INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE IN THE JAKARTA POST E-NEWS OPINION ARTICLES

INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE DALAM ARTIKEL OPINI SURAT KABAR ELEKTRONIK THE JAKARTA POST

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Abstract: This study discussed about types and functions of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in newspaper article opinion. Interpersonal metadiscourse holds significant role in writing, especially in opinion article, since it reflects writer's position towards both the content of text and reader. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, and the data are taken from opinion articles in The Jakarta Post online, an Indonesian English newspaper. The results of the study suggest that the types of interpersonal metadiscourse markers, such as hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries are used in the opinion articles. The results also reveal that the types of markers hold some specific functions in the texts. Hedges help the writers withhold their opinion, while certainty markers function to emphasize it. Attributors function to support the writers' arguments and attitude markers express their attitudes towards the text and readers. Finally, commentaries help them to build relationship with their readers.

Keywords: interpersonal metadiscourse, opinion article, newspaper

Abstrak: Penelitian ini membahas tentang jenis-jenis dan fungsi penanda interpersonal metadiscourse pada artikel opini surat kabar. Interpersonal metadiscourse berperan penting dalam sebuah tulisan, terutama dalam artikel opini, karena merefleksikan posisi penulis terhadap isi teks dan pembacanya. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif, dan data yang dianalis diperoleh dari artikel opini surat kabar elektronik The Jakarta Post, sebuah surat kabar Indonesia berbahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jenis-jenis penanda interpersonal metadiscourse, yaitu hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, dan commentaries digunakan dalam artikel opini. Hasil penelitian juga menunjukkan bahwa penanda-penanda tersebut memiliki fungsi masing-masing di dalam teks. Hedges berfungsi untuk memperhalus pendapat penulis, sedangkan certainty markers berfungsi untuk menegaskannya. Attributors digunakan untuk mendukung argumen penulis dan attitude markers membantu penulis untuk menunjukkan sikapnya terhadap teks dan para pembaca.

Kata Kunci: interpersonal metadiscourse, artikel opini, surat kabar

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Opinion articles in newspapers is an appropriate means to express opinions and ideas to an issue, especially in the information age as at present, in which information can be easily accessed by everyone. Through an opinion article, one can express his thought and show his attitude or position towards something - whether to support or reject the opinions of others. By writing opinion articles in the mass media, one can also influence or persuade others to do or not to do something. To convince or persuade another person is called persuasive function

Opinion article is a form of persuasive writing which aims to convince the reader that the writer's opinion is correct in regards to an issue. (Dafouz, 2003). Therefore, it can be concluded that an opinion will manage to become a tool of persuasion if it is able to convince the readers.

In order to convince the readers, the attention should not only on the content or written material, but also on the strategies that can arouse emotions. Emotions or feelings should be involved in the text, because it is one of the most important factors in composing a persuasive writing, especially opinion articles. When an article managed to touch the readers' emotions, it is probable that persuasion will also succeed because readers also feel what is felt by the writer. An interesting opinion article is one that has a good presentation and could also create emotions

One of the linguistic features that can be used to arouse or touch the readers' emotions is interpersonal metadiscourse. Interpersonal metadiscourse is closely related to persuasive writing, because it explores interpersonal relationships and interaction between the writer and the readers. Therefore, interpersonal metadiscourse markers often arise in persuasive writings, especially opinion articles

For that reason, the researchers are interested in examining further the use of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in opinion articles in electronic newspaper *The Jakarta Post*. This study focuses on interpersonal metadiscourse markers and their types and functions.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Interpersonal metadiscourse is a category of the new approach in discourse analysis called metadiscourse. The term *metadiscourse* itself was first proposed by Zellig Harris in 1959 that refers to the ways of understanding the language, which represents the attempt of the writers or speakers in leading the perception of the text receiver (Hyland, 2005: 3).

