

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In anticipating the Covid-19 pandemic, government policies need to be communicated to the public clearly and transparently. Submission of policies that are not strategic will have an impact on public communication. Information that is not well planned will result in panic and public distrusts. At the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government needed to develop appropriate communication strategies so that the delivery of policies could be planned, and information could be conveyed to the public. The media is a messenger from the government to the public. In critical perspectives, the representation of the government and society depicted in the text is worth to analyse since with the frame or representation, the media builds public's perception of the news (Sulistiyowati, 2021).

There are four points of government instructions for the public to be obeyed in handling Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia: (1) The public need to remain calm and alert; (2) Focus on coordination of related agencies; (3) Easy access of information to the media; (4) Mainstream the "Washing Hands with Soap" movement. The Presidential Instruction wants to show that the government is serious, ready, and able to deal with the outbreak. Information is delivered comprehensively and periodically about what the government has done, is currently doing, and will do. The government has formed a Task Force or *Satuan Tugas (Satgas)* for the Acceleration of Handling Covid-19 through Presidential

Decree No. 7/2020, in the context of handling Covid-19 so that it is fast, precise, focused, integrated, and synergistic, including coordination between ministries, government agencies and local governments. Task Force Duties are planning, coordinating, controlling, mobilizing resources, supervising, and reporting the implementation of handling Covid-19 to the President (Tambun, 2020). This task includes coordinating public communications, delivering information, updating data on the development of Covid-19 cases, through daily press conferences (by the Covid-19 Spokesperson), press releases and websites. The main narratives of the government's strategy to tackle public issues regarding the ongoing cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia (Presidential Staff Office, 2020), namely: (1) "The Government is Serious, Ready and Able to Handle Covid-19"; (2) "People Remain Calm and Alert"; (3) "Covid-19 Can Be Cured"; (4) #Lawancovid19. The goals: (1) Create a calm society and understand what must be done for the environment; (2) Build public perception that the state is present and responsive in controlling this crisis condition.

When this pandemic first entered Indonesia, the government's narrative goal of creating a calm society at the beginning of the Covid-19 emergency response has not been fully implemented. The public was haunted by panic and confusion of information. For example, (1) there is panic buying behaviour or massive purchases of goods (BBC News Indonesia, 2020); (2) stigma and bullying of COVID-19 positive patients and their families; (3) public protests over the implementation of PSBB; and (4) hoarding of medical equipment, such as masks (Purbaya, 2020). There are many violations committed by the community, such as violations of health protocols (not wearing masks, not keeping a distance),

movements to refuse burial of bodies in several places. Hospitals face a high surge in patients. There has even been a netizen movement on social media with the hashtag #IndonesiaTerserah, which is a statement of surrender to the existing conditions. *Warganet* or Indonesian netizen enlivened by uploading photos of medical personnel carrying the words *Indonesia Terserah*, which voiced their disappointment with the government's policy which was considered to provide flexibility for community mobility.

Due to many issues spread in public, the Indonesian government tries to control the ongoing issues such as hoaxes, updates of Covid-19 graphic, policies of handling health protocol by releasing reportages on the website of *covid19.go.id*. This website has been running since the first case of Covid-19 Indonesia occurred in early March 2020. This study focuses on *covid19.go.id*, the government's official website that specializes in reporting Covid-19 cases in Indonesia. The focus is specified on how the government handles the *3 M 3 T* which abbreviation of 3 M (*Mencuci tangan* or washing hands, *Memakai masker* or wearing masks and *Menjaga jarak* or keeping the distance) and 3 T (Testing, Tracing, Treatment). What is important about this redaction is that it shows the pattern of how Indonesian people are represented on the text and how the discourse of *3 M 3 T* produced by the government makes Indonesian people feel embraced in the participation of handling Covid-19 in Indonesia.

The importance of the health protocol of *3 M 3 T* has also been the key in handling Covid-19 in the world. Many countries are in a state of having no choice, so they need a 'fast learning' period in order to take various policies needed to deal with a situation that is increasingly becoming a multi-crisis situation as a

result of the increasing number of positive cases and fatalities. There is no best way that applies to all countries because each country has other variables that affect every policy taken. The story of ‘success’ is very relative because of the different variables faced by each country, but most countries that have successfully handled Covid-19 are due to the implementation of health protocol and community participation. The degree of success in the first six-month period in 2020 is certainly an asset for the governments of each country to face further developments of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some countries are considered ‘successful’ in handling the pandemic because of their efforts in maintaining health protocol and focusing on public participation to help reduce the number of cases.

