



## **Discourse on Ethnic Discrimination: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Political Statements Presented by The Members of Indonesia House of Representative in Social Media**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the discriminatory discourse contained in the statements of members of the Indonesian Council which is addressed to ethnicity. This study aims to reveal the topics of discourse presented and the discourse strategies used by council members in their tweets and speeches when presenting ethnic minorities negatively. The type of research used in this research is descriptive qualitative research. The results of this study based on Youtube found 28 racist statements. Then, Twitter found 10 tweets. And Instagram found 15 statements. The theoretical framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA) used in this study is based on Van Dijk's 'ideological square', namely positive self-presentation and other negative presentations. From the discriminatory discourse analysis posed by the council members, it was found that 10 statements were categorized as problematization strategy, 1 statement categorized as blaming the victim (scapegoating), 4 statements categorized as metaphor, 14 statements categorized as prejudice strategy, 22 statements categorized as negative attribution, and 2 statements are categorized in disclaimers.

**Key words:** Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Ethnicity, Discrimination, Ideological Square, Council Members.

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Critical discourse analysis is one approach that is widely used in analyzing discourse. CDA aims to expose the sociopolitical inequalities, power relations rooted in political, economic, cultural, and religious contexts (Khoirunisa & Indah, 2018; Mogashoa, 2014; Suppiah et al., 2019). According to Van Dijk (2004: 138) "Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context". CDA is able to determine how people in power play their discourse in

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discriminating against ordinary people. Fairclough & Wodak (1997 in Van Dijk, (2015) noted that in CDA, the term discourse or the use of language in spoken and written form is seen as a form of 'social practice' text in social and political context.

Discriminatory treatment can befall any ethnicity, but mostly targets ethnic minorities. This is influenced because their existence is not strong and hidden causes them to become the main target for the ethnic majority to oppress them. Racial and ethnic discrimination can be said as an act of refusing or treating individuals or groups unfairly and even immorally because of the differences inherent in them such as: skin color, descent and ethnicity. In some countries discrimination continues and is unavoidable. Even the government is overwhelmed with this problem. For the government discrimination is a big problem that is very difficult to overcome.

Discrimination is an action or practice that excludes, disadvantages, or merely differentiates between individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of some ascribed or perceived trait, although the definition itself is subject to substantial debate (Kohler and Hausmann, 2020). Fershtman, Gneezy, and Verboven (2005: 371) define discrimination as "differential treatment of people depending on their group affiliation". Bodanhausen and Richeson (2010) also describe discrimination as the condition when individuals are treated differently because of their belongings to certain groups. Discrimination cannot be justified because it can traumatize people who receive discrimination.

Discrimination occurs because there are excessive prejudices and stereotypes in the minds of people. These bad thoughts eventually make people compelled to spread hatred. Either by insulting, harassing, spreading false news and others. For example: ethnic blacks are characterized as dark, scary, criminal, lazy and others. Stereotypes that are maintained for a long time and even cultivated by society will lead to the emergence of prejudice and discrimination. These two concepts are then suspected to be one of the causes of ongoing conflicts between community groups in Indonesia. Richard Schaefer as quoted by Neulip defines stereotype as an exaggerated description of the characteristics of a particular group based on the prejudices of individuals who have bad feelings towards that group (Neulip, 2012). Meanwhile, Barker (2004:415) defines stereotypes as overt, but simple representations that reduce people to a series of exaggerated and usually negative character traits.

Discrimination is almost the same as prejudice, in fact the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably. The difference between the two is that prejudice is an attitude, while discrimination is an action. It can be said that discrimination is prejudice in action. Thinking that ethnic Chinese are stingy is prejudice, while prohibiting them from trading or going to school is discrimination.

Usually discriminators will show hatred and fear of disliked people by depicting them in unpleasant (negative) images. On the other hand, they will present themselves well (positive). Be it from gender, race, ethnicity, religion and between groups. And this is the theory of Van Dijk known as the ideological square. "Ideological Square," as proposed by Van Dijk (1998b), is a theoretical and methodological approach that combines positive in-group and negative out-

group strategies. This approach is widely used by haters to destroy their opponents. By slandering, inciting and bringing down the enemy's mentality with bad sentences. They believe that such a method is very powerful and effective. Van Dijk argues that many group ideologies seem polarized in representing Self and Others, namely We and Them, in terms of “We are good and They are bad” (Shojaei et al., 2013). The “ideological square” operates to present a polarized image of in-group and out-group by portraying “Us” in a favorable way and “them” in an unfavorable way (Kuo & Nakamura, 2005). The “Ideological Square” is a theoretical model that emphasizes on examining media texts to determine ideological strategies that ascertain eminent descriptions of different social groups (Philo, 2007).

