

REPRESENTATION OF NATIONAL FINAL EXAM IN INDONESIAN NEWS OF DETIK.COM

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Abstract

National FinalExam is the questionable policy that the government has taken to improve the quality of national education. It becomes one favorite topic of mass media in Indonesia. Some related studies have proven that mass media are likely to mislead their news due to certain interests. This study aimed to observe how national final exam is represented in Indonesian news. It was a critical media discourse study. The analysis focused on three main levels: textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. The data were taken from news articles which were published in Detik.Com, the most visited news website, in 2013.

Keywords: representation, media discourse, national final exam

1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, national final exam is used as an indicator to review the success of teaching process. It is a controversial topic. Some believe that the national exam still needs to implement. They argue that the national examination could be used as an effort to standardize the national education. The exam is expected to motivate the students, parents, and other parties to further improve student's achievement. Moreover, not all schools in Indonesia are ready to administer the exam.

Some argue that the exam as a measuring indicator of the student's success in the teaching process is not necessarily correlated with the student's actual performance. In a certain situation, it is possible that an intelligent and diligent student could fail in the final examination. The increase of the minimum standard of passing score caused some concerns. The increase will cause more students failed in the National Exam. Based on the data from the Ministry of Education, the failure rate in senior high school in in 2006 reached 20.96 %. In 2009, it reached 100 % in some schools.

The debate on the implementation of national final exam becomes a hot topic in various mass media in Indonesia. The controversy and problems on the implementation are reported by the media. It could be positive to raise the public awareness. However, lately, the credibility of mass media is questionable. The study of Nugroho, et al. (2012) states that concentration in the media industry happens as an inevitable consequence of the capital interest which drives media industry development in the country. The current media oligopoly has endangered citizens' rights to information as the media industry has become profit-led, and media companies represent a profitable business which can be shaped by the owner's interests and are thus highly beneficial for those seeking power.

In this study, I investigate how national examination is represented in news of Detik.com. Detik.com is the leading news website visited million people in a day. I apply Fairclough's critical discourse study approach to analyse the representation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Representation

The term *representation* refers to how people, groups, objects, places, experiences, and ideas are presented in the public discourse. It could be neutral, marginal, or crucial (Eriyanto, 2001; Hall, 1997;

Fowler, 1996). Representation is practiced in some ways, namely lexical choices, inter-sentence relations, pictures or photos. However, representation is mainly embodied in language use (Eriyanto, 2001).

2.2 Critical Discourse Studies

Critical discourse studies is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are presented, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Van Dijk, 1985). The object of critical discourse study is public speech, such as advertisement, newspaper, political propagandas, official documents, laws and regulations. It aims to investigate the relations of language, ideology and power.

Critical discourse analysis of a communicative event is the analysis of relationship between three dimensions or facets of that event, which Fairclough (1995) calls text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. *Text* is writer or oral text. *Discourse practice* is processes of text production and consumption. *Sociocultural practice* is the social and cultural going-on which the communicative events is a part of.

a) Text

Analysis of texts is concerned with their meaning and forms. Meanings are realized in forms, and differences in meaning entail differences in form (Fairclough, 1995). In this study, I focus on three textual elements: cohesion and coherence, transitivity (Halliday, 1985), and lexical choice. To support the textual analysis, *intertextuality* is also concerned. Sequential and embedded forms of intertextuality are where different generic type alternate within a text, or where one is embedded within the other (Fairclough, 1992).

b) Discourse practice

Discourse practice dimension involves various aspects of the process of text production and consumption. It refers to institutional routines such as editorial process involved in media text production, and how, for example, watching television fits into the routines of the household (Fairclough, 1995).

c) Sociocultural practice

Analysis of sociocultural practice involves the wider context of institutional practice in which the event is embedded within, or the yet wider frame of the society and the culture. In this study, I focus on three scope of context: *context of utterance*, *context of culture*, and *context of reference* (Fowler, 1996).

