

**REVEALING POWER AND IDEOLOGY THROUGH MODALITY EXPRESSIONS IN AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPER REPORTING JIS'S PEDOPHILIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research is aimed at identifying the manifestation of power and ideologies through modality choices used by SMH. This is qualitative research in which to answer the research questions Fairclough's CDA, Bybee's, et al (1994) and Frawley's (1992) concept of modality were used. From the 98 total data from SMH, this Australian newspaper, expresses both epistemic and deontic modal meaning in the same frequency which is 0,32% for the deontic meanings and 0,31 for epistemic meaning. In terms of lexical verbs expressing SMH employed 0,03% for deontic meaning and 0,72% for epistemic meaning. In terms of adverb, this Australian newspaper employed 0,01% for epistemic meanings but non for deontic meaning. In terms of adjective, this newspaper employed 0,02% for epistemic meaning but none for deontic meaning and the last category is multi word units, this newspaper employed 0,04 % multi word units from the total 98 data. These use of modality expressions represents SMH's interests in exposing the inferiority of the Jakarta International School and its staffs, and the "quality" of the legal process in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), modality choices, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Ideology*.

**Introduction**

News is a representation in the sense of constructions of facts; it is not value free reflection of fact since events and ideas are not communicated neutrally, in their natural structure, as they were (Fowler, 1991, 25). The different choices made by language users can be in the form of lexical (Richardson, 2007; 47), or syntactical structure to describe the same events or the choice of different modality expressions to describe the same events. This various choices of words and constructions indicate specific points of view which are relevant to that social situation which means that linguistics variations implicate ideologies. It is because media is ideology carrier, facilitators and sometimes a source of social problems (Teer Tomaselly, 1992: 15, Simpson (1993: 176-177), it means the language used in the newspaper is reflecting some ideologies that the media has.

News is a representation of the world in language; because language is a semiotic code, it imposes a structure of values, social and economic in origin, on whatever is represented; and so inevitably news, like every discourse, constructively patterns that of which it speaks (Fowler, 1991: 4). Language is the medium of power that can be used to sediment inequalities of power, legitimate social relations and language is political (Richardson, 2007: 14). Firth (1957) added that language was basically a way of behaving and making others behave. That is why it is through language (lexical choices), the news makers express their interest and ideologies defined as "presentations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are and what our relationships with others are" Octar, 2001: 314 and Van Dijk, 1995a and 1995b). Hall (1996) adds ideology is a framework of mental and 'social representations, i.e. ideas, beliefs and attitudes which are shared collectively by members of society.

One of the linguistic features which is often employed by text producers to address their interest and ideologies is the modality expressions. By using CDA, these modality expressions give a reflection of the journalists' ideologies and interests. CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use

(or discourse) (Fairclough, 1989). Additionally, Van Dijk (1988) says that CDA is concerned with analyzing written text to reveal the discursive source of power, dominance, inequality and bias. There are three concepts figure crucially in all CDA: the concept of power, the concept of history and the concept of ideology.

Modality refers broadly to a speaker's attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence. It also extends to their attitude towards the situation or event described by a sentence (Simpson, 1993; 47 in Richardson, 2007:59). Modality in news reports is usually indicated via the use of modal verbs (such as *may*, *could*, *should*, *will*, and *must*), their negations (*may not*, *couldn't*, *shouldn't*, *will not*, and *must not*) or through adverbs (*certainly*). Modality, then, can informally be regarded as 'comment' or 'attitude', obviously by definition ascribable to the source of the text, and explicit or implicit in the linguistic stance taken by the speaker/writer (Fowler, 1991: 85). Modality can be expressed in two principal forms truth modality, obligation, permission and desirability (Fowler, 1991: 85). Halliday (2004, 1970: 349), Palmer (1986: 54-55), Papafragou, (2000: 3), Bybee's, et al (1994) and Frawley's (1992) mention these terms as epistemic and dionic modality.

This research is aimed at identifying the types of modality expressions representing ideologies of SMH. This underlying reason for examining the power and ideology through modality choices in this newspaper is the statement from Simpson (1993: 176) who says that language is shaped by a mosaic of cultural assumptions, political beliefs and institutional practices which are ideologies and modality expressions are one of the linguistics features used to represent media's power and ideologies.

### Research Method

This research is qualitative research. To analyse the type of modality expressions used by the journalists in SMH, Bybee's, et al (1994) and Frawley's (1992) concept of modality were used and to analyse how the use modality expressions contributes the manifestation of ideologies and power in each of those three newspapers, the concept of Fairclough's CDA was employed.

