

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The discourse inside a text is established according to the purposes of the author and the ongoing issue emerges in society for instance, persuasive and argumentative writings are utilized to persuade and convince the readers to see things in a particular way (Oshima and Hogue 2009). A lot of hidden ideologies are inserted into the text and appeared in the language used, but these ideologies are not discoverable for common readers (Fowler, Kress and Jones 1979). The ideologies owned by the writers can be observed by analyzing the discourse within the text. These ideologies are representing the perspective of the writer towards a certain issue that is being talked about.

The notion of perspective is continually utilized and quickly understood by readers, at least for simple purposes in daily conversation. With the word ‘perspective’, it means that something is being communicated from certain views (Graumann 2002). In discourse analysis, it is possible to discover and observe the perspective applied in a topic of discussion, in which to show the particular way of understanding, presenting, and illustrating the issue or the subject (Linell 2002). For example, an event is usually presented in a specific way by the author, under a certain perspective to point out an intended purpose.

In this broad, language as a whole can be considered as perspectival (Linell 2002, 49). In other words, it means that every unit of meaning indicates or

represents a certain perspective (Graumann 2002, 27). The sentences within a text contain aspects that show the viewpoint or how the writers see a certain issue. Perspectivization phenomena constitute a prime example of how discourse can affect the interpretation of certain information at the sentence level (Klages, et al. 2017).

As Renkema (1999, 126) also added in his study, information can be delivered through various perspectives. He formed a perspectivization theoretical framework that will be applied in this study. Perspectivization is the concept used in linguistics to look into the meaning of language and the influence of perspective forming the text (Graumann 2002). The perspectivization is illustrated by analyzing three important aspects of perspective according to Renkema (1999) which are vision, focalization – originally introduced by Genette (1988), and empathy – originally brought by Kuno (1987). These three aspects are portraying the perspective of the author. Besides, information tends to be conveyed through a certain perspective, and it can be seen in how media builds the text and delivers the information Van Dijk (1995).

Media has a significant role in providing information, thus the perspective of media holds power. Media power is essentially representing and convincing, that results in which media generally have a promising position to control and shape the opinions of their viewers or readers to some extent (Van Dijk 1995, 10). It controls what people think because media is remarkably successful in persuading people of what to think about and influence what they think (Entman 2007, 349). Media influence their viewers or readers to respond to an issue in society through their

perspective. The perspective of media can be seen from the way they convey the information and how the discourse within a news article being constructed.

News as the product of media contains such perspective. News is created by the relation of media and other industries and therefore cannot be considered as a natural fact appearing based on 'reality' (Fowler 1991, 222). News is a tool for media to show their power. It implies to some extent that the media perspective affects people's interpretation or viewpoint towards certain issues in the community, including how people see a minority group. The power of media is also supported by the growth of online media.

People have been favoring online news media in the past decade, the online and digital versions of media provide different opportunities for media consumers to keep up with information and news than they do with traditional print and broadcast media formats (American Press Institute 2016). Additionally to this upgrade, media consumers are also provided new ways to evaluate the news sources. Due to those reasons, online news media has been growing rapidly since 2008, particularly in Indonesia (Margianto and Syaefullah 2012). One of the news media that grows significantly in the online publication is *The Jakarta Post*.

*The Jakarta Post* ([thejakartapost.com](http://thejakartapost.com)) which is managed by PT Niskala Media Tenggara, is the online division of *The Jakarta Post*. *The Jakarta Post* found in 1983, is one of the few English-language news media in Indonesia. It is considered as one of the reliable and independent news media with its jargon, "Always Bold. Always Independent". *The Jakarta Post* is chosen as it is considered

as being “Indonesia’s Leading English-language Daily” and because of their moving mission “the push to freedom and democracy”. *The Jakarta Post* is also a part of Asia News Network, which is an affiliation of 23 news organizations from South, Northeast, and Southeast Asia. Due to this value, *The Jakarta Post* holds a significant power as a news media to influence people’s opinions toward minorities (Entman and Rojecki 2000, 305). Therefore, it will be intriguing to discover the perspectivization in *The Jakarta Post* on a certain minority group in the community.

In this study, the minority group that will be discussed is Indonesia’s atheists. The phenomena of atheism become highly debated again nowadays in media (Cliteur 2009, 1). Atheist according to Poidevin (1996), is one who does not believe in an existence of a supernatural being that acts as the creator of the universe, and simply lives without any denotation to such being. Indonesia’s atheists are considered as a part of marginalized groups as they are denied and do not have the same access to privileges enjoyed by the common society (USAID n.d.) Atheism is treated as a crime if being expressed publicly and can have severe social and legal consequences in Indonesia (Atack 2014). It is considered a crime as it against the ideology of Indonesia which is Pancasila. In Pancasila, it is stated that Indonesia believes in one and only God. Any expression in public which against this ideology may be considered as a crime, thus atheists have to live a double life in Indonesia.

