

Notifications of Covid-19 and Its Potential Impacts for Readers: A Study of Critical Discussion Case Study of the Antara and Republika Media

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Abstract

The media's point of view on an issue has a considerable impact on reader acceptance and understanding. This is the background for researchers to study further about the media's point of view. This study aims to identify the media's point of view between Antara and Republika in reporting on COVID-19. The researcher chose the Covid-19 news as the object of study because currently the issue is a global issue and of course has a high level of urgency to be studied further. There are six discourses that become sources of data analysis. This study uses a qualitative method with a critical discourse study approach of Teun A. van Dijk. The researcher uses three elements of van Dijk's textual analysis, namely thematic elements, intent, and quotations. The results of the textual analysis are combined with an analysis of the social and cultural background of the media. An analysis of the social and cultural setting of the media was carried out to identify the potential influence of this setting on the news production process. The results of the analysis show that the news on Covid-19 in the Antara media tends to bring the state (government) point of view, while Republika is more from a general point of view.

Keywords

media; critical discourse analysis; covid-19



I. Introduction

The famous Greek philosopher, Aristotle stated that man is a zoon politicon. Zoo politicon is defined as a creature who "politics". Politics in this context refers to the basic nature of humans who need each other socially so that they are better known as social beings. As social beings, interaction in human life becomes a necessity. Language acts as a medium to fulfill the need for this interaction. Language is a sound symbol system used by members of a society to work together, interact, and identify themselves (Kridalaksana, 2009: 24). Santoso (2015: 227) states that the role of language in social life in the "late modern" era or post-structuralism era is marked by a number of changes and developments,

As a means of communication, language is something systemic. What is meant by systemic is that language is not a single system, but consists of several subsystems, namely phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, lexicology, to multidisciplinary dimensions, such as critical discourse analysis. Chouliarki and Fairclough (in Blommaert, 2005: 6) state that critical discourse analysis is a breakthrough in establishing the legitimacy of a strong and fundamentally oriented language discourse analysis in the form of social reality with deep attention to actuality and forms of social inequality. According to Fairclough and Wodak (in Eriyanto, 2006: 7) in the perspective of critical discourse analysts, language, in this case discourse, is described as a social practice. The description of language as a social practice gives rise to a dialectical relationship between certain discursive events and the situations,

institutions, and social structures that shape them. Furthermore, it will show the function of language that the researcher described earlier, namely as a tool to influence and be influenced. Data that is often studied using critical discourse analysis is data in the form of discourse in the mass media. In order to gain public trust, the mass media often promote neutrality and objectivity in their slogans. However, in essence, the media and their reporting cannot be separated from interests and various other subjective tendencies. That is the basis why an incident can have a different point of view, depending on what media it is published in, or furthermore who are the people involved in the production of the news. This is what makes the mass media in a critical point of view seen as agents of social construction. As an agent of social construction, critical discourse analysis of the discourses in the mass media needs to be carried out in order to detect the reality construction carried out by the mass media and its relationship with the social construction that occurs. Rengganis (2019) states that the mass media can use language as a tool to build perceptions on other parties. This has also been proven by Kusno (2019). The research that Kusno (2019) carried out represented the Al-Islam media which succeeded in building negative stereotypes for the government in order to create a positive representation for HTI.

Inequality in reporting to the dominant representation of one party becomes an indicator of an interesting discourse to be analyzed critically. Critical discourse analysis can also be an appropriate "knife" in comparative studies of several media with different ideologies. As did Hakim et al., (2019) who compared the news on the DKI Jakarta Pilkada on tirto.id and republica.co.id. The results of the analysis show different representations (of the characters involved), according to the interests of the media. This seems to indicate that critical discourse analysis focuses on problems or conflicts of interest. This is in line with the opinion of Ramanathan (2015) which states, "Critical discourse analysis is problem oriented". Ramanathan (2015) states that the core of critical discourse analysis is the "problem". Therefore, a "critical" paradigm is needed to analyze the problem. Language as a media "weapon" is the most effective tool for building social construction and even social cognition in general. Departing from these indicators, researchers are interested in analyzing discourse about COVID-19. News related to COVID-19 is interesting to study because it relates to many aspects and interests. Researchers are also interested in studying how the media represents COVID-19 as a pandemic. This will affect the reader's acceptance and the after effects. Moreover, in this era of information disruption, it is important to examine all forms of information circulating. Sihombing (2020) state that Covid-19 pandemic caused everyone to behave beyond normal limits as usual. The outbreak of this virus has an impact especially on the economy of a nation and Globally (Ningrum, 2020). The problems posed by the Covid-19 pandemic which have become a global problem have the potential to trigger a new social order or reconstruction (Bara, 2021).

