COVID-19 Related Terms in Online News Headlines: Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract*

This research aims to construct news headlines related to COVID-19 terms in Indonesia. The data source is from various online news media such as health.detiknews.com, kompas.com, and liputan6.com. Data was collected by only selecting headline news text with *istilah* (terms) and *COVID-19*. The data were analyzed using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach. The results showed that through the microstructural dimension, the eight news headlines used linguistic tools with 1) diction or vocabulary selection focused on the use of the word COVID-19, and 2) grammatical units dominated by phrases, 3) syntactic functions dominated by descriptions as topicalization of discourse, and 4) the form of news that is emphasized on statements regarding the change or replacement of various terms related to COVID-19. Then, through the mesostructural dimension, the three online mass media have different characteristics and characters in delivering news, especially related to COVID-19 terms, but still being presented accurately and objectively so that news content can be conveyed to readers. Finally, through the macrostructural dimension, it was revealed that a political system demonstrated the power of the government and the Ministry of Health in determining the use of various COVID-19 terms in Indonesia.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of communication technology can not be separated from the easy access to information autonomously. Communication that used to take a long time to deliver now has become very fast with technology and seems to be without distance. Thanks to this technology, various media provides an alternative for the community in finding and utilizing information sources to meet their needs (Hadi, 2009). Both individually and collectively, the media can build perceptions of other parties. Apart from being a tool for conveying news, images, or general descriptions of many things, the media can act as a forum that can shape public opinion and even become a pressure group on an idea that must be accepted by other parties (Sobur, 2009).

Hall (in Cenderamata & Damayanti, 2019) added that the media had a significant role in explaining events and how they were interpreted and understood by the public. It can be seen from the number of media, especially news media, as a means or forum for delivering and gaining access to various information for the community. News media includes 1) print media such as newspapers, magazines, books, etc.; 2) electronic media including radio and television; and online media include internet media such as websites and others (Yunus, 2010). Among the three forms of news media, in recent years, online news media, which is a combination of

printed-news media and online news media, has developed rapidly. It is understandable because the public can more easily access the information and news they want without any limitations of space and time (Nurkiman, 2017).

Through online news media, every individual has broad access to various information and news about current events locally, nationally, and internationally. One of the news pieces of information that are still being discussed is the use of new terms that have emerged related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meanings of these terms are often unknown, even though they are often known so that sometimes these terms confuse the public or ordinary people because some of them are too technical in the world of health. Therefore, there is much news related to the COVID-19 terms used by the government, such as ODP (*orang dalam pemantauan*; people under monitoring), PDP (*pasien dalam pengawasan*; people under surveillance), etc. There are various terms related to COVID-19 in English, such as WFH (work from home). Information related to the use of terms related to COVID-19 is constructed differently by several media according to the ideology of each media. To understand information, readers get different references based on news that has been constructed by each of these media (Prihantoro, 2013). Therefore, this study will examine how various online news media construct headline news on COVID-19 terms using Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis so that the news can be more quickly and more clearly understood.

2. Research Methods

The approach used in this study is based on qualitative descriptive research assisted by a theoretical approach to critical discourse analysis by Nourman Fairclough (1995). Critical discourse analysis theory is built based on the relationship of micro texts with macro community contexts (Darma, 2013). The object under study was analyzed with three dimensions of discourse, namely 1) the textual dimension (microstructural) is a text analysis by looking at vocabulary, semantics, sentence structure, and cohesion and coherence between sentences; 2) the dimension of discursive practice (mesostructural) is the practice of discourse by analyzing the production, consumption, and distribution of texts; and 3) socio-cultural (macrostructural) dimensions are socio-cultural practices that are analyzed using three levels, namely (a) situational, (b) institutional, and (c) social (Fairclough, 1995).

The data sources in this study focused on headline news texts related to COVID-19 terms. The text was issued by several online news media, such as detiknews.com, kompas.com, and liputan6.com. The data sources of this study were published during COVID-19 pandemic on 2020. The data were collected using the observation method with note-taking technique as data collection methods with the data subject in the form of news headlines related to COVID-19 terms.