Taiwan’s experience in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic is one of the most successful examples so far (Rowen, 2020). Taiwan managed to control the Covid-19 Pandemic until July 30, 2020, and only recorded 467 positive cases of Covid-19 and only seven people died. The key to Taiwan’s success is the application of the health protocol, community participation, rapid response and the use of information based on accurate data integration and supported by action, discipline, cooperation, and the significant role of the Taiwanese community. Another country in East Asia that has been relatively successful is South Korea. This success is due to the expertise of the South Korean government in presenting a suitable *hurry-hurry* strategy for the community, maximum application of health protocol, community action, participation and being able to combine epidemiological investigations, the use of high technology for tracking, as well as an appropriate rush culture applied to local communities (Lim et al., 2021). Many

countries have applied similar ways in preventing the transmission of Covid-19. A country in the region of Southeast Asia that is fairly successful is Singapore (Abdullah & Kim, 2020). Three components supporting this success are a responsive and efficient health disaster mitigation system, the application of health protocol, and the role of a disciplined society (Hennida, 2020). The ministry of health of Singapore has also released official advice for the public that should be taken to control the transmission of Covid-19 disease. They focus on maintaining good personal hygiene, being socially responsible, practising social distancing, and looking out for health advisories.

Australia and New Zealand are included in the category that is fairly successful in the first six months of 2020. Australia is successful because it can manage risk in three areas, namely public health, the national health system, and the sustainability of the country's economy (Mayangsari, 2020). New Zealand was successful due to two factors: 'nurture' and 'nature'. The first 'nurture' is related to the willingness of all parties (opposition and society) to work together so that the government can focus on taking the necessary policies to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, 'nature' is related to geographical factors which are located far from other regions, and this gives New Zealand enough time to determine the most appropriate policy options (Pardede & Rozali, 2020).

From the description of what had happened in some countries in handling Covid-19 cases, the writer acknowledges that society's participation has a very important role; society can play a role not only as an object but also as a subject for handling Covid-19. Society participation is a sincere willingness from them to help disease management activities that occur in their respective areas so that the

spread of Covid-19 does not expand. Therefore, an analysis of the discourse of health protocol *3 M 3 T* is significant because in this redaction the government shows to the public how their action and attitude in handling Covid-19 cases and issues in Indonesia. Also, it is to reveal how the representation of the government and Indonesian people are represented in the discourse of *3 M 3 T*.

At this point, the Critical Discourse Analysis is necessary. The understanding on how the government produced the text and controlled public on this website is necessary to be analysed. In the field of CDA, language is considered as a manifestation of ideology and linguistic activity on the text is regarded as a social practice. Critical linguists focus not only on the language and linguistics but also on the relationship of language, ideology, and power presented in the text. In line with how the government uses language as the media to increase public trust, therefore, this study urges the writer to see the scientific research in linguistics, ideology, and power which manifested on the website *covid19.go.id* by the Indonesian government with the purpose to reveal big social cultural context and unhidden the ideology embedded behind news reportages.

Relating to that, the writer uses Fairclough's model of analysis called the three-dimensional approach because this approach is useful to provide multiple points of analytic access. This model of analysis allows the writer to connect the patterns of analysis to be more comprehensive since it is described, interpreted, and explained. Fairclough (2013) defines this model of discourse analysis as capable of contributing analysis of social and culture to reveal how the producer of language carries certain ideology. Therefore, it needs thorough analysis. This model of analysis allows the writer to see discourse as a form of action. It implies

the relation of a reciprocal process between discourse and social structure. This concept is to see how text, discourse practice and social practice are contributed to revealing meaning critically. Moreover, how it explains the method to find out the meaning is presented alongside the process of production, ideology in the text, and social culture practice in which the media is located. The three dimensions can be drawn as *description*, *interpretation*, and *explanation*.

In line with the term of ownership that influenced how media was shaped, it is apparent that the ideological system also has a significant role in forming reality. There are many variants of the notion of ideology, although briefly it can be interpreted that ideology refers to a series of ideas that make up the reality of a group, a system of representation, or a code that determines how a person describes the world and his environment. Ideology plays behind representation. Ideological meaning begins with understanding the workings of the language system in the social structure. Althusser (2014) views that the essence of ideology can be identified through the structure of language. Combination and disposition are the keywords to explain the extent to which ideology plays in language, so to dismantle the ideological language of a representation, its structure must first be dismantled, then meaning is linked with the existence of the social structure that underlies the use of language structure.

