The Emergence of Political Cyber Conflict in Indonesia – A Critical Discourse Analysis of Facebook Status Clash on Governor of Jakarta Blasphemy Case

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The Emergence of Political Cyber Conflict in Indonesia
(A Critical Discourse Analysis Study of Facebook Statuses Clash Regarding Governor Jakarta Blasphemy Case)

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Abstract: This paper examines the emergence of political cyber conflict in Indonesia social media. The researcher investigates the Facebook statuses war emerged regarding blasphemy case of Jakarta's embattled governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. As public know, the BTP blasphemy case has split society into two groups; protestors of BTP in one hand and supporters of BTP in other hand. Both groups have demonstrated tough debates on social media, especially in the days around verdiction of the BTP case. This study uses the Critical Discourse Analysis of Norman Fairclough method in order to reveal the dynamics of public sphere and contestation of power as well as mode of speech in certain statuses of sample netizens. The findings of this study is there are various language tools used by social-political actors in the social media in order to achieve the hidden goals of each group and it is contributes to the pattern of grassroots communication, as well as the mediatisation phenomena of Indonesia social media users in the context of mobilizing public opinion to achieve certain political targets.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the fastest growing countries in the world in terms of access to social media. Data from the latest APJII shows, the number of internet users in Indonesia throughout 2016 is as many as 132.7 million people. This represents 51.8% of the total population of 256.2 million people. This number increased from only about 88.1 million people in 2014. This indicates an increase in penetration rate of approximately 17% from 34.9% in 2014 (APJII, 2016).

Furthermore, the number of social media users in Indonesia in 2016 was 129.2 million people, which means 97.4% of total users. Meanwhile, in terms of of social media usage, the most frequently social media paltform used is Facebook, which were 71.6 million, or about 54% among total. The second most frequently used social media is Instagram, totaling 19.9 million, representing 15% of all social media users in Indonesia in 2016. While in third place most frequently used is the Youtube platform of 14.5 million people, which is 11 % of all social media users.

Meanwhile, according to internetworldstats.com, released on March 31, 2017, Indonesia is the fifth global internet user nation. There are 132.7 million internet users, and 88 million of whom are active users of facebook. Therefore, it is interesting to examine the dynamics of cyber conflicts that occur related to political contestation at the national level mediated by social media, in this case Facebook. A case that triggered public debate from late 2016 until mid-2017 was a case of religious blasphemy committed by a public official, Governor (at that time) of DKI. Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (BTP).

The case of blasphemy of the former Governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (more popularly called Ahok), began to confiscate public media in Indonesia in the second half of 2016. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama or Ahok was officially designated as a suspect on 16 November 2016. The allegation of blasphemy started when Ahok visited the district of Thousand Islands (kepulauan Seribu) on Tuesday, September 27, 2016. During a speech in front of the

people, Ahok stated that he did not force people to vote him in the 2017 Jakarta's Governor election. The statement was accompanied by quotes from Al Maidah verse 51 which triggered public reaction.

On Thursday, October 6, 2016, Ahok's video that quoted Al Maidah verse 51 was viral in social media through a Facebook acount of by Buni Yani. This video then triggered the anger of most Muslims. Furthermore, on October 7, 2016, Ahok was reported by Habib Novel Chaidir Hasan who works as a cleric. Ahok was reported for allegedly committing a criminal act of religious humiliation.

After published in various mass media, on Monday, October 10, 2016, BTP apologized for his statement. BTP declares no intention to offend Muslims. In fact, BTP's statement regarding the alleged blasphemy still triggered the reaction; the demonstration broke out in front of the city hall on Friday, October 14, 2016. The demonstration movement was sponsored by a number of Islamic mass organizations.

As the case goes, BTP went to Bareskrim Police Headquarters on Monday, October 24, 2016 to clarify the statement. However, public disappointment over the alleged blasphemy of religion was up to point of no return. On Friday, November 4, 2016 (famous as 411 rally), masses from various regions and grops thronged a number of points in the heart of the capital city of Jakarta including around State Palace (Istana Negara). The demonstrations also continued in a row at the location on December 2, 2017, known as the 212 action. It also followed by rallies on January 11, 2017 as well as on March 31, 2017. Some people claimed that the the whole actions had mobilized hundreds of thousands of mass, and some even claimed the 411 rally has reached millions participants (news.okezone.com/6/11/16).

The various street rally sponsored by *Forum Umat Islam* (Islamic Society Forum) who claimed themselves as anti-Ahok masses were the result of various organized consolidations. Mass media, especially social media play a lot in mobilizing the masses. Public able to pay attention from evidents of statuses in various social media, especially Facebook. As the controversy emerged, majority of people were mediatised and blowing up this topic as a source of debates. Society is divided into two extremes groups, supportive or anti-Ahok. Interestingly, society is split not only in the real world, but also in the virtual world. Statuses that emerged in various social media at the time of BTP case controversy developed into important to be analyzed, especially through the perspective of cyber conflict.