II. Research Methods

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a critical discourse study approach of Teun A. Van Dijk. The data analyzed is in the form of news discourse related to covid-19 published in Antara and Republika. The analysis activity is carried out by considering the general pattern in the form and behavior of the existing data, which is influenced, and which is present together with the surrounding contexts. The analytical technique used is the equivalent analysis technique. The data collected, analyzed, then matched with the theories and approaches that the researchers used. The following is a flow chart of the research carried out.

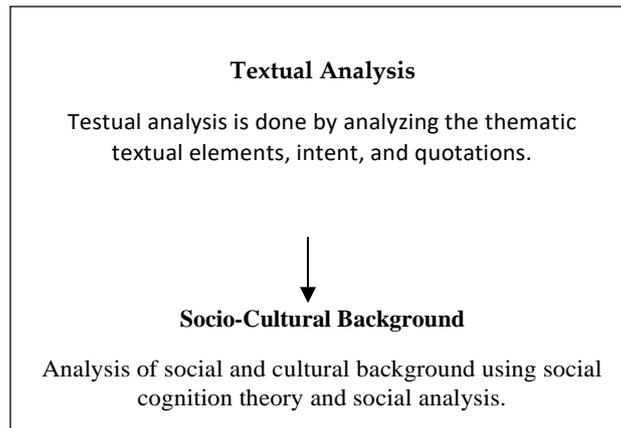


Figure 1. Plot Study

A total of six discourses were analyzed. The following is the title of the article that became the source of research data.

Table 1. Data Source

No.	Title	Media and Release Time
1	Palace: It is not true that President Jokowi Implements Partial Quarantine (hereinafter referred to as discourse 1)	Between, March 16, 2020
2	IDI Asks Government to Immediate Lockdown (hereinafter referred to as discourse 2)	Republika 22 March 2020
3	Minister: 180 Million People Need COVID-19 Vaccine for Population Immunity (hereinafter referred to as discourse 3)	Between, October 20, 2020
4	IDI's message to be careful with the Covid-19 vaccine (hereinafter referred to as discourse 4)	Republika, October 22, 2020
5	President: RI is Lucky, Since the Beginning Has Moved to Get Vaccines (hereinafter referred to as discourse 5)	Between, February 23, 2021
6	Slow Vaccination Rate, This is the Task Force's explanation (hereinafter referred to as discourse 6)	Republika, 23 February 2021

The six discourses were chosen by considering the similarity of the issues discussed and the time of publication which tends to be one time. The discourse is analyzed using van Dijk's theory of critical discourse analysis. Teun A. In his theory, van Dijk divides analysis into three levels of structural analysis, namely macro structure, super structure, and micro structure. The macro structure is related to the theme or topic of discourse as a whole, the super structure is related to the discourse scheme, and the micro structure is related to the textual level of the discourse. To analyze the microstructure, van Dijk uses various textual elements such as thematic, graphics, details, presuppositions, lexicon, etc. In addition to these three structures, van Dijk also identified that cognition also influences the discourse produced.

According to van Dijk (in Eriyanto, 2006: 221) the study of discourse is not only based on an analysis of the text alone because the text is only the result of a production practice that needs to be observed as well. Discourse by van Dijk is described as having three dimensions or levels, namely text, social cognition, and social context (analysis). The essence of van Dijk's analysis is to combine the three dimensions of discourse into one unified analysis.

