103

The Use of Verbal Rhetorical Devices to Construct Readers' Ideology in **Online News Headlines**

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ABSTRACT

Headline editorials have their merit to create inventive language choices to meet a targeted discourse. This paper serves as an understanding on how news discourse can be elaborated by taking both meaning and effects of language use in the production and interpretation of a text into account. Gathering the key instrument from 139 relevant online news headlines under the discourse of Gerwani, a debarred women's organization in Indonesia's New Order regime from various online news websites publication year 1999-2016, this research aims to: 1) identify verbal rhetorical devices (alliteration, parallelism, testimonial, metonymy, irony, quotation out of context, rhetorical question, and antithesis) used in the headlines, and 2) elaborate the use of verbal rhetoric devices and how they serve the readers with persuasive manner toward their ideology, including beliefs, opinions, and value systems, regarding with Gerwani-related case. The analysis proved that the use of verbal rhetorical devices in online news headlines contributed to create relevance of the topic, thus, aided the readers to perceive intended meaning, which might influence the establishment of power to construct their ideology. Consequently, the use of language can never be separated in socio-cultural contexts of a particular society, driving a persuaded manner for headline-oriented and language practitioners to notice how important it is to use verbal rhetorical devices as one of incorporating attitudes in delivering messages in public sphere ensuring a variety of contents and contexts to be perceived.

Keywords: online headlines, verbal rhetoric devices, Gerwani, ideology, discourse

I. INTRODUCTION

In the changing period of communication medium, headlines are still considered as an important key point to access news. In fact, as headlines are also a part of language texts, they share communicatively various intentions, such as to inform, to entertain, to persuade, to educate, and many others. Isani [1] classifies three functions of news headlines, which include a function on a surface level; how the production of headlines are to meet the visual level of columns, place, text design, font size, and many others to be eye-catching, on a linguistic level; how headlines generally serve economy grammar in their textuality, and on a pragmatic level; how headlines act as way to level up relevance, negotiate body texts, select or even summarize the news.

Under linguistic context, the researchers explored the use of linguistic cues as Luow [2] identified that they allow headlines to influence readers' interpretation. Johnstone [3] also asserted that headlines become a part of information that is skillfully shown in microrhetorical linguistic choices, in which Metila [4] also pointed out that if they are added with subtle structural and linguistic elements, headlines might sway readers in forming opinions or interpretations. Long &Wall [5] mentioned that one of rhetorical media tools and techniques that can be used in media communication is the use of verbal rhetoric devices. Verbal rhetorical devices are a part of rhetoric which concern not only about the messages delivered but also about the determination of how persuasive a text can be [6][7]. They include alliteration, parallelism, testimonial,

metonymy, irony, quotation out of context, rhetorical question, and antithesis [5][8][9][10].

Alliteration is the repetition of starting letters of words in a phrase or sentence to create affective rhythm. Parallelism refers to the use of the same pattern of words and structures which is created under the same class of the words, nouns, or noun phrases. Meanwhile, testimonial is a rhetorical device that uses testimonies from a person or institution to endorse its related description towards the news story to convince the readers. Subsequently, metonymy is a word, name, or expression used as a substitute for something else with which it is closely associated, used to represent a part as a whole or a whole for a part. Thenceforth, irony is a statement or expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect; include the use of sarcasm, cynicism, and mockery. Quotation out of context denotes a statement or expression used that removes the most important quotes from the context and editorial. A rhetorical question is an expression or utterance in the form of a question that is asked to make a point rather than to prompt an answer, for a stylistic effect with the purpose of emphasizing or provoking. Lastly, antithesis is a figure of speech in which an opposition or contrast idea is expressed by parallelism of words that are strongly the opposite of or contrasted with.

This research was conducted under a pragmatic goal to investigate how language and discourse are always intertwined with socio-political agendas reflecting ideologies as MacRitchie & Seedat [11] mentioned that the use of verbal rhetorical devices may optimize the relevance of the news as they can relate the contextual effect and processing effort by looking at a distinct layout and typography that also present a specific version of truth, reality or world order.