### Findings and Discussion

Based on the findings, some types of modality meanings expressed in some modality expressions used by this printed mass media is representing the media's interest or ideologies, such as the use of modal auxiliaries, lexical verbs, adverbs, adjectives or multi modal units or grammatical resources, etc can implicitly denote certain ideologies. The following illustrations and descriptions elaborate the findings of the research.

#### 1. Modal auxiliaries

Modal auxiliaries employed by this media are such as *must*, *should*, *can* *should*, *will*, etc. These expressions represent DeM and EpM. Both of these meanings carry different implicit message addressed to the readers. For example:

- (1) .....all teachers at the International schools *must be* fluent in the Indonesian language and the school's curriculum needed to change as .....(SMH/5/24/14).

The use of *must* in the examples above represents deontic modality meaning because they have an interpretation that it is necessary to do something. The proposition above indicates the crucial need for the mastery in Indonesian language and the ownership of the school. The deontic expression *must* in the data above shows that there is strong and impulsive act from the sayers towards another social actor (sayers). Therefore the proposition carries strongest performative obligation by imposing a volitionally acting such as the one indicated by modal auxiliary *must*. In different place, weak compelling modality is employed as illustrated below:

- (1) They say his teachers *should* have been aware of the boy's long absences and should have noticed that he was upset when he returned to class (SMH/4/18/1).

The modal *should* is used by the journalist to describe the statements from the victim's family, however, this modal content no compelling meaning but denotes typically derives from individual wishes and desires such as the statement of new rules towards the child protection.

This is subjective obligation in which the actors try to share an idea(s) and the force that appeal to values is therefore minimal and there is no obligation to the authorities to comply. In other words, this modal auxiliary employed by the journalist describes the actors' idea of desirability about an advisable course of action. This was done to shape the readers' opinion that it is not at all becoming the teachers' duty to be aware of their students' emotional change.

- (2) Mr Bantleman and Ferdi say that when travelling with police in the car, they had been warned separately that they *should* confess now because the evidence against them was so strong (SMH/8/7/26).

The quotations stated by the journalists give an implied meaning that what has been stated by the social actors (Mr Bantleman and Ferdi) is not strong enough for the people to believe because of the weak compelling modality *should*. This way of quoting is to shape the readers' opinion that there were no impulsive actions from the Indonesian police to the two suspects to confess their attitude which means that the police do not have strong evidence yet to force the suspects to admit or the police doubted that they are guilty.

The next modality expression *will* is employed to express original sense of wishing and desiring. It is deontic modality in that one's wishes and desires typically invite inferences about perspective actions, as illustrated in the data below:

- (3) Today is a miscarriage of justice, "Bantleman said immediately after his verdict. "We *will* continue to fight until the truth come out (SMH/4/3/91).

*will* is used to represent the sayer's desire which is based on the information that the suspects' families and school supported them and their assurance that the allegation done by the boys had been coaches to increase the pressure on the school to settle a financial claim. This support given to them strengthen their assurance that they are innocent and will win the case. It is different when the expression *would* is employed, as illustrated below:

- (4) The letter, signed by Mr Carr, said outsourced staff *would* also be required to comply with the same medical tests as employed staff. The school has implemented a child protection program across the school and *would* set up an independent review of the incident, the letter said (SMH/2/18/11).

When modality *would* is operated, it means that it is weak volition. In other words, deontically, this syntactical structure highlights the social actor's inner wish to cooperate with the officials to solve the incident, but the use of weak volition modality expression indicates the unseriousness of JIS to solve the problems. If deontic modality meaning describes the social actors' inner desire, epistemic modality meaning which is found in the following data describes the assessment of probability achieved by some evidence or the social actors' knowledge. For example;

- (5) Two teachers from the prestigious JIS who have spent 108 days without charge in police detention over child sex allegations, were told on Wednesday that they *would* face trial in an Indonesian court (SMH/10/29/41).

The epistemic meaning of the above data is that there is a possibility of taking the sex abuse case to the court. Looking at the modal auxiliary *would* employed by the journalist, this possibility is not strong enough because of lack of information about the precise date or day of the trial or the journalist is not too sure about this. The previous information or the evidence is not strong enough for the journalist to believe that there is a trial to judge the suspects. That support the journalist' uncertain about the trial because there might be any extension just like in the previous stage. The media tried to bias the readers' judgment about the suspects.

## 2. Lexical Verbs

In this part of analysis, the researcher finds some modality meanings expressed in lexical verbs. Deontic meaning is used to express various meanings such as a necessity or possibility, evaluative judgment and a demand.

Pragmatically, a demand is expressed through an expression such as *require* or *want* but here, the social actors' demand is represented though the verb, *demand* such as illustrated below;

- (6) The religious affairs ministry *demand*ed access to the campus to check the school's religious curriculum (SMH/5/24/19).