Dafouz (2003: 7) defines metadiscourse as a term that refers to features that are used by the writer to help readers describe the messages, share their opinions and reflect certain conventions in a culture. Meanwhile, Hyland (2005: 3) suggests that metadiscourse is the way to build human interaction through language, because metadiscourse contains the idea that communications made by humans not merely about information exchange as well as goods and services, but also involves personality, attitudes, and assumptions. Vande Kopple in Noorian and Biria (2010) also states that metadiscourse can assist the readers in understanding the message and the writer's views. From the definitions explained above, it can be concluded that metadiscourse is a very important language feature because it can be used by the writers not only to help the readers/listener in understanding the messages conveyed but also to look at the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of the writers/speakers of the text were made.

Some metadiscourse categories division have also been proposed by some experts like Vande Kopple (1985), Crismore et al. (1993), Hyland (2005) and Dafouz (2003). They generally divide metadiscourse into two categories, namelv textual metadiscourse and interpersonal metadiscourse (Hyland uses different namelv interactive terms metadiscourse and interactional metadiscourse, which actually refers to thing). the same Textual metadiscourse related to discourse organization, like how to achieve cohesive and coherent in writing, while interpersonal metadiscourse serves to reflect the position of the writer, both to the content of text and to the readers (Dafouz, 2003: 97). Because of its function that is more dominant in showing the interaction between writers and readers. interpersonal metadiscourse more often appears in a persuasive text.

Interpersonal metadiscourse, as does textual metadiscourse, is a term derived from language metafunction proposed by Halliday in Hyland (2005). Hyland (2005: 26) states that metadiscourse analysis, both textual and interpersonal, involves functional approach to a text. Therefore, interpersonal metadiscourse can be defined by its original term, i.e. interpersonal function.

According to Halliday in Hyland (2005: 26), interpersonal function is the language function in encoding the interaction, which allows humans to socialize with each other, take part and

express and understand assessment and feeling. Meanwhile, Lyons in Hyland (2005: 26) also added that interpersonal metadiscourse can help in revealing the personality and reaction the to text content propositions are made, and characterizing the interactions expected with the readers about the content.

Hedges

According to Dafouz (2008), hedges serve to hide full commitment of the writers to the statements they made in the text. The point is that hedges can avoid or reduce the authoritarian attitude of the writers against the readers, so that the text created becomes friendlier (Camiciottoli in Noorian and Biria, 2010: 72). In addition, hedges can also show the possibilities and politeness in a text (Noorian and Biria, 2010: 72). Hedges are divided into three types or subcategories:

a. epistemic verbs (e.g.: may, might, would)

b. probability adverbs (e.g.: probably / perhaps / maybe)

c. epistemic expressions (e.g.: it is likely)

(Dafouz, 2008: 99)

Certainty markers

Certainty markers has the opposite function with hedges, which is to show full commitment to the statements the writers convey in the text (Dafouz, 2008). Certainty markers provide an opportunity to the readers to find the writer's opinion, which in turn can create solidarity between the writers and readers (Dafouz in Noorian and Biria, 2010), e.g.: *undoubtedly, cleary, certainly*.

Attributors

Dafouz (2003) explains that attributors has a dual function in a text. He does not only explicitly mention the source of information, but also use the reference as an authoritative tool with a persuasive purpose. In addition, the attributors also help the writer to gain support and justification for the argument he gave (Noorian and Biria, 2010: 74), e.g.: 'x' claims that..., as the Prime Minister remarked...

Attitude markers

Attitude markers have a similar function with certainty markers, which emphasize the opinion of text maker (Dafouz, 2008). Dafouz also adds that the attitude markers may indicate an attitude or opinion of the writer to the readers and the content presented in the text. Dafouz (2008) divides attitude markers into four types or categories:

- a. deontic verbs (e.g.: *have to / we* <u>must</u> understand / needs to)
- b. attitudinal adverbs (e.g.: *unfortunately* / *remarkably* / *pathetically*)
- c. attitudinal adjectives (e.g.: *it is absurd / it is surprising*)
- d. cognitive verbs (e.g.: *I feel / I think / I believe*)

