

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON TERRORISM-RELATED ARTICLES IN INDONESIAN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the discursive construction of terrorism-related information conveyed on the Indonesian newspapers. The Jakarta Post, one of the most notable Indonesian English-language newspapers, have been covering terrorism related encounters in its editorial especially after the 2002 Bali bombing. This paper finds out the use of common definitions and terms as well as the discrepancies in the produced expression related to terrorism and extremism in the editorials the newspaper has published since 2014. It is found that the newspaper has sympathetically portrayed and supported the victims while it represented the perpetrators from their ideological perspectives and separating their ideologies from religious teaching practices in the country. Additionally, the newspaper identifies terrorism as threat to Indonesian democratic values and classifies terrorism as a serious issue endangering the country's security and social stability. To the latter end, the newspaper suggested policy recommendation while at the same time criticizing the law enforcement for failures and in the end promoting secular values for the country in order to eradicate terrorism.

Keywords: Terrorism, Newspaper Editorials, Social Reality, The Jakarta Post

A. INTRODUCTION

The 2002 Bali bombing has been seen as a wake-up call by Indonesian government, as well as the people, that the very extremists are exist in the country. The groups were not operating alone, yet they have been motivated and controlled by transnational groups such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS claiming many attacks mostly for the sake of religion (Country Report on Terrorism, 2015). The events and the trend as a whole have been heavily politicized by different social, political and actors which lead to society's different perceptions on how terrorism has been depicted by the media. Does it solely be motivated by the religion? Will it change our social

construction in the future? Such questions, and many more, appear as part of different ways of the media portraying terrorism-related actions.

The words “military, extremism, radicalism”, according to Abuza (2003), are often interchangeably used with “terrorism”. Hence, people possess an ambiguous image of what is actually constructing terrorism which then partly results in the pejoration of other encounters such as shocking acts of violence, political dissidents against government, and riots labelled as “terrorism” too (Hoffman, 1988). Therefore, this paper aims to examine how terrorism is represented through the newspaper. It also aims to identify dominant discourses representing the newspaper’s editorials. Several research questions of this paper are:

1. Does the newspaper convey common elements of the actual terrorism definition?
2. How are both the perpetrators and the victims constructed by the editorials?
3. How do the editorials provide solutions to the problem?

This paper conducts Critical Discourse Analysis, henceforth CDA, as a methodological paradigm to figure out the ways by which the most prominent Indonesian English-language newspaper, specifically the Jakarta Post, constructs ‘terrorism’ since 2014, aiming to have a closer look through the lens of editorials and opinions regarding terrorism and violent extremism. Primary analysis of this paper focuses on how the terrorism events and transnational groups, as the culprits of the terrors, are depicted in the Jakarta Post. This is because the newspaper has largely been keeping the broadsheet-like characters in their news coverage as well as maintaining a vivid online presence. In fact, terrorism in its transnational forms are factored in as a serious matter in terms of multi-dimensional diplomatic affairs. The newspaper has also been organising archives for the selected research online. Building on its strong presence, both online and offline, not only does the newspaper reach local readers but also international audiences.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Terrorism

A multidimensional phenomenon, terrorism also carries political, social, religious, economic, military and psychological implications. The term “terrorism” was first coined during the French Revolution (Matusitz, 2013). The word “terror”, etymologically, derived from Latin’s “terrere” which means “frighten” or “tremble”. Meanwhile, the prefix ‘ism” is originated from French “isme” relating to “practice” (Matusitz, 2013). On the pretext of French revolution, Maximilien Robespierre, as one of the frontrunners, said that “terror” is nothing but “justice, severe, inflexible” (Matusitz, 2013, p. 2). Nevertheless, the word has been a pejorative term in nowadays contemporary definition.

