis shows the processes in which the text is produced or received by humans. Lastly, the social analysis shows the socio-historical conditions of the processes.

In doing the textual analysis, which requires to do the visual and verbal analysis, it will be supported by Kress and Van Leeuwen's Social Semiotic theory to help determine the real meaning behind the visual images that are attached to the news articles and also for verbal analysis, Appraisal theory by J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White will be employed to be able to analyze the journalist's position in seeing how Indonesian government is handling Covid-19 which can be seen through his writings on the three news articles. Lastly, Gramsci's hegemony is used to see whether the online news successfully influence the reader's to agree or

disagree with the representation presented by the journalist which can be found through the comment section of the news. to see whether the readers agree or disagree with the journalist's representation to Indonesia in handling coronavirus outbreak

Research regarding the representation of Indonesia in the Australian online newspaper, the Sydney Morning Herald has been done before by Milawaty and Nurul Fitri Hapsari from Universitas Airlangga in 2016 which entitled *The Representation of Indonesia in an Australian Newspaper Sydney Morning Herald Online 2015 Covering the Case of Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran's Death Penalty: A Critical Discourse Analysis* which analyzed SMH online news articles during the case of the death penalty of duo Bali Nine to see the representation of Indonesia as well as the assumed ideology constructed inside.

The study uses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proposed by Norman Fairclough and Orientalism by Edward Said as the main theory. The result of this study shows that the representation of Indonesia in SMH news regarding the death penalty issue of the duo Bali Nine, Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, carries the ideology of Orientalism which includes the representation of the East and the West in which the East is positioned as weaker than the West. As an Eastern country, Indonesia is portrayed as inferior to Australia while Australia is pictured as the opposite, the powerful one. The differences between this research with mine lie in the focus and corpus. My study focuses on the representation of Indonesia in the Sydney Morning Herald in terms of handling the Covid-19 outbreak and my corpus are two news articles written by James Massola regarding coronavirus in Indonesia. In contrast, this study uses the news articles regarding the duo Bali nine's death penalty.

Research regarding Covid-19 in Indonesia has also been conducted before by Siti Setia Mintarsih, Denny Kodrat, and Raynessa Noor Emiliasari entitled *Tempo's Perspective on The Representation of Government in Dealing with COVID-19 Cases* which focuses on a textual analysis of Tempo news concerning the Covid-19 pandemic posted in the early emergence of covid-19 in Indonesia. This study uses five trending news from Tempo posted between April to March. The result of this study shows that Tempo.co portrays this media as a 'watchdog' that serves to supervise those who have the power within politics (government). Tempo's newspaper produces text news that reflects the government's depiction in their policies. The differences between this research with mine lie in the focus and the data. My study focuses on how the Australian online newspaper sees the Indonesian government handling the Covid-19 outbreak. Furthermore, unlike this study that uses Indonesian local news as the source of data, my study uses two news articles written by James Massola in the Sydney Morning Herald.

Another research regarding Covid-19 in Indonesia has been conducted by Eronika Unun Pratiwi, Nofrahadi Nofrahadi, Apri Pendri, Dina Komalasari, and Sumarlam which entitled *News Text on Kompas.com Media of Covid-19 and the Underlying Conspiracy Theory: A Teun Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis* which examines how the COVID-19 news is used for political and ideological purposes on the Kompas.com Online Media newspaper on 11 June 2020 and 05 September 2020 using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. The difference with mine lies in the focus, corpus, and theory. As stated earlier, my study focuses on how the Sydney Morning Herald online newspaper sees the Indonesian government in handling Covid-19. This study uses Kompas online news as the corpus while my study uses two news articles from The Sydney Morning Herald.

Lastly, in terms of theory, this study uses Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, which focuses on the relationship between discourse, power, dominance, and social inequality. In contrast, mine uses Fairclough's critical discourse analysis theory. From the previous studies, no studies have examined the study of critical discourse analysis in online news that analyzes how the Sydney Morning Herald online newspaper represents the Indonesian government in handling Covid-19 using Fairclough's critical discourse analysis as the main theory.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study and the reason for choosing the topic, this study tries to answer the following questions:

1. How is Indonesia represented in the Sydney Morning Herald in terms of handling Covid-19?

1.3 Purpose of the study

By conducting this research, the writer would like to show how Indonesia is represented in the Sydney Morning Herald in terms of handling Covid-19 and show whether the Sydney Morning Herald successfully influence the readers to agree or disagree with the idea that the Indonesian government cannot handle coronavirus properly. Furthermore, in analyzing this study it will also improve the reader's awareness in reading media reporting. Thus they will not be easily influenced by what they read on the news.

1.4 Scope of the study

The study focuses on the two news articles from an the Sydney Morning Herald regarding Indonesian government in terms of handling Covid-19 outbreak using descriptive qualitative method and three-dimensional CDA framework by

Norman Fairclough as the main theory, supported by Kress and Van Leeuwen's Social Semiotic theory to help determine the real meaning behind the visual images that are attached on the news articles and also for verbal analysis, Appraisal theory by J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White will be employed to be able to analyze the journalist's position in writing the news articles. Lastly, Gramsci's hegemony is used to see whether the online news successfully influence the readers to agree or disagree with the journalist's representation.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study has both academic and practical significance. In academic significance, the writer hopes that this study will contribute in giving an academic input in cultural studies and media studies. Furthermore, this study is also expected to enrich specific knowledge by providing information especially on the development of theories of critical discourse analysis. In practical significance, this study is expected to give a contribution to the university and can be used as a source of information and reference for students who are doing similar research regarding the representation of Indonesia in the Australian online newspaper, the Sydney Morning Herald.