The U.S. in Syrian Conflict

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ABSTRACT

This present research examines the representation of the United States in Syrian conflict as evidenced in the BBC International and the BBC Indonesia articles by using van Dijk'ssociocognition framework (2009a& 2009b). This research employed qualitative method to describe the representation and its significance. Drawing on 10 online articles from the BBC International and the BBC Indonesia, it was found that the U.S. is represented as the Globo-cop who controls the plot in Syrian conflict. The representation is indicated by three indicators, namely: the U.S. is a firm and powerful country, the U.S. is intimate with the Opposition, and the U.S. is the Opposition group helper. In addition, through sociocognition and context analyses, it was revealed that the ideology of the BBC International and BBC Indonesia is shaped by the culture of their owners. However, the different level of representation of the U.S in the two news corporations is influenced by their target readers.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Sociocognition, Van Dijk, Representation, Translation Media, Syrian Conflict.

INTRODUCTION

As a medium of communication, mass media are inseparable from representation. The way how mass media represent social actors can be critically discussed and revealed from their sociocognition perspectives, such as by the approach proposed by Van Dijk (2009a & 2009b). Van Dijk'ssociocognition approach (Kuntoro, 2008) not only focuses on the text, but considers the process behind the text production. However. translated news might present news differently from that of the original versionbecause the translated text might reflect the ideology of the translators or editors (Martinovianto, 2012). This research examines the representation of the U.S. in the news of a current international issue in Syria, as evidenced in 5 online articles from the BBC International and their translated version in 5 online articles from the **BBC** The Indonesia. data are analyzedusing text analyses (comprising of macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure analyses), sociocognition, and

context analyses. For text analyses, Halliday's Theme-Rheme (1994), van Dijk's news schemata (1980), and Halliday's transitivity (1994) are used to analyze the text's macrostructure, superstructure and microstructure respectively. In addition, this research also discloses the significance of the representation.

VAN DJIK'S PERSPECTIVE ON CDA

Van Dijk (2009a) sees CDA as not only a critical analysis, but also a critical critical theory and a application. Therefore, he prefers using the term Critical Discourse Studies Critical Discourse to Analysis. Van Dijk (1998) also states that discourse studies are inseparable from knowledge since discourse is produced by people's cognition. He further argues that discourse has power to both construct and reflect society by language. Therefore, Critical Discourse Studies should also cover psychological and social knowledge in the production process of discourse.

Van Dijk's perspective on CDA is schematized into three stages,

namely text, sociocognition and context.

The first schema, the text stage, covers macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure analyses. Macrostructure analysis (van Dijk, 1980 p.2) focuses on macro or global meaning of text. Superstructure analysis explains how the microstructure of text is arranged and constructs the macrostructure or global meaning. Meanwhile. microstructure analysis is detailed realization of macrostructure.Regarding sociocognition, Van Dijk (2009b) states that ithas an important role in determining people's mental awareness in local society. The sociocognition schema consists of Environment. Dimension. Goals. Motivation and Decision Making. Finally, the last schema, context analysis is the intertextual analysis to disclose the chronological event of the news. Van Dijk (2009b p.4) refers to context as "selection of the discursively relevant properties of the communicative situation". Context or social situation does not influence discourse directly because

social situation as a cognitive object is mediated by subjective interpretation, which depends on people's social cognition (Van Dijk 2009b p.4).

REPRESENTATION IN TRANSLATED NEWS

Representation is included as a phase in building culture sincelanguage as a representation system plays a role as a medium between culture and representation (Hall, 1997 p.2). In line with this, Hall (1997 p.2) states that culture is a factor which determines the way how people represent meaning.He exemplifies this notion with how people from the same culture represent meaning in the same way, but people from different culture do it differently.

Meanwhile, meaning depends on the symbolic functions of language, which include particular sounds or words. It activates the function of language which is to symbolize, to represent, or to signify meaning (Hall, 1997 p.27). The relation between meaning and language is fixed by the cultural codes (Hall, 1997 p.32). However, Saussure (2011 p.141) argues that the relation is not permanently fixed because culture also shifts historically.