Research objectives:

- 1. to identify the verbal rhetoric devices used in *Gerwani*-related online news headlines publication year 1999-2016.
- 2. to reveal the relationship between the verbal rhetoric devices and headlines, and how the verbal rhetoric devices serve the readers with persuasive manner toward the readers' ideology, including their beliefs, opinions, and value systems, regarding with *Gerwani*-related case

I. LITERATURE REVIEW

Headline editorials have rights to create a manipulation of words to ensure that a specific discourse

can be maintained. Thus, Simpson & Mayr [12] described that there is no text that is neutral because in discourse, every text carries a specific meaning which is bias, because each has its ideological standpoint. This paper serves as an understanding on how discourse itself can be elaborated by taking both meaning and effects of language use (by investigating the use of verbal rhetorical devices) in the production and interpretation of a text into account (how the texts can be perceived). Verbal rhetorical devices in the headlines themselves offer newspaper editorials to explore their persuasive manner using linguistic devices used in words or phrases that may contribute to influence the readers' ideology to believe so or otherwise [10]. They are words or phrases that can be used to manipulate readers in some cases [13]. Thus, it is believed that they contribute towards the establishment of power as a significant persuasion device to construct the readers' attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, in this case by the media cultivation, e.g. from 139 selected online news headlines in the case of Gerwani.

Gerwani is an activist-based movement that makes its move towards a mass women organization to attract wider scope of Indonesian's women, focusing on women's rights in education, marriage law, labor's rights, prostitution banning, and political rights [14][15]. Its members were claimed to take active involvement during the 1965 coup in 30 September 1965 and to murder six army generals [16], which then they were also arrested and imprisoned without trial. This event also remarked as Indonesia's governmental power transition period from President Soekarno (Old Order regime) to President Soeharto (New Order regime) [17].

During the New Order regime (1966-1998), Gerwani was believed to misrepresent the nature of Indonesian women. It was claimed that Gerwani had performed sadistic and sexual rituals before and after killing the six Generals during G30S [18]. Gerwani was recognized as a threat to the "idealized Indonesian identity" [19] in the New Order regime, as women should be referred as obedient housewives and passive political participants, in which Gerwani opposed to that the misogynous propaganda.

The traditional beliefs of Indonesian's women's role were made by the New Order regime to fit in with the power interests of the state in which *Gerwani* noticed this state of inequality. Since the reproduction of all state-controlled media over *Gerwani* and its associated institutions such as the Indonesian Communist Party, the ex-*Gerwani* members were not easily accepted by the society even after being discharged. Until today, the

majority of Indonesian society believes that they are a part of leftists and thus, it leads them to be systematically discriminated.

I. METHODOLOGY

The selection of the data was based on three considerations: 1) the data were purposively taken under a special case of Indonesian's unresolved human rights issue that has been highlighted internationally, 2) they are all available to be accessed online by Indonesian and international readers, and 3) this type of editorials usually brings about a particular ideological stance, thus the intertwined context of language use and discourse can be investigated. This research focused on *Gerwani*. stood for Gerakan Wanita Indonesia, or Indonesian Women's Movement, a massive women organisation established in 1950 as Gerwis (Gerakan Wanita Indonesia Sedar, or Movement of Conscious Indonesian Women) that changed its name to *Gerwani* in 1954 [15]. Suspected and then claimed to be under the same line with PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia, or Indonesian Communist Party), the New Order government banned the organization and arrested the members to be put into prison without trials[20].

The data were collected from 14 online news websites (the Jakarta Post, Jakarta Globe, the Guardian, the Diplomat, Aljazeera, The Conversation, News Mandala, The International People's Tribunal (IPT) 1965, Inside Indonesia, NYR Daily, Foreign Policy, Tempo, Green Left Weekly, and Pacific Media Center) publishing year 1999-2016, compiling 139 headlines in total. The keywords used to search for the news headlines were, such as "Gerwani", "women organization 1965", "1965 genocide", "1965 mass killing", and other related terms. The research object was in accordance to any news that the headlines or body structures contain a word "Gerwani", "women organization in 1965", "communist women" and similar references.

Employing a basic data sheet, the researchers did the following in their data collection: 1) retrieving the online news headlines, 2) reading them, 3) preparing a data sheet, 4) identifying the verbal rhetorical devices employed, and 5) transferring the data to the data sheet. In data analysis process, the researchers 1) read and reread the online news headlines, 2) selected them as raw data, 3) classified the data into raw data to be categorized based on the data sheet, 4) categorized the kinds of verbal rhetorical devices, and 5) analyzed the tendency of the verbal rhetorical devices employed in an in-depth analysis.

