

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF  
THE AUTHOR'S RHETORICAL STRATEGIES TO REVEAL THE STRUGGLE OF  
IDEOLOGY IN RICHARD MANN'S PLOTS AND SCHEMES THAT BROUGHT DOWN  
SOEHARTO<sup>1</sup>

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Abstract

The study explored the rhetorical strategies employed by Richard Mann in writing a political textbook entitled 'Plots and Schemes that Brought down Soeharto' in order to reveal the struggle of ideology of both the hegemonic reforms (the reformists' side) and the hegemonic maintenance (Soeharto's regime).

Employing Appraisal Theory (White 1998; Martin & Rose 2003), Genre Theory (Chandler, 1997), and Text Framing (MacLachan, G. and Reid, I. 1994), the textbook was analysed in terms of micro-, super-and macro-structures. On the level of microstructure, the readers were positioned as pro-reformists and against Soeharto's regime. The superstructure analysis indicated that the textbook was written following the tradition of plots: orientation ^ mounting incidents ^ climax ^ denouement. The climax part was when Soeharto stated his resignation from presidency, followed by the denouement (the Habibie's regime). Macrostructurally, the textbook was written in academic perspective of journalistic style employing the rhetorical strategies (Strayer 2004), such as downplayers, weaslers, dysphemism, euphemism, innuendo, loaded questions and horse-laugh.

Since the study was pedagogically motivated, several issues, such as the development of literacy, the development of linguistic analyses (from non-critical to critical) were discussed at philosophical level to justify that the current study was critical discourse analysis.

Key Words: Critical Discourse Analysis, Rhetorical Strategies, Hegemonic Reform, Hegemonic Maintenance, APPRAISAL, Microstructure, GENRE (superstructure), Macrostructure.

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<sup>1</sup> A dissertation rewritten in a journal format

## BACKGROUND

The study was motivated by my concern that reading society in Indonesia has not been well developed as it has in the neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, I was not alone; the Government of Indonesia issued Competence-based Curriculum of 2004 (2004 CBC), further enhanced in 2006 School Unit-Based Curriculum in response to the need of literacy education.

With this in mind, I would like to conduct a critical discourse analysis (CDA) to justify that it is a linguistic tool which can be used to analyze texts—linguistic products which are not value free—from linguistic and social points of view. It is a kind of multidisciplinary study. My interest in rhetoric is in its concrete forms (rhetorical strategies) of a particular author in writing a textbook. Then, I came across Richard Mann's Plots and Schemes that Brought down Soeharto (PSBDS); I am interested in investigating how Richard Mann (the author) ideologically wrote the textbook.

From the research findings, and the process of CDA, I would like to draw possible theoretical and practical contributions in the form of pedagogical implication in support of the implementation of 2004 CBC—a discourse-oriented curriculum aimed at promoting literacy pedagogy.

### (1) Research Question

The main research question in this study is: “What rhetorical strategies are employed in Mann's PSBDS with respect to the ideology (of the author) that represents the **hegemonic reform** (the Antagonist) and the **hegemonic maintenance** (the Protagonist)?”

However, the above research question is further developed into the following sub-research questions in order to facilitate the process of analysis.

- 1) On the level of microstructure, what rhetorical strategies are identified as representing Mann's vested interests and ideology in writing the textbook?
- 2) On readers' positioning, how are Mann's rhetorical strategies employed?
- 3) On the level of superstructure, how does the generic structure of Mann's PSBDS contribute to the rhetorical perspectives to represent both the hegemonic reform and the hegemonic maintenance?
- 4) On the level of macrostructure, what answers does Mann's PSBDS offer to Mann's rhetorical questions printed on the back cover of PSBDS with respect to the physical appearance of the book as commodification of discourse?