III. Results and Discussion

In the analysis process, the researcher uses three textual elements, namely thematic elements, intent, and quotations. These three elements are the most appropriate tools to identify the media's point of view. Researchers also identify the social and cultural backgrounds of Antara and Republika by conducting a social cognition analysis that focuses on the institutional cognition of the two media.

3.1 Thematic

Thematic analysis is carried out by identifying the themes used in each news produced. The following are the details of the themes in the six discourses analyzed.

Table 2. Theme Identification

No.	Title	Theme
1	Palace: It's Not True that President Jokowi Implements Partial Quarantine	Partial quarantine refusal
2	IDI Asks Government to Immediate Lockdown	Urge to apply lockdown
3	Minister: 180 Million People Need COVID-19 Vaccine for Population Immunity	The high level of urgency of the vaccine
4	IDI's message to be careful with the Covid-19 vaccine	Vaccine effectiveness and safety
5	President: RI is Lucky, Since the Beginning Has Moved to Get Vaccines	Anticipate the availability of vaccines
6	Vaccination Rate is Slow, This is the Task Force's Explanation	Vaccination rate that has not reached the target

Referring to table 2, the researcher's analysis was carried out by comparing the themes raised by each media, then concluding the effect of the theme based on the issue. There are three issues raised in the six discourses analyzed, namely issues (1) quarantine; (2) the urgency of the vaccine; (3) implementation of vaccines.

Between choose the theme of denial of partial quarantine to accommodate the first issue. The theme was chosen as a form of denial of growing information, which said that the government would carry out a partial quarantine or also known as a lockdown. Meanwhile, in the discourse produced by Republika, the theme was chosen regarding the urge to implement a lockdown. For the second issue, Antara chose the theme of the high level of vaccine urgency, while Republika focused more on the effectiveness and safety of vaccines that need to be considered in responding to the high level of vaccine urgency for the community. For the third issue, Antara chose the theme of rapid anticipation, which was carried out by the state to obtain a vaccine.

3.2 Meaning

In the context of news production, the element of intent or intention analysis is used to identify the desired form of information delivery. According to van Dijk, the use of intentions implicitly or explicitly affects the representation of the parties involved in the information produced.

a. Media Analysis Between

- 1) The Presidential Palace confirms that President Joko Widodo never ordered the implementation of a partial quarantine... (discourse 1)

Data 1 shows the intention shown explicitly. In data 1 Antara shows clearly and clearly that Jokowi has never ordered a partial quarantine. This news was produced when the issue of the implementation of a lockdown in several regions emerged to the public. With an explicit explanation of intentions, Jokowi's representation in the news tends to be positive because it indirectly answers the negative issues that were emerging at that time.

- 2) Palace confirms that the president has said that the regional quarantine policy (lockdown) both at the national and regional levels is the policy of the central government, which is still unthinkable. (discourse 1)

Data 2 shows the intention shown explicitly. In data 2 Antara shows an affirmation that the lockdown or regional quarantine policy is the authority of the central government, which until the time the news was published it had not been carried out. From the point of view of the context of the situation, indirectly the news edited by Antara also emphasized that the quarantine issue that had been sticking out in the regions through the policies of their respective regional heads was a policy that could not be used as a reference because it was against the policies of the central government.

- 3) We have already established cooperation, not only with China or with Astra Zanecca but also with Korea as well as with Turkey. (discourse 3)

Data 3 is information that is displayed explicitly. Information about the positive role of the government which has succeeded in establishing cooperation with China, Korea, and Turkey is presented clearly and clearly. This certainly shows a positive representation of the government.

- 4) ... President Jokowi in a virtual international conference that was monitored in Jakarta, Tuesday, (stated that) Indonesia became the first country in Southeast Asia to start vaccinating COVID-19, to be precise in mid-January 2021. (discourse 5)

Data 4 is information that is displayed explicitly. Antara clearly suppressed information regarding the positive role of the government in becoming the first Southeast Asian country to initiate a COVID-19 vaccination. This certainly shows a positive representation of the government.

