



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

REALISM AS A TOOL TO PRESENT FACT IN DOCUMENTARY

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**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Cinematography)
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REALISM AS A TOOL TO PRESENT FACT IN DOCUMENTARY

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This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Cinematography)

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
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2014

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Masters



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ABSTRACT

Title: Realism as a Tool to Present Fact in Documentary

Yanty Binti Syainal

This research is about realism as a tool to present fact in documentary. Realism element is applied in a documentary entitled “ Di Sebalik Kota”. Realism presenting reality of life with the natural situation through observation and show reality through human behaviour naturally. This Research used mixed method and distributed closed ended and open ended questionnaire to Cinematography student. Realism is applied in documentary with observation methods to present the reality and facts about “Bajau Pala'u” real life in Lahad Datu Sabah.

ABSTRAK

Tajuk: Realisme Sebagai Alat Penyampaian Fakta dalam Dokumentari

Yanty Binti Syainal

Kajian ini bertujuan mengkaji unsur "realism" dalam dokumentari sebagai alat penyampaian fakta. Unsur "realism" ini diterapkan dalam dokumentari yang bertajuk "Di Sebalik Kota". Realism membawa maksud yang sama dengan realiti. Realiti adalah sesuatu perkara yang berlaku secara semulajadi dalam kehidupan seharian manusia dan dilihat melalui pemantauan seseorang. Unsur "realism" ini diterapkan dalam dokumentari digabungkan dengan kaedah pemantauan bagi memperlihatkan lagi realiti dan fakta tentang kehidupan sebenar masyarakat "Bajau Pala'u" di Sabah.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research will produce one documentary "*Di Sebalik Kota*" to hear society voice and identify their problems and show to the audience. The title of this research is "*realism as a tool to present the fact in documentary*". The main purpose of this research is to identify how to apply the realism element in documentary without re-enactment element and focus subject mater are Bajau communities in Sabah. Therefore, in these studies researcher will identified what type of mood that can be applied. Two types of mood that will be applied on this research is observational and participatory mood.

Documentary is about the fact and non fiction videos. In other words documentary can be intended as the documentation of the actuality about social, culture and things that already research. However, because of "*filmmaking practice, a cinematic tradition, and mode of audience reception*" documentary nowadays can come out with series (*Documentary archive*, 2013). In this documentary researchers want to incorporate elements of realism. Documentary is non-fiction film and also known as fact or actuality, however it depends on

director creativity to organize the fact that recorded into narrative. Other than that, documentary must be engaging with character, issues, narrative tension and human condition to show up something from director perspective as the evidence from the storyline. Rabiger (2004) claimed that "documentary lives in the real word" in other word documentary can be record from surrounding and acts on audience.

According to Armstrong (2004) realism is about present the reality, in other words if people see the subject is ugly means it is exactly ugly and will explain more about that in my methodology (Armstrong, 2004, p.3). Realism presenting the reality, actuality, naturalism and factuality, which is exploring actual people and actual situations. As mentioned by Rabiger (2004), most of the people assumed actuality is something that they can see and measure and argue.

Sabah not only famous with their beautiful places, flora and fauna, as study by Halina and Saidatul (n.d) it also knows as one of the rich ethnic diversity. Sabah has more than 40 groups ethnic and each ethnic representative their identity by using language or dialect, economic activities and location.

Bajau also known as "Sama". As stated in Kazufumi (2003) study, in this era some of them still live in a boat and known as "*sea nomads*" or "*sea gypsies*". Though Halina and Saidatul (n.d) states that Bajau is the second largest ethnic in Sabah after Kadazandusun and place the focus on ethnicity was at the Kota Belud, Semporna and Lahad Datu.

1.1 Problem statement

Thesis Problem statement:

The main problem of this research is how far realism can show the reality to the audience in documentary. As mention by Ubaidullah (2008) in *Prinsip Filem Dokumentari: Penilaian penceritaan & Kritikan* book that cinematography aspect can make the audience believe what their see on television and as mentioned in literature review Ubaidullah said documentary not show the reality but the reality combined with the fantasy aspect as shown on *Nanook Of the North*. The other problem is how far the observational mode can relate to realism in delivering messages to the audience.

Project problem statement:

The main problem this research is about Bajau nationality status. As mentioned in introduction part from Halina and Saidatul study they mentioned that this ethnic is the second largest ethnic in Sabah. The issue is what their status actually even though they are immigrant from Philippines before independent especially for "*Sea Gypsies*" that living on a boat.

Other than that, this research concern about the "*discrimination*" side of this ethnic. Moreover, the problem is how this documentary can make them realize about the transformation of the modernization. Moreover, the issue this studies to identify is the different between Bajau and Suluk.