Triangulation was employed in this research to conform key informants, data observation, and peer scrutiny ensuring the result reflected the experience of the key informants. In the case of reliability and dependability, this research employed clear research methodology to show that if the work were repeated under the same context, methods and key informants, similar results would be obtained [21].

II. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The researchers see the needs of reviewing linguistic cues that allow headlines to influence readers' interpretation, which shall be shown by what Johnstone [3] mentioned as micro-rhetorical linguistic choices. Below is the table showing the deployment of rhetorical devices that the editorials from various online news headlines chose to represent the meaning from *Gerwani*-related case during 1999-2016 that can be used as one of the strategies to influence public.

A. THE CLASSIFICATION OF RHETORICAL DEVICES USED IN GERWANI-RELATED ONLINE NEWS HEADLINES

Rhetorical devices	Frequency	%
Metonymy	52	37,41
Literal meaning	32	23,02
Parallellism	15	10,79
Alliteration	12	8,63
Testimonial	10	7,19
Rhetorical question	9	6,47
Antithesis	5	3,60
Irony	2	1,44
Quotation out of context	2	1,44
Total	139	100

The result shows a great deal of how rhetorical devices majorly help the readers focus at the attitude of the headline editorial, which, becomes the main aim at influencing and shaping the readers' understanding upon the case of Gerwani. Out of 139 headlines, 106 headlines employed the use of rhetorical devices ranging from the most performed rhetorical device: a) metonymy in 52 occurrences, b) parallelism in 15 happenings, c) alliteration in 12 occurrences, d) testimonial in 10 happenings, following next e) rhetorical question in 9 occurrences, with the least performed rhetorical devices from antithesis, irony, and quotation out of context with the order of occurrences for 5, 2, and 2 times. Meanwhile, the headlines that do not perform any rhetorical devices happened for 32 occurrences, which the editorial chose not to use any rhetorical device to ensure the literal meaning is received well by the readers instead of using the stylistic figurative speech which might be confusing for them, in terms of the message. However, 106 headlines that performed the rhetorical headlines did not make the readers confused, instead, they invited the readers' curiosity to read more and search for their intended meaning. Based on the distributions of rhetorical devices in *Gerwani*-related news headlines, there are 8 rhetorical devices. They are metonymy, quotation out of text, rhetorical question, alliteration, parallelism, testimonial, irony, and antithesis. Based on the occurrences employed from the previous distribution, the researchers proceeded to elaborate them in order of occurrences.

A. Metonymy

The occurrences of metonymy is mostly representing a whole for a part, intended to create bigger magnitude of representation so that the consequence of receiving the news is impactful. The examples can be seen below:

1. <u>RI exiles</u> wish dearly to return (RI (the Republic of Indonesia) exiles : ex-Gerwani members and their affiliated institution)

(The Jakarta Post, 26 April 2006)
2. Indonesia Should Heed Verdict From International People's Tribunal Over 1965-1966 Mass Killings

(Indonesia: Indonesia government) (Jakarta Globe, 28 July 2016)

There is one example of headlines exemplifying metonymy that represents a part as a whole as in the following:

1. <u>PKI properties</u> revisited (PKI properties: PKI and its affiliated institutions, including *Gerwani* and Lekra¹)

(The Jakarta Post, 25 September 2015)

Under the context of *Gerwani*, the metonymy distributed by the headline editorial ensures the representation of meaning to be received more wholistically rather than partially. Thus, the use of metonymy, especially a wholefor-a-part form, manages to create a bigger gravity of the issue referring to *Gerwani* which the editorial considers it to be a national issue that has to be the concern of the government as well. The use of metonymy, mostly to represent a part of something into a wholistic level, becomes the ideological standpoint of the editorials that see the current fate of ex-*Gerwani* members who struggle over injustice in getting their basic rights as an Indonesian.

Thus, to create a bigger persuasion towards its readers,

B. Quotation out of context

The examples can be referred below:

they stand mostly in this type of metonymy.