News functions as a tool for spreading information to society (Hohenberg in Chaer, 2010 p.2). However, Jhally (2004 p.6) argues that besides delivering information, the language of news, also represents or depicts the meaning included in information. Actual meaning, which presented in information, is sometimes distorted from the information. Hence, the task of a researcher is measure the between the true meaning of an object and how the object is News discourse presented. as contains particular commodity and power to regulate people's action. Moreover, news reflects the ideology

brought by its writer. However, in translated news, the commodity might also come from the translator since translating is not a neutral activity (Hatim& Mason, 1997 p.120).

TEXT ANALYSIS: THEU.S. IS A FIRM AND POWERFUL COUNTRY

The analysis shows that the U.S. isrepresented as the Globo-cop who regulates the actors and the plot in Syrian conflict. The representation is indicated by three indicators, namely the U.S. is a firm and powerful country, the U.S. is intimate with Opposition, and the U.S. is the Opposition helper. The first indicator is illustrated in the textual evidence in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The Representation of the US as a Powerful Country

	BBC International	BBC Indonesia			
Theme	Rheme	Theme	Rheme		
Obama	warns Assad over chemical	Obama	peringatkan Assad		
	weapons		tidakgunakansenjatakimia		
Today	I want to make itabsolutely	Hariini	sayaingin membuatpesanpenting kepad		
	clear to Assad and anyone		a Assad dansiapapunyang ada di		
			bawahperintahnya		

The Theme in the first sentence from the BBC International version,

Obama, who represents the U.S.is combined with the Rhemewarns over

chemical weapon. The Rheme in this sentence contains an element conveying afirm action warnswhich is further supported in the following sentence Today I want to make it (the warning) absolutely clear to Assad and anyone. These two sentences are translated similarly by the BBC Indonesia. It implies that the news from both versions represents Obama as the same entity as the U.S., as a firm figure in fighting back chemical weapons from Assad's government.

However, the BBC Indonesia does not translate the texts in a wordfor- word way. It translatesover chemical weapon to tidakgunakansenjatakimia and make it absolutely clear to membuatpesanpenting. These changes are made to make the texts understandable and natural Indonesian readers. In addition. theBBC Indonesia also addsyang ada di bawahperintahnya in the second sentence. This additional information gives background information for readers to better understand the meaning of the text. Thus, the BBC Indonesia represents the U.S. in the same way as the BBC International.

The superstructure analysis shows that the representation of the U.S. as a firm and powerful country revealed mostly in Verbal Reaction. It is illustrated by the sentence, If you make the tragic mistake of using these weapons there will be consequences and you will be accountable. held This Verbal Reaction is a threat delivered by regardingthe Obama chemical weapon in Syrian conflict which is used by Assad government. By making the threat, Obama is represented as a firm and powerful figure in rejecting the use chemical weapon in the conflict. Furthermore, by Verbal using Reaction, the news is more accountable. This representation is similar to that of the BBC Indonesia. Therefore. the use of Verbal Reaction which represents the U.S. as a firm and powerful country, in both the BBC International and BBC Indonesia, strengthens the accountability of the representation.

Meanwhile microstructure analysis revealed that for specific transitivity analysis, which focuses on the U.S. role in the texts, both the

BBC International and the BBC Indonesia mostly position the U.S. as Sayer. The transitivity role of the U.S. Sayer as construes that. according to the texts, the U.S. actions in Syrian conflict are mostly saying rather than doing. In addition, the analysis also shows that both the **BBC** International and Indonesia online articles represent the U.S. as a firm and powerful country. However, there are some deletions of the sentences in the translated version which reduce the point of firmness of the U.S.

Furthermore, the lexicalization analysis indicates that the articles represent Obama as a firm figure and the U.S a powerful country. Text 1 entitled *Obama warns Assad over chemical weapons* for instance, begins with the quote from Obama "The world is watching. The use of chemical weapons is and would be totally unacceptable,...."The quote is considered a threatening act which is

targeted to Assad. Obama uses"the world" as a shield against chemical weapons in Syrian conflict. This threat also includes other influencing actors behind Obama which support his opinion. The statement implying that Obama is not working alone is realized by deixisWe in We simply cannot allow the 21st century.... By stating the threat to Assad, Obama is represented as a firm figure in fighting the use of chemical weapons. Furthermore, by using the world shield and deixiswereferring to the U.S. imply that U.S. is a powerful country.

