

# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **Background of the Study**

Racial segregation is the system that separates group of people based on race, skin color, religion, ethnicity, or national identity. Nowadays, it still takes place as a part of society even though the idea of unity and equality is promoted to society. For example, lately in Indonesia the topic of segregation becomes the trending topic especially in relation to the politics. In Indonesia the term for segregation is commonly known as discrimination which also called as SARA (Suku, Agama, dan Ras). It can be seen from the case of “Ahok” who has been sentenced for blasphemy during his re-election campaign in September, 2017. This case became a controversial issue as dealing with “Ahok” as Jakarta’s governor who comes from minority group as the Chinese descent in Indonesia. This news became a trending topic and got people’s attention all around the world.

In the United States, racial segregation against minority groups still remains as a controversial issue until now. The civil rights movements do not guarantee that segregation is disappeared. Based on Brookings Institution census data, it is

shown that the segregation declined in big cities even though it is still considered as high level (BBC News, 2016). In some cities, minority groups do not mix one another, such as in Ferguson, Baltimore, and Chicago. Those three cities still have higher tension on segregation (Vaidyanathan, 2016). Vaidyanathan on BBC News (2016) reported from Louisiana to Kansas, Alabama to Wisconsin, Georgia to Nebraska there is no interaction among races just because of the circumstances. In America, most of black people live in Southern States where the white society is superior and more powerful compared to black society.

In 2016, the racism issue is on high concern in public as represented in cases involving US police who shot and killed black people. The cases of black people shot become a trending topic related to the police brutality. Those issues are exposed to the society. The Huffington Post (July, 2016) reported at least 136 black people were killed in the beginning of 2016 without any clear reason. Those series of cases raises back the awareness of racial segregation back then in 1950 which becomes the greatest momentum of conflicts in the history of racial segregation (Rbedi, 2016).

In 1950, black people were triggered to gain their rights to be equal with white people. They started campaign which is

continued to Civil Right Movement. After World War Two, many figures took part in Civil Right Movement who played important roles in the history. The leading figures are Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Andrew Goodman, and Malcolm. Among those people, Martin Luther King Jr. is the most famous one. He is known with his dedication and works in the theme of anti-racial segregation in the United States. His works are including essays, letters, and speeches. His famous masterpiece is “I Have a Dream” speech, considered as the top of American Speech of the twentieth century based on research conducted by University of Wisconsin-Madison and Texas A&M University (1999).

In the field of language research, the discussion of racial segregation or racism is concerned on language use and its relation to social phenomenon. It discussed specifically in the area of critical discourse analysis which is used to analyze written or spoken text based on socio-political perspective (Cameron & Panovic, 2014). Van Dijk (1996) argued that CDA focuses on the relationship between discourse and power in written or spoken text. It is believed that a text is never neutral as it is based on several aspects, such as society, situation, social identities, and relationship among group of people (Livholts, 2015). In terms of power, it refers to group power

not individual power which commonly called as social power. The social power refers to part of relationship between groups, classes, social formation, or even between people as social members (Van Dijk, 2008).

There are some researchers conducted studies on language use in relation to social power, especially on the role of majority and minority group. In Western countries, social power is commonly produced by white groups as the majority group towards the minority group (Van Dijk, 2008). In 1984, Van Dijk published his work on *An Analysis of Ethnic Prejudice in Cognition and Conversation in Netherlands*. It focused on the conversation analysis on how white people talked about immigrants as minority groups (Van Dijk, 1984, as cited in Van Dijk, 1991, 2008). Widyastuti and Amelia (2014) conducted Racism analysis on racism in Django movie which focuses on how white people showed their power and control as dominant group.

In line with the background and theories above, this study aims to reveal the social power reflected in speech. The text is derived from Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches. His speeches are expected to provide enough data in relation to social power in discourse. The speeches were written during the racial segregation era in which different power relation

exists between white society as “majority group” and black society as “minority group”. Even though his speeches were written and delivered around fifty years ago, people still remember them when discussing the racial segregation and civil right movements in United States. The context of his speeches is also relevant in Indonesia in which the issues of discrimination against minority group raises to the Indonesian society lately, as stated earlier in the case of Ahok.

There are numbers of studies analyzing Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech. Sipra & Rashid (2013) also conducted critical discourse analysis on analyzed the 31 first sentences of “I Have a Dream” speech. They applied 3 dimension model and framework proposed by Fairclough (1992) to refer to textual and stylistic devices. In another research, Alfayez (2009) used critical discourse analysis to reveal the hidden meaning from I Have a Dream speech through linguistic markers. In Indonesia, Kasenda & Ariyanti (2014) investigated about speech acts spoken in I Have a Dream speech. All of the previous studies conducted to reveal the hidden meaning in Martin Luther King Jr.’s speeches. All of them are limited only to one speech from Martin Luther King Jr. which is “I Have a Dream”.

In comparison to the previous studies, this study was conducted in the form of Critical Discourse Analysis by using socio-cognitive approach. The analysis was focused on macro level analysis as dealing with how social power was reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches. The social power was further formulated into two research questions: what types of social power were reflected; and how is the gap between white society as “majority group” and black society as “minority group”. In terms of data, this study used three speeches from Martin Luther King Jr. as the data.

### **Research Questions**

This study aimed to reveal the social power is represented in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches. The social power was further formulated into two major research questions, as following:

1. What types of social power were reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches?
2. How was the gap between white society as “majority group” and black society as “minority group” reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches?

