

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides background of the study, problems of the study, purposes of the study, limitations of the study, and the significance of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

Founded in November 25th, 2000 by the Media Group, Metro TV was the television company that provided a 24-hour news programs about the current events happening in Indonesia and the world (History of Metro TV, MetroTVNewscom). The company had a slogan Knowledge to Elevate, that was intended to create a “Knowledge Based Society” by providing “enlightening information to enhance the lives of the viewers” (Suryopratomo, 2010). Today, Metro TV have become one of the largest media companies in Indonesia and has had many achievements, such as becoming one of the most trusted television channels in Indonesia according to the Edelman Trust Barometer survey in 2011 (Fauzan, 2014: 73), and receiving the Special Jury Prize at the 2011 Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Prizes in New Delhi for the documentary programme entitled Scholarship Ala Bajau (Indonesia Proud, 2011).

Beyond all the achievements, Metro TV had set up an agenda to influence the viewers with its ideology, as media were used to “distribute power and influence” (Hall and Morley, as cited in Baldwin, 2004: 89), which was reflected through the visions and missions of Metro TV. One of which was to “promote the nation's and country's advancement towards democratic atmosphere”. What the

company meant by “democratic atmosphere” was Metro TV wanted to influence the viewers with the owner’s own perspective about democracy rather than the democracy based on the nation’s ideology. Another example was the slogan Knowledge to Elevate that indicated Metro TV would only provide knowledge according to the values and ideology of the company. In other words, what Suryoprato (2010) meant by “enlightening information to enhance the lives of the viewers” was the knowledge was intended to “enlighten” the viewers to follow the political ideology of the company. By implementing the ideologies, Metro TV “enhanced” its strategies to influence and control the lives of the viewers.

Moreover, Metro TV was often used as the tool to express the political orientation and activities of its owner, Surya Paloh. This can be seen from the fact that the company received a warning from the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI) because it frequently broadcasted the advertisements about the National Democratic Party (Partai NasDem), a political party founded by Paloh (The Jakarta Post, 2012). Another example was the coverage of Metro TV about PSSI in 2011. As stated in Jakarta Post, Metro TV was warned alongside TV One for the “alleged partial reporting” on the news about PSSI, where Metro TV criticized its leader at the time, Nurdin Khalid, for his poor management, while TV One defended Khalid and his management (The Jakarta Post, 2011). Both examples showed the lack of objectivity of Metro TV, as the company implemented the political ideologies of its owner and frequently took sides on political matters.

There have been many studies that analyzed Metro TV. Umar Fauzan (2014), for example, analyzed the hidden message of Metro TV news about the Lapindo mudflow in his journal using the critical discourse analysis (CDA). Fauzan stated that Metro TV had set up its ideologies within each broadcasted news, by using strategies to “emphasize the bad things” and “de-emphasize the good things” of the political rivals (Fauzan, 2014: 85). What Fauzan meant was Metro TV has been used as a political tool to expose the negative aspects and not to expose the good achievements of the political rivals. However, the study conducted by Fauzan had one minor flaw. Fauzan failed to explain the reason why Surya Paloh, the owner of Metro TV, wanted to use his television company to create a negative representation of Bakrie and Lapindo. Fauzan did stress that Paloh wanted to gain the highest power in Indonesia, by “fighting with the official figures in Indonesia” (2014: 13). However, Fauzan failed to give further explanation about the important reason why Paloh wanted to “fight” Bakrie in order to gain that highest power.

On the other hand, a study from Aulia and Garnida (2014) analyzed the exchange structure of the spoken language in a Metro TV programme called After Hours. They concluded that the exchange structure, initiated by the “move of the speaker” and later responded by the “addressee” (Stenstrom, 1994: 102), of After Hours did not always align on the initiating-responding theory by Stenstrom. However, it did not interfere with the structure itself, as the initiations and the responses still applied smoothly during the conversation (Aulia and Garnida, 2014: 90). The problem with this study was Aulia and Garnida failed to explain

why the exchange structure on the After Hours text was considered acceptable even though it did not always align with the initiating-responding theory, as the audience could not understand the spoken words from the speaker (2014: 90).

One example to determine the production of news in Metro TV is the news about Bali Nine, in particular the rejection of the clemency request. According to various sources of media, the current Indonesian President, Joko Widodo, rejected the final clemency request for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, the leaders of the Australian drug smuggling group in Bali called Bali Nine, insisting that there would be “no clemency for convicts who committed narcotics-related crimes” (Aritonang and Susanto, 2014). The two Australians were arrested in 2005 for smuggling 8.8 kg of heroin from Bali to Australia and were originally scheduled for execution on that same year, charged under three sections of the law, according to the head of the Bali Police (Moore, 2005). However, the charge was constantly postponed, mostly due to the pressure from the Australian government on this case, like the Australian Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty who demanded the Indonesian police to hand over all evidence regarding the case (Roberts, 2005), or the Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, who forced the Indonesian government to grant clemency for the defendants (ABCNews.com, 2006).