## **A. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

As it has been previously mentioned that the study was pedagogically motivated, it is important to highlight the development of literacy. Holme (2002) outlines literacy in three developments: (1) literacy thought of as the ability to read and write, (2) functional literacy as the ability to survive by means of skills where hegemony and uniformity were put as priorities, and (3) critical literacy as the ability to grow as individuals with differences. In Indonesia, people are heading toward critical literacy after the fall of Soeharto with his P4 (Guidance and Principles of Pancasila) as the benchmark of functional literacy. Meanwhile, Fairclough (1992) outlines the developments of linguistic analyses starting from non-critical to critical studies of language, as the basis of developing critical discourse analysis (in which a language is analysed by means of a linguistic tool called systemic functional linguistics (SFL) of Halliday's and the social theory (Martin & Rose 2003)

To be more specific, in order to answer the research questions that have been formulated, I adopt Fairclough's theoretical framework (1992) on Critical Discourse Analysis in which language is analyzed from the perspectives of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Social Theory which can be outlined below.

### **(1) Systemic Functional Linguistics**

APPRAISAL (White 1998; Martin & Rose 2003) or the Appraisal theory is an extension of SFL's domain of interpersonal meanings. Meanwhile, Thematic Structure (Martin & Rose 2003), Cohesion, Coherence (Eggins 1994) discuss the textual meanings and CLAUSE COMPLEX, Rhetorical Transference (Halliday 1994) deal with the ideational meanings.

### **(2) Social Theory**

A model of analysis of protagonist Vs antagonist (Martin & Rose 2003) to depict the profile of social change based on microstructure analysis and generic structure analysis in order to arrive at the macrostructure analysis focusing on the commodification of discourse.

## **B. METHOD**

The study is qualitative and interpretative in nature. In case quantitative numbers (frequency counts, percentage / %) are found, they simply facilitate the qualitative description. The data were purposefully collected based on 'crises' and 'moment of crisis' by means of

quoting paragraphs which represent both the hegemonic reforms and the hegemonic maintenance. In this respect, I performed critical reading throughout Mann's Plots and Schemes that Brought down Soeharto (PSBDS), thereby justifying the significance and potential of critical reading (CR) as a means of full comprehension of a text.

With respect to the method of data analysis, three levels of analysis were employed, (1) Microstructure Analysis in which, to arrive at Mann's rhetorical strategies, purposefully quoted paragraphs were analyzed using APPRAISAL. Thematic Structure, Cohesion, Coherence, CLAUSE COMPLEX, Rhetorical Transference; (2) Superstructure Analysis in which the data were analyzed in terms of the generic structure of the textbook in order to identify the development of plots of the textbook; finally (3) Macrostructure Analysis in which Text framing was used to formulate the cultural change (before Vs. after the fall of Soeharto), and Mann's rhetorical questions were converted into statements of which the truth is justified by linguistic evidence.

### C. FINDINGS

In general Mann's PSBDS was written in academic perspective of journalistic style employing rhetorical strategies (RSs) with ideologically vested interests of supporting the pro-democracy activists but without neglecting the potential achievement and failure of the Soeharto's regime. Of the nine RS—since I prefer to separate euphemism from dysphemism—that have been theorized in Chapter II, only seven were used in Mann's PSBDS, namely **(RS-1): Downplayers**, **(RS-2): Weaslers**, **(RS-3): Dysphemism**, **(RS-4): Innuendo**, **(RS-5): Euphemism**, **(RS-6): Loaded questions**, and **(RS-7): Horse laugh**, each of which have been justified by linguistic evidences taken from the paragraphs quoted on the basis of cruses and moments of crises.

With respect to how those RSs were used, it can be seen from the attitudinal words employed to represent the interpersonal meanings (APPRAISAL systems) in which positive attitude was directed to the reformists and negative attitude to Soeharto's regime. The words were constructed to form Clause Complex (elaboration, extension and enhancement) and Phrase Complex (figurative use of words, grammatical metaphor, i.e. ideational, interpersonal metaphor). At paragraph level, Mann employed exposition, emotional persuasion, arguments, journalistic styles, each of which was used according to the nature of event(s) he was highlighting. To focus on a particular piece of information, and to create cohesiveness of paragraphs, the theme-rheme (new) structures were skilfully used.

On the level of superstructure, the generic structure of the textbook clearly represents the perspective of rhetorical strategies. The eleven chapters were designed like a curve with climax in Chapter VI: **“I quit” Says Soeharto**. Chapter I represents the Orientation, followed by four chapters of mounting incidents. Meanwhile, Chapters VII, VIII, IX, X and XI represent the resolutions (denouement), describing the Habibie Government and recommendations for future investments in Indonesia as a Nation in waiting.