1.2 Research Question

Project Problem statement:

According to problem statement, the main question for my research "*who is Bajau community exactly*". In other words, this studies need to identify their background including where their come from and the history background. Based on my research problem, this research also wants to know their nationality status. In consequence, researcher wants to know about "*What*" government concern with this issue. Other than that, whether the problem leads to discrimination to them or no effect. Other than that these researches desire to know "*what*" their other uniqueness than living in a boat.

1.3 Research Objectives

General objectives for this research are *to explore* realism element in documentary. Other than researcher want to *explore* more further what is realism and how researchers can use this element in my documentary and whether this element is suitable for my subject mater or not

The specific objective for this research is to *determine* suitable mode for realism documentary. Researcher can evaluate how far realism element effective to my documentary in delivering the messages about Bajau to the audience. Other than that, researcher want to *analyze* either the mode that have choose is good enough to the subject mater especially in delivering the massages about their nationality status and discrimination, and who are their actually. The other purpose of this research is to ascertain whether there exists an audience receptive to realism in documentary. Implications documentary to fulfil expectations of such an audience will also be investigated.

1.4 Hypothesis

The *early hypothesis* for this research, researcher can identify about the realism, however it is still on limited because researcher will explain more in literature review. In chapter one also researcher can identify mode that researcher want to use in my documentary

However, there is newest hypothesis after the project. Researcher believes that the worse things need to be explore and understanding but not be judge. This documentary show by exploring the circumstances leading up to Bajau Pala'u unique lifestyle as a nomad community undergoing their daily activities and bring the questions about the nationality for the nomadic community in Malaysia.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This documentary tells about realism which is look closely into human being life. Since this documentary telling about the truth reality and actuality it was very close with observational mode. However not most of the footage record on observational mode because expository mode applied which is including interviewee and interviewer. Observational documentary correlated with direct cinema, which is director stalks the human using handheld camera and both of this approach give spontaneous action.

2.0 Definition of Documentary

Rabiger (2004, p.3) expresses the view that *"documentary as the rare medium in which the common person takes on large, important issue and shakes up society"*. In Other words, documentary is unfrequented medium to convey the facts and give awareness to the society. Other than that Rabiger (2004, p. 5) pointed out from Amend Zola's statement that documentary research the issue based on human behaviour or attitude. John Grierson stated that documentary as the creative treatment of actuality. In other words, the idea of the documentary is come from the sensibility of sense, awareness and concern.

Godmilow (1997) found that in the words of Bill Nichols documentary is

“discourses of sobriety” and discourses stand for reality to tell the truth. Godmilow (1997) claims that, to make a non-fiction and show the actuality researcher need spent a lot of time to visualize it and everything involved is not present the professional actor but the social actor. To be a good or successful documentary the documentaries must have engaging characters, narrative tension, and something about human condition. In other words documentary work is to purposefully act on audience and they think or analyse into cause and effects to help us perceive what underlines human organizations and agendas.

2.1 Documentary Intentions

Generally, documentary is all about the fact and evidence. Therefore documentary needs investigation, analyse, explore, observe, experiment and report it is because documentary lives in the real world, does active work and means to act on its audience.

Documentary intention including:

I: Actuality – Central to documentary's spirit is exploring actual people and authentic situations.

II: Surrounding Evidence - Technologies nowadays allows us to easily record events spontaneously.

III: Taking many forms – Which is similar to mode of documentary. (e.g. : Observational, expository, re- enactment and etc)

IV: Hope – All successful stories on some aspect of human development, no matter how minimal and symbolic this happens to be.

2.2 Realism and Actuality

Armstrong (2005) categorizes realism into two sides. First, the researchers said we can see the realism in "*its everyday sense*" and in "*its aesthetic sense*". In another hand, everyday sense is about the naturalism dealing with us as we are. In aesthetic sense, is about showing about life or something in fact. Armstrong (2005) maintained that our life is full of experience and we are not plan what will happen to us from day to day (Armstrong, 2005, P.1). So, it will be happen with the natural situation and because of naturalism are facts of life. However, it is not about assumes something from the looks but also from the observation to get the evidence.

Barnouw (1993) maintained that "*Documentaries around the world continued to shun the big studio for the small unit and the world outside the Studio*" means they alert with who are involves in industries and hear what they want actually. The industry also leads by the social recycle. In other words it is research about something beyond or unimagined. Because of that researcher want to show something that make audience feel "*is it happened*" or "*is it true*".

As mentioned in introduction documentary is about something that we research to find out the fact that prove something and we documentation the fact and come out with the visual. In other words is all about the creative treatment of the actuality and this is known as factual videos by the observational (*Documentary Guideline, 2004*). Therefore, this documentary wants to identify about the Bajau ethnic to highlight their Nationality status, fates and uniqueness. Based on location scouting that showing on tailer and behind the scene picture,

reality of the Bajau lives is not same goes like we can see in the television.