While the concrete consensus on social science definition of the word “terrorism” as tactic and doctrine is largely unclear (Schmid & Jongman, 2015). Bypassing the question of its definition means that terrorism is derived by “violence of which people do not approve” – an implicit definition. This is an “operationally valid claim, as far as Vought and Frasser (1986) explain. On the contrary, Schmid and Jongman (2015) argue that solely using one element of the definition is non-scientific approach leading to massive misinformation whereas the use of more elements in defining terrorism helps decrease ambiguity. Indeed, taking into account the political and media climate in Indonesia, this is the starting point on which confusion rises on the definitions of terrorism – the definiendum.

This is so problematic that, apart from academic nature of “terrorism” definition, some definitions also emerge such as those political and institutional. For example, the U.S Department of State and United Nations issued an in-depth work that analysed the concept through a meta-level (Godin, 2006). In this paper, the author takes a stand of identifying terror/fear as a key element, in the light of Schmid and Jongman’s (2005) study as it could help contextualise the research topic to a wider context combined with several definitions – violence/force, political and threat, and thus help the researcher to generate a definition which is not too broad and cover the

significant aspects of terrorism in any given context – for the case of Indonesian terrorism.

2.2 Terrorism as tactics of communicating

To be able to understand the nature of terrorism from a communication perspective, Harold Laswell (1948 as cited in Matusitz, 2013) gives an explanation that “communication is intended to have an impact on audience”. To this end, the aim of terrorism is not the violent itself, rather, it is the message and response to those who contradict their values or purposes. Such a description is called “Collective Communication Model of Terrorism (CCMT) by authors such as Fishcher and colleagues (2010). It proposes that behavioural and psychological impact produced by terrorist threats is mainly a collective means of communication taking place between the terrorists and their targets. Terrorists are the senders of the messages and the targets are collective receivers such as people in certain races, social identities and religions, according to the CCMT. Contrary to the definition, however, Crelinsten in Schmid and Jongman (2005) argues that terrorism does use “dual method of victimisation”. Understanding terrorism through a communicative perspective, it is essential that we take conduit metaphor into account. According to the metaphor, to encode purpose humans are using media in which ideas are put into words, symbols and signs by moving them through a channel and racing the receivers (Reddy, 1979).

2.3 Terrorism as a social construction of reality

The term, social construction of reality, was first introduced by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1966) referring to the generation of concepts of the world around, who interact with it and play reciprocally. One of the basic of social construction of reality is a language. News reports, through the use of a certain language, links up words with certain issues or problems thus will create social reality. Frequent repetition of the process constructs public discourse (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Fowler, 1991). By providing logic and consistency to audience, ideas and situation for guiding moral conduct of societies, discourse then becomes a

narrative (Matusitz, 2013). Through deploying narrative fidelity, a certain style of storytelling suitable for audience, it allows sender and/or receiver of a message to add meaning on current events. Matusitz also opines that, in the context of the U.S, the narrative of Global War on Terror (GWOT) was strongly adopted to the local context upon 9/11 period as a product of symbolic interactionism.

Symbolic Interactionism theory suggests that people commonly communicate through symbols of shared nature such as words, definition and roles (Matusitz, 2013). In a specific society where the interaction appears, meaning are received in accordance with society's values and then become symbolic which is associated with behavioural interpretation.

2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis

The model of discourse analysis are divided into two parts, critical and non-critical (Fairclough, 1992). As cited in Blommaert (2002), critical analysis is mainly the analysis of "power effect". Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on relational properties of power and language. Different scholars observe critical discourse differently. Fairclough (2001), for instance, focuses on how discourse is shaped by ideology and power as well as how it affecting social structure and belief systems in return. Wodak (1995), on the contrary, defines the analysis as transparent structural relationships of discrimination, dominance, control and power which manifested in a language. Fairclough (1992) strongly describes discourse in journalism as a field shaped by power and ideology affecting social life and people's cognition. Media texts are inevitably influenced by ideologies and stances of their authors, reviews, owners and stakeholders of the media organisation. By disseminating information, media often takes part in influencing the social reality. This is another aspect of this paper's consideration on utilising Fairclough's model as it is more appropriate for the analysis of the research questions.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 The Dialectical-Relational Approach (DRA) and its key concepts