- 5) Nevertheless The President also reminded that the presence of a vaccine does not mean that the problem will be solved quickly. The world community needs to remain disciplined in implementing the 3M health protocol...(discourse 5)

Data 5 shows the intentions that are implicitly displayed by Antara. In data 5, Antara reduces the president's explanation regarding the application of the 3M health protocol discipline even though vaccines are already present in Indonesia. This implicitly explains that vaccines are not the final solution to the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of implicit strategies makes these facts hidden from the readers and does not create a negative representation for the government.

b. Republika Media Analysis

- 6) The Indonesian Doctors Association (IDI) asked the government to immediately implement a lockdown or self-isolation policy. IDI believes that this method is an effective step to suppress the spread of the COVID-19 virus, aka corona. (discourse 2)

Data 6 shows the intentions that are displayed implicitly by Republika. In data 6, Republika explained that the Indonesian Doctors Association asked the government to immediately implement a lockdown or self-isolation policy. This indirectly raises the government's representation which tends to be negative. In the editorial that was built, it was implied that the government's decision not to implement the lockdown was a wrong decision (referring to the IDI argument).

- 7) The Executive Board (PB) of the Indonesian Doctors Association (IDI) asked for the Covid-19 vaccination program to be carried out only after the results of the phase III clinical trial came out. IDI recommends that new vaccines be given after their effectiveness and safety have been proven. (discourse 4)

Data 7 shows the explicit delivery of information. Republika clearly reduces the things that the government needs to pay attention to before implementing a vaccination program. In general, this editorial is neutral without any tendency for positive/negative representation from certain parties.

- 8) Chairman of the PBIDIDAeng M Faqih, said that there should be good preparation in selecting the type of vaccine to be provided and preparations related to its implementation. This is in accordance with the President's instructions so that the vaccination program should not be carried out and be started in a hurry. (discourse 4)

Data 8 shows the delivery of information explicitly. Republika clearly reduces the preparations that the government needs to make for the successful implementation of vaccination in Indonesia. In general, this editorial is neutral without any tendency for positive/negative representation from certain parties.

- 9) The pace of COVID-19 vaccination is still relatively slow. Until today, the first dose of vaccine injection has only been given to 1.27 million people who are included in the priority targets of health workers. (discourse 6)

Data 9 shows the explicit delivery of information. Republika has clearly mitigated the slow vaccination rate, complete with data on the vaccination rate which has only reached 1.27 million people. This amount is still beyond the government's target. Explicit exposure of the slow rate of vaccination makes the representation of the government as the person in charge of the vaccination program tend to be negative.

- 10) Government Spokesperson for Handling Covid-19, Wiku Adisasmito, explained that not all health workers were vaccinated due to many factors. Among other things, the vaccination mechanism is hampered from registration, implementation, to socialization that needs to be improved. (discourse 6)

Data 10 shows the conveying of intentions explicitly. Republika displays a complete explanation of the government spokesman. This makes readers know that the vaccination program initiated by the government, from the registration process, implementation, to socialization is still not perfect and needs to be continuously improved.

3.3 Quote

Quotes affect the point of view carried by the media. The following is an analysis of the elements of quotations and their effects on the COVID-19 reporting process.

Table 3. Number of Quotes

Discourse	Media	Number of Quotes	Information
Discourse 1	Between	6	one party
Discourse 2	Republika	6	4:2
Discourse 3	Between	4	One Party
Discourse 4	Republika	7	4:3
5 discourse	Between	6	one party
Discourse 6	Republika	3	one party

Table 3 shows the number of citation utilization by *Between* and *Republika* in the six discourses studied. Discourse 1 utilizes 6 quotations which all quote the government, whether represented by the direct president, or represented by another party (the palace spokesman). All quotations in discourse 1 are essentially talking about the government's clarification which denies having imposed a partial quarantine.

Discourse 2 makes use of 6 quotes. In contrast to discourse 1 produced by *Antara*, in discourse 2, *Republika* utilizes quotes from two different parties and tends to be more balanced. Of the 6 quotes used, 4 of them are quotes from the Indonesian Doctors Association, 2 others are quotes from the government represented by the Head of the Covid-19 Handling Task Force. The quote in discourse 2 essentially discusses the level of urgency for the implementation of regional quarantine (lockdown).