The macrostructure analysis (phylogenesis) reveals the physical appearance of the textbook under study and the answers to Mann’s rhetorical questions printed on the back cover. Upon conversion of Mann’s three rhetorical questions into statements, it turned out that all the three statements were rejected. Actually, Soeharto’s fall was caused by his own plots and schemes in which Pak Harto tried as far as he could to cling to power by preparing some plots and schemes which turned out that they did not work. He simply miscalculated. Fortunately, however, he was able to show to the world that he stepped down from presidency **solemnly, honourably and indeed constitutionally**.

In addition, I also analyzed the text-production (intertextuality), consumption and distribution (prospective potential readers). It was found out that, like many other texts of academic nature, Richard Mann’s PSBDS was also produced, making use of intertextuality either vertical or horizontal dimensions. Those interested in politics could become potential readers of the book with of course different reading reactions depending on the background knowledge, vested ideologies and interests of the individuals.

I also drew possible relevance of the microstructure to both literacy and language pedagogy. It was found out that textbook analysis such as done in the current study was closely related to the development of literacy and language pedagogy.

The analyses of micro, super, and macrostructures of a text have therefore proved relevant to both literacy and language pedagogy especially in terms of text interpretation, using Extratextual Framing, Intratextual Framing, Circumtextual Framing, and Intertextual Framing, each of which can only be developed through well-designed critical reading class.

#### **D. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The 2004 CBC further enhanced by the 2006 Content Standard (School-Based Curriculum), and thus termed the E 2004 CBC with respect to the teaching of EFL in Indonesia has been developed to be compatible with literacy pedagogy in which Senior High School

graduates are supposed to be at informational level of literacy to prepare for their tertiary studies. Therefore, at the same time, the primary goal of teaching and learning EFL in Senior High School is, according to Depdiknas (2003:6), to develop communicative competence in the said language in both spoken and written forms. Communicative competence includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing (My translation). It is also argued that the teaching of those communicative skills shall be integrative in nature. They are not linearly positioned, that is one after another but one within the others. Thus, teaching reading for example cannot be separated from dealing with listening, speaking and writing.

Meanwhile in literacy perspectives, by informational level of literacy is meant to refer to 'critical' literacy, as I have elaborated in 1.1., which includes seven principles of literacy : (1) interpretation, (2) collaboration, (3) convention, (4) cultural knowledge, (5) problem solving, (6) reflection and self-reflection, and (7) language use. These have been incorporated in the 2004 CBC by a number of competences, such as discourse competence, linguistic competence, sociocultural competence, and strategic competence.

These competences shall cover the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) As my concern is with 'critical' reading, I will examine the basic competence of the reading chunk of the E 2004 CBC of SMA/MA (Senior High School), namely: Year X: To understand meanings and rhetorical development in written texts, such as narratives, procedures, spoof/recount, report and news item (My translation), Year XI: To understand meanings and rhetorical development in written texts, such as descriptive, narrative, anecdote, analytic exposition, and hortatory exposition, focusing on ideational and textual meanings (My translation), Year XII: To understand meanings and rhetorical development in written texts, such as narrative, explanation, discussion, commentary and review (My translation).

This study clearly indicates that 'critical' reading is the key to appropriate interpretation and comprehension of text with which to identify the rhetorical strategies which are ideologically vested.

### **(1) Critical Reading (CR)**

CR is part of activities in CDA which can be best referred to as investigating every bit of a text which contributes to providing information for the purpose of text comprehension and interpretation. It is furthermore argued that critical reading of a literacy-based model is 'a much more complex matter than simply decoding letters to ascertain the sound of words' (Eyres 2004):179). Thus, critical reading is seen as an active process of constructing meaning which

involves graphic, phonic, syntactic and semantic cuing systems coupled with knowledge and experience. In addition it is necessary to the higher order skills of skimming, scanning and inferring. The last but not of least importance is the additional skills, such as the ability to use alphabetical order, indexes, and contents pages.

