

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the study

Open-forum nature in media as a communication tool became a good option for societies to establish interaction to other people. Open-forum refers to a situation when some or many people are engaged in communication which importance does exist. The communication is naturally could happen either by direct way or indirect way. Direct way refers to talking by face to face whether indirect way might found in cyberspace by way of internet can serve as a tool for communication. The Baker (in Muis, 2001, p. 110) recognized that media give a huge role and impact in socializing process moreover it also able to help society actualize their own interest. Basically, in the communication process people have a chance to exploit language to convey certainly intention and purpose. Language is often become the most important thing in ideas exposition not to mention media language. The reports in media that are often tossing the words even become their strength to deliver the message.

Halliday's view explained that a language is interpreted as "a system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be expressed" (cited in Crane, p.1). It also strengthens Sobur's statement that asserts language is uncommitted (2004, p.30). Since every person has different interpretation towards words, language in news has a various meaning even less news release in press

media. In media perspective, the word choice on news could have shown some interest and purpose. A certain party in media for instance, is frequently been viewed eager to spread a particular ideology. Those certain parties could come from the ruler or the reporting victim. Someone who's an authority surely has a profound chance to be more powerful and the suppressed side can use the media as an intermediary to express their anxieties. Here, it can be concluded that media are not neutral. Media not only broadcast news but also create a new discourse in public.

Media may broadcast a news in different presentation depend on the intention and importance. It is because media is consumed by and for the mass. Hamley (2001) assumed that mass media provide a wide range of cultural opinion to people in identity differentiation. The media reports about people are not the fixed identity of people but rather to reshape and give another people chance built an identity. The fact says that media especially popular media has a great intervention on the people identity construction. As Debra Grodin and Thomas R. Lindlof state:

With a simple flip of the television channel or radio station, or, or a turn of the newspaper or magazine page we have at our disposal an enormous array of possible identity models. (Grodin & Lindlof, 1996, cited in Hamley, 2001)

Identity above refers to the identity that we known as “a theatrical presentation of the self” and because of constructed by consumerism and image, it is also “unstable and always subject to change” (Damean, 2006), pp.1-6). Grodin & Lindlof resort to television, radio station or newspaper as the example of popular media since internet was not a part of them yet. Yet, in recent days, media with internet already being a

popular media which help people having every possible identity agree with the image portrayal.

Technology development has significantly heightened the media works and people are striving to follow its development included internet. Okamoto & Sjolholm (2001) has found that Indonesia implements an important transformation which is the process and the products fulfillment needs a new and high technology. Our world recently is increasing and could be categorized driven and controlled by a combination of information and entertainment values. Both of which are supported by any kind of communication means, especially electronic communication such as TV. Considering media in Indonesia is now quite advance proven by the increasing amount of technology tools and the ease to access technology and electronic substance, it is already introduced also a media over the internet. Thus, the writer believed that a cyberspace, a space created through an assembly of electronic communication harness an internet, exist as a representation of technology development which dominates various Indonesian walks of life.

Bell (2001) emphasized that cyberspace is made from people and it is also a human culture points out the human stories in daily life. Cyberspace presents a performance space have an opportunity to helps people shape their virtual identity. Moreover, Bell also argued that cyberspace represents some elements which can be negotiated which determined by the author experience. People in cyberspace then could have fold identity, where/when to positioning a real life and identities

disappear. In order to make people conveniently travel through the cyberspace and access information easily, there is a media provided in cyberspace called cybermedia.

Cybermedia is a media which can be found over the Internet. It means that cybermedia is one of the reflections of a cyberspace existence in human life. The information on cybermedia has no boundaries related to the author identity even the subject of matter. McAdams in his article, *Cybermedia: An Introduction (1995)*, explained that cybermedia is an electronic media form offer a vast collection of information which can be controlled by any users to suit their needs and without boundaries related to subject matter.

Presently, cybermedia have exploited high technology. Technology makes media actively other in the building of self identity. Many people are then increasingly interest hooked to being creative by creating several social online forums because it easier way to socialize, to exchange ideas, to share thought and opinion. In other words, social media created an online discussion forum. Since they are made for different importance the online forums have different characteristic one another. Solis (2007) defined a social media as the democratization of information which involved people to discussing discourse which form who is the readers and the publisher. It is mechanism broadcasting shifting, could be one-to-many, or even people in a group to a group. It is “uses the internet to facilitate conversations”.

Recently, the most phenomenal social media is Twitter. According to Jakarta Post online newspaper, the number of Indonesian twitter users in 2012 reached to 30 million people and it makes Indonesia ranked in the fifth place for twitter user

quantity in the world. Some internet social statistics showed a significant increase in Indonesia twitter users. Hence, based on the fact above, twitter could be said as a phenomenal social media in Indonesian society.

