

Indonesia in *The Sydney Morning Herald*

Aylanda H Dwi Nugroho

English Department,
Petra Christian University

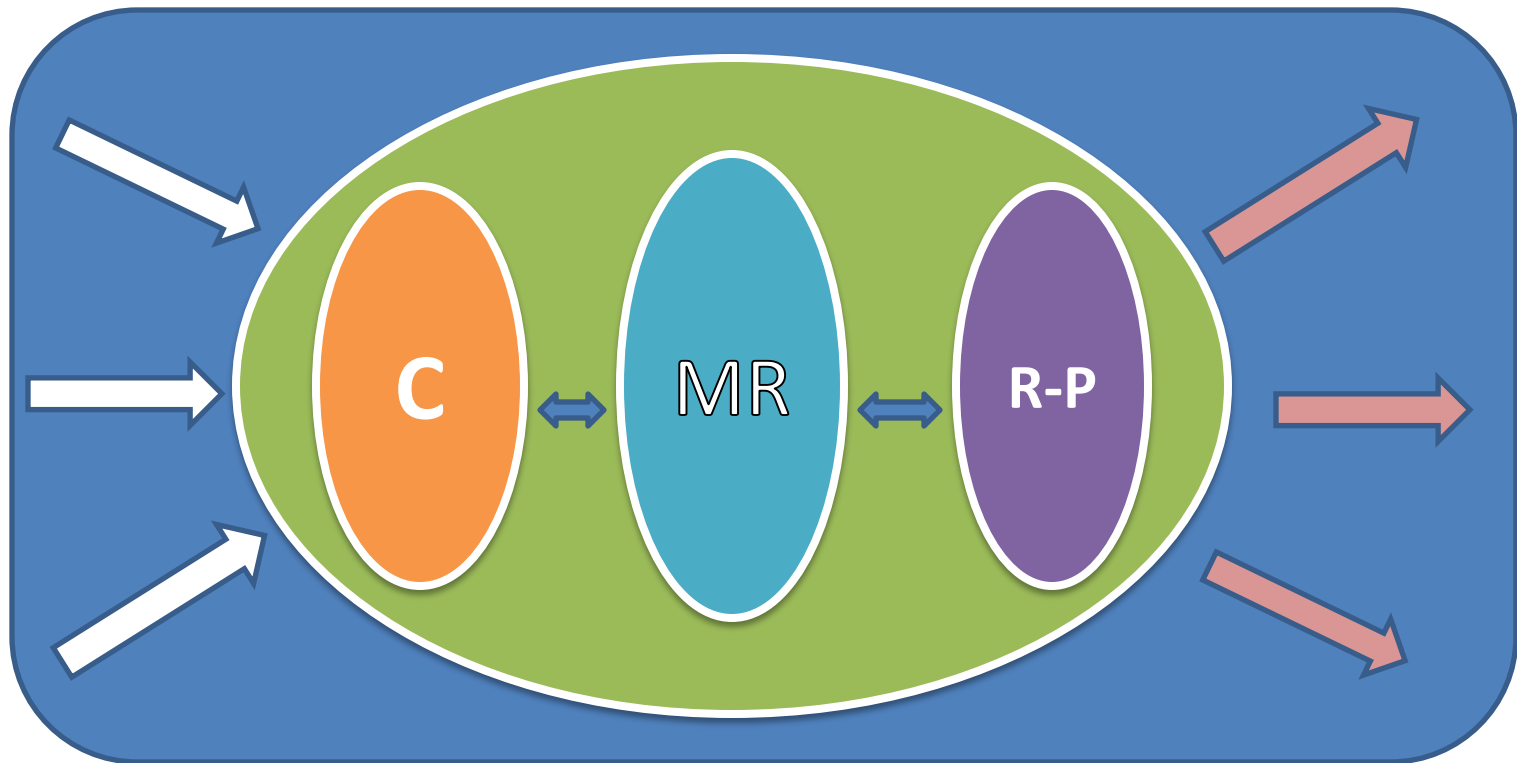
Overview

- My study about media representation of Indonesia in one Australian newspaper
- Socio-cognitive and cultural concepts of representation and media representation
- CDA and SFL frameworks in analyzing media representation
- The Australian media representation of Indonesia

- *The Sydney Morning Herald*
- Indonesia from 2004 – 2009
- Data: 80,000-word **news articles** in six years
- Three groups of news actors:
 - the presidents and presidential candidates
 - the government officers
 - the local people

Concepts of Representation

- Representation-making as a **socio-cognitive process** (e.g., van Dijk, 1988, 1998, 2008)