2 METHOD

This study aims to reveal deeply how Facebook participants use language to create meaning, to persuade people to think about events in a particular way, sometimes even to seek to manipulate them while at the same time concealing their communicative intentions. Spesifically, this study will explore the implicit matters that play and operate behind the texts uploaded on Facebook in the context of the BTP case controversy. The discussion of the existence of public spheres, the tendency of mediatization and the role of power behind the text, will be discussed in the context of interdiscursive analysis. On the other hand, this research will also reveal analysis around language elements. To do so, the researcher will focus on statuses scattered on social media, especially on Facebook, as long as the case was rolling, including when the case enters the litigation stage from December 13, 2016 to May 9, 2017 when the court verdict is held (cnnindonesia.com: 9/5/17)

In the context of analysis stages, the study will examine the various statuses trends created by two pro-Ahok informants, and two others who are anti-Ahok, as representations of conflicts in the cyber arena, in this context of social media of Facebook. Firstly, the texts were taken selected purposively, whose statuses clearly indicate the alignment of BTP on the one hand, and the other side is against BTP/pro Islamic Society Forum. The data were taken and selected from the statuses uploaded on Facebook in the Ahok case since December to May 2017. All data then will be described and analyzed by means of analysis tools in the form of textual analysis of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The CDA version used in this context is the Norman Fairclough version. According to Fairclough (in Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012; 85), Textual analysis in CDA comprises (a) inter discursive analysis, and (b) language analysis.

As analytical tools, the theories used in this research are the theory of cyber conflict of Athina Karatzogianni, network society theory of Manuel Castells, media theory and culture of Jose Van Dijck, and several other relevant supporting theories. Due to space constraints, this paper will parse the analysis points in a concise manner without reducing the effort to delve deeply and critically the text contained in the object of research. Moreover, the

objects that are analyzed and used as the basis for further discussion will be reviewed based on general trends gained through the review of the content of the social media statuses regarding the object's of research.

3 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Interdiscursive Analysis

Social media constitute an arena of public communication where norms are shaped and rules get contested (van Dijk, 2013: 19). In this case, Facebook in the context of religious abuses involving Ahok has fueled controversy and harsh and tough public debate among Indonesians. The public is dragged into a wave of very much discourse involving media, especially new media. Cyber conflict clearly visible through the status war that can be listened to in social media, in this case Facebook. Furthermore, there is a tendency for mediatisation phenomena when social media users are often in a hurry to be caught in a debate that manifests into a sarcastic status caused by media coverage.

The function of Social Media as the 'real public sphere', resulted both positive and negative effect. People has an independence to express their ideas and position, but it is not affected unpredictable consequences. The war of status within the cyber conflict framework, from the perspective of the network society, has two consequences, connecting society in social interaction on the one hand, making society fragmented on the other. However, as the social media are mediated by technology, it is also has implications for political autonomy for its users. Acording to Castells (2012: 103) internet and mobile phone networks are not simply tools, but organizational forms, cultural expressions and spesific platforms for political autonomy.

Furthermore, Manuel Castells, as reviewed by Webster (2006) also stated that the impact of globalization has increased integration in global relations. On the other hand, globalization has resulted in fragmentation and disintegration. Castells concern is to examine how globalization integrates people and processes and assesses fragmentation and disintegration (Webster, 2006: 101).

The network society, as one of the most obvious consequences of globalization, places the media as a center of community integration. On the other hand, in circumstances that provide an opportunity for struggle for influence and interests, as well as ideology and power, the integration process turns to fragmentation instead.

The growing statuses and becoming viral on Facebook, from December 2016 to May 2017, implies the occurrence of that fragmentation, people able to examine from the disparity and sarcastic of statuses.. On the one hand, Ahok's supporters emphasize the strong engineering tendency of the opponents, as the case is bloated up at a time very close to the election of Jakarta's regional head. Ahok, a non-Muslim, is perceived by his supporters to try to be stamped in unfair ways, in order not to win the battle in the Chief Election to go to the governor's seat. On the other hand, the anti-Ahok party believes Ahok does not deserve to be a leader due to bad behavior and poor communication.

Based on this context, there are interest and power factors that influence everyone to choose the position and way of communicating in the mass media. There is a powerful influence of the interests and powers that make up the frames of each person in communicating in various settings, not only in the real-world setting, but also in the virtual setting. Political interests, influenced by political actors and leaders, have also shaped the pattern of public communication behavior at the grassroots. This is in line with what Karatzogianni (2008) says that the power contestation between political leaders is the primary determinants of frames.

On the other hand, the anti-Ahok believes that the way Ahok communicates violates the ethics and norms of communicating that should be consequently used as the rule of conduct of a leader. According to them, Ahok's actions, which quoted verses from the holy book of the Qur'an, have offended Muslims. Therefore, according to the anti-Ahok group, he is no longer eligible to be elected and the consequences of his deed must be rewarded in the form of a verdict as a defendant.

Based on this analysis, we can analyze that the power of the norm as one of the determinants of social interaction interwoven in social media, cannot be ignored. Social media, as a new social interaction environment, also has consequences to serve as an interaction framework, or even a set of regulations that are always likely to be debated. As Van Dijck says, the power of norms, in the area of sociality, is much more influential than the power of law and order (Van Dijck, 2013: 19).