The current study has highlighted the success of microstructure analysis, superstructure analysis and macrostructure analysis or better termed as a tri-partied analysis for the investigation of ideologically vested rhetoric found in a textbook of a political discourse

With respect to the microstructure analysis, Martin and Rose (2003) has provided a useful tool for text analysis at discourse level in which genre analysis is also discussed for the analysis of superstructure of text. The macrostructure analysis is catered with the application of text framing (Bell 2002). Therefore, the current study pedagogically implies that critical reading be fostered in EFL classes to further enhance the reading activities for the achievement of informational level of (critical) literacy as stipulated in the E 2004 CBC.

In addition, (critical) language awareness should also be introduced to the students in that a text can be of different genres which can be examined through contrastive rhetoric (See Ostler 2002 for details). Therefore, it is high time several different academic genres of a variety of disciplines need to be introduced possibly as of Year XI in order to start promoting students' literacy at informational level.

### **(1.1 Intensive Reading**

This is conducted in a reading class to improve the students' lexico-grammatical accuracy by identifying rhetorical strategies from short passages of different genres. From this point language awareness can be developed in terms of textual varieties and readers' positioning of ideologically vested rhetoric. The teacher's role here is to provide text variations.

### **(1.2 Extensive Reading**

This is, conversely, conducted outside reading class as structured tasks, thus, the teacher's role is to provide task variations. In extensive reading, the students have the opportunities to practice text framing in order to arrive at text interpretation. They are at the same time trained to enact interactions among the texts, the students themselves and the authors. At this point, writing will also be enhanced as they may be asked to write simple reports of what they have been reading.

Authentic materials are available from newspapers, magazines, manuals, brochures, internet browsing and many others to broaden the students' experience as a basis of developing a reading society. It is argued that 'Even in this modern age of multimedia and high-tech environment, it is still the case that most of us rely on our reading ability in order to gain information or expand our knowledge' (Celce-Murcia 2000:118). It is further argued that:

In a second or foreign language, reading carries even greater potential importance than in the first language since it is often the only readily available exposure to the target language. A learner of another language will be able to retain some of the knowledge gained in a course of study by continuing to read in that language for many years after graduating from the course. For anyone learning the language of a remote country, reading opens up a world of literature and culture representing that country in a manner that would not otherwise be possible (Celce-Murcia 2000:118)

This explicitly supports the importance of a reading society as continuing efforts towards critical literacy acquisition.

## **(2) Language Teachers**

English teachers in Indonesian Senior High Schools are of different expertise depending on several factors such as educational background, teaching experience, school facilities, geographical location and the like. I do not have any intention to prescribe any methodology. However, the current study—regardless of the different expertise—assumes, the importance of CR ability before any attempt to apply CR in their reading class can be made. Useful resources are available from Celce-Murcia (2000)'s Discourse and Context in Language Teaching, Kern (2000)'s Literacy and Language Teaching and Eyerer (2004)'s Developing Subject Knowledge: Primary English.

Most importantly, the teacher's two roles in reading class are, as previously mentioned, (1) to provide **text variations** for the intensive reading class and (2) to provide **task variations** for the extensive reading class.

### **(2).1 Suggested Macro Skills for Teaching Reading**

Summing up what I have discussed above, I will outline the macro skills for teaching reading which, I hope, encourage Indonesian EFL teachers to be aware of their roles.

#### **(2).1.1 Considerable Knowledge of Functional Grammar**

The basic issue of functional grammar (FG), or at times referred to as systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is how meanings are ideationally, interpersonally and textually realized. The ideational metafunction of language (transitivity) deals with verb processes: material, mental, verbal, behavioral, existential and relational. Meanwhile the interpersonal metafunction of language deals with the MOOD structure of clause (verb finiteness, modality). Furthermore, the grammar of textual meaning (textual metafunction of language) deals with the Thematic structure. Several resources are available, such as Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar* (1994), Suzanne Eggins' *an Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (1994) and JR. Martin's *et.al Working with Functional Grammar* (1997)

The grammar of interpersonal meaning has currently been developed into the APPRAISAL theory in which a text can be analyzed in terms of ENGAGEMENT, ATTITUDE and GRADUATION. This theoretical framework is very good to analyze the readers' positioning (White 1998). Details for the APPRAISAL theory can be visited in APPRAISAL HOMEPAGE : <http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/index.html>.