Mental Representation

Perception

Understanding

Memory

Comprehension

Knowledge

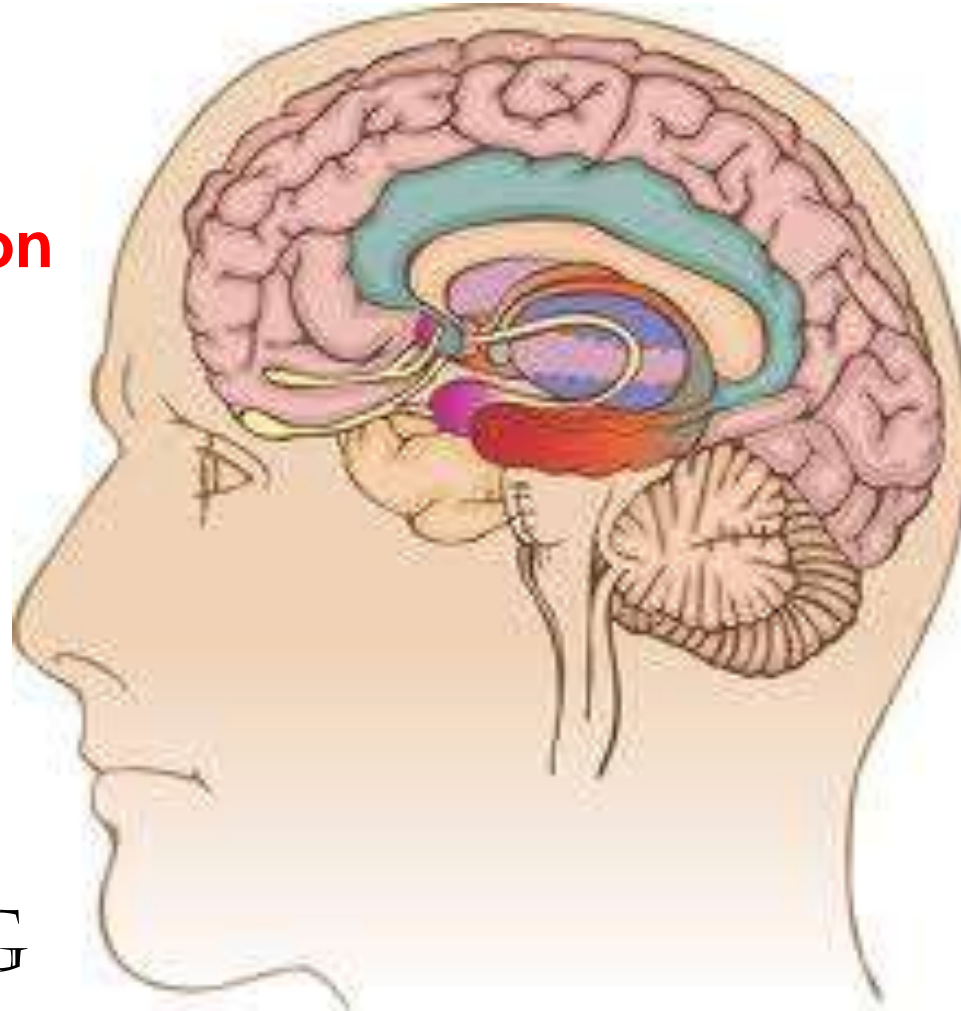
Frame

Schemata

Belief

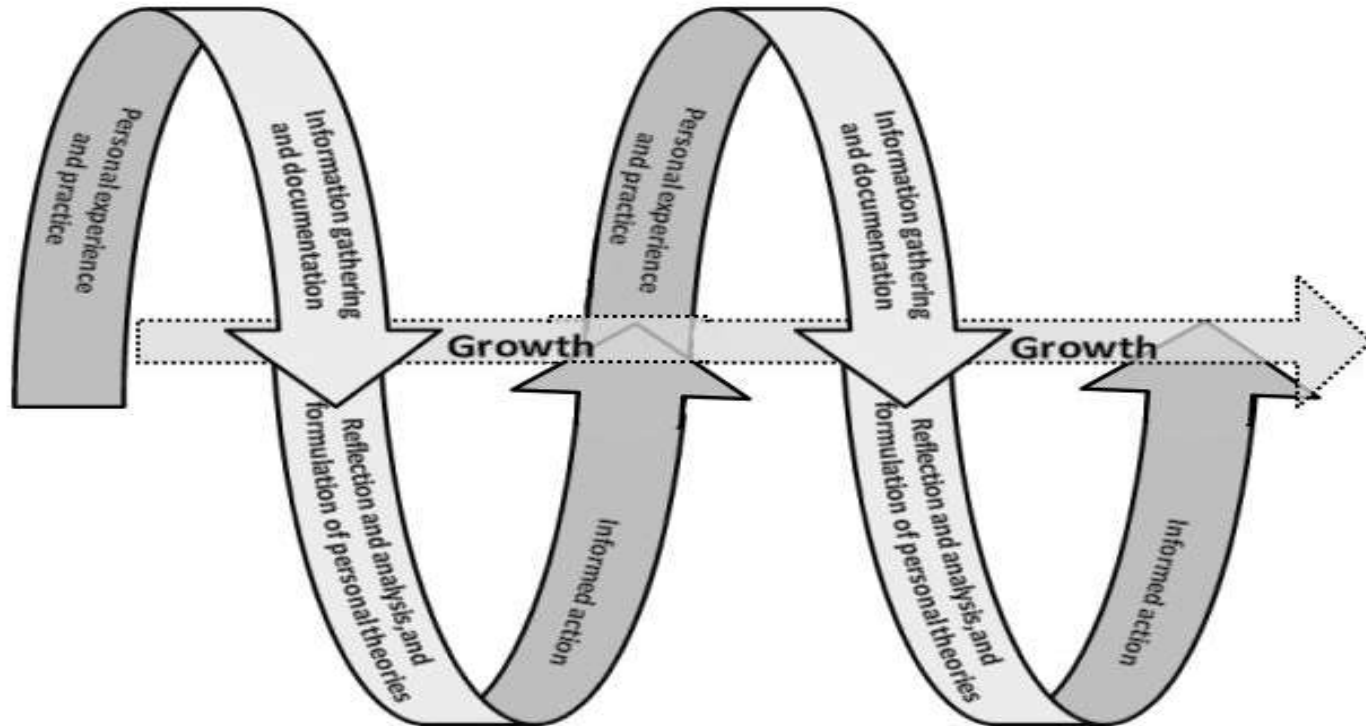
Concepts

FEELING



The Spiraling Process

- Representation-making as a **cultural process**: a spiraling process throughout time



1. A Representation

is a product of a culture, and thus it reflects the culture, and over time it becomes the document of that culture (from Berkowitz, 2011)

E.g. Fashion trends

2. As an **'interpretive community'** (Zelizer, 1997)

→ We pick up meaning in our culture to try to understand new happenings
= incorporate old meanings into new meanings

E.g., earthquakes, tsunami, plane crash

3. Collective memory (Halbwachs, 1951 [1992])

= socially constructed notion that brings together individuals, located in a specific group context, who remember a common past”

→ compare what happens now with what happened in the past

In relation to Benedict Anderson's "**imagined community**",

Knowledge, beliefs, memories are exchanged in relatively same society context and same time, and also from generation to generation

→ The *spiraling cycle* of perceiving and producing representations in societies and cultures in the world

Presidents



**Piye kabare?
Enak jamanku to??**

Frameworks of Analysis

CDA perspective

= to see how social power, dominance, and inequality are enacted or reproduced in the news texts in SMH about Indonesia

- Norman Fairclough's 3D discourse analysis

News Actors (Dwi-Nugroho, 2013)

- From van Leeuwen's *Social Actors* (2008)
- How news actors are represented in terms of personal attributes