The verb, *demand*, is employed by the journalist means that this is a strong desire from the ministry to get involved in the school area. This deontic meaning of the verbs give indication the media's unpleasant to the attitude of the ministry and open readers' perception that the Indonesian government has done too many threats to the school and staffs.

### 3. Adverb

The adverb is only identified once in the text to describe how Mr Bantleman's objection towards the evidence used to prosecute him. He mentioned that there were no details of the case and it is impossible for the judge to accept the testimony from the victims' parents, as illustrated below;

- (7) It even says that the prosecutor doesn't remember a time, doesn't know a location," *possibly* somewhere in South Jakarta (SMH/12/2/65).

Therefore, adverb, *possibly* which included in Mr Bantleman's statement carries epistemic meaning that the location of the incident is not exactly detected. It might be that the incident happened in South Jakarta or somewhere else. The goal of the media to include adverb, possibly in this statement is to convince the readers about the wrong being judgement of the people and the prosecutors in this incident. There is an attempt to find the people sympathy for the suspects', so that they will not feel like real actors in the incident.

### 4. Adjectives

There are three various adjectives used by the journalists to express their degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition they utter. Those adjectives are *likely*, *absolute* and *unlike*. Though these expressions do not reflect modality as they are in modal auxiliaries, they have implicit meaning about how the journalist views the incident they report from their point of view. For example;

- (8) Canadian school administrator, Neil Bantleman and Indonesian teacher's aide Ferdinant Tjong are *likely* to now be moved to high security Cipinang detention centre in Central Jakarta to wait a trial over allegations of rape against three preschool boys at the school (SMH/10/29/42).

*Likely* is the adjective expression which denotes a meaning of possibility. When employing this expression, the journalist wants to express his opinion about the truth of the information that the two suspects were probable to be moved to Cipinang. The adjective, *likely* is employed indicates the journalist's low degree of probability of the affair about the police' plan to move the suspects to higher security Cipinang detention. This might be done because of lack of information from the informants in the field so that the truth of the affair is not totally fixed.

- (9) We have a justice system that is exhibiting extreme carelessness with these two men. It's an *absolute* disgrace to justice and human rights, "Mrs Bantleman said (SMH/10/29/48)

The opposite of the above epistemic modality expression is *absolute* which denotes the high degree of certainty of the journalist. This modal meaning denotes the meaning that the journalist supports the sayer's statement in which the justice system in Indonesia is based on carelessness and therefore really disgraces human rights.

### 5. Multi word units

The next modality meaning is expressed through some verbs such as *seems to be*, *according to*, *it's partly true*, *appeared to be saying*, *it is impossible*, as seen in the following data;

In the text, these grammatical resources are used by the journalist to show his/her unconfident description about the attitude of the Indonesians who gave empathy to the two teachers, as seen below:

- (10) *It's partly true and*, according to the cleaner's lawyer, Patra, It's working (SMH/10/7/57).

- (11) ..... *It is impossible that* this could occur in any school, anywhere somebody noticing, including the parents of the children (SMH/4/3/98).

*It is partly true* and *it's impossible* are two grammatical resources denoting epistemic modal meaning in which they represent the journalists' commitment to the truth of a certain affair. These expressions denote a meaning that based on the information collected the journalists then conclude that an attempt to influence public opinion about the actors of the rapes is working. The journalist describes clearly the cleaner's lawyer's statement that partly, the boys' mothers had been successful to attempt public opinion. While in data no 98, it implicitly indicates that the journalist concludes that if the rapes happened several times in one school day, there must be someone noticing including the parents of the children although the boys' parents gave some statements about the rapes. Therefore, the parents' statement was not correct and clearly sounds provocative.

### Conclusion

The first conclusion is related to the type of modality expressions in Sydney Morning Herald, The Washington Post and Jakarta Post. From the 98 total data from Sydney Morning Herald, an Australian newspaper, expresses both epistemic and deontic modal meaning in the same frequency which is 0,32% for the deontic meanings and 0,31 for epistemic meaning. In terms of lexical verbs expressing SMH employed 0,03% for deontic meaning and 0,72% for epistemic meaning. In terms of adverb, this Australian newspaper employed 0,01% for epistemic meanings but non for deontic meaning. In terms of adjective, this newspaper employed 0,02% for epistemic meaning but none for deontic meaning and the last category is multi word units, this newspaper employed 0,04 % multi word units from the total 98 data.

Judging from the percentage of all the resources employed by the three newspapers, it is can be noted that SMH is having the intention to communicate its ideologies in more obvious way. This Australian newspaper shows its position to support the In group which consists of the school and its staffs through modal auxiliaries and lexical verbs it employed such as in exposing the inferiority of the JIS and its staffs and the "quality" of the legal process in indonesia.

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