The data analysis method was carried out by the three stages of discourse dimension analysis in Norman Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis, namely the description analysis stage, interpretation analysis stage, and explanation analysis stage. The description analysis stage describes the content and descriptive analysis of the text described without being connected to other aspects. Meanwhile, the interpretation analysis stage is interpreting the text associated with the practice of discourse. The text is not analyzed descriptively but is interpreted by relating it to the text production process. Analysis of the content and language used in the editorial is related to the production process of an editorial in the newspaper. Lastly, the explanation analysis stage aims to find an explanation of the interpretation results that have been carried out at the interpretation stage. The explanation analysis stage can be obtained by connecting the production of the text with socio-cultural practices to find the reasons why the news discourse is produced.

3. Discussions

The search results for news headlines with COVID-19 related terms found several news texts from several online news media, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1.
Data on News Headlines Related to COVID-19 Terms

Online News Media	Data	News Headline
Health.detik.com	1	*Mengenal 20 Istilah Terkait COVID-19: ODP, PDP, Rapid hingga Swab Test*
Health.detik.com	2	*Mengenal Deretan Istilah Baru Seputar COVID-19 yang Diubah Kemenkes*
Kompas.com	3	*Perubahan Istilah Terkait Covid-19 Disebut Demi Dukung Penanganan Pasien*
Kompas.com	4	*Perubahan Istilah Terkait Covid-19: Jangan Bingung, yang Penting Disiplin*
Kompas.com	5	*7 Istilah Terkait Covid-19 yang Perlu Diketahui, Jangan Salah Kaprah*
Kompas.com	6	*Setahun Pandemi Corona, Istilah Seputar Covid-19 Pun Tercipta*
Liputan6.com	7	*Saat Pandemi Corona Covid-19, 27 Istilah Populer yang Harus Dimengerti: Dari Novel sampai Viral Load*
Liputan6.com	8	*5 Istilah yang Kerap Dipakai saat Pandemi Covid-19 Tapi Diganti Pemerintah*

Table 1 shows that some news headlines highlight the introduction or change of various COVID-19 related terms that are known or changed in Indonesia. The coverage of various COVID-19 related terms was analyzed based on three dimensions of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, namely microstructural analysis, mesostructural analysis, and macrostructural analysis through the stages of description, interpretation, and explanation analysis. Then the data analysis is described one by one based on three dimensions of critical discourse analysis by Norman Fairclough.

1. **Textual Dimension (Microstructural Dimension)**

The textual dimension was analyzed based on the various linguistic tools used by online news media in reporting COVID-19 related terms, in which two tools marked the representation of the theme in the news headlines, namely through (1) selection of diction or vocabulary and (2) units of grammar, syntactic function, and form of reporting.

There are some diversity of vocabulary choices in the news headlines of COVID-19 terms, as shown in table 1. The first diversity are the use of nouns together with other types of word classes to form phrases, namely *20 istilah terkait Covid-19* in data (1), *deretan istilah baru seputar Covid-19* in data (2), *perubahan istilah terkait Covid-19* in data (3) and data (4), *7 istilah terkait Covid-19* in data (5), *istilah seputar Covid-19* in data (6), *27 istilah populer yang harus dimengerti* in data (7), and *5 istilah yang kerap dipakai* in data (8). It can be seen that the use of term nouns together with other types of word classes is dominated by noun word classes so that formed noun phrases. However, from the eight phrases, it was found that there were noun terms

followed by adjectives, such as the adjective of *baru* in phrase of *istilah baru* (data 2) and the adjective of *populer* in phrase of *istilah populer* (data 7).