1. The winners of life (The Jakarta Post, 13 June 2016)

¹ Lekra is an acronym of *Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat*, meaning Institute for the People's Culture. It is a literary and social movement

Context: It is about the story of 22 female survivors of the 1965 tragedy who were photographed by Adrian Mulya to pose for his photo essay book *Pemenang Kehidupan* (The Winner of Life).

2. 'Jurnal Perempuan': Facing off against fundamentalism

(The Jakarta Post, 13 August 2010)

Context: Jurnal Perempuan Foundation (JPF) launched the country's first feminist journal named Jurnal Perempuan that is progressive enough to give understanding about how Gerwani can be a role model for women's empowerment during the Old Order regime because of its big contribution that helped build Indonesia.

The above headlines do not clearly state the intended meaning of what the rest of the story implies, however, they are made to grow curiousity by picking up a piece of information that is quoted within the story itself. Even though they are quoted out of the contexts, it is hoped that the readers nurture their enquiry mental to think about how the headline relates towards the latter news story. Summarised in "The Winners of Life", for instance, it turns out to be the quote from editorial that comes from the name of photo essay book Pemenang Kehidupan (The Winner of Life) by Adrian Mulya, a photographer who concerns on female survivors in the 1965 tragedy. The ideological standpoint from this type of rhetorical device is hard to be seen to refer specifically to Gerwani, but the main agenda can be seen, for example in the second example, the headline has something to do with a way to practically fight against fundamentalists in the country that hinder Indonesian women's agenda who are progressive in exercising their rights, especially in relation with their gender role struggle.

C. Alliteration

The repetition of starting letters can be exemplified below:

1. <u>Violation victims demand vindication</u>.

(The Jakarta Post, 14 December 2012)

2. That formula: '<u>K</u>ill or be <u>k</u>illed'

(The Jakarta Post, 1 October 2015)

3. 1965 Tragedy Not Yet a Priority for Jokowi

(Tempo, 26 August 2016)

The three examples above present a repeated section of the starting letters, such as in 'violation victims demand vindication', 'kill or be killed', and 'in tragedy, priority, and Jokowi'. The rhyming sound of alliteration garners the readers' reading effort because they can see a

associated with Indonesian Communist Party, focusing on arts to promote social progress and reflect social relaities, established in August 1950.

contextual momentum of the main idea in the news story. Those headlines surely depict a specific ideology maintained. For example, in the first exemplification, the word "vindication" ideologically holds just attitude, focusing on the essence of justice, how it has to be enforced in the society, especially to those who used to be Gerwani members, or perceived to be so. The same goes for the second exemplification, in which "kill" ideologically holds something morally wrong in most societies. Thus, the headline is intended to shape the readers' opinions upon how kill or be killed can be justified, in relation with Gerwani case. The third example shows how the rhyming does not have to be in the front part, but it can be made in the ending sound of the letters of words, emphasizing how there is an ideological relationship among the rhythmic words, questioning Jokowi, as the President of Indonesia and as the representative of Indonesian society, about his priority in civil and human rights issues, especially over the 1965 tragedy.

D. Parallellism

The examples of parallellism in *Gerwani*-related online headline editorials can be seen below:

Violent anti-communism is alive and well in democratic Indonesia
 (The Conversation, 4 March 2015)
 The 1965 controversy and need for people's tribunal
 (The Jakarta Post, 16 April 2015)

The first example shows the same pattern used in adjectives (alive and well), while the second example shows parallellism through the same pattern used in nouns (controversy and need). Parallellism helps the readers to notify the presence of the important details of the headline since it uses the same linguistic structure, for example, in "Violent anti-communism is alive and well...". The parallellism happens for the sense of characterizing an anti-communism society in Indonesia, described as "alive" and "well", making it more persuasive in implying a certain meaning that as its consequence, questioning whether Indonesia is consistent in providing space for holding onto democratic ideology. Those examples are occupied under the notion of parrallellism, intending to create persuasive force of the headline because of the way how the headline is made repetitively, in terms of the patterns of the words.