The situation changed after Jokowi, the nickname of Joko Widodo, was elected as president and created a policy that gave death sentence penalty to drug dealers and smugglers, claiming as an act of emergency to “fight drug abuse” (The Jakarta Post, 2015). This “drug emergency state” policy was enacted because

Jokowi was concerned with the fact that there were more than fifty drug users each day and around 4.2 million users were rehabilitated every year (Paath and Pratiwi, 2015). Jokowi also concerned with how drug smugglers were able to smuggle the drugs through legal government agencies (Antara News, 2014). Another possible reason was Jokowi wanted to show some “results” and “decisiveness” in order to fulfill the expectations from both the media and the public about his commitment to eradicate drugs (Dominguez, 2015). Both Chan and Sukumaran were scheduled as “the next group of prisoners to be put to death”, after several drug dealers and smugglers were already executed and gained negative reactions from the international world (BBC News, 2015). As the result, several foreign countries, in particular Australia through its prime minister Tony Abbott, had made some efforts to postpone the execution and grant the clemency request, by giving statements on how both “defendants” were reformed characters and deserved mercy (Roberts, 2015). However, Jokowi still insisted on rejecting the clemency requests from Chan and Sukumaran, stating that drug convicts didn’t deserve second chances as the victims killed by drugs couldn’t get a chance to be rehabilitated (Bachelard and Rompies, 2015).

From the examples, it was clear that the media had different ways when reporting news such as Bali Nine, as different media had different ideologies and always took sides in response to matters such as Bali Nine. International media, in particular Australian media, supported the effort of the Australian government to postpone the execution of the two Australians, Chan and Sukumaran. Those media showed their support by frequently referring Chan and Sukumaran as “two

Australians” or “two young Australians”, indicating that both of them were only normal Australian citizens who deserved mercy from President Jokowi (BBC News, 2015). Other examples included the article of the Sydney Morning Herald which reported the effort of Tony Abbott to deny the execution of Australians abroad, stressing phrases like “both men are remorseful” and “great efforts to atone” (Allard and Topsfield, 2015), and the ABC News article that stated how Abbott made an appeal to President Jokowi for informing that both men "deserve mercy" and were “reformed characters” and by stating an interview with a relative of the two Australians ” in order to gain sympathy from the readers and persuade them to support the effort (Roberts, 2015). Aside from gaining supports, the media also showed the dislike towards the decision and President Jokowi, such as Dominguez in DW who put statement on how Jokowi “disappointed” the activists of human rights by insisting to execute Chan and Sukumaran and how the decision was only to prove the expectation of the media and public to Jokowi on eradicating drugs (Dominguez, 2015).

On the other hand, most media companies in Indonesia showed their supports with the decision to execute the defendants when reporting the news about Bali Nine. Metro TV was among those media, as the company showed its commitment to support the Jokowi administration in reporting news about Bali Nine. For example, there was a headline of an Indonesia Now news entitled Rally Ridicule Aussie PM Abbott (Effendi, 2015) which could represent the dislike of both the company and most Indonesian people towards the statement from Abbott, using words like “slamming” and “intervene” to indicate the dislike upon Abbott

and Australia. In addition, Metro TV kept using phrases like “drug convicts”, “drug smugglers”, or even “drug criminals” when referring Chan and Sukumaran, like the news about the rejection of clemency for Sukumaran where “drug smugglers” and “drug criminals” were often used (Effendi, January 11th, 2015), indicating that the company had acknowledged their status as suspects of drug smuggling, thus showing the support of Metro TV to President Jokowi. Other media companies also showed supports to the decision, such as Antara News that showed several facts about the amount of drug users and the drug smuggling that made Jokowi concerned (Antara News, 2014) and Jakarta Globe that reported the commitment of Jokowi to eradicate drugs by showing no forgiveness in drug-related cases and increasing the capacity for rehabilitation centers (Paath and Pratiwi, 2015).

This study analyzed the production and consumption process of the Bali Nine news in Metro TV, using the encoding and decoding theory by Stuart Hall (1983). Hall stated that television programmes needed to be treated as the “meaningful discourse” that consisted some codes. Those codes were being encoded through the production of the programmes and then being decoded by the audience in different ways they saw fit (Baldwin, 2004: 87). The same treatment was conducted when analyzing the construction of the Bali Nine news in Metro TV. Through encoding, the writer gained insight on how a media company such as Metro TV constructed and processed a “raw” social event into a news worthy with its visions and missions.

This study was also conducted by analyzing the videos about the Bali Nine news on Indonesia Now, an English-speaking news programme by Metro TV. The videos were taken from November 30th, 2014 to March 1st, 2015, the period when President Jokowi announced the two Australian drug convicts as the next group for execution and rejected their clemency request. The reason for choosing the videos of Indonesia Now was because the programme provided the headlines of the news that had happened in Indonesia and the world in a week, thus giving an easier access to select a particular event that caught the viewer's attention. Moreover, the Indonesia Now programmes served as a representation for other programmes in Metro TV and provided an insight on how Metro TV produced a news from an event.

1.2. Problems of the Study

1. During the production process, how did Metro TV encode the meanings within the Bali Nine news?
2. What side did Metro TV chose when covering the news about Bali Nine?
3. During the consumption of the news, how did the viewers decode the news about Bali Nine in Metro TV?

1.3. Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were as follow:

1. To analyze how Metro TV encoded the meanings within the Bali Nine news during the process of news production.

2. To analyze the political orientation of Metro TV during the coverage of Bali Nine news.
3. To analyze how the viewers decoded the news about Bali Nine in Metro TV during the process of news consumption.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was limited on the news regarding the Bali Nine case. The study only focused on the construction of the Bali Nine news, in particular the news about the death sentence penalty and the rejection of the clemency request. The videos of the news were the videos dated from November 30th, 2014 to March 1st, 2015. The writer used the encoding and decoding theory by Stuart Hall as its methodological and theoretical basis on this study.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to give insight on how media companies constructed and processed a news from social events happening in the society. The study also helped the television viewers to understand the social and political aspects encoded within the news. By understanding those aspects, the viewers would be able to decode the news themselves and determine which position they would take: the dominant-hegemonic, the negotiated, or the oppositional.