Commentaries

Commentaries helps writers to build and maintain relationship with the readers (Noorian and Biria, 2010). Dafouz (2008) divides commentaries into:

a. rhetorical questions (e.g.: *What is the future of Europe, integration or disintegration?*)

b. direct address to reader (e.g.: <u>vou</u> must understand, <u>dear reader</u>)

c. inclusive expressions (e.g.: <u>we</u> all believe / let <u>us</u> summarize)

d. personalizations (e.g.: *What the polls are telling <u>me</u> / <u>I</u> do not want) e. asides (e.g.: <i>Diana <u>(ironically for a</u> <u>Spencer)</u> was not of the <i>Establushment*)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, namely the research method that aims to describe the data through qualitative approach. In this study, the authors made the following stages: (1) conducting literature review, (2) collecting data, (3) classifying the data by type, (4) analyzing the data, and (5) drawing conclusions regarding the results.

The data in this study were obtained from opinion article in electronic newspaper The Jakarta Post issued on March 26th to April 4th 2013 downloaded through the internet. The articles had been collected were read carefully to find interpersonal metadiscoure markers in the content. found. the interpersonal Once metadiscourse markers were further classified based on the categories proposed by Dafouz (2008), namely (1) hedges, (2) certainty markers, (3) attributors, (4) attitude markers, and (5) commentaries, and analyzed based on the function in the text, that is to refine the writer's opinion, to confirm the writer's opinion, to strengthen the argument, to indicate the writer's attitude toward the text and the reader. and to build relationship between the writer and the readers. At the final stage, the authors drew conclusions about the findings and the analysis that had been done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis, the authors found sixteen interpersonal metadiscourse markers used in opinion articles newspaper electronic *The Jakarta Post* issued on March 26th to April 4th 2013. Interpersonal metadiscourse markers found are hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries.

The types of hedges found in the data were epistemic verbs (data 01 and 02) and probability adverbs (data 03). Certainty markers were found in the data (04) to (07), while attributors were found in the data (08) and (09). The types of attitude markers found in attitudinal adjectives were (data (10)), attitudinal adverbs (data (11)), and deontic verbs (data (12)). Meanwhile, the types of commentaries found were asides (data (13)), personalisations (data (14)), rhetorical questions (data (15)), and inclusive expressions (data (16)). Further explanation regarding the findings will be presented below.

Hedges

There are two types of hedges on the data, that is epistemic verb and probability adverb.

(01) As the country's largest party, the Democrats have failed to emerge from the crisis and that **may** inspire other parties. (The paradox of Yudhoyono's leadership)

Data (01) is obtained from opinion article about the Democrat Party crisis. In data (01). interpersonal metadiscourse marker found in the article is epistemic verb characterized by verb *may*. The writer states that as the largest party in Indonesia, Democrat Party has failed to resolve the internal problems. The writer this failure will considers be potentially followed by other parties.

The writer expresses the opinion by using verb *may* which means 'maybe'. By using the verb, the writer indirectly tries not to be authoritarian by giving space to the

readers to find any other alternatives or possibilities. Meanwhile, in data (02), hedges are marked by epistemic verb *might*.

(02) In some Muslim countries like Turkey, demands for the utter implementation of sharia and the establishment of an Islamic state spearheaded by various actors of political Islam **might** have significantly abated due to certain societal and political circumstances that prompted most of these actors to translate their Islamic aspirations into widely acceptable political messages that could reverberate through many layers of society. (Is political Islam in Indonesia in decline?)

Data (02) is taken from an article about political Islam decline in Indonesia. In the data, the writer states ۰۰ ... demands for the utter implementation of sharia and the establishment of an Islamic state spearheaded by various actors of political Islam might have significantly abated..." In the sentence, the writer uses epistemic verb, *might* implying that the writer's opinion could be right or wrong. By using hedges in epistemic verb, the writer does not seem to force the readers to believe what he has stated. However, this marker is considered to be able to create closeness and emotional connection between the writer and readers.

The use of hedges in probability adverb can be seen in data (03) below.