The following studies have used the “ideological square” approach in their research (Minaei, Farid Khezr, 2021; Khan et al., 2021; Noor, Natrah & Bahiyah, Abdul Hamid, 2021; Adnan et al., 2019; Ghauri, Muhammad Junaid & Salma Umer, 2019; Rezaei et al., 2019; Dilaimy et al., 2022; Guler, Kamber, 2018; Khan et al., 2019; Ghauri et al., 2021). The topics discussed were varied, ranging from Cyberbullying, images of Muslims in the Western Media, Islamophobia, National and foreign Islam in the Australian Press, Islamophobia in Donald Trump's Tweets, Anti-Muslim-Islam, The Nature of Islam and Muslims in The Australian Press, President Trump's Speeches, Donald Trump's Aggressive and Offensive Language and Anti-Immigration Europe. from some of the studies above discuss statements from public officials in the context of Islam and gender. Therefore, the researcher adds two studies that specifically examine the analysis of public officials' statements by using Van Dijk's Ideological Square. The research is titled Polarization and Ideological Weaving in Twitter Discourse of Politicians (Masroor et al., 2019) and The Representation of America and China in Trump's Press Conferences Concerning COVID-19: A Critical Discourse Analysis (Mohammad, Zainab Abd Al-Razaq & Weaam Hussain Ali, 2021).

Based on previous research, several have investigated the discrimination used by public officials in their speeches and tweets on social media. The issues discussed were also related to sensitive issues for the community, such as religion and gender. This study examines the discourse of discrimination against ethnic groups, especially ethnic minorities in Indonesia who often receive unpleasant treatment from the majority ethnic group. The causes also vary, ranging from dislike, strangers, to troublemakers. There are three things that distinguish this research from previous research, namely: first, members of the DPR selected as subjects and ethnic minorities as objects in the study. second, the ideological square approached become the main tool used to analyze statements from members of the DPR RI. The researcher intends to analyze the representation of "self" and "others" in the political discourse of members of the DPR RI. third, the researcher takes the issue of ethnicity as a discourse to be discussed.

In the last decade, social media have been widely used as a public relation tool, also in political discourse (Frame & Brachotte, 2015). One of them is twitter. Twitter's substantial bearing, especially in politics, has garnered the attention of researchers to explore its effects in the elections and public opinion poll results (Liu, 2017). Hendricks and Kaid (2014) and Campos-Dominguez (2017) argued

that Twitter has become the main theoretical trend in political communication. Political communication is a means of grabbing support for politicians to gain public recognition by spreading negative rumors to their opponents. One of the goals of political communication is to form a good political image for the community so that they can win the hearts of the people. Political elites are ideologically aware and use various structures, strategies, and rhetorical movements that are at odds with other powerful groups when their interests are at stake (van Dijk, 2006c).

This development provides a suitable platform for politicians to connect to their followers through social media. Twitter was chosen because the application facilitates politicians to connect with their followers with the help of retweets and reactions to questions and comments. This gives a positive impression that politicians can understand and respect the opinions of their followers. The role of Twitter in the transformation of democracy is irrefutable as it provides a platform to political leaders and the public to communicate in an easy way (Grant et al., 2010).

In this study, members of the DPR were chosen as subjects because they were often caught making bad statements that sparked public anger, and it is clearly addressed to a person or group who has a different ethnicity from them. The statement is sometimes spoken directly or written on social media when they are still serving as representatives of the people. Therefore, the ideological square approach is needed in developing this research. There are two reasons why the researcher chose this topic: first, the researcher wanted to examine how the discourse of ethnic discrimination became a tool for public officials in attacking their opponents. Second, because the researcher wants to analyze how public officials present themselves well (positively) while portraying the opposite party badly (negatively). This study aims at providing insight and information to the public so that they can think critically and be able to understand the meaning of the discourse played by public officials, so that the public does not get trapped and fall into the hate narrative that is played well by public officials.