### **Objectives of the Study**

In line with the research questions above, the objectives of study are as the following:

1. To identify what types of social power were reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches
2. To identify how the gap between white society as "majority group" and black society as "minority group" was reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research used two theoretical frameworks: critical discourse analysis on social power theory (Van Dijk, 2008) and types of social power (Raven, 1974). In critical discourse analysis (CDA), there are two levels of analysis in CDA: micro and macro level. Micro level consists of language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication, while macro level of analysis consists of power, dominance, and inequality. Social power is a part of relationship between groups, classes, social formation, or even between people as social members (Van Dijk, 2008). In term of social power, this study dealt with group power not individual power. The term power refers to some social resources such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, or education. Social power commonly produced by white people as majority group towards minority groups, for instance, immigrants, and refugees (Van Dijk, 2008).

“That is, most power elites are themselves white, and their power implies preferential access to the means of mass communication, political decision-making discourse, the discourses of the bureaucracy and the legal system” (Van Dijk, 2008, p 72-73).

In the discussion of social power, there are two major groups being discussed; majority groups, and minority groups.

In terms of social power types, there are six types of social power (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965, as cited in Raven, 2008): reward, coercive, referent, legitimate, expert, and informational. Reward power refers to the ability to give rewards when other people are aligned with your wishes. Coercive power refers to the ability to give punishments if someone does not follow the instruction. Referent power comes from someone's attractiveness, power, or worthiness. Commonly, it is derived from famous figures who become the role model in society. Legitimate power comes specifically from position and role. Expert power refers in which expertise and knowledge is the source of power. Informational power is a person's ability to control and share the information that others need to accomplish something. It results in cognitive change and acceptance by the target.

## **Significance of the Study**

Practically, the result of this study provided new insights for language learners that language is never neutral. It deals with how language is constructed and used within certain social context. The findings were expected to present how social power between majority and minority group was reflected through Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches. The social power was further formulated into types of social power and how the gap between white society as "majority group" and black society as "minority group" was reflected in Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches. Most of the studies about discourse and racism are conducted in the case of representation of immigrants in media such as, newspaper articles. This study presented different phenomenon in revealing the social power through speeches from Martin Luther King Jr. who belongs as part of minority group. Theoretically, the findings were expected to support the framework of discourse and power especially on types of social power and how social power was documented and manifested in discourse.

## **Scope and Limitation**

This research is a critical discourse study to reveal social power as represented in verbal language. It focused on Martin Luther King Jr.'s speeches. The analysis used socio-

cognitive approach which concerned on macro level analysis as dealing with social power. The social power analysis was delimited only on two major research questions: what types of social power were reflected; and how the gap between white society as “majority group” and black society as “minority group” was reflected in King Jr.’s speeches. In terms of social power types, it was based on six types of power proposed by Raven (1974). In the gap of majority and minority group, it was based on social power theory from Van Dijk (2008). The gap of majority and minority group focused on two major discussions: social status, and roles in society. It concerned only on verbal language based on the orthographic transcripts without paying attention to the paralinguistic (gestures, facial expression), or suprasegmentals aspect (pitch, stress, and intonation).

For the data, it was limited only to three speeches from Martin Luther King Jr. as sources of data. The three speeches were “*I Have a Dream*”, “*Our God is Marching On*”, and “*I’ve Been to The Mountaintop*”. Those speeches were chosen as the most memorable speeches from Martin Luther King Jr. (Plesset, 2018). Besides that, each of them had related context in the theme of racial segregation. Each of the speeches had its own background in the history of racial segregation for the

basis of his speeches. This study only concerned on the discussion of language and power. This study did not deal with any political view which influenced those speeches.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

This part gave clear definition of terms used in this study. As a means of clarification, the terms and concepts were defined, as follows:

- a. **Discourse** refers to unit of sentences which unifies text within certain context (Crystal, 2008).
- b. **Critical Discourse Analysis** is an approach which studies the relationship between text and socio-political perspective (Crystal, 2008).
- c. **Power** refers to the ability of an entity (e.g., company, individual, social group, etc.) to make change, or conversely, to maintain things as they are” (Bielsa & O’Donnell, n.d).
- d. **Social Power** refers to the control from one group to another usually from majority towards minority groups. It is based on some social aspects such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, or education (Van Dijk, 2001, as cited in Jahedi, Abdullah, Mukundan, 2014). In this study, the social power will be focused on the

control from white society as “majority group” towards black society as “minority group”

- e. **Reward power:** is the ability to give rewards when other people are aligned with your wishes (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965, as cited in Raven, 2008).
- f. **Coercive power:** refers to the ability to give punishments if someone does not follow the instruction (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965, as cited in Raven, 2008).
- g. **Referent power:** comes from someone’s attractiveness, power, or worthiness. It is commonly derived from famous figures (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965, as cited in Raven, 2008).
- h. **Legitimate power:** derives from position and role in society (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965, as cited in Raven, 2008).
- i. **Expert power:** refers in which expertise and knowledge is the source of power (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965, as cited in Raven, 2008).
- j. **Informational power:** is the ability of someone who refers to control or share the information that others need to accomplish something (French & Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965, as cited in Raven, 2008).

- k. Majority group:** refers to a group of people who is powerful and dominant in the society (Wirth, 1945, as cited in OpenStax-CNX, 2013). Dominant group has special access to the most of the important forms of public discourses (Van Dijk, 2011).
- l. Minority group:** commonly refers to group of people who were isolated from society because of their physical and cultural characteristics (Wirth, 1945, as cited in OpenStax-CNX, 2013). Most of them received unequal treatment in society as they were less powerful than the dominant group.
- m. Negro:** is related to people who have dark skin or originally come from Africa or whose Ancestor came from Africa (Merriam Webster Online Dictionary). It was commonly used during racial segregation era in America. However, it is not used anymore as it is considered as offensive for them.