

THE VIDEO ADVERTISEMENT OF *MEIKARTA*: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at analyzing the discourse of a video television commercial on the apartment property in Meikarta and investigating into the language used by the advertisers in the discourse, the verbal sign and the nonverbal sign, the implication of power behind the advertisement and the strategies employed in their attempts to manipulate and influence their prospective clients. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) was employed to analyze the language used. Van Dijk (1995) defines critical discourse analysis as a type of analytical discourse research that discusses social power abuse, dominance and inequality and how they are reproduced, enacted, and resisted. CDA is a bit different from a traditional linguistics study since language is analyzed to relate that with the context. Language is used for certain purpose and practice, including the practice of power. The data are taken from a television commercial of a mega project of a new city in Cikarang-Bekasi regency, a neighboring area to Jakarta. The analysis is based on Fairclough's three-dimensional method of discourse analysis framework. A qualitative method was used for this study. The results shows that the commercial ads of the apartments in a new city are persuading clients to buy a dream of a super-modern city to be, with high-rise buildings of apartments, offices, schools, hospitals, super-modern transportation system, with a blue lake and a central park that every family dream of under a blue sky. The developer company demonstrates a power to dictate the needs of the citizens in their techniques to reach more clients. The commercial advertisement is criticized as creating false narration that Jakarta is an unsafe place to live, and Meikarta will be the perfect neighborhood to replace Jakarta. A powerful image of a child in a car begging to be taken out of Jakarta is quite convincing to the audience that a new neighborhood is needed for the sake of her upbringing.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis, advertisements, social power abuse.*

INTRODUCTION

For months, we have been bombarded by the interesting advertisement of *Meikarta*, a mega-project of a real-estate in Cikarang, Bekasi regency, either in television of different channels, radio, internet printed newspapers, billboards and at the malls. The impact of the advertisements is tremendous, as expected. Everybody has heard about *Meikarta* but do we know whether their promise is true or not? It is true that we could see a vast land stretched as long as your eyes can see and the central park they promised is there regardless of the state and the condition of the park right now, but the skyscrapers they promise are not yet there, the infrastructure of the modern transportation is nowhere to be seen. Clearly, the consumers are waiting for the realization of the dreams. Do they become the victims of the power of the advertisers in creating the images?

This study aimed at analyzing the discourse of a video advertisement in a television commercial on a mega project of a new city and investigating into the language used by the advertisers in the discourse, the verbal sign and the nonverbal sign, the implication of power behind the advertisement and the strategies employed in their attempts to manipulate and influence their prospective clients. The critical discourse analysis (CDA) was employed to analyze the advertisement. According to Fairclough (1989), CDA is an analytical framework to analyze the relation between language, power, and ideology. Dijk (1995) also defines CDA as a type of analytical discourse research that discusses social power abuse, dominance and inequality, and how they are reproduced, enacted and resisted. Many studies in CDA are however not limited to purely verbal approaches to discourse, but also pay attention to other semiotic dimensions (pictures, film, sound music, gestures, etc) of communicative events. Discourse, according to Van Dijk (1995), however, is not limited to verbal action, but also involves meaning, interpretation and understanding. Advertising somehow influence the “minds” of readers and hearers. The repetitions of words, expressions again and again will not fail to drill the minds of readers and hearers, or even TV audience. When it is accompanied by visual representation, the advertising might control the minds of the audience even more. It is true that they may have relative freedom to interpret and use discourses as they please and in their own best interests. However, despite of such freedom, people may be lied to, manipulated or otherwise influenced by the advertising agencies. People may not have alternative sources of information. These people are under the power of the advertising agencies and the related companies. Arens (2016) defines advertisement as “the structured and composed nonpersonal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services, ideas) by

identified sponsors through various media.” In this research the CDA is employed to analyze the relation between the language in the *Meikarta* advertisement and the power of the advertisers to construct an image of the ideal residence.

METHODOLOGY

According to Van Dijk (1995), theoretically and descriptively we need to explore which structures and strategies of text and talk to attend to in order to discover patterns of elite dominance or manipulation “in” texts. The analysis is based on Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional method of discourse analysis framework: Text, Discourse Practice, Sociocultural Practice. The structure of analysis of this advertisement is following the pattern used by Margareth Wetherelle (2001) in analyzing the advertisement of “Hamlet” cigar as cited by Haryatmoko (2016). A qualitative method was used for this study.

ANALYSIS

This study is analyzing the discourse of a video advertisement in a television commercial, Some aspects are brought into focus: The organization of the whole text, the verbal sign and non-verbal sign, the image that the advertisers want to create, the process of creating the image, the strategies used in the advertisement, and the implications of power behind the advertisement.