(03)*The recruitment system is* **possibly** *flawed because the Supreme Court, which appoints judges, lacks the necessary time to screen candidates thoroughly.* (A momentum to restore judicial integrity)

In data (03), the writer talks about the recruitment system of judges which might be imperfect or flawed. The

writer argues that this flaw occurs because of the Supreme Court, the institution that has the authority to elect judges, does not have enough time to screen or check the track record of every candidate in detail.

In the data above, probability adverb is found in the clause "The svstem recruitment is possibly flawed ...". The use of adverb possibly indicates the writer is not so sure of what he is saying. Nevertheless, the writer still provides the underlying reason for his statement by continuing the previous clause "...because the Supreme Court, which appoints judges, lacks the necessary time to screen candidates thoroughly."

Certainty markers

As mentioned in the previous discussion, the functions of certainty markers as markers of interpersonal metadiscourse are in contrast with the functions of hedges. Hedges tend to hide the writer' belief, whereas the certainty markers serve to express the writer' beliefs and show certainty. Data (04) to (07) describe the use of these certainty markers in the article.

(04) Law enforcement **certainly** has discretionary authority to choose specific coercive measures in handling a particular case. (Densus 88 and the (il) legality of torture)

In data (04), the writer talks about law enforcement which has discretionary authority to choose specific coercive measures in handling a particular case. In this article, he criticizes the legal action taken by the Densus 88 toward suspected terrorists. The writer in this data uses "certainly" as a certainty marker to express 'definitely or indeed'. By using the word *certainly* in the sentence, he believes that law enforcement has the authority to choose wisely specific coercive measures in handling a particular case.

(05) **Surely**, those articles deserve much criticism. ('Santet', 'adat' law and Criminal Code revision)

Data (05) is obtained from an opinion article talking about the weak position of the criminal laws of *santet* (black magic). In some of the previous sentences, the author cites several verses in the criminal laws which are deemed to be contentious. He, therefore, comes to a conclusion that this article should be criticized by saying "Surely, those articles deserve much criticism."

The writer uses certainty markers shown by adverbs "surely". The meaning of the word "surely" itself is closely related to the word "certainly", and they also have the same function of confidence expression. Thus, it can be concluded that the writer is full of confidence that the verses of criminal laws which the writer mentioned in the previous sentence deserve to get a lot of criticism.

(06) It **clearly** violates the rule of law as explicitly recognized by the Constitution, which aims to restrict state power by obliging it to comply with the principles of legal certainty when producing legislation. ('Santet', 'adat' law and Criminal Code revision)

Still in the same article, data (06) discusses the criminal laws of *santet* (black magic). In the previous sentences, the writer describes some points on the reasons why the customary law (according to the writer, black magic is considered an issue of customary law) cannot be incorporated into the general criminal law. Sentences in data (06) are the

conclusion of the main points described by the writer.

In data (06), the writer uses the adverb "clearly" as a certainty marker. This adverb also serves to emphasize the writer's confidence of the statements he points out. The writer strongly believes that the law violates the rules of customary law which is explicitly recognized by the constitution.

(07) **Of course**, in terms of membership and organizational resources, they are far tinier than the two largest moderate Islamic organizations — Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah. (Is political Islam in Indonesia in decline?)

In data (07), the writer talks about Islamic organizations in Indonesia. In the previous sentence, the writer states that there are several radical Islamic organizations in Indonesia, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), the Islamic Defender Front (FPI), the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI) and the Muslim Forum (FUI), which decided not to compete through elections and does not fight for their interests through formal institutions such as the House of Representatives. The writer then continues the sentence as seen in the data and states that the members and resources of organizations he mentioned are far less than the two leading moderate Islamic organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

At the beginning of the sentence in this data, the writer uses "of course" as a certainty marker. By using the certainty marker in the form of an adverb "of course", he wants to show the reader his confidence on the statements he made. He believes that organizations such as HTI, FPI, MMI, and FUI have a few sympathizers and resources compared to the Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah.