According to Fairclough (2001), social life is interconnected social practices and the practices are made of several elements such as subjects and their social relation, activities as well as discourse (Fairclough, 2001). Those elements are correlated, dialectically, and thus should not be separated. Fairclough also describes that such a dialectical relationship between elements of discourse and social practices are contral to dialectical-relational (Fairclough, 2001; 2003; 2009). Fairclough also views that social processes as the interplay of three social levels – social structure, social practice and social events, where social practice arbitrates between structure and particular or concrete events. In this case, (written) languages and semiosis become elements of all the tree levels (Fairclough, 2003).

DRA focuses on the dialectical relation between event and structure, as well as between semiotic and other elements. Here, the linguistic elements of networks of social practice need to be taken into consideration. Discourse is also the way by which something is represented, while “gendres” are “ways of acting” and “styles” are “ways of being” (Fairclough, 2003). Text as “mutli-functional” is further described with a distinction between genres, discourse and style and idea development. He further describes those as three functions “Action, Representation and Identification which indicates resemblance between action and genres, representation and discourse and Identification and styles.

3.2 Analytical Framework

In an in-depth analysis, this research uses the themes as discourses ans sought the “interdiscursive” relation on the element of “order of discourse” in the text analysis. Additionally, the paper has partially used Fairclough’s CDA model in analysing expression and ideology loaded words within the body of the text, as well as the headlines. The research also looks into the use of vocabularies. These specific tools of textual analysis provide valuable insight into the ways texts construct particular versions of reality (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002).

3.3 Data Collection

There is no CDA way of collecting data (Meyar, 2003). To reduce errors and increase reliability, at first, this research compiles a detailed list of terror-related events through the Global Terrorism database (GTD). It is mentioned in the GTD that, in 2017, the numbers of events were 459. Initially, upon compiling the lists of terrorism incidences in the GTD database, the author then selected particular incidences of regionally and locally known terrorist groups and entities which narrowing the list into 26 incidences since 2014. Starting from here, the next phase is collecting the data to be used for the analysis of this study.

The Jakarta Post has a very user-friendly present both in its online and offline presence. In the newspaper, it could easily be found that by using an exact date as the hint of searching, contents can be found through category.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Thematic Analysis

Through this thematic analysis, this research intends to find out whether or not the newspaper used definitions to discuss, construct and represent terrorism. By four dominant recurring discourses, terrorism-related events were defined in the newspaper: the identification of action, the expression of emotion, deployment of collective identity and symbols, and exposure and identification of motif. Additionally, two additional themes – consequences & response and remedies were identified during the analysis, enabling this research to determine the nature of responses towards terrorism as well as finding a common solution. It turns out that the Jakarta Post produces robust emotion, dominantly condemnation and fear, as well as gives critiques to several of Indonesian law enforcement group.

Table 4.1. Recurring themes of the Jakarta Post editorials on terrorism

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Sub-theme</i>	<i>Frequency of being mentioned</i>
1. <i>The expression of Emotion</i>	Expressing anger	3
	Expressing fear and panic	1
	Expressing satisfaction	1
	Condemnation	5
	Disappointment	3
2. <i>The identification of action</i>	Attack of freedom of speech and expression	4
	Violent action	11
	Distorting religious values	7
	Attack on democracy	2
	Threat	8
3. <i>Identification of structure and motif</i>	Religious motif	6
	Political and motivational motifs	3
	Identification of organisational structure	2
	Religious identification of the perpetrators	7
4. <i>Deployment of identity and symbolism</i>	Religious identification of the victims	2
	National identification	1
	Political identification of the victims symbolic interaction	-
	Policy recommendation	14
	Endorsement of Law enforcement	4
5. <i>Responses & remedies</i>	Criticism towards religious perspectives	3
	Criticism of law enforcement	4
	Ensuring justice and investigation	7
	Endorsement and criticism of the government	1
	Rising intolerance and hate speech	1
	Unrelated crimes	-
	Impunity	2
6. <i>Consequences</i>	Insecurity	-
	Creating problems with foreign relationship	-
	economic problems	-