### **(2).1.2 Critical Questioning**

Critical questioning is related to critical thinking. However, the critical thinking is still within the capacity of Indonesian culture. In this respect, it is a matter of a teacher's teaching strategies (the scaffolding talks) to direct the students to interpret and comprehend texts. Therefore it is assumed that an appropriate use of scaffolding talks will be of some help in teaching intensive reading classes. For the extensive reading class, knowledge about text framing is very useful in designing the tasks for the students in order for them to read extensively outside the school premises.

### **(2).1.3 Maintaining the Reading Interests**

A reading class has commonly been labelled as something boring and frustrating. It is normally thought of as dealing with difficult vocabulary and structure, locating vague and complicated references, identifying cohesive devices to relate one idea to another, in order for the students to answer comprehension questions.

One and probably the most reliable way to maintain reading interests is to promote **interpersonal rapports** between the teacher and the students. Another way is to vary the text-genres without going beyond the students' reach of intellectual capacity. If at all possible, the

students may be asked to find texts of their own interests through internet-browsing. Simplified ways of language appraisal may also be introduced in order to promote text-participation.

The last but of no least importance is that the texts used in both intensive and extensive reading classes should be able to generate knowledge of critical literacy in order for them to be able to participate in diverse cultures, and thereby making them critically literate. Awareness should be implanted that reading is the mother of learning by equipping them with appropriate reading skills. With this in mind, they will not become aliens in their own world. In other words, the texts can facilitate the students' individual progress as critically literate agents of change.

## **E. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS**

In response to my concern with the importance of a reading society that has proved effective in the development of Indonesia's neighboring countries, such as Australia, Singapore, Malaysia—to mention only a few, I was obsessed to analyze an academically-written book of a political discourse entitled 'Plots and Schemes that brought down Soeharto' (Richard Mann 1998) employing CDA which 'aims to provide accounts of the production, internal structure, and overall organization of texts' (Dellinger, 1995). However, since this study is also pedagogically motivated, the main research question was formulated as 'What rhetorical strategies are employed in Mann's PSBDS with respect to the author's ideology that represents the hegemonic reform (the Antagonist) and hegemonic maintenance (the Protagonist)?' This main research question was further developed into three sub-research questions, namely: (1) On the level of microstructure, what RSs are identified as representing Mann's vested interests and ideology in writing the textbook? (2) In readers' positioning, how are Mann's rhetorical strategies employed?

(3) On the level of superstructure, how does the generic structure of Mann's PSBDS contribute to the rhetorical perspectives to represent both the hegemonic reform and the hegemonic maintenance? and (4) On the level of macrostructure, what answers does Mann's PSBDS offer to Mann's rhetorical questions printed on the back cover of PSBDS with respect to the physical appearance of the book as commodification of discourse?

The current study has answered all the research questions on the basis of the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter II on which to draw the pedagogical implications.

Since CDA does not have any fixed method of analysis, the microstructure analysis in this study was performed by means of systemic functional analysis with its current developments ‘Working with Discourse—meaning beyond the clause (Martin and Rose 2003), further development of the APPRAISAL theory (White 1998), while still clinging to Halliday’s Functional Grammar (1994). This analysis was aimed at identifying the readers’ positioning in search of rhetorical strategies (logogenesis).

Meanwhile, the macro and superstructure of the book was approached by means of text framing (Bell 2002) and genre analysis (Martin and Rose 2003). This analysis was aimed at identifying the organizational features of the book coupled with the previous analysis (logogenesis) in search of hegemonic ideology with reference to ontogenesis (progress and development of individual) and phylogenesis (social and cultural shift).

This study evidently indicates that **critical reading is the key to text comprehension and interpretation**. Richard Mann’s ideologically vested rhetorical strategies have been identified. The three statements developed from Mann’s rhetorical questions printed at the back cover of the book have also been proved. Most importantly, this study supports the importance of language awareness, and improvement of language pedagogy towards ‘critical’ literacy. In other words, this study supports the implementation of the E 2004 CBC in English language pedagogy at the level of Senior High School in Indonesia.

**CDA has proved effective for textbook analysis**; and this has not been very often undertaken. Therefore, the research method used in the current study is replicable and hopefully it can be useful for evaluating and analyzing other textbooks of different discourses.

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