Attributors

Attributions are used by the writer in the article to support his statements or opinions by giving some information as part of a strategy of persuasion. This type of interpersonal metadiscourse is found in data (08) and (09).

(08) Claiming himself as a champion of democracy, Yudhoyono should have left the nation a legacy that would have earned him the credit of being a great statesman — if only he had followed **the words of Manuel Luis Quezón**: "My loyalty to my party ends where my loyalty to my country begins." (The paradox of Yudhoyono's leadership)

In data (08), the writer discusses the problem faced by the Democrat Party. The writer states that Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono should have left a good impression by not holding dual positions as a president and also as a party leader. To support his opinion, the writer uses an attributor by quoting Manuel Luis Quezon's statement saying "loyalty to the party ends when my loyalty to the country begins."

(09) Quoting James MacGregor Burns in his book Leadership (1978), a leadership crisis is especially characterized by a deterioration of political leadership qualities in an organization. Burns does not bother debating whether leaders are born or created, but rather he underlines the responsibilities of leadership. He savs the structure of motivation. values and objectives distinguishes leaders in terms of influence and quality. Burns emphasizes transformational and leadership the importance of collectivity in political leadership. (The paradox of Yudhoyono's leadership)

Still in the same article as data (08), in data (09) the writer is still criticizing

the leadership of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In this data, he cites the words summarized from the book entitled *Leadership* (1978) by James MacGregor Burns. The writer states that, quoted from Burns, a leadership crisis is marked by a decline in the quality of political leadership in an organization.

Attitude markers

The attitude markers found in the article are attitudinal adjectives (data (10)), attitudinal adverbs (data (11)), and deontic verbs (data (12)).

(10) *It is difficult* to imagine the institutional development aspect of a modern party like the Democrats, because the recent congress has strengthened the traditional pattern of patronized leadership. (The paradox of Yudhoyono's leadership)

In this data, the writer uses the attitudinal adjective shown by the clause "it is difficult". He embeds adjective construction to express attitude and view to both the reader and the text he wrote. The writer argues that it is difficult to expect the progress of modern institutions like the Democrat Party because of the result of the party's congress recently just reinforced the patterns of traditional leadership.

(11) *Unfortunately* that hope has now faded. (The paradox of Yudhoyono's leadership)

Data (11) is also taken from the same article as the previous data, which is about the leadership of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the problems in the Democrat Party. In the previous sentence, the writer cites the famous words of Manuel Luis Quezon which is stating that loyalty to the party leader should end with the commencement of loyalty to the state. He also states in the preceding sentence, if President Yudhoyono wants to be recognized as a true statesman, he should not hold double position. However, President Yudhoyono decided to become a party leader as well as a president. This decision triggers the writer's disappointment. То express his disappointment, he uses the adverb "unfortunately" as an attitudinal in this data. The writer states that the expectation of the emergence of a true statesman in this country unfortunately faded due to President has Yudhoyono's decision.

(12) First, we **have to** understand the nature of the criminal law. ('Santet', 'adat' law and Criminal Code revision)

In data (12), the writer discusses the problems of the criminal laws of *santet* he opposes. In the previous sentences, the writer states that customary law cannot be used as a common criminal law. He then describes the underlying reason for his opinion and argues that to understand the reasons why the common law cannot be used as a common criminal law, one must first understand the nature of the criminal law.

In this data, the writer uses deontic verbs marked by the verb "have to", which means 'must'. By using deontic verb "have to", the writer tries to reveal the value of his affections to the reader by telling the readers about what should be done.

Commentaries

Commentaries appearing on the data are *asides* (data (13)), *personalization* (data (14)), *rhetorical questions* (data (15)), and *inclusive expressions* (data (16)). (13) The policies they impose may not benefit stakeholders (especially students) and are not amendable to their interest and needs, as these policies are the by-products of ideological and institutional logic to which educational staff, students, and teachers must accede. (Questioning autonomy in higher education)

Context of the sentence in data (13) is about the issue of autonomy in higher education, particularly in universities. In this data, the writer uses "aside" by adding the words "especially students" after the parentheses in word "stakeholders" which roughly means "the parties concerned in a policy or engage in an activities. "Aside" in this data serves as explanatory or By adding "especially emphatic. students" after the word "stakeholders" as an aside, the writer insists on the reader that students are becoming the victims of the university autonomy policy. The use of "aside" in this data has the ultimate goal to establish a dialogical relationship between writers and readers (Dafouz, 2003).