THE U.S. IS INTIMATEWITH THEOPPOSITION

From the Macrostructure analysis, the representation of the U.S. as being intimate with the Opposition group is illustrated in the textual evidence in Table 2 below.

Table 2. US is Intimate with the Opposition

BBC Internation	al	BBC Indonesia		
Theme	Rheme	Theme	Rheme	

US	recognises Syria opposition coalition	Obama	mengakui oposisi Suriah
Says	Obama		

The sentence in the **BBC** International, US recognises Syria opposition coalition says Obama, has different tension from that of the BBC Indonesia since it is translated to Obama mengakui oposisi Suriah. The first sentence from the BBC International uses the word "coalition" which, according Oxford Dictionary (1995: means "temporary union of separate political parties", while the sentence in the BBC Indonesia uses the word Oposisi, which means rival (Oxford Dictionary, 1995: 814).

By using the word *coalition*, which refers to the Opposition group, the BBC International conveys the intimacy between the U.S. and the group. Thus, the BBC International focuses on the relation between the U.S. and the Opposition group. Differently, by using the deictic *opposition*, the BBC Indonesia does not convey intimate relation between the U.S. and the Opposition like the BBC International does. The deictic *opposition* implies that the BBC

Indonesia focuses on the conflict between Assad and the Opposition.

From the superstructure analysis, the U.S. is represented as being intimate with the Opposition in Headline, as in US recognises Syria opposition coalition says Obama; Lead, as in President Barack Obama has said the US now formally recognises Syria's main opposition "the coalition as legitimate representative" of the Syrian people; and mostly Verbal Reaction, as inMr Obama told ABC News that the National Coalition was inclusive. reflective and representative enough for Washington to take this "big step".

According to Van Dijk (1980: 4), Headline and Lead are the readers' main focus on the news. Headline and Lead also shape readers' perception towards the news because these are the most highlighted points in the news. By representing the U.S. as being intimate with the Opposition group Headlineand Lead, the BBC International shapes the readers' perception that the U.S. and the Opposition are having intimate relation to cooperatively topple Assad regime.

Verbal Reaction explains the comments of people concerned with the news. Verbal Reaction in the text represents the same thing as Headline and Lead do, namely the U.S. is intimate with the Opposition group. By using Verbal Reaction which supports Headline and Lead to

represent the U.S. as being intimate with the Opposition group, the BBC builds and strengthens the perception on the readers by trustworthy verbiages that the U.S. and the Opposition group are intimate and working cooperatively.

Furthermore, from transitivity analysis, the role of the U.S. which represents this country as being intimate with the Opposition group is Sayer, which is exemplified in the following sentence in Table 3.

Table 3. The US is Intimate with the Opposition: Sayer

President	has	the	Now	Formally	recognises	Syria's	as "the
Barack	said	US				main	legitimate
Obama						opposition	representative"
						coalition	of the Syrian
							people
Sayer	Verbal	Actor	Circ:	Circ:	Material	Goal	Circ: role
			time	manner			
		Verbia	ge				

The use of Sayer as the transitivity role of the U.S. indicates that the actions of the U.S. in Syrian conflict are verbal action. The use of verbal action in representing the U.S. as being intimate with the Opposition group implies that the BBC makes the information more trustworthy. In addition, the BBC does not take any responsibility in the representation

since that is the verbalization uttered by the U.S. president himself.

Meanwhile, the lexicalization analysis further strengthens the representation of the U.S as the friend of the Opposition. This can be seen in sentence in Text 5 from the BBC International, At the meeting with Mr Kerry, leader of the SNC, Moaz al-Khatib, said he was still

frustrated by the lack of military help. The adverb of place in the beginning of this sentence explains that Moaz al Khatib, the leader of the Opposition group is having a face-to-face meeting with John Kerry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.A. In the meeting, Khatib talks about the problem of the Opposition group.