E. Testimonial

Testimonial can be exemplified in:

Saskia Eleonora Wieringa: Debunking myths on Indonesian women's movement (The Jakarta Post, 21 April 2010)
 Yosep Stanley Adi Prasetyo: Striving to resolve human rights violations (The Jakarta Post, 24 Maret 2008)
 Ko Swan Sik: "It's a Human Rights Game"

(The International People's Tribunal (IPT) 196, 13 November 2015)

As testimonial refers to a rhetorical device that use testimonies from a person or institution to endorse its related description towards the news story to convince the readers, the examples above show clearly upon what testimony means. Testimony is a formal written or spoken statement that provides an attestation or evidence by the existense of something. The examples above give a hint about what the human rights activists think about the case of Gerwani, especially how to resolve the human rights issue related with the 1965 tragedy. Thus, the names are written in details to ensure that those interested readers will have clues about the perspectives that these people have. The main idea of those headlines headlines is to give clear depiction about the story behind Gerwani-related case and its human rights issue and how Indonesian society should respond, especially for those who care. The influence factor from this rhetorical device is gained by naming Saskia, Yosep Stanley, and Ko Swan Sik as those people who are an expert in the field to form a belief that the readers will be able to find the force of the power in the headline, following the related description of the news story.

F. Irony

The examples, especially in the case of *Gerwani*, can be comprehended below:

1. Indonesian women: their choices, 'destiny'
(The Jakarta Post, 16 August 2016)
2. Ignorance helps excuse mass killings
(The Jakarta Post, 29 September 2012)

Exploring from the first example of the headline editorials, for instance, the use of 'choices' and 'destiny' at the same time seems intriguiung. As the editor prefers the words "their choices, destiny", these words represent the consequence of Indonesian women who have a choice to not better think about

it. Referring to the word "choice", it is supposed to have two consequences; the first is about giving someone rights to have options, and the second is about how that someone is aware of the options given so that he or she can have rational decisions to go for the chosen option. On the other hand, the word "destiny" is interestingly the opposite. When a person faces his or her destiny, it means that he or she cannot avoid a predetermined course of events considered as something beyond human power to control. It means that that person received an illfated future that he or she cannot prevent so. This headline somehow brings contradicve yet sarcastic notion to be ideologically interpreted under irony intending to create a mockery towards Indonesian government and the majority of society, especially on women's rights that was not well-presented from the very first generation of women organisation, Gerwani, even for nowadays situation.

G. Rhetorical question

The examples are as follow:

Resolving the tragedy of 1965: Mission impossible?
 (The Jakarta Post, 30 September 2015)
 1965 symposium: a glimmer of hope?
 (The International People's Tribunal (IPT) 1965, 29 May 2016)

As rhetorical question deals with an expression or utterance in the form of a question, that is asked to make a point rather than to prompt an answer, those two headlines above represent it well. In influcencing the readers' beliefs, the first example is not meant to have an answer whether it is mission impossible or not, but it is created to emphasize the needs of resolving the unfinished 1965 tragedy that needs to be done by the state. It is made for a stylistic effect, with the purpose of emphasizing the agonizing condition faced by the victims of the tragedy. The second example of the headline does the same in trying to provoke the inner sensitivity of the readers upon the symposium regarding to the case in 1965 that was government-sponsored, ensuring the expected outcomes of open discussion among government agents, human rights activists, 1965 victims, and other concerned stakeholders would lead to a breakthrough despite the increasingly-narrow political space to discuss 1965 and the anti-communist violence in Indonesia. By luring questions in the form of rhetorical ones, it is expected that headlines reserve uncertainty in the

readers's mind, which stimulates the readers to question the rest of the news.

H. Antithesis

The examples are illustrated below:

1. The ups and downs of Indonesian women's movement

(The Jakarta Post, 20 December 2010)
2. The <u>rise</u> and <u>fall</u> of Indonesian women's movement

(The Jakarta Post, 21 April 2010)

The use of antithesis in those two headlines show the opposite portrayal of how Indonesian women's movement apparently moves. Giving this type of rhetorical devices ensures a balance argumentation on things compared, if the antithesis uses adjective characteristics of bringing up something. The examples above show an opposite correlation as in 'ups' and 'downs' with 'rise' and 'fall' upon the progress of Indonesian women's movement, which Gerwani is included in its history, and are to create clear distinction to not only inform but also to reflect the editorial's subjective attitude of beliefs. As mentioned earlier, those headlines are expected not only state an informative value within the headline, but also to argue about the possibility of the growing concerns upon the matter.

