

Local television and the construction of local identities: case studies on two local televisions in Pekanbaru, Indonesia

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Abstract

This aim of the study is to describe the role of local televisions in constructing local identities. This study was conducted with qualitative approach, examining two programs in two local televisions in Pekanbaru, Riau, Indonesia, namely Belacan Program of Riau Television (RTV) and Online Channel Program of Riau Channel Television (RCTV). This research found that local televisions have important roles in constructing local identities and maintaining local cultures. RTV and RCTV have optimized various ways of constructing local cultures, which simultaneously draws closer relations to their audiences, such as focusing on the Malay culture as a dominant culture in Riau, exploring tourist attractions and new places surrounding the city, delivering the program with local language, presenting traditional clothes worn by the host, involving local communities in the production and creative processes of the program, innovating the program with the interactive music segment, discussing folk songs, and inviting local speakers. These programs have shown the resistance to the dominance of 'Jakarta' and global culture. The use of local language acts as symbolic signs, namely representing the local identities.

Keywords: *local television; local identity; local culture; creative processes.*

1. Introduction

In the process of making television programs, the creative team should explore creativities so that the program is well planned (Fachruddin 2015: 10). A good television program should have a focus, referring to which will determine other creativities. Wen (2014: 95) said that, "Local television stations were more focused on entertainment or show having to do with daily life. Beginning in the 1980's city TV stations worked hard to provide entertaining program." Thus, the creative team which is the brain of a program must be able to develop, exploit, and even make thousands of ideas put

together and presented in the good quality programs. Generally, creative television programs are developed from the process of imagination to the initial idea, design, production, and creative processes.

As local televisions, Riau Television and Riau Channel Television have vision and mission to maintain local culture. In order to achieve this goal, these two local televisions have formed entertainment programs promoting local cultures. Riau Television has entertainment programs such as 'Belacan', 'Berbual dalam Dendang', and 'Senandung Melayu'. Meanwhile, Riau Television Channel has a flagship

entertainment program, namely 'Online Channel'. Although the composition of entertainment programs are not as much as news programs, these local televisions are able to construct local identities through lightly packaged entertainment programs.

Some studies have examined the roles of local television in constructing local identities. Haryati (2013: 1-22), for example, said that Indonesian local televisions are currently faced with quite strict competitions with Indonesian national televisions. But, in terms of local culture representation, local televisions benefit because of their focus on locality. This local representation processes are carried out with cultural, political, social and other local aspects in the greater depth. In this study, I will look at how the creative processes carried out by the creative teams of Riau Television and Riau Television Channel in order to represent local cultures. This study was based on qualitative approach, applying interviews and observations as the techniques of collecting data. This study has examined two programs, namely Belacan Program of Riau Television (RTV) and Online Channel Program of Riau Channel Television (RCTV).

2. Theoretical framework

Local identity is an identification constructed by a specific local area and its people resulting its distinctiveness compared to other regions and cultures. The entertainment programs presented by local televisions, in addition to the purpose of entertaining the audiences, have also aim to raise the potential, wealth and peculiarities of local cultures.

The development of local televisions in Indonesia began in 2002 with the emergence of the Indonesian Law no. 32/2002. This law has emphasized two things, namely the limitation of national broadcasts, but not including those who collaborate with local televisions, and the

permission of local television broadcasts only within coverage areas according to their homebase (Wirodono 2006: 127). Local televisions with their local topics are closely related to the local identity. Lustig and Koester (2003: 213) suggested that cultural identity can emerge not only through someone's experiences and backgrounds, but also through media contents that represent local culture. Thus, the information presented by local media such as local television does not only serve as education tool, but also as identity presentation as well. Within the local scope, the presence of local televisions have their own meaning since they will present the repertoire of local culture with a variety of diversity, wealth and peculiarities of each region (Haryati 2013: 3-4).

In developing local programs, creative processes are very important. According to Setyobudi (2006: 57-59) television programs are produced through a series of processes designed by the creative team. First is the pre production process. This is the initial stage of making a program through exploring ideas from the team. Starting from the idea, the team begins to collect data and developed it into the script. It would be continued with planning phase, including estimating the working time, correcting the script, and assigning the location and crews. The second stage is the production process, in which the script is translated into auditive and audio-visual forms. This stage involves not only creative team, but also production team, namely director, producer, camera person, lighting person, and others. Third stage is post production process. It is an improvement stage of the production that has been carried out, usually through editing, giving effects, and others. After that, an evaluation will be made to determine whether the program is qualified to be broadcasted or not.

3. Result and discussion

Belacan Program of Riau Television (RTV) constructs local identity through highlighting the regional elements and ethnics diversity of Riau. As already known, Riau has many ethnics inhabiting the area. The creative team of Belacan program tried to represent the potential and uniqueness of of the five biggest ethnics within Riau region. However, the Belacan program basically promotes a dominant local culture in Riau, namely Malay (Melayu) culture, including its arts, performances, languages, customs, and anothers. It is highlighted for the purpose of maintaining and promoting Malay culture, especially for the local people, as it has encountered serious problems related to the threats of global cultures.