The face-to-face meeting between Khatib and Kerry to talk about the problems of the Opposition indicates that the Opposition puts much trust in the U.S. that the country can solve their problems and help them to achieve their goal. This trust also implies an intimate relation between the two parties. Meanwhile, the **BBC** Indonesia excludes this statement, implying that the BBC Indonesia reduces the level of intimacy between the Opposition and the U.S. This explanation leads to the interpretation that the U.S. represented as the friendof the **Opposition** more in the **BBC** International.

THE U.S. IS THE OPPOSITION HELPER

From macrostructure analysis, the **BBC** Indonesia provides less information by eliminating some sentencesabout the U.S. reasons foraiding the Opposition, which are due to the brutality of superior armed force propped up by foreign fighters from Iran and Hezbollah;the statement from al-Khatib Opposition leader) that he was lack of military help for rebel fighters; and the accusation against Assad of being behind attack with Scud missiles against rebel areas. addition, the deleted sentences also convey the U.S. goals of giving the aid, which are to help the opposition extend stability and build representative government and the rule of law.

Besides showing the bias of the U.S. towards the Opposition, these sentences also explain that the U.S. wants to help the Opposition to win the conflict against Assad. Hence, by including these sentences, the BBC International represents the U.S. as being the Opposition helper. However, the reasons and aims of the U.S. for aiding the Opposition also

become the legitimation of this U.S. action.

Meanwhile, the BBC Indonesia deletes these sentences, implying that this news corporation automatically reduces the representation of the U.S. as the Opposition helper and reduces the legitimation of the U.S. aid to the Opposition group. Hence, in this case, the BBC International is more direct in representing the U.S. as the Opposition helper.

Based on the superstructure analysis, the sentences which support the representation of the U.S. as the Opposition helper both in the BBC International and the BBC Indonesia are mostly Verbal Reaction, as in Mr Kerry said the US would provide direct support to rebel forces in the form of medical and food supplies. Verbal Reaction, which is the comments of people regarding the news, functions to support the accountability of the news.

By using more Verbal Reaction to represent the U.S. as the Opposition helper, both the BBC

International and the BBC Indonesia make the representation of the U.S. as being the Opposition helper accountable. However, the BBC Indonesia reduces several Verbal Reactions in the news, indicating that the news in the BBC Indonesia as less informative and less accountable compared to the BBC International.

Based on the transitivity analysis, there are several deletions from the original news article in the translated version of the BBC Indonesia. From the Macrostructure analysis, the sentences deleted represent the U.S. as the Opposition group helper. By deleting these the **BBC** Indonesia sentences, reduces the representation of the U.S. as being the Opposition helper in the news. The sentences representing the U.S. being the Opposition helperare realized in Identifying, Verbal and Mental processes. The representation is illustrated in the following textual evidence in Tables 4 through6 below.

Table 4.Mental Process

It (aid)	was intended	to help	the opposition	Deliver	governance and basic services	in rebel- controlled areas.
Phenomenon	Mental: Affective	Material	Goal	Material	Goal	Circ: Place

The BBC International uses mental process to explain the purpose of the U.S. for aidingthe Opposition group. By explaining the purpose, which is to help the Opposition deliver governance and basic service in rebel-controlled

areas, the BBC International conveys that the U.S. intends to help the Opposition fix the Opposition government to ease toppling the Assad governance. In this case, the BBC International also shows that the U.S. is siding with the Opposition.

Table 5. Verbal Process

At the meeting with Mr.	leader of the SNC, Moaz al-	Said
Kerry,	Khatib,	
Circ: time	Sayer	Verbal

Table 6. Mental Process

He	was still frustrated	by the lack of military help	for rebel		
			fighters.		
Senser	Mental: Affective	Inducer	Circ: Purpose		
Verbiage					

The verbalization in Table 6 He was still frustrated by the lack of military help for rebel fighters uttered by the Opposition leader, Moaz al-Khatib, illustrates the U.S.' reasons for aidingthe Opposition. The verbalization above might be intended to attract sympathy from readers that the Opposition is lack of help to survive under Assad regime. The readers' sympathy fromwill

automatically legitimate the U.S. action in aiding the Opposition group.

From the lexicalization analysis, the sub-title *International Silence* in Text 5 explains that International community does not put much concern over the Syrian conflict. This sub-title is used in the text that discusses the non-weapon aid given by the U.S. to the Opposition.