Through the article entitled “Living a Double Life: Indonesia’s Atheists Fear Jail or Worse”, *The Jakarta Post* conveyed their perspective of Indonesia’s Atheists. The article was published in July 2018 following the case of a university student who compared Allah to Greek gods on Facebook’s post and stated that the

Koran was as fictitious as the Lord of the Rings, he then was convicted to five years in prison. It also features an atheist woman who lives her life as a Muslim and describes the fear of Indonesia's atheists to open up about their belief and forced to live a double life. The article chosen has been shared by 1,000 readers and reposted by other news media namely, *Global Times*, *Yahoo News*, and *Straits Times*.

Thus, the purpose of the study is to investigate the perspective of *The Jakarta Post* on Indonesia's atheists by applying the theoretical framework proposed by Renkema (1999). The discourse in the article is elaborated by looking into the words as the building blocks using lexical choice theory brought by Biber, et al (2002). By illustrating the perspectivization in *The Jakarta Post*, it will provide another side of media perspective towards a certain marginal group, but in this case, they can be considered as criminals. Perspectivization of media towards Indonesia's atheists may contribute to the field of how media views a minority group that is against the national law.

The previous studies were conducted by Al-Thamery (2009), Klages et al. (2017), Chen (2013), and Oktavia (2017). Al-Thamery (2009) in his research entitled *A Study of Focalization in Woolf's: Mrs. Dalloway*, applied focalization theory by Genette. He concluded that the story was presented without constant interruption from external focalization and that the novel provided a different perspective in the same situation. Klages, et al. (2017) in their study *Discourse Expectations Induced by Perspectivization: The Case of Counteridenticals*, also stated the importance of perspectivization that some natural language expressions rely upon a perspective in order to be acquired the truth value. Chen (2013) applied

Kuno's theory and he found that showing empathy represents an important dimension of the speakers' attitudes. Oktavia (2017) in her study used perspectivization theory by Renkema (1999) to find the perspective of The Atlantic and The New York Times newspaper toward the issue of western designers embracing hijab. She concluded that those two newspapers had different perspectives, in which The Atlantic showed the side of hijab as a compatible fashion to diminish the Islam community marginalization in western countries, meanwhile The New York Times tried to break the major concept of modest fashion of Muslim women.

The similarities of those studies and this current study can be found in terms of the topic discussed, which is perspective or perspectivization. However, the focus of each study was different. Al-Thamery (2009) and Chen (2013) focused on the specific parts of perspectivization, which are focalization and empathy. Klages et al. (2017) studied perspective in relation to discourse expectations. Meanwhile, Oktavia (2017) used the same theory that will be applied in this current study that is perspectivization framework by Renkema (1999) however, she focused on a certain issue – why western designers are embracing hijab – instead of focusing on the subject or a particular group. That will summarize the distinction of this current study in which the writer will focus on the perspective of media towards a marginal group, which is Indonesia's atheists, and may provide an insight presenting a minority group who is against the law and can be considered as criminals.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the previous explanation in the background above, thus this study is intended to answer the following question.

1. How is the perspectivization in *The Jakarta Post's* article entitled "Living Double Life: Indonesia's Atheists Fear Jail or Worse" toward Indonesia's Atheists?

## 1.3 Objective of the Study

In line with the statement of the problem, the objective of this present study is:

1. To illustrate the perspectivization in *The Jakarta Post's* article entitled "Living Double Life: Indonesia's Atheists Fear Jail or Worse" toward Indonesia's Atheists.

## 1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is conducted to give theoretical use and practical use in the same field of study. For theoretical use, this study is expected by the writer to contribute to the study of discourse analysis, in particular perspectivization. It offers an example of perspectivization analysis in online news media and to provide another view of how media present a certain community. Meanwhile for practical contribution, this study is expected to help develop an awareness of people responding to articles in online news media. It presents the perspective of media in viewing a certain community, in this case is Indonesia's atheists. Additionally, this

study is also expected to be a reference for those who are interested in conducting research in discourse analysis and perspectivization.

### 1.5 Definition of Key Terms

1. Discourse analysis: The study devoted to investigate the relationship between function and form in communication (Renkema, Introduction to Discourse Studies 1999). The goal of discourse analysis is to show and interpret the structure or pattern with the goal expressed through the linguistic unit.
2. Perspective: A position from which a person or group view something (things, person, or events) and communicate their views (Graumann 2002).
3. Perspectivization: The framework in discourse utilized to analyze the meaning of the languages used and the influence of the perspective of the author in choosing the topic of discussion, expression, and relevance valuating (Graumann 2002).
4. Atheist: One who does not believe in an existence of a supernatural being that acts as the creator of the universe, and simply lives without any denotation to such being (Poidevin, 1996).
5. *The Jakarta Post*: A daily English-language newspaper based in Indonesia (Merdeka, n.d.).