3. METHOD

3.1 Data Collection

Data were collected from text of news on national final exam published on Detik.com in 2013. I used the *search* button on the home page of Detik.com and got related articles on national final exam. I selected nine articles, which mainly discussed the exam.

Table 1. News on Nation Final Exam on Detik.com in 2013

No.	Tanggal	Topik Pemberitaan
1	Selasa, 14/05/2013 12:04 WIB	Pemerintah Hapus Ujian Nasional SD
2	Senin, 22/04/2013 10:35 WIB	SMP Perdana Semarang Tolak 13 Pengawas UN
3	Jumat, 19/04/2013 14:32 WIB	Distribusi Soal UN Sempat Kisruh, Gubernur Kaltim Cek Sekolah-sekolah
4	Jumat, 24/05/2013 10:39 WIB	3 Kisah 'Jatuh Bangun' Darin Menggapai Kelulusan Sekolah
5	Jumat, 31/05/2013 15:54 WIB	777 Peserta Tidak Lulus UN Tingkat SMP di Sumut
6	Sabtu, 31/08/2013 22:09 WIB	Konvensi Ujian Nasional Digelar Akhir September
7	Rabu, 25/09/2013 17:41 WIB	Mendikbud: Ujian Nasional, Harga Mati!
8	Senin, 15/04/2013 07:48 WIB	Tak Diizinkan Ikut UN, Sudirman: Sedih, Teman-teman Bisa Ikut Ujian
9	Selasa, 16/04/2013 09:06 WIB	Butuh Koordinasi Mutlak Untuk Pendidikan Kita

3.2 Data Analysis

In this study, I use the descriptive analytical method. It gives a systematic and accurate description of data and observed phenomenon. The analysis procedure involves three dimensions: *text*, *discourse practice*, and *sociocultural practice*.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Textual Analysis

The first stage of analysis is concerned with cohesion and coherence, transitivity and lexical choice. In the following, I discussed the findings.

1) News of “Pemerintah Hapus Ujian Nasional SD”

The news of “Pemerintah Hapus Ujian Nasional SD” was published on May 14th, 2013. It discussed the removal of national final exam in Indonesian elementary school. The news consisted of three pages. In the first page, the journalist informed the government decision to eradicate the national final exam due to the revision of the Act. The last two pages are used to discuss the content of the revised Act.

Table 2. Sample of Clauses in News of “Pemerintah Hapus Ujian Nasional SD”

Subject	Process	Object	Adjunct		
“Pemerintah” The government	“Menghapuska” eradicate	“Ujian Nasional” National Exam	“terkait dengan” in relation to	“kurikulum baru” “the new curriculum”	
		UN		“Peraturan Pemerintah” the decree	“yang telah disahkan Presiden” has endorsed by the president

The example in Table 2 represented most sentences in the first page. The government was an actor of material process, who is powerful to change an object (National Exam). The process was driven from constitutional consideration - the decree.

2) News of “SMA Perdana Semarang Tolak 13 Pengawas UN

The news of “SMA Perdana Semarang Tolak 13 Pengawas UN” was published on April 22nd, 2013. In the news, the journalist reported the rejection of 13 invigilators by SMA Perdana from the viewpoint of Taufik Hidayat, the chairman of organizing committee of National Exam - Semarang. The text was dominated by the quotation of Hidayat’s talk. The most interesting quotation is “menyelamatkan UN siswa” –save the students’ final exam. The term of *save* means *to stop (someone or something) from dying or being hurt, damage, or lost* (Meriam-Webster Dictionary). In Hidayat’s perspective, the final exam could be the students’ crucial entity.