- The news representation is more affected by the reporters' perception and representation than what the actors really are, although they do not mean to lie.

News Actions

- From van Leeuwen's *Social Action* (2008)
- How the news actors are represented through their actions
- Different action representations suggest different power imposed on the actors by the news writers.

Author Evaluation

- From Martin & Rose's *Appraisal* (2007)
- Author's perception, judgment, evaluation about news actors is actually the controlling concept of his/her representations.
- "prosody"

Representations of Indonesia

Three groups of news actors in the data:

- The P/presidents, the presidents-to-be
 - The government officers
 - The local Indonesians

Presidents

Almost always be:

- Identified : Functionalized, Nominized
- Individualized

Almost never be:

- Genericized

May be: - Symbolized - Impersonalized

Former president Soeharto/Suharto



Very negative representation of Soeharto in the news:

-Labeled as

dictator,

authoritarian regime,

corruption,

embezzlement,

human right abuses,

the fall from power

the US billions

= the Soeharto billions

“... the world’s **most corrupt leader of the past 20 years** ...” (April 3, 2004)

“... but his legacy remains tainted by **countless human right abuses.**” (Jan 28, 2008)

“The Soeharto kids remain in Indonesia, not some safe haven, and run the rent-capturing businesses their father’s power got them. **The Soeharto billions** are in these assets.” (Feb 2, 2008)

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono



Nomination:

While still formally
nominated as

“Dr Yudhoyono”,

he is getting popularly
referred to as

“SBY”,

“as he is popularly called
here”.