Likewise, from the eight datas, there are some diversity in the use of numerals (numbers) in four datas, including the use of number 20 (twenty) in data (1), number 7 (seven) in data (5), number 27 (twenty-seven) in data (7), and number 5 (five) on data (8). The mention of numerals in the four news headlines shows the information on COVID-19 related terms focusing on the number of terms introduced or used during the COVID-19 pandemic. The difference in the numbers mentioned in the headlines shows a focus on COVID-19 related terms which was most popularly used during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Later on, there are the use of several COVID-19 related terms included in the news headlines, namely *ODP, PDP, Rapid hingga Swab Test* in data (1) and *Dari Novel sampai Viral Load* in data (7). The inclusion of several COVID-19 related terms in data (1) and data (7) shows that as a representative form of the many terms often used during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is related to the inclusion of numerals of number 20 (twenty) in data (1) and number 27 (twenty-seven) in data (7). The inclusion of numbers equal to and more than twenty indicates that the COVID-19 related terms discussed in the news content in data (1) and (7) has a large number, so it is necessary to display several terms as representatives in the news headlines.

The data in Table 1 is dominated by grammatical units of phrases rather than clauses in terms of grammatical units. The grammatical units of phrases are found in data (1), (2), (4), (5), and data (7). The five phrases are dominated by noun phrases in data (4), (5), and data (7), while data (1) and (2) are classified as verb phrases because there is an active verbs of *mengenal* in both data. On the other hand, the grammatical units of clauses are found in data (3), data (6), and data (8). The three data are included in the grammatical clause unit because of the use of verbs that function as predicates, namely verbs of *disebut* to in data (3), verbs of *tercipta* in data (6), and verbs of *terpakai* in data (8), where all three are passive verbs.

2. Discourse Practice Dimension (Mesostructural Dimension)

The discourse practice dimension is centered on how texts are produced and consumed. Text production is closely related to the ideology of news writers and the news media that surrounds them, which are discourse processing, such as distributing and using discourse, media profiles, editor procedures, and the way workers produce news texts. The online news media discussed in this dimension are detik.com, kompas.com, and liputan6.com.

Detik.com, founded on May 30, 1998, is an internet-based news site created due to the changing times from the analog to the digital era. Then, on August 3, 2011, detik.com was officially acquired by Chairul Tanjung's Trans Crop. Detik.com does not have a print edition, only an online edition. In addition, detik.com provides much information for readers who are not limited in type, which presents news and provides service products, such as discussion services (detikForum) and advertising services (Iklan Baris; classified ads). With the variety of information presented, detik.com has become a flexible site in cyberspace. It is proven that detik.com can package news up-to-date and uses a neutral choice of words that all readers can touch. Even news related to the latest issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, is presented by detik.com in an updated manner and is packaged in a relaxed manner using short word choices that are easy for readers to understand.

Kompas.com began with the print media called Kompas published on June 28, 1965. Kompas was the only print media that reported on politics and law at the beginning of its emergence. However, informational and entertainment rubrics are also featured in the print media as time goes by. Kompas has also published through online media version with the name of website, kompas.com since July 1, 2009. Two years later, Kompas established an electronic

media called Kompas TV, established on September 9, 2011. The presentation of news on kompas.com used a choice of specific rubrics or channels according to the reader's needs. Kompas.com always looks at and points to things that readers have never thought of before. For example, in reporting on current issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, kompas.com invites its readers to directly assess an individual involved in a case. It is evidenced by the careful use of vocabulary and the careful attention to literature. And, also it is the hallmark as well as the character for kompas.com.

Liputan6.com began with the news broadcast Liputan 6, established on August 14, 2000, by PT Kreatif Media Karya, which presented news based on television viewing broadcast by SCTV as one of national television station in Indonesia. Liputan6.com has been present since May 24, 2012. The presentation of information in the form of news broadcasts has made liputan6.com present in videos with the direction of reporting that looks at the criminal aspect. More or less, this media presents public news in detail and highlights a case or event legally and according to the rules. However, liputan6.com does not focus much on legal and criminal issues. This mass media also presents current issues such as COVID-19 pandemic issue.

3. Socio-Cultural Practices Dimension (Macrostructural Dimension)

The dimension of socio-cultural practice is a macrostructural level analysis based on the opinion that the social context outside the media influences how a discourse exists in the media. Socio-cultural practices, such as situational, institutional, and social levels, influence media institutions and discourse. The situational level is related to the production and context of the situation. Meanwhile, the institutional level is related to the influence of institutions internally and externally. Lastly, the social level is related to more macro situations, such as the political system, the economic system, and the cultural system of society.