(14) I challenged the US labelling as terrorists those who resisted the US governmegnt's foreign policy, which I considered unfair to Muslim countries at that time, especially Palestine. In response to my statement, Craner said that any attempt to reach a goal by sacrificing innocent civilians was terrorism. I then asked him: "What did you think when you attacked Afghanistan in October 2001 after the event of 9/11 that devastated the WTC in New York? (America, 'pesantren' and terrorism)

Data (14) is obtained from an article about criticism of Islam and Islamic definitions proposed by the US government considered totally wrong and unacceptable by the writer of the article. In this data, the writer uses "personalization" several times, as in the clause "I challenged ." "..I considered ..", "I then asked ..", and the phrase "my statement". The writer uses the first person pronoun "I" rather than "the writer" to refer to the author himself in this data. The author can actually uses the word "the writer", which Indonesian people quite commonly use when writing in English. However, the use of "I" and "the writer" is quite different, especially in terms of emotion and the distance created between the author and readers. The word "I" is said to contain the strong emotion rather than "the writer".

The writer uses the word "I" and "my" to refer to himself. By using these words, the writer asserts as if he was an actor. In addition, by using these two words, the writer also wants to close the gap and build the emotional connection between him and the readers.

(15) Furthermore, there are a lot of things which actually need our policy makers' attention more than these legal matters, such us the huge social gap in our society, which could be the most probable root of crime, the corrupt behavior of state officials, including the legal enforcers, impunity for the powerful and so on. Have those serious problems been fixed in our legal system? As long as the fundamental problems remain unaddressed, any revision of the law will be pointless for sure. ('Santet', 'adat' law and Criminal Code revision)

Data (15) is taken from an article about criminal law polemics on *santet* (black magic). The writer states that there is a problem considered more important and should have received serious attention from policy-makers rather than debating the criminal laws that are still controversial, namely social inequality (which actually could trigger crime), and corruption.

The writer then continues the sentence by asking a rhetorical question "Have those serious problems been fixed in our legal system?" Rhetorical question, in this context, is regarded as a statement rather than a question. It is intended to say that the stakeholders have not improved the legal system related to the serious problems the writer mentioned.

(16) On the face of it, it would be much more productive if **we** intellectuals were concerned instead over how the tradition of nurturing the habits of mind among our students can be sustained rather than be overwhelmed by the apprehension of the judicial review of higher education law. (Questioning autonomy in higher education)

Data (16) is about a polemic on education law especially in the policy of university autonomy. In this sentence, the writer argues that giving attention to sustainable thinking habit among the students is far more productive than dwelling on the judicial education law.

"We" as inclusive expression is used by the writer to involve the readers, to determine the attitude in response to the problems of campus autonomy. The writer also added the word "intellectuals" after "we" to show his assumption that his readers are educated.

CONCLUSION

Opinion article, as one of persuasive writings, require linguistic features which help to achieve the goal of persuasive writing that is to persuade or influence the readers. To achieve this objective, a writer should be able to build good relationship and interaction between himself and his readers. Relationship and interaction in an article can be constructed by using a linguistic feature called interpersonal metadiscourse.

Based on the data analysis and discussion, there are five interpersonal metadiscourse markers used in the opinion articles, namely (1) hedges, (2) certainty markers, (3) attributors,

markers, (4) attitude and (5)commentaries. Each marker has its own functions to describe the text. Hedges refine the writer's opinion. On the contrary, the certainty markers are used to confirm it. Attributors help authors to strengthen the argument and attitude markers perform to indicate the writer's attitude toward the text and reader. Meanwhile, the commentaries serve to build relationship between the writer and the readers.

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