Since twitter is a well-known social media, regardless of age and profession, everyone can be the users of twitter. The target of twitter users can be a young learner, a student, a college student, a worker, etc. This also applies to a public figure. Twitter basically can be accessed by any people including public figures. Public figure is a famous person whose life and behavior are the focus of intense public interest and scrutiny (Free Online Dictionary, 2012). Thus, celebrity who practices or performs any of creative arts and able to attract the attention of the public can be classified as public figure. In order to be recognized by public, a celebrity surely needs press media help to construct his/her image to be recognized by public. Among various press media, twitter as a part of media in cyber space provides an option for public figure to construct their intended identity. This is in line with Marwick & Boyd (2011) argument that famous people “use social media sites to maintain popularity and image”. Smith assumed that one of the media job is “maintain the identification of society with relevant people values and symbols” (in Muis, 2000, p.111) and it makes public figure especially celebrity always related to media. In order to make people see their values, public figures need media to help and support constructing desirable identity. Twitter as the representation of social media can provides some information which gives significant impact to the public social

action (Passia Seminar, 1999). Whatever kind the media is, it helps public to shape their rules of constructing an identity.

The fact that twitter, a microblogging site in social media, has a powerful capacity to expose a thing is finally be used by celebrity with certain purpose. Celebrity will make the best use of twitter until successfully existed in the midst of public life. In many cases, media play roles to release news, therefore it can be a friend but also an enemy for an artist. They can act as a friend when they blow up the public figure's problems to society in order to make them recognized. On the other hand, they can also be a nuisance to the celebrity by disseminating, creating and reinforcing negative stereotypes to general society which may totally different from facts. There are problems which are exaggerated or inappropriately broadcast by media which is in line Sobur statement about the negative or positive impact of media. The positive and negative determination is properly depend on who view it, how extent they have an interest through the media coverage (2004, p.31). Recently with the rapid development of social media, many of celebrities prefer to use social media to publish things they deem important. Since 2008, the first time Twitter presented in social media, it is directly gained the popularity in celebrities' life. Twitter serves them a tool to be a device to get closer interaction with their fans.

In Twitter, celebrity's fans would know about their admirable person's activities especially their favorite one. Hence, Twitter is like a reader's column in which people can share their thoughts without expecting responses. In Celebrity's perspective, they indirectly use twitter as a diary which is broadcast to the public and

there is no more privacy in it. They can tell everything to share their knowledge, experiences, activities, even their feelings for certain purpose. For example, they make some clarifications against an untrue report about them that has been widely spread in society. They choose a practical way both to share and to clarify something without conducting a press conference, inviting media such as journalists, reporters. Twitter provides them a freedom space to express themselves in order to be read by societies in general or a Twitter's users in specific. This is one way of public figure to establish popularity and construct an identity. They would like to create and portray an image they wish and it will be presented to the public. The situation of some tweets written by celebrities in Twitter can be so different from that broadcast on television and they are even sometime too good to be true. In this way, celebrities can either obtain reputations or good image. Yet, they can also be seen as a disgrace and considered having created image building and construct an identity. If personal branding describes the way people with an entity portrays an image it wishes to represent (Sowers, 2009, pp.17-18), identity construction involves both self-representation and social action (Castells, 2010, p.53).

This study took Angelina Sondakh as the example of one of the public figures in Indonesia who utilize twitter to construct a certain identity. The writer chose Angelina Sondakh as the object of investigation because she is a well-known celebrity in Indonesia. She has many achievements before deciding to enter political field. She could be seen as an ambitious and powerful woman. In sequences stories, Angelina inclined to depict herself as a modern woman. On other hand, in Twitter,



the writer found the opposite description of her personality. She created an identity as a weak-minded woman.

Angelina Sondakh is a former of “Putri Indonesia” 2001. She is both an actress and a parliament member who has been experiencing series of ordeals. Her position as the Vice president of a big political party plays an important role in the world of politics and often jeopardizes her standing. The series of her ordeals started from the allegation of her involvement in Graft-Ridden Lab Project around August 2011. Not to mention the allegation of her relationship with one KPK (Corruption Eradication Commission) investigator and some unflattering news about her past cohabitation with her late husband and fellow legislator, Raden Pandji Chandra Pratomo Samiadji Massaid or famously known as Adjie Massaid. He passed away from an unexpected accident on 10 February 2011. Angie, a nickname of Angelina Sondakh, was detained by the Corruption Eradication Commission on 27 April 2012 for her involvement in Graft-Ridden Lab Project around August 2011 and has been charged with accepting gratuities and bribes, and could be sentenced to 20 years in Jail and fined up to Rp. 1 billion. She was accused in a corruption case, plans to file an exception to an indictment that says the Democratic Party Lawmaker received more than Rp. 12 million from the Permai Group Company. The bribes allegedly came from Muhammad Nazaruddin, the owner of Permai Group Company and the former Democratic Party treasurer who was later convicted of graft.