3) News of “Distribusi Soal UN Sempat Kisruh, Gubernur Kaltim Cek Sekolah-Sekolah”

The news of “Distribusi Soal UN Sempat Kisruh, Gubernur Kaltim Cek Sekolah-Sekolah” was published on April 19th, 2013. The journalist informed problems on the distribution of question sheets and the control conducted by Awang Faroek Ishak the governor of East Kalimantan. However, the discussion was dominated by the inspection done Ishak to some schools in East Kalimantan. The other actors involved in the inspection were the chairman of Education Office and the chairman of national exam committee of SMAN 1 Samarinda.

4) News of “3 Kisah Jatuh Bangun Darin Menggapai Kelulusan Sekolah”

The news of “3 Kisah Jatuh Bangun Darin Menggapai Kelulusan Sekolah” was published on May 24th, 2013. The news focus was Darin Mumtazah, the student who is indicated to be related to a sensational case of corruption. The news consisted of three pages.

5) News of “777 Peserta Tidak Lulus UN Tingkat SMP di Sumut”

The news of “777 Peserta Tidak Lulus UN Tingkat SMP di Sumut” was published on May 30th, 2013. The journalist reported that 777 students of junior high school in North Sumatra failed in National Exam. The journalist concerned with details of the failure in every district. In the end of text, the journalist mentioned districts where all students passed the exam.

6) News of “Konvensi Ujian Nasional Digelar Akhir September”

The news of “Konvensi Ujian Nasional Digelar Akhir September” was published on August 31st, 2013.

The journalist reported the ideas of Muhamad Nuh, the Minister of Education and Culture on the convention of national exam. Therefore, the text was dominated by the quotation of his statements.

7) News of “Mendikbud: Ujian Nasional Harga Mati!”

The news of “Mendikbud: Ujian Nasional Harga Mati” was published on September 25th, 2013. The journalist reported the response of Muhamad Nuh, the minister of Education and Culture, toward the public denial on the national final exam. The news consisted of two pages, which are dominated by the statement of MuhamadNuh and the discussion of regulations supporting the national exam.

8) News of “Tak Diizinkan Ikut UN, Sudirman: Sedih, Teman-Teman Bisa Ikut Ujian”

The news of “Tak Diizinkan Ikut UN, Sudirman: Sedih, Teman-Teman Bisa Ikut Ujian” was published on April 15th, 2013. The journalist reported the case of Muhamad Sudirman. He was a grade twelve student, who was risked not to take the exam. He impregnated his girlfriend, so the school dropped him out. In the news, the journalist also paraphrased the statement of Muhamad Nuh, the Minister of Education and Culture, that there is no restrictions for pregnant and married student to take the exam.

9) News of “Butuh Koordinasi Mutlak untuk Pendidikan Kita”

The news of “Butuh Koordinasi Mutlak untuk Pendidikan Kita” was published on April 16th, 2013. The text was written by Yusuf Senopati Riyanto. He stated his ideas on national final exam. In his statements, the term *national exam* is equal to “national importance”. It is an effort of empowering the citizen to be qualified and proactive.

4.2 Discourse Practice

Detik.com is a web portal that contains online news and articles in Indonesia. It is one of the most popular news sites in Indonesia. In contrast to other Indonesian news websites, Detik.com only has online editions and depends on the profits of advertising sector. However, Detik.com is the leading website of breaking news.

On August 3rd, 2011 CT Corp acquired Detik.com. Right now, it is officially under Trans Corp. Chairul Tanjung, the owners CT Corp. Once it has been taken over, the board of directors is filled by the parties of Trans Corp. The commissioner is the General (Ret.) Bimantoro, the former chief of police, who currently also serves as the commissioner of Carrefour Indonesia, which is also owned by Chairul Tanjung.

In July 1998, Detik.com received 30,000 hits per day (a measure of the number of visitors to a website) with around 2,500 users (internet customers). In March 1999, the hits per day rose seven-fold, exactly 214,000 hits per day, or 6.42 million hits per month with 32,000 users. In June 1999, the figure rose again to 536,000 hits a day with 40,000 users. Lastly, Detik.com got more 2.5 million hits per day. The target reader of Detik.com is adolescents.