First, socio-cultural practices at the situational level related to production and the context of the situation are found in all data from data (1) to data (8) indicated by the use of the words *pandemi* and *corona* or *COVID-19*. It can be seen by the COVID-19 outbreak, which was first detected in Wuhan City, Hubei, China, on December 1, 2019, and was later designated as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020). However, among the eight data, it was found that there was the use of adverb of time, namely *setahun* (a year) in the phrase *Setahun Pandemi Corona* (data 6), which has its functions as topicalization of the discourse. The adverb of time used by data (6) shows that the COVID-19 pandemic situation which has lasted for a year since it was designated as a pandemic by WHO, on March 11, 2020, until the publication of the news with the title *Setahun Pandemi Corona, Istilah Seputar Covid-19 Pun Tercipta* which published on March 2, 2021, by kompas.com.

Second, socio-cultural practices at the institutional level related to the influence of institutions internally and externally are found in data (2) and data (8) which are indicated by the use of the word *Kemenkes* (Ministry of Health) in data (2) and the word *pemerintah* (government) in data (8). The word *pemerintah* in data (8) refers to the Indonesian government led by President Jokowi. However, it is not President Jokowi who is changing COVID-19 related terms, but the cabinet ministers assigned to coordinate the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. One of the ministries responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia is the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia. The Ministry of Health is also responsible for setting COVID-19 related terms. Previously the Ministry of Health had divided people suspected of COVID-19 into several status levels, such as *PDP, ODP, OTG,* and *kasus konfirmasi* (confirmed cases) (Ministry of Health, 2020). However, since July 13, 2020, the government has no longer used *ODP, PDP,* and *OTG* to classify patients with the potential or contracted COVID-19. Many

new terms, namely *kasus suspek* (suspected cases), *kasus probable* (probable cases), *kasus konfirmasi* (confirmed cases), and *kontak erat* (close contacts) were introduced based on the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number HK.01.07/MENKES/413/2020 concerning Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 (Anggita, 2020).

Finally, socio-cultural practices at the social level related to more macro situations are found in the political system, which can be seen in data (2) and data (8) which refers to the use of the word *Kemenkes* (Ministry of Health) in data (2) and the word *pemerintah* (government) in data (8). It can be understood as a political system because the government and the Ministry of Health are responsible for handling the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, so the government and the Ministry of Health can determine various terms related to COVID-19. The power shown by the government and the Ministry of Health is that they are the ones who have the right to determine and even replace these various terms. It can be seen in Muhadjir Effendy's statement as the Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture. He acknowledged that the terms new normal and lockdown are not under the law (UU) when referring to Law Number 24 of 2007 concerning Disaster Management. Indonesia should enter a transitional period of socio-economic rehabilitation and reconstruction (Reporter Merdeka, 2020).

4. Novelties

The novelty of this research is that critical discourse analysis studies not only examine discourse texts as a whole, but can also be used to examine headlines in news media, especially online news media. This is because the headlines compiled by one news media with other news media will be different when discussing a particular topic. This shows that how the news media uses a certain perspective in reporting a topic that is reported. That perspective will become the ideology of the news media.

5. Conclusion

Based on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis through three dimensions of discourse, it can be concluded that through the textual microstructural dimension, the eight news headlines use linguistic tools by:

a. Vocabulary's choice focused on the use of the word COVID-19,
b. Phrases dominate grammatical units,
c. Syntactic function dominated by information as topicalization of discourse, and
d. The form of news is emphasized on statements regarding the change or replacement of various COVID-19 related terms.

Then, through the mesostructural dimension, the three online mass media have different characteristics and characters in delivering news, especially related to COVID-19 terms, but still being presented accurately and objectively so that news content can be conveyed to readers. Finally, through the macrostructural dimension, it was revealed that a political system demonstrated the power of the government and the Ministry of Health in determining the use of various COVID-19 related terms in Indonesia.

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