Discourse 3 utilizes 4 quotations which all quote the government. In discourse 3, the government is represented by the Minister of Research and Technology, Bambang Permadi S. Brodjonegoro. All quotations in discourse 3 essentially talk about the level of urgency of vaccination, vaccination targets, cooperation with external parties, and efforts to achieve herd immunity.

Discourse 4 makes use of 7 quotes. *Republika* utilizes quotes from two different parties and tends to be more balanced. Of the 7 citations used, 4 of them are quotes from Daeng M Faqih as *IDI*'s top management, 3 others are quotes from the government represented by the Minister of Research and Technology Bambang Permadi S. Brodjonegoro. The quote in discourse 4 essentially discusses the things that need to be considered in the implementation of the vaccination program.

Discourse 5 utilizes 6 quotations which all quote the government. In discourse 5, the government is represented by President Joko Widodo. All of the quotes in discourse 5 essentially talk about the government's achievements which have made anticipatory efforts to handle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discourse 6 utilizes 3 quotes which all quote the government. In discourse 6, the government was represented by the Government Spokesperson for Handling Covid-19, Wiku Adisasmito. All quotations in discourse 6 essentially talk about the causes of the slow vaccination rate and have not yet reached the national target.

Overall, analysis at the textual level shows that *Antara* and *Republika* tend to have different points of view. *Antara* tends to produce news from the government's point of view. This is identified from the selection of themes, delivery of intentions, to the use of quotes. The use of these three textual elements makes the government more dominant in being represented positively. In contrast to *Antara*, *Republika*'s point of view tends to be more general. Based on the results of the textual analysis, the researcher is interested in studying further the historical, social, and cultural background of *Antara* in order to identify the potential influence of that setting on the tendency of the point of view that is brought.

3.4 Social Cognition

The researcher's social cognition analysis was carried out by focusing on the background of the media as an institution and its potential influence on the news produced. The researcher only analyzes social cognition of Antara based on the results of textual analysis which shows that Antara tends to produce news from the government's point of view.

Between was founded by Adam Malik on December 13, 1937. The background of the name Antara itself represented the main function of the media at that time, namely as an "intermediary" of information. Antara was first established not as a media, but as a news agency. As a news agency, Antara provides news sources, both "raw" and in the form of complete news products to be distributed to the media that collaborate with each other. Functionally, Antara distributes news to media in need, then the new media spreads it more widely to readers. Antara was also one of the parties who disseminated information on Indonesia's independence to the national and international public (besides RRI through its radio broadcasts).

After independence, Antara was taken over by President Soekarno. Antara served as a "mouthpiece" of state information at that time. During Suharto's leadership, Antara even collaborated with several foreign news agencies such as Reuters, etc. Post-reform, referring to the 1999 Press Law, every agency related to the reporting process must have a clear legal entity. Until finally in 2007 Antara officially became part of the BUMN and expanded its business into the realm of digital media, which we know today as Antaranews. Referring to the data, the tendency of positive representation towards the government and the policies issued is motivated by Antara's position. From pre-independence to post-independence, Antara was always under the auspices of the state and was the mouthpiece of information from the government at that time. The same is true when it becomes a state-owned enterprise. As a business entity owned by the state, it is natural for Antara to have a nationalist ideological point of view, in this case siding with the state, whoever is in power.

IV. Conclusion

The results showed that the use of textual elements (6 themes, 10 intentions, and 32 quotes) had a significant effect on the representation of the media's point of view. Antara is identified as having a nationalist point of view that tends to represent the government in a positive way. Republika has a more general point of view according to the trend of developing issues/news. The results of the textual analysis are corroborated by the results of social cognition analysis from Antara. Based on the analysis of Antara's historical, social, and cultural background, it is clearly identified that Antara has a nationalist ideology. From pre-independence to post-independence, Antara was always under the auspices of the state and was the mouthpiece of information from the government at that time. The same is true when it becomes a state-owned enterprise.

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