There is nothing objective. We cannot say that the dismantling of the structure of language along with the findings of ideology in a language is a guarantee of the ultimate certainty of an ideology. Changing the structure will change the ideological meaning because in Althusserian terms ideology is determined by its structure. That way, ideology is a subjective reality that is

present in society, flexible, fluid and ready to change. Ideology is present in everyone as something subtle and often unconscious so that ideology is no longer seen in the classical Marxist tradition which says it is false consciousness. Althusser interprets ideology as a deep unconsciousness whose practice in humans takes place in everyday life.

Furthermore, Althusser (2014) defined that ideology is often propagated by social structures, such as what he calls the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA). Through his ideas, Althusser said that all social and political institutions have a role in the spread of ideology and the dominance of the distribution of meaning. In view of Althusser, a structural analysis model can be developed in view of how the power relations between the structures of social work, which of course is limited to its use in the language. The media as part of the structure that deal with language are often referred to as the ‘ringleader’ of the spread of ideology. In Althusser’s view, communication media is ISA communication, they work without using physical violence. State Apparatus such as government, administration, soldier, police, court, and so on which Althusser called them as ‘Subject’ hails or interpellates individuals or ‘subjects’ to obey them, recognize the mutual interests, and guarantee that everything is going well. This view is related to the focus of this study which investigates the control of the government depicted in the media. The government as part of ISA is able to control society through subliminal ideology which manifests by the words in the text. Regarding to that, this study attempts to acknowledge how the media which is owned by the government represented the government and society in the text. It is crucial to be analysed because their

representation depicted in the text reveals the power and ideological processes in discourse.

All in all, the government's efforts in promoting the importance of health protocol *3 M 3 T* are meaningless without the participation, involvement, and contribution from society. According to Marston et al., (2020) global health guidelines already assert that community participation is very crucial. Government has a role to tell society what to do, but seemingly information from the government has minimal input. Those become the challenging part of handling pandemic. Policy makers that work on Covid-19 should assure the society to understand that their voices are heard and important. Their voices and participation are the keys in public discourse for handling the pandemic because their action can reduce immediate damage of Covid-19 and build future resilience. Therefore, by using the CDA approach, the discourse of *3 M 3 T* which is produced by the government can be seen from how the society is represented in the text. Also, how the discourse of *3 M 3 T* produced by the Indonesian government embracing the participation of Indonesian people in handling Covid-19.

1.2 Research Questions

From the statement in the background of the study, the writer tries to answer questions:

1. How are the Indonesian government and society represented in the discourse of *3 M 3 T* produced by the Indonesian government on the website *covid19.go.id*?

2. How has the discourse of *3 M 3 T* produced by the Indonesian government embraced the participation of Indonesian society in handling Covid-19?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Based on research questions, the present study aims:

1. To find out the representation of the Indonesian government and society in discourse of *3 M 3 T* which was produced by the Indonesian government on the website *covid19.go.id*.
2. To reveal how discourse of *3 M 3 T* produced by the Indonesian government embraced the participation of Indonesian society in handling Covid-19.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research is expected to have some significance theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the results of this study are expected to enhance the knowledge and development of linguistics. This study focuses on the critical analytic process of how the Indonesian government and society are represented in the discourse of *3 M 3 T* on the website *covid19.go.id* and how the government produced a discourse of *3 M 3 T* that embraces Indonesian people to be participated in handling Covid-19. By adopting model analysis from Fairclough, it can reveal critical findings which can enrich linguistics research generally in the field of critical discourse. Furthermore, it can be the reference for similar studies specifically in critical discourse analysis that uses governmental platforms as the object of the study.

Practically, the results of this study are expected to increase knowledge for society to be more critical in accepting, reading, or consuming information from any source with no exception from the government. By using critical analysis by Fairclough, we can understand how complex the discourse media is. What is represented in the text is a complex process of production which involves power, ideology, social context, culture and so on. This process of meaning making has a purpose to be accepted in public. Thus, this study hopes that the public can develop critical thinking in processing information from the media.