In addition, Text 5 also explains the issue that Russia aids Assad's army with weapons.

The use ofthe sub-title "International silence" and the issue of Russia weaponry supply to Assad military force made the U.S. give the non-weapon aid to the Opposition. Indirectly, these reasons legitimate the U.S action for giving the aid, because this sub-title and the issue attract readers' sympathy to the Opposition. By giving the nonweapon aid to the Opposition, the article indicates that the U.S. is the only one country which helps the Opposition, amidst the silence of the International community and Russia's armament of Assad military force.

SOCIOCOGNITION ANALYSIS

Van Dijk'ssociocognition (2009b) analysis is divided into four points, namely Environment, Dimension, Goal, Motivation and Decision Making. The BBC International and the BBC Indonesia have similar environment because both of them are owned semi autonomously under the Royal Charter. By being owned

semi autonomously, the BBC International and the BBC Indonesia have the similar ideology to represent the U.S. in the same way as being the Globo-cop in Syrian conflict.

However, the BBC International and BBC Indonesia evaluate the U.S. action at different levels. The BBC International, which is read by people worldwide, foregrounds the representation and the condition of Moslems; meanwhile, Syrian BBC Indonesia with its specific readers' characteristics decreases the level of these representations, excluding the sentences about Syrian Moslems' condition, and focusing more on the conflict between the Opposition and Assad.

BBC Furthermore. the International and BBC Indonesia have different goals. The formerintends facilitate to understanding of its readers about the events by providing more information, including the U.S. action and information about the Moslems' conflict and Moslems' victims in Syrian conflict. However, the BBC Indonesia has more focus

on the news about the conflict itself and eliminates the news about the Moslem's conflict and Moslem victims to prevent its readers, who are mostly Moslems, from fidgeting around the conflicts.

The goal of the text producer is also influenced by his motivation and decision making (Van Dijk, 2009b p.43). The BBC International decides to provide more informative news because its news is read worldwide by readers who are more general than the readers of the BBC Indonesia. Meanwhile. the BBC Indonesia decides to exclude some information from the BBC International because its target market is only Indonesian people. The specific readers of the BBC Indonesia makes this news corporation only includes proper information for Indonesian readers. The BBC Indonesia also intends not to provoke religious conflicts in Indonesia related to that of Sunni-Shiite's which contributes to a great numbers of Moslem victims in Syrian conflict.

CONTEXT ANALYSIS

Syria is a republic led by a President through a hereditary system. Bashar Al Assad has been the president of Syria since the death of his father, Hafez Al Assad in 2000. Bashar Al Assad who was an ophthalmologist was made President of Syria since his older brother, Basil Al Assad who was the actual next President, died in a car accident in 1994. Assad dominated government was which AlawiteShiite, was the minority sect in Syria.

Nevertheless, the Syrians held protests against the government and demanded political transition due to dissatisfaction with the system in the regime. The protestworseneddue to the attack of the government military force on people involved in the demonstration.

The attack of the government military force caused rebellionswithin the government soldiers which then separated into two groups: the pro-government and anti-government. The Opposition formed an organization called SNC (Syria National Coalition) headed by Moaz Al Khatib. The Opposition and

other Syrian citizens are dominated by Sunni Sect.

Considering the conflict between Alawite-Shiite representing Assad and the Sunnigovernment, dominated Opposition, the regime of Assad is believed to maintain recognition of Alawite-Shiite minority among the Sunni-dominated Opposition and Syrian citizens. The religious conflict is more clearly conveyed in the BBC International than in the BBC Indonesia.

Moreover, the conflict in Syria has invited many countries intervene, such asthe U.S., France, the UK, Russia, China, and Iran. The former three countries support the Opposition, while the latter three supportAssad government. The U.S., which holds liberal and democracy ideology, is disappointed by Assad'spolicy to ignore **Syrian** people's voice. Assad's refusal to be democratic to his people makes the U.S. intervene and supports the Opposition group, which has the same ideology as the U.S. Hence, this situation enacts the U.S. social role as the Globo-cop to regulate the plot in Syrian conflict, which is to support the Opposition group and topple Assad regime.