From the rhetorical devices explored, the researchers draw a conclusion that headline editorials create a significant influence in the use of their linguistic devices to serve the readers with their persuasive manner towards the readers' ideology, which includes their beliefs, opinions, and value-systems. Headline editorials have rights to create a manipulation of words to ensure that a specific discourse can be maintained. This study, thus, serves as an understanding on how discourse itself can be elaborated by taking both meaning and effects of language use in the production and interpretation of a text into account.

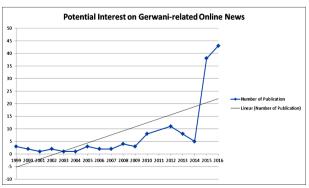
It has been no doubt, as well, that by doing this research, it is realized that headlines contribute towards the establishment of power as a significant persuasive influence to construct the readers' attitudes, beliefs, thoughts, in this case by the media cultivation, in the case of *Gerwani*. Power in discourse, as coined by Foucault [22], is "a productive, complex and continuously evolving web of social and discursive relations". Thus, the interaction between societies is encouraged to which he believes that power is never fixed and stable. Previously, Gramsci [23] also believes

on this idea that power can be defined by its significance of its persuasive influence which links to a system of hegemony. Hegemony is "a mechanism through which dominant groups in the society succeed to persuade subordinate groups to accept the former's own moral, political, and cultural values and institutions" [23]. It is exercised through dynamically cultural formations to shape people's attitudes, opinions, and beliefs to be seen as "natural" and "common sense".

That state of ideology above shaped by the New Order government, then, is finally invalidated by the publication of online news editorials after the New Order government forcedly ended by the Indonesian's democratic mob. The editorials also ensured that, from the case of Gerwani, headlines should be able to attract the readers and to create relevance towards the topic by using rhetorical devices as one of linguistic tools in trying to aim for specific intended meanings. The use of 8 rhetorical devices that can be found in the related topic, they are: metonymy, quotation out of context, alliteration, parallelism, testimonial irony, rhetorical question, and antithesis. When they are included in the headlines, the researchers managed to see the significant contribution to help the readers in getting the intended meaning so that the readers may have understood about the context that the headlines cover. After knowing the meaning from the headlines, it is expected that the readers can establish their ideological standpoint, especially from the case of Gerwani as exemplified from the sampling in 139 online news headlines.

III. CONCLUSION

The researchers managed to see how the online news editorials have taken an interest to focus on this *Gerwani* matter as it is drawn from a linear trend in Figure 1 that was going up steadily, showing potential interests from the readers as well. It means that headline editorials see the importance to keep engaging with the readers' demand, and indeed the news production showed its consistency. It is clear that the interest to take this case as a potential topic has started since 2015 until then. Thus, in conclusion, it becomes clearer that *Gerwani* news was well-represented. The diagram also represented how the online news media have taken a stance to show a firm support to help ex-*Gerwani* members and their affiliated parties to fight for power struggle in finding justice.



Linear trend of potential interest on Gerwani-related online news

The researchers also draw a conclusion that the focus of media texts can present meaning positioning the audience to create emotional, psychological, or physical responses. It does not mean that media has the right to manipulate the words, but in trying to overcome the sense of simply reporting information, the media needs to attract the potential readers, to be persuaded. Thus, this study concludes how newspaper headlines in online media publication can represent a certain ideology in understanding a particular case; especially about *Gerwani*-related case.

Further studies in language and educational fields are encouraged to look at the special characteristics that newspaper headlines possess. Linguistically, the headlines can be elaborated textually by the identification of linguistic devices, e.g. the choice of words, rhetorical devices, etc. Pragmatically and discursively, it is expected by recognizing the importance of headlines in newspapers to influence the readers' ideology, which includes beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, etc., it helps headline-oriented and language practitioners to have deep-rooted understanding on how the headlines can be used, either in telling the truth or in manipulating a certain agenda imposed by some institutions. In the educational field, the study of headlines, especially in online version, nowadays can be introduced by language educators to help the students have the most up-to-date information which they can access freely as one of learning materials in stimulating students' critical thinking to care about the social issues, which they live as a part of them. By knowing several implications, the researchers are able to find the relationship between headlines and how they influence the readers' ideology. After knowing so, it is hoped that the readers can understand the intended meaning, which can be analyzed in many fields of disciplines, such as in media communication, discourse, linguistic, journalism, or even in education.

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