According to the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, Article 1 paragraph 4 states that a public official is a person who is appointed and given the task of occupying certain positions or positions in public bodies. Meanwhile, a statement is a sentence made from information obtained or only based on personal assumptions and it has a true or false value, or often interpreted as giving a personal statement in expressing opinions to someone. Based on the above understanding, it can be concluded that a public official's statement is an utterance or announcement made based on what he/she gets and it can be fact or hoax.

## **B. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **1. Type of Research**

This research used a qualitative descriptive method. Descriptive research is a type of research to explore a phenomenon or social reality. Qualitative research is research on descriptive research and tends to use analysis. Bogdan and Taylor

in Moleong (2010) suggest that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior.

This type of qualitative descriptive research is a research method that utilizes qualitative data and is described descriptively to describe and explain in more detail, transparency, and depth about the problems to be studied by studying as much as possible individuals, groups or an event. According to Sugiyono (2016: 9) qualitative descriptive method is a research method based on the philosophy of postpositivism used to examine the condition of natural objects where the researcher is the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out by triangulation (combined), data analysis is inductive/qualitative, and the results of qualitative research emphasize meaning rather than generalization. Therefore, this type of research is appropriate to be used in CDA research to explain ethnic discrimination carried out by public officials through their statements in speeches and social media.

## 2. Data and Source of Data

In this research, data obtained or taken from several statements by members council in Indonesia that discriminate against ethnicity. both the minority and the majority. The emergence of these bad statements was uttered in various contexts, ranging from the defense of parties, citizens, vaccine recipients, political manners, and cooperation among ethnic groups. Some of these discriminatory statements were made when they were interviewed and some only wrote it on social media. for the topics discussed when the statement was made, namely when discussing the Hambalang project, giving ulos, presidential term, distribution of the covid vaccine, the dragon boat race and others.

## 3. Instrument of The Research

In a research, several instruments are needed to support researchers in obtaining valid data.

The following instruments used in the research, including:

1. Researcher as people who analyze data and develop research.
2. Electronic devices, such as mobile phones and laptops.
3. Stationary tools, such as books and pens to record statements of discrimination against ethnicity from public officials.
4. Social media, such as youtube, twitter, and instagram as a platform to search and find statements that discriminate against ethnicity.
5. Journals and articles as references and supporting media in analyzing data.
6. Indicator tables as the guideline for analyzing the data.

	Us (majority ethnic)	Them (ethnic minority)
Positive Representation	Emphasizing our good things	De-emphasizing their good things
Negative Representation	De-emphasizing our bad things	Emphasizing their bad things

**Table 1.** Van Dijk's Ideological Square: Polarization of 'Us' and 'Them

No	Types of Discriminatory Discourse Strategies	Indicator
1	The Strategy of Problematisation	Describes a group as threats, criminals, and troublemakers.
2	Blaming the Victims (Scapegoating)	Blaming or accusing minority groups of doing bad things they didn't do.
3	Metaphor	Presenting individuals or groups by using words that have no true meaning (figurative language).
4	Prejudice Strategy	Bad views or judgments about certain races without knowing the real facts.
5	Negative Attribution	Give characteristics to individuals or outer groups that are negative.
6	Labelling Mechanism	Labeling minorities by combining certain words with other words that contain negative meanings.
7	Quoted Utterances or Quotations	Quoting someone's sentence to worsen the portrait of the individual or group being targeted.
8	The Use of Personal Pronouns to Show Indirectness	Use personal pronouns to prevent direct mention of discriminated individuals or groups.
9	Normalisation of Prejudice as Common Knowledge	Assuming negative traits given to outsiders is something normal and natural.
10	Social Demarcation or Distancing	Establish distinctions for outgroups based on social status and social identity.
11	Devaluation or Exception of the Good Characteristics of Others	Rejecting the good characteristics of the discriminated group because they are considered not to represent their personal characteristics.
12	Disclaimers	Presenting positive arguments to outsiders to avoid negative impressions.
13	Extensivisation	Adding good or bad information to Identify the natural characteristics of an individual or group.

**Table 2.** The Indicator of Types of Discriminatory Discourse Strategies

### 3.4 Techniques of Data Collection

In this research, data collection divided into two, based on the number of

questions. Among them:

#### Data collection 1

1. The researcher seek statements from members of the council that contain discrimination against ethnicity using phones and laptops.
2. The researcher watch the hate speech thoroughly to find the topic of discrimination.
3. The researcher record every point that leads to the topic.
4. After the topic is found, the researcher move it into a notebook.