Angelina Sondakh is one of public figures who used Twitter to share her feelings about all her life’s obstacles. She has used Twitter since 14 July 2010. By her

tweets, she showed how to be a strong woman without a partner of life and stay patient for everything that happens in her life including her name which is getting worse after the corruption allegation. Tweet is a term for short message around up to 140 characters delivered or sent by the Twitter users to reveal their ideas (Ling and Baron, 2007 cited by Denby). It is one of the Twitter popular terms besides followers, hash tag (#) and etc.

Previous study related to identity construction in Twitter was by Marwick & Boyd. Their study focused on the celebrities practice in Twitter. They observed the celebrities performing on Twitter and the result showed that Twitter disrupts the expectation of parasociality between the famous person and interactions. Moreover, “celebrity performance of access and affiliation conveys the inner working of unequal status, making power differentials clear” (Marwick & Boyd, 2001. pp.1-33). Another study was by Rahmani & Sarhammar which focused on the people personal branding and how people brand their image. The idea of personal branding in Rahmani & Sarhammar study helped the writer to explain what the identity construction is. The result showed that a person has an ability to make the best out of image which made people chose personal branding (2010, p.56). Their thesis also explained that branding an image helps people to construct their identity in competitive society.

Still another study is addressed to the problem of media discourse analysis especially in the discursive construction of social reality that is involved in the production and consumption of newsprint media. Christianopoulus & Steve (2004)

compared news from two different sources; China daily and South China Morning Post which in fact reported its news entirely different. They applied a critical discourse analysis theory by Foucault and the result was that each paper constructs its own social reality in ways which reflect its own social and cultural context included the intended readership. The last was a study by Rahal which focused on the ideological construction of female body in media production, a case study of critical discourse analysis. Rahal (2001, p.196) reported a correlation between exposure to appearance media and body dissatisfaction among young and women which definitely focus on media production. The results showed that educational interventions go beyond the media literacy. The study recommended a mainstream construction in the media production while this thesis focused on a public figure construction in Twitter as the representation of social media.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Considering the fact above, the writer would like to state the problem as follow:

How is the identity of Angelina Sondakh as a public figure constructed in her personal Twitter?

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

This study is intended to analyze the identity construction by Angelina Sondakh in her tweets in Twitter as the representation of social media. Furthermore, critical discourse analysis theory help to find out the way public figure re-establish their image in social media. The captures of Angelina Sondakh's tweets were used to investigate the identity construction she tried to establish.

### **1.4 Scope and Limitation**

The writer in this study analyzed only one Indonesian public figure, Angelina Sondakh. The analysis focused on her tweets in Twitter as the representation of social media in cybermedia considering there are varieties of social media can be used in cyberspace, such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. The twitter period gathered for the data was from 3 February 2012 to 16 April 2012. Since the analysis was applied on the case study of Angelina Sondakh, the writer did not recommend the critical discourse analysis on this study as a generalization of identity construction of other public figure's tweets in Twitter. Date and time goes flies while public figures have their own way to construct an identity in cybermedia. The way Angelina sondakh constructed her identity in virtual world might not be the same compared to other public figures.

## 1.5 Significance of the study

The writer expected this research about an identity construction by using critical discourse analysis approach contribute to linguistic studies especially that of critical discourse analysis. This study also could be an additional reference for students of linguistic and open a new thread in the English department. This study is also expected to provide a point of view to society in general about how word arrangement in language has a meaning beyond the sentence itself so that readers should be more critical while reading a text especially text in open media. Above all, the result will hopefully make society aware of the way Angelina Sondakh as the public figure created her identity construction seen from her tweets in Twitter as the representation of social media.

## 1.6 Definition of Key Terms

- Identity:** People's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are and how they relate to others" (Hogg & Abrams, 1988, p.2). "Identities are relatively stable has role-specific understanding and expectations about self" (Wendt, 1992, cited in Fearon, 1999, p.397,).
- Identity construction:** The process of identifying self identity involves determining if other people responses. A discourse among society finally makes self-identity.

**Twitter:** A social networking in a form of micro-blogging as a part of cybermedia and the network provides any information such as people's stories, ideas even news. (cited in twitter website).

**Cybermedia:** An electronic media form offer a vast collection of information which can be controlled by any users to suit their needs and without boundaries related to subject matter (1995)

**Discourse:** A concept and idea which is composed by people with their own language (Van dijk, 1998)

**Critical discourse analysis:** A type of discourse that analyze "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van dijk, 2000).

# **CHAPTER 2**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**