1. The organization of the whole text: Better future living and working

It is quite common in advertising to show that a product is better than the other competitors. However, without mentioning that, it is easy to find out that *Meikarta* is compared to Jakarta. The advertisement of *Meikarta* offers a better quality of living and working, a blue sky, unpolluted air to breathe, a super modern city with reliable and modern public transportation.

2. The verbal sign and non-verbal sign

The verbal sign “Take me away from this place” is a very strong statement whispered by the innocent little girl who has to see the dull side of the place, the crime that happened in front of her eyes. This statement is drilled into the listeners’ subconscious to influence them that it is not the right way of living. “We forget that there is another way of living, the easy way to reach the dreams” is next stated by the narrator. In Indonesian, the lines of statements by the narrator is using a rhetorical device and figurative language like a poem. The non-verbal sign is the grand pictures of skyscrapers of apartments they can buy. Apartments in modern high-tech buildings which we can only see in sci-fi movies will be theirs. High-tech shopping centre where customers can just touch the image of items they want to buy are available. The beauty of nature in the central park gives the image of sustainable green environment that the advertisers want to evoke.

3. What kind of image that the advertisers want to create?

The developer would like to build the image that *Meikarta* is the visionary new metropolitan city, Indonesia’s biggest and most beautiful city for better living and working. *Meikarta* provides innovative infrastructure and modern transportation is secured and accessible. Safe and convenient traffic system is offered to its residents. *Cikampek* elevated highway and local monorail link all six industrial states together. Air pollution is controlled, the sky is blue and the sun shines brightly. It offers green environment with a central park inspired by New York’s. *Meikarta* is a way out for all the problems people face in Jakarta. The image is a convenient living for the urban middle upper class.

4. How is the process of creating the image?

First of all, the visionary new metropolitan city of *Meikarta* is compared to Jakarta with all the unsolvable problems. The video starts with a picture of a little girl sitting next to the glass window of a car. The sky was dark, it was raining. Suddenly something hit the glass window that caught her attention, apparently a speeding motorcycle grazed the glass window. Looking outside, the shops were closed and on the pedestrian walk she watched a crime happened before her eyes. Somebody snatched the hand-bag of a lady with a girl of her age. In fright, the little girl held her mother’s hand tightly and hid her face behind her. The rain was falling on the muddy street, littered with garbage. The car was passing a small dirty polluted river, and a dark tunnel, creating a bleak atmosphere. The little girl in the car could not stand it anymore and whispered: *Bawa aku pergi dari sini* (take me away from this place). The music changed from the sad note to the tone that showed optimism and the narrator said: We forget that there is another

way of living. Suddenly, the car is out of the dark tunnel to a place with a blue sky and the sun shines brightly. The trees are green and the colorful butterflies are flying here and there that shows the beauty of nature. The little girl steps her foot out of the car into a very modern high-tech building just like in a sci-fi movie, where everything is running through simple touch in the air, in a city where shopping is done by touching the shop window. What a life! And the little girl said: I want to stay in *Meikarta*!

By comparing the unbearable Jakarta with the dead-end problems and the new metropolitan city, the prospective buyers are led by the advertiser to the notion of a new living, the image living in a beautiful modern city, the comfort living of the middle upper class. This place is not for the other little girl who cannot afford it. In another word, *Meikarta* is not for the lower class, they do not belong to this place, they are put aside.

5. What are the strategies used in the advertisement?

Not only that the advertisers use the strategy of comparing *Meikarta* with Jakarta, they also use an innocent little girl as the representative of the voice of the restless citizens of Jakarta. By using a little girl, the adults are easily being enticed to sympathize with her and are willing to sacrifice anything for her future and the future of our children, to protect her from the acts of crime and to let her grow up in a safe and good environment.

6. The implications of power behind the advertisement.

Most of all, the people who are mystified by the image of the visionary metropolitan city of *Meikarta* are being the victims of the abused power of the developers. So far they buy the image, the dreams that may not come true for a long time. The clients were not informed that the developer has not got the permit to start building the area. They have no idea when the apartments will be built. The image of the Bandung-Jakarta Light Rail Transit (LRT) has been one of the gimmicks of the transportation access that the developer claims will be available. However, the newspapers mentioned that the Secretary of the State-owned Enterprise (*BUMN*) stated that the railways will not even pass the area. The prospective clients may be powerfully abused by the advertisers.

CONCLUSION

The results shows that the advertisements of the apartments in a new city are persuading clients to buy a dream of a super-modern city to be, with high-rise buildings of apartments, offices, schools, hospitals, super-modern transportation system, with a blue lake and a central park that every family dream of under a blue sky. The company demonstrates a power to dictate the needs of the citizens in their techniques to reach more clients. The advertisement clearly creates a false narration that Jakarta is an unsafe place to live, and *Meikarta* will be the perfect neighborhood to replace Jakarta. A powerful image of a child in a car begging to be taken out of Jakarta is quite convincing to the audience that a new neighborhood is needed for the sake of her upbringing.

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