Reporter in the news department of Detik.com works in three stages, namely pra-coverage, coverage, and post-coverage. After a reporter complishes his coverage, he makes the news flow. He writes a news script in line with the rule of journalism. Then, he give the script to his producer to be corrected. After the editors and reporter has coordinated to determine the news framing, the script is published.

4.3 Sociocultural Practice

National examination, commonly abbreviated as UN/UNAS, is a nationally standard evaluation system of primary and secondary education and quality equation of education levels among regions conducted by the Educational Assessment Centre, Ministry of Education in Indonesia based on the Act of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003. It is to control the quality of national education evaluation as a form of accountability of education providers. The evaluation is conducted by an independent agency regularly, thoroughly, transparently, and systematically to assess the achievement of national standards and the monitoring process of the evaluation is carried out continuously.

The debate on the national exam actually occurred when the policy was implemented in the academic year of 2002-2003. UN originally named the National Final Examination (UAN) to substitute the policy of the National End Stage Evaluation of Study (Ebtanas). While Ebtanas was applied to all levels of school, UN only addresses to junior high school, madrasah tsanawiyah, senior high school, madrasah aliyah and vocational school. In elementary school, outstanding primary school and madrasah, Ebtanas is replaced with school final exam.

The debate is caused by the minimal socialization of UN policies, which is initiated by the Ministry of National Education. In addition, at least four irregularities are identified in the implementation of the UN. Firstly, in education, student’s competence includes three aspects, namely cognitive knowledge,

psychomotor skills, and attitude. However, UN only assesses the student's cognitive knowledge.

Secondly, several articles in the Acts of National Education System Number 20 of 2003 have been violated. For example, the article 35 paragraph 1 states that national education standards consist of content standards, processes, graduates' competence, staff, facilities and infrastructure, management, finance, and valuation of education, which should be improved regularly. UN only measures the ability of knowledge and the determination of educational standards is unilaterally taken by the government.

The article 58 paragraph 1 states an evaluation of student's learning outcomes conducted by educators to monitor the process, progress, and improvement of student's learning outcomes. In fact, UN ignores the elements of assessment process.

The article 59 paragraph 1 states the government evaluates the administrator, school track, level and type of education. The government only evaluates the learning outcomes of student, which is actually the task of educator.

Thirdly, in the convening of the UN mechanism, the government has set a standard passing score of 3.01 in 2002/2003, to be 4.01 in 2003 /2004 and 4.25 in 2004/2005. These raises give a psychological anxiety to the students and their parent.

Fourthly, the cost of the implementation of UN is wasteful. In 2004, its cost was IDR 260 billion, taken from the state budget. In addition, the system has not been made clear to ward off the financial irregularities of UN funds. The management system of UN funding is very closed and unaccountable.

Unfortunately, the Regulation of Minister of Education Number 1 of 2005 became the basis of UN. Because, substantially, no significant improvement encouraged by the implementation of UN in every academic year, the same debate happens.

5. CONCLUSION

In the news of Detik.com, national final exam is represented as a lawful policy taken to improve the quality of the national education. The national exam is a controversial topic. The government and its allies gained a dominant portion in the media agenda. Among the nine news texts, there are two stories which made the non-governmental subject the focus of discussion. Unfortunately, they are not well represented. Sudirman, in the news "Tak Diizinkan Ikut UN, Sudirman: Sedih, Teman-Teman Bisa Ikut Ujian", was presented as an immoral actor. Darin, in the news "3 Kisah Jatuh Bangun Darin Menggapai Kelulusan Sekolah" was presented as a beautiful woman behind the sensational corruption case. Discussion about the refusal of the national final exams did not get much attention. In addition, in some news text, the journalists often included the legal studies and quotes that support the national final exam. However, the judicial studies related the refusal of the national final exam did not gain much portion in the agenda.

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