The creative team of Belacan has also innovated the program with adding the music segment, discussing folk songs, inviting competent local speakers, and providing relevant information related with Malay cultures. In the music segment, the audiences are able to request folk songs, especially Malay songs. The invited speakers come from local community, local artist, local culture esperts, lecturers, and another local resources who are competent with the chosen topic. The host delivers the program using Malay, using traditional cloths as well. The goal is the public awareness of their own traditional clothing. When I did the observation,

the hosts were man and woman wearing blue and red colored traditional cloths. It was very contrasting and striking, but was a very interesting blend of colors as well.

While, Online Channel Program of Riau Channel Television (RCTV) is actually a soft news program packed in an entertainment form. The program explores tourist destinations and new areas in Pekanbaru to encourage local people visiting the places. They regularly report various aspects of the city, such as culture, arts, tourist places, music, and package them in the form of soft information. In order to find local news, the creative team observes directly local diversities and insights and dicusses them in the production processes. They emphasize local news closely related to the daily life of local communities. From the journalistic view, they are highlighting the closeness as a main news value.

The creative team also involves local communities, such as inviting local artist or local hobby-based communities to introduce their communities and activities. During the program, the invited communities could also showcase their attractions. Even the existing communities are able to contact the creative team to cover their activities. The program also provides song request segment, especially for local and pop songs. Maintaining songs as one of the local advantages, the creative team strives to present folk and pop songs that are going popular.

Table 1 Creative processes in RTV and RCTV

	Riau Television (RTV)	Riau Channel Television (RCTV)
Purpose	Introducing cultural diversities in Riau, especially the Malay culture.	Introducing local advantages related to tourism, places, communities, and cultures.
Pre production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exploring ideas related to the five most dominant cultures in Riau, especially Malay culture. 2. Pre-production meeting to discuss the ideas and preparing the production script. 3. Field observation and refining the production script. 4. Innovating program through <i>on air</i> and <i>off air</i> programs as well. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program meeting to discuss the ideas. 2. Doing field observation and involving the local community. 3. Exploring materials from the internet for the additional data. 4. Testing the program if time allows.
Production and post production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical preparation of program, both live or off air. 2. Production processes, in which two presenters are wearing local cloths and invited communities performing their activities. 3. Editing processes will run for 3 days. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical preparation of program. 2. Production processes, the hosts are two women. 3. Editing processes.
Evaluation	Evaluation is done related to the material, the innovation, and the conformity with cultural values. Evaluation is also taken from the audiences and local communities.	Evaluation is conducted routinely in order to continuously develop the program. Evaluation strongly involves local communities.

In contemporary Indonesian society, television plays very important roles in the social life. As concluded by Heryanto (2015), there is no social institution which is able to deeply attract the interest of the community such as television. Generally, television is **not** only the most popular entertainment medium, but also the place for power and identity struggles. In this notion, the constructions of local identity on RTV and RCTV represent their resistance to the dominance of 'Jakarta culture' (Rianto et al. 2012) or even global culture (Armando 2016). Rianto et al. (2012) found that local televisions in several regions in Indonesia were pressed by the dominance of the Jakarta-based television which carried out national broadcasts. These ten Jakarta-based national televisions have co-opted the television market in Indonesia, and simultaneously it has blocked the development of local televisions.

In the Indonesian television industry, rating has determined every program. In order to achieve the highest rating, these Jakarta televisions will broadcast the most popular entertainment programs. They do not really care about local culture programs since they are not economically profitable. Conversely, for economic reasons, Jakarta-based televisions prefer to broadcast global and popular culture, such as Hollywood films, Bollywood films, or K-Pop. Even K-Pop has become a new opium for many young people in Indonesia (Heryanto 2009; Heryanto 2015; Ida 2012).

In the local televisions, although rating remains as the reference, they seriously take into account local cultures as the sources of their programs. They play important roles in maintaining local cultures. Besides RTV and RCTV as have been analyzed in this paper, we may mention some examples, such as JTV in

East Java which is widely known for its use of the Javanese “ngoko” language, or some local televisions in Yogyakarta which also use Javanese language. In this notion, the local language is not only a medium for communication, but at the same time carries certain symbolic values. According to Katubi (2010: 34) through adopting certain languages, groups or nations declare their identity, the self as it differ from the other.

4. Conclusion

This study found that local television has important roles in constructing local identity. RTV and RCTV use various ways to represent local cultures, which simultaneously draws closer relations to the audience. The construction of local identities in Belacan Program are carried out through raising the Malay culture as a dominant culture in Riau, innovating program with the music segment, discussing folk songs, talking with present

speakers, and giving other important information related to Malay culture. During the program, the hosts would speak Malay and wear local clothing. While Online Channel Program explores tourist destinations and new places to attract the local people to visit. They also involve local communities in the production and creative processes through accepting their suggestions and critics, involving them in the exploration of new places, and inviting them to introduce and show their activities in the program. They also have song request session to make the program is more interactive with audiences. These programs have shown the resistance to the dominance of ‘Jakarta’ and global culture. The use of local languages are not only a medium for communication, but also acts as symbolic signs, namely representing the local identities. To sum up, this paper concludes that local televisions play important roles in maintaining local cultures, especially through exploring local cultures as the sources of their programs.

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