This international issue has been reported in many news agencies, such as that in the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation). **BBC** broadcasts its news in many language versions. includes Indonesian. The BBC International, which is written in English, is aired worldwide, while for people Indonesian version. the **BBC** Indonesia, is aired for Indonesian citizens. Both the BBC International and BBC Indonesiaare owned semiautonomously under the Royal Charter in England. This might make the BBC International and BBC Indonesia have the same perception as the British to support the U.S. action, which is biased to the Opposition to topple Assad regime.

DISCUSSION

The BBC International and the BBC Indonesia represent the U.S. as the Globo-cop who controls the actors in International conflicts, in this case in Syrian conflict. The representation is indicated by three indicators, namely the U.S. as a firm and powerful

country, the U.S. is intimate with the Opposition group, and the U.S. is the Opposition helper. In addition, the U.S. is found to be biased to the Opposition based on its policy to help and assist the Opposition to achieve their goals.

The similar representation of the U.S. as being the Globo-cop in Syrian conflict revealed in both BBC International and BBC Indonesia signifies that the BBC, which is owned semi-autonomously under the Royal Charter, might have the same culture as that of the British in representing the action of the U.S which supports the Opposition.

However, although the BBC International and BBC Indonesia are under the same agency, they have different target market. The BBC International publishes its news for International readership, meaning that their readers are people across the globe. However, news published by the BBC Indonesia is especially targeted for specific readers, only the citizens of Indonesia.

The BBC International's readers are wider and more general compared to those of the BBC

Indonesia. This explains why the contents of the BBC International are more general and informative. The BBC International also includes Moslem's religious conflicts behind political conflict in Syria. Furthermore, the BBC International provides several sentences to attract readers' sympathies Opposition and thus legitimates the U.S. action and policy. However, the **BBC** Indonesia omits these sentences, hence reducing the level of representation. The **BBC** Indonesia also focuses more on the conflict between the Opposition and Assad.

Moreover, the BBC Indonesia eliminates the information about Moslem condition in Syria. It might consider its readers whoare mostly Moslems by eliminating Islam's religious conflicts and Moslem victims in Syrian conflict. This indicates that the BBC Indonesia intends to preventits readers from fidgeting around the issue and thus provides themonly with information that they would properly need.

In conclusion, the different level between BBC International and BBC

Indonesia in representing the U.S. is influenced by their different readers. This indicates that both the BBC International and BBC Indonesia are readers oriented.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the three stages of analysis, the BBC International and BBC Indonesia similarly represent the U.S. as the Globo-cop in Syrian conflict. The representation indicated by three indicators, namely the U.S. is a firm and powerful country, the U.S. is intimate with the Opposition, and the U.S. is the Opposition helper. In addition, the U.S. is found biased to Opposition based on its policy to help and assist the Opposition to achieve their aim. However, the BBC International provides more informative news compared to the **BBC** Indonesia. The International covers both political religious issues in Syrian conflict, whilethe BBC Indonesia omits sentences about Moslem conflict thereand reduces the level of the representation of the U.S in the conflict.

The characteristics of the BBC International's readers might explain why the contents of the BBC International are more general and informative. The different level between the BBC International and BBC Indonesia in representing the U.S. is influenced by the different characteristics of their readers.

As discussed in the two previous sections, the BBC Indonesia puts more focus on the conflict between the Opposition and Assad. Moreover, the BBC Indonesia eliminates the information on Moslem condition in Syria. This broadcasting corporation might consider its readers who are mostly Moslems by eliminating Moslem's religious conflict and Moslem victims in Syrian conflict. This indicates that the **BBC** Indonesia intends avoid to fidgetiness among its readers by only providing information which is properly needed by them.

The similar representation of the U.S. as being Globo-cop in Syrian conflict revealed in both the BBC International and the BBC Indonesia

indicates that the BBC, which is owned semi-autonomously under the Royal Charter, might use English culture in representing the action of the U.S which supports the Opposition. However, the difference in the way the BBC International and the BBC Indonesia present the news shows that both news corporations are readers oriented.

It is expected that this research can contribute to Critical Discourse Analysis on Translation works. Moreover, it is expected that this research can help readers not to take the information contained in mass mediafor granted.

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