The thematic analysis of the Jakarta Post's 26 editorials indicates that the media mainly responded with suggesting policy while at the same time emphasising that proper investigation and justice are in place. Among the definitional elements of terrorism, religious and violent actions were explicitly identified in the editorials. The newspaper also strongly emphasises the actions as the violation of freedom of speech and expression which could be implied that it parallels with the personal point of view of the editor. The newspaper shows an effort to identify both the victims and the perpetrators in rather equal manner.

4.2 In-depth Analysis

4.2.1 Discourse 1: The expression of emotions

Terrorism generates several types of psychological effects, one of which is fear as its key element (Schmid & Jongman, 2005).

The survey, which was conducted in 26 countries in 2018, showed that 81 percent of the respondents in Indonesia considered IS to be the biggest concern in recent years, while others – 60 percent of the respondents – regarded the outlook for the global economy as most disconcerting (<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/02/06/81-percent-of-indonesians-consider-is-greater-threat-than-climate-change-pew-survey.html>)

The editorials of the newspaper pointed out terrorism-related events are always condemnable. The particular discourse has emerged as a result of terror-related events. Particularly, the Jakarta Post editorials demonstrated a strong sense of “fear and panic”.

4.2.2 Discourse 2: The identification of action

The newspaper, in our study, does not have a single instance of disagreement over violent nature of terrorism, identifying, clearly, the terrorist actions by factually interpreting and describing the events. It also argued that the reduced activity might be caused by IS sympathizers reacting to the COVID-19 outbreak by staying at home to wait for the end of the world as foretold in Islamic prophecies, rather than carrying

out jihad operations (<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/04/09/covid-19-may-reduce-pro-is-activity-but-attacks-still-possible-ipac.html>).

The tendency of a continuum state of terrors, as far as the editorials concern, interpreting attack on freedom of speech and expression as well as attack on democracy, hence a partial attack on the freedom of the country. The newspaper reveals that “threat” is a produced consequence of violence.

4.2.3 Discourse 3: Identification of motif and organisational structure

Essential characteristics encompassing terrorism act are attempt and/or intention to achieve religious or political motifs as well as a clear organisational structure. In such a discourse, there have been distant mention of social and political doers.

Didit, a community unit head in Beru village where Subagio lived, said Subagio was once arrested by the antiterrorist squad along with dozens of other suspected terrorists in a number of locations in Blitar in June last year (<https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/08/28/three-suspected-terrorists-held-in-connection-with-surabaya-attack.html>).

The newspaper frequently mentioned organisational structure and international link of terrorist groups. Apart from invoking religious motivation as a motif, the newspaper, most of the time, failed to identify and vaguely depicts political stance of terrorism groups. The newspaper, however, has successfully identified organisational patterns of terrorist groups and religious motifs.

4.2.4 Discourse 4: Deployment of Collective symbolism and identity

Religious and political-related motivated violence aims to achieve the goals of sending messages to a certain, or certain, authorities. Hence, to fulfil the communication purpose of the terrorist act. In saying so, the direct victims have been put as a conduit metaphor which means that the main target of the action is always be the secondary target, namely the authority or those opposing the perpetrators' values. Such a discourse is built on the aim to spread symbolic communication with the rhetoric of terrorism. Further, women wearing niqab and men with beards, turbans,

and above ankle-length trousers raise concerns whether they have been radicalized. There is indeed a presumption that those who follow the hijrah (repentance) movement, which usually starts with changing the way the followers dress into more “Islamic” way, have a bigger chance to be infiltrated by radical ideologies. There might be a few cases, but there are no grounds for generalization (<https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2019/10/15/muslim-attire-is-not-terrorist-uniform.html>).