Actuality in documentary means exploring actual people and actual situation which is central to documentary's spirit is exploring actual people and authentic situations Rabiger (2004). As mentioned in introduction Kazumi (2003) claimed that Bajau also known as sea gypsies. Waddington (2003) maintained that Bajau live as nomadic people, they also practice living by sailing from one place to another place and thus making the boat as a living, which is explain why they are still commonly known as sea gypsies. They are also known as "Sulu" or "Suluk", because of they often come from "Sulu Islands" off the South western coast of the Philippines. Haddington (2003) maintained that Sulu island is the most dangerous Island and because of that they are also related to the invasions of Sultan sulu.

Ubaidullah (2008, p. 4) claims documentary film as a display of real life is not true and this is evidenced by the first documentary making Robert Flaherty (Nanook of the North) in 1922. This documentary about life of Nanook an Eskimo at Hudson Bay in canada. Ubaidullah (2008) expresses the views that Nanook character name is fake but it is not strong statement because of the director was in the exact location and see the real Eskimos. Other than that, plot structure in this documentary was designed by the director and to turn on real life themes and perseverance Eskimos Nanook and family at the audience appeal. Robert Flaherty also built their personal igloos without roofing to make it easier get the source of light. Furthermore, the igloos also don have their background wall to easier camera movement. In conclusion, this research will investigate and

compare how

The conclusion from Ubaidullah statement, Nanook of the North creative work of arts that fictional that combined with the reality of life. Other than that, on his studies also claims the cinematography aspect also is the important thing to attract the audience attention.

2.3 Ways to prove the reality in this research

Researcher applied four tendencies by Michael Renov to prove the reality in this research and documentary. These tendencies within theories of poetic in order to show are products of historical and cultural. As result, these tendencies serve as a way to see how to widen the gap between the image and it is representation. One of the tendencies is Record, reveal or preserve which is the main function is to be a strong desire to fix a moment and hang onto posterity. This tendency to prevent moments from being lost and in effect it recreates history, reality within a medium outside that reality. Representing reality in an images, the gap between image and reality it represents seems almost to collapse, when instead it should widen.

Secondly, Persuade or promote which is can appeal to us in a variety of ways, including interviews, evocative images, and statistical information. As an example based on this research, researcher used quantitative and qualitative as a method to convince the data collection. This types of data collection is to persuade people to believe that realism or reality can presents the fact in documentary. Researcher also convince the audience by the recording images, show "Baja'u Pala'u" daily lifestyle naturally on observational mode.

Other than those analyse or interrogate is one of the Michael Renov tendencies in documentary. This tendencies calls attention to the seemingly direct link between image and reality. Within the gap the audience finds a place to analyse and even act what it sees. This tendencies connecting between images and images, typically comment or explanation from people who involve on the video.

Lastly, is to express which is space for exposing the gap and typical representation of reality, and typical representations of reality, more functional than artistic because appear more objectives. In other words this tendencies is to express director point of view of the subject and be apart of the subject to reveal the real situation to show the reality.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research methodology used is described, which is instrument and method used will explain further. In other word, the instrument used to collect the data, including methods implemented to maintain validity and reliability of the instrument are described. This research also will applied survey, experiment and film analysis as the methodology.

3.2 Research Approach and Design

Method/ Tools

Quantitative approach a used in this research. Quantitative research is to understand and investigate human behaviour this type of research also aims at discovering the underlying motives and desire. This type of research also gives chance to the researcher's participant with the interviewee and the researcher can collect the data directly.

According to Bell and Bryman (2003) this type of approach is appropriate because researcher would like to know about causes and consequences. Other than that, McQueen and Knussen (2002) researcher able to measure the information through number system. As mentioned by Rabiger (2004) it will know the information or factual by numerical framework, in other words this quantitative research the information can be measure. This approach also intended to get the average, variation, differences and relationship between one thing to another. Other than that, observation by using questionnaire is used on this research which is intended to make data collection and variable and measure it. McQueen and Knussen (2002) claimed that observational mode will be done in formally and researcher need to focus about the research instrument to respondent.

3.3. Population and sample

Population on this research is not on big areas, because researcher focused on cinematography student from year one until masters student.

3.4. Research instrument

Instrument on this research is questionnaire consists of the questions that have been designed by researchers and it will be as mediation between researcher and respondent. According to Sapsford and Jupp (2008) have two types of question can be use in our questionnaire which is including close ended and open ended question. Close ended question required respondent to answer the question based on the choices and open ended require respondent to give their opinion.

Other than that close ended question will be key in and analyse in *Statistical package for the Social Science (SPSS)*.

This is sample of close ended answer:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5

Table : Likert scale