Moreover, due to the uniqueness of its social setting, communication in the cyber world also produces technical consequences, in addition to the control functions that influence social dynamics. This is in line with what Foucault says, as quoted by

Van Dijck, operation is not ensured by right but by technique (Foucault 1980: 89, in Van Dijck, 2013: 19).

Associated with Ahok cyber conflict case, there is a social control function that tend to be ignored, where as Facebook users are technically indeed have a very large authority in utilizing the freedom to write any status on social media. The implication, in line with what was said by Karatzogianni (2006: 171) that the use of internet, in ethno-religious conflict is not merely as a mobilization and propaganda tool but also as a weapon.

3.2 Language Analysis

Basically there are so many language elements that can be used as the basis of analysis of any text in order to achieve an analysis that is in line with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. But due to space limitations, this paper will limit its analysis from a review of how the text contained in the status uploaded by social actors represents people. In the CDA study, the elements studied from this perspective are referred to as a study of 'representational strategies', ie from the point of view of representatives and groups of people (Machin and Mayr, 2013: 77). For instance, through lexical selection, they can have the effect of connoting sets of ideas, values and sequences of activity that are not necessarily overtly articulated.

Based on a general overview of the statuses spread around BTP's case, we can see that each group is trying to give certain stereotypes and characters that match its cyberconflict objectives. The choice of '*asing*' and '*aseng*' ('foreign and idle'), '*si mata sipit*' ('narrow eyes'), or '*kafir*' (unbeliever), used by anti BTP, is clearly an attempt to shape understanding and direct certain ideas and concepts of thought to the reader of his statuses. Similarly, the dictions of '*kaum bersorban*' (people who wearing sorban), '*kelompok radikal*' ('radical groups'), and '*anti kebinekaan*' ('anti-diversity'), were a selection of dictions used by Pro BTP which also clearly illustrates how they represent opposing group.

Shortly after the 4 November 2017 action took place, there was also a tendency to highlight what in CDA language analysis is called aggregation element. It can be seen from the perspective of this element, the anti-BTP stronghold to justify the number of 411 Islamic contestants they claim to reach a million more. It certainly is not necessarily rationally acceptable to common sense. But from the CDA review, this is commonplace. Van Dijk (in Machin and Mayr, 2013: 83-84) says that Aggregation means that the participants are quantified and treated as 'statistics', this kind of statistics can be utilized to give the impression of objective research and scientific credibility.

Meanwhile, almost all the statuses in the cyber conflict landscape are related to Ahok's case, using kita ('us') and mereka ('them') vocabulary. It also implies an attempt to differentiate the choice of attitudes and interests of each group. Each group places the opposing group as an 'enemy', and those who share and agree are the 'us'. Fairclough (in Machin and Mayr, 2013: 84) says that the concept of 'we' is slippery, the fact (the usage of 'we' or 'them') can be used by text producers and politicians to make vague statements and conceal power relations. Furthermore, the emphasis of using 'we' and 'them' also tends to lead to racist symptoms, when both words are replaced by 'Chinese', or 'Arab descent', as pronouns of 'them'. These symptoms are also very much found in various status of Ahok cyber conflict case.

Another thing obtained from the statuses emerged as the object of this research is from the review of elements of direct usage of the main actors of conflict, ie Ahok, and Habib Rizieq. The haters rarely write the names of these two characters followed by their authority, for example, Ahok as the Governor of DKI Jakarta, or Habib Rizieq as the Leader of the Forum Pembela Islam (Islamic Defenders Forum). The haters prefer to write their name as a person. In a CDA perspective, these symptoms are included in the review of the 'Nomination or Functionalism' element. Using of personal names in the 'Nomination' attempt, while if the authority is also called or written, then it belongs to the element of functionalisation.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The cyber conflict that occurs around the Governor of Jakarta blasphemy case implies many interesting things to be analyzed from the Critical Discourse Analysis approach. In this paper, researchers try to analyze from the main perspective in the CDA, divided into inter discursive analysis, and language analysis. Cyber conflict Ahok's case leaves behind important things to be learned about how social media is increasingly being used as a means to express and persuade people different perspectives and interests over the actual political and religious situation.

Another finding is about the trend of cyber debate and sarcastic-statuses-war within the lanscape of cyber conflict is a most potential consquence around power and politics contestations in Indonesia nowadays. Subsequently, it is potential to affect an overwhelmed Indonesia socio-political cyber conflicts, caused by the diversity of political and cultural groups and religions. It is urgent also to examine the impact of new media and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into current Indonesian's netizen attitude and behaviour within democratization and freedom of expression context. The implications not only dealing with the way and form of social media users communicate and behave, but furthermore, it potential to emerged various implications for the complex relations between society, the Internet (both as a technology tool and as a social institution), government, business, and political and social movements.

On the other hand, this study reflects the importance of observation of the various language tools used by social-political actors in the mass media (in this case social media) for the achievement of the hidden goals of each group and their contribution to the pattern of grassroots communication. However, through this paper, it is hoped that there will be reviews in the future based on various other perspectives within the framework of the CDA analysis tool focusing the impact of new media to strengthen democracy among people as well as between people and government of Indonesia.

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