These characters are constructed on the grounding point of deployment and frequent use of collective identities of both the perpetrators and the victims themselves linking with the terrorist rhetoric symbols. The Jakarta Post, in this case, tried to build an image through the basic of religious and political identities through the lens of both parties such as perspective of ideologies, outfit and so on.

4.2.5 Discourse 5: Responses

This so-called responses discourse exemplifies the common nature of responses shown by the editorials, specifically on the law and government enforcement authorities. One of the pretexts of the revision of the old Terrorism Law was the government’s difficulty in dealing with returning FTFs. Now that the new Terrorism Law will answer the government’s concern, it has no reason not to use the 2018 Terrorism Law, especially Article 12 (<https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2020/02/24/wrong-to-make-indonesian-islamic-state-fighters-stateless.html>).

By giving policy recommendation, apart from criticizing actions undertaken by the government, most of the remedies were produced. However, it is evident that frequent, yet repeated, calls ensuring proper investigation and further action already committed was strongly noticeable. Yet, there are some points where both law enforcement government agencies are praised.

4.2.6 Discourse 6: Consequences

The produced responses from the Jakarta Post editorials are often mentioned as terrorism consequences in a discrete nature. Apart from being distantly linked with each topic of the editorial, the consequences were described as an effort to depict issues in its entirety. In March 2018, the Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University (UIN) of Yogyakarta was in the spotlight after the rectorate wanted to hold a coaching program for female students wearing niqab, which was mistakenly understood as a ban on wearing niqab on campus. Yet following public pressure especially from the conservative religious mass organizations, the plan was later halted with the university saying it wanted to protect "conducive academic space." (<https://www.thejakartapost.com/academia/2019/10/15/muslim-attire-is-not-terrorist-uniform.html>).

Such a tendency is explicitly found in the majority of the Jakarta Post editorials in a scattered manner. Several consequences mentioned are to include decreasing religious harmony and diversity as well as rising intolerance, while impunity and prevailing insecurity, as the result of lack of social justice, were rarely mentioned.

E. CONCLUSIONS

This paper aims to examine the discursive construction of terrorism in the Jakarta Post editorials. The three research questions will be derived in detailed on the basis of results found through the analysis process.

5.1 Does the newspaper convey common elements of the actual terrorism definition?

While extracting the thematic analysis of the selected 26 editorials from the Jakarta Post, it is identified that six recurring themes appeared on the topic of terrorism; the expression of emotions, the exposure of motifs, the identification of actions, the deployment of symbolism, responses and remedies as well as consequences. The sub-themes characterising the discourses are very similar to that

of being discussed in the Literature Review chapter. In this study, in which the researcher took a stand of considering “fear” as an element of terror, as parallels with the study by Schmid & Jongman (2005). Throughout the critical discourse analysis, it is found that the Jakarta Post has produced a high amount of expression similar to fear and panic. This result is consistent with Schmid & Jongman’s study. Therefore, it could be concluded that the Jakarta Post uses the definition as a primary element in its construction of terrorism.

5.2 How are both the perpetrators and the victims constructed by the editorials?

The images of both perpetrators and the victims were given through ideological representations and alignment of the editorials with latter’s ideology. The result, however, is irregularly produced on the basis of the victims’ identity. As such, in a particular events of terrors, the victims were represented based on the reasons they promoted and killed for. On the other hand, the perpetrators were interpreted as a serious challenge to Indonesia democratic values.

5.3 How do the editorials provide solutions to the problem?

The Jakarta Post produces multidimensional solutions, both in a specific and broad manners. The most common solution produced is calling for justice, providing policy recommendations, as well as suggesting a more efficient policy and investigation. Suggestions were also made to the religious leaders to fight against teaching distortion of religious nature of terrorist groups while promoting non-violent approach of religious practices.

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