Abstraction, Symbolization

- “... his famed Javanese **circumlocution** ...”
- “... **slow** decision-making ...”
- “the **oblique and contradictory language** for which he is infamous”
- “... **seriously indecisive**...”
- ... a breath of **clean air** ...
- Yudhoyono’s **balloon**
- “It was like a **soccer player** with a ball ready to be kicked for a goal. But he [keeps] dribbling the ball instead of shooting,” he said.

Megawati Soekarnoputri



Nomination

“President Mega”,

“President Megawati”,

“Ms Megawati”

“Megawati”/ “Mega”

instead of

“President Soekarnoputri”,

“Ms Soekarnoputri”

Labelization

“Had the election commission not compelled her to front the cameras, **the self-described housewife** *would have stayed at home...*” (Jul 3, 2004)

Objectivization

“ ... do-little-say-less approach ...”

Symbolization

“She is facing political execution next week, ...”

The presidential candidates

Wiranto (2004)



Prabowo Subianto (2009)



- Both presidential candidates are negatively represented due to allegations of human rights abuses which have never been resolved or made publicly clear
 - Wiranto: East Timor case
 - Prabowo: East Timor and Jakarta May 1998 Tragedy

The Government Officers

- All government department/ institution are very negatively represented
 - Central Government
 - Provincial/ Local Government
 - The Police
 - The Parliament
 - The Judicial Powers
 - The Military/ Intelligence
- Issues: **incompetence and corruption cases**

Abstraction = Evaluation

... But it also points to a widerphenomena (sic) in Indonesia: **money politics** that extends from small handouts to poor villagers to a **slew of bribery and corruption scandals that have hit the national legislature.**

[Mar 14, 2009]

Concretization

Adults and children milled around, watching animals being slaughtered, thrown into a pit and burnt with no sign of public safety precautions. The Indonesian Agriculture Minister, Anton Apriantono, **shouted frantically to department staff to find if it was safe to remove his white mask to answer** questions.

“Don’t blame me if you get bird flu because you don’t wear a mask. This is very dangerous, you know, as the virus can be transmitted through the air,” he warned reporters that July afternoon.

[Sep 24, 2005]

Evaluation

Sarcasm – Disbelief – Optimism?

If you do not want to deal with the hordes of agents swarming outside, there have always been plenty of police officers in the building happy to solve your problems while you top up their wallets.

That is how it is always been but now, suddenly, everything has changed.

The agents have gone and they have taken the queues with them. When I approached a policeman for help, he did not ask me how much I could pay, but steered me to the first window, where I waited less than a minute for the eye-test form.

I didn't even know they had eye tests.

In years gone by the eye test was like the road rules exam, just another box to be ticked in a back room once your agent had paid the right price. Now you sit against a wall and read the little letters at the bottom of the light box, *just like in other countries*. Instead of the 300,000 rupiah (\$42) I paid an agent last year, the price now is only 65,000 rupiah, the same amount as is listed on the receipts. And the SIM card, with photograph and thumb print, was ready in 40 minutes. [Feb 19, 2005]

The Local People

- They are most often:
 - genericized: nameless, faceless
 - aggregated: as amounts
 - objectivied: as actions or events
- Some of them may be nominated, but it is only used as examples or evidence to support the abstraction or evaluation the writers make

- The locals are perceived as
 - a huge number of people: crowds
 - living in a very poor standard
 - resilient enough to strive

Contribution

- 1. A socio-cognitive and cultural perspective of representation-making and representation-interpreting process**



Elliot Rodger

2. A **critical linguistic framework** to analyze verbal representation of news actors:
- **a key** to name/identify signals or methods of representing
 - interpretation is not just based on 'quick reading', but supported by a system of representational choices

3. A blend of quantitative and qualitative analysis → **'prosody'**

- quantitatively through content analysis
- qualitatively through textual analysis

Online - Offline

- The data is published online, but it is not much different from the print format
- The difference between the online and offline/print format is more on the frequency and interval of news articles of the same issue
- In general:
 - Online** – what is communicated “on the surface”
 - Offline** – what is communicated “beyond the surface”