#### Data collection 2

1. The researcher collect discriminatory statements from several council members.
2. The researcher record the statement of discrimination in a notebook.
3. Then, the statement examined from the point of view of the discriminatory discourse strategy.
4. The data processed by the researcher to determine what strategy the statement includes.

#### 4. Technique of Data Analysis

Data analysis technique is a process or steps in processing data to make it easy to understand and useful as a solution to a problem in developing research. The main purpose of the data analysis technique is to get an overall conclusion that comes from the research data that has been collected.

According to Sugiyono (2010: 335), what is meant by data analysis techniques is the process of searching for data, systematically compiling data obtained from interviews, field notes, and documentation, by organizing data into categories, breaking down into units, perform synthesis, arrange into a pattern choosing which ones are important and which will be studied, and make conclusions so that they are easily understood by themselves and others.

The following steps taken by researcher in analyzing the data:

#### Data analysis 1

1. To identify topics, researcher follow discussions or tweets from members of the DPR.
2. The researcher note the points that lead to the topic discussed.
3. After that, the researcher explain the topic based on the source and the researcher's own thoughts.
4. Then, the results obtained show how parliamentarians use the polarization of “us” vs. “them” in presenting and disseminating discourses of discrimination against other ethnicities.

#### Data analysis 2

1. Researcher watch discussions and read tweets from several board members via youtube, twitter, and twitter.

2. These statements analyzed one by one based on the discriminatory discourse strategy.
3. After that, the researcher categorize the statement according to the discriminatory discourse strategy.
4. Then, explain and discuss the findings obtained so that researchers can draw conclusions from the research conducted.

### C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. Findings

After analyzing the data, several findings were obtained. For the first research question related to the topic of discourse, the researcher found that there were 4 topics of discourse that were used by council members to discriminate against minority groups. It is shown in the following table:

Table 3. The percentage of the findings of the discourse topics.

No	Discourse Topics	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hatred	12	22,6%
2.	Suspicion	13	24,5%
3.	Demeaning	5	9,4%
4.	Insult	23	43,3%

The findings show that the topic of discourse about insults is mostly used by council members in attacking ethnic minorities negatively in their discourse. Next, followed by suspicion, hatred, and demeaning. Most of the insults displayed by members of the council were because these words were the most powerful weapon in destroying and deteriorating the image of the ethnic group. and judged to be able to make the person who issued the inappropriate words satisfied.

#### 2. Discussion

The findings of the analysis on the statements of members of the council that contain utterances of discrimination against ethnicity show that the topics of discourse used by them are varied, such as hatred, humiliation, demeaning, and harassing. In addition, it was found that board members tend to emphasize negative things about other people and reduce bad things about them by constructing unpleasant stories and prejudices against minority groups. The discourse was generated to damage the image and embarrass the small group.

In addition, the analysis reveals that various discourse strategies such as problematisation, blaming the victim, metaphor, prejudice strategy, negative attribution, and disclaimers are used in destroying minority groups by portraying positive-self presentations and negative others. This proves that this discourse strategy is widely used by the majority as the ruling group so that their bad actions are considered as justification for branding and demeaning minority groups.



Furthermore, it was found that attacks carried out by council members to discriminate against ethnicity tended to be carried out openly, both in front of large audiences and on social media of those who have many followers. And these negative statements were made not only because they didn't like it but also because of political factors.

From this analysis, the researcher found that there were some interesting findings from the discourse presented by the members of the council as a ruling group. In some statements, it was found how they described ethnic minorities as other people or outside groups. However, in several other statements, members of the council also tried to show that the discourse produced was aimed at protecting the integrity and harmony of the community from the threats created by these ethnic groups. This is part of their strategy so as not to appear to corner the targeted ethnic group so that their positive image is not tarnished.

Furthermore, the findings of this study provide insight and open public views regarding cases of discrimination committed by council members against ethnicity, which initially received little attention, are now presented in the topic of discourse that can be found in the research in chapter 4.1. where, Council members create hateful, insulting, degrading, and harassing speech aimed at minority groups. In the next description, the use of discourse strategies is presented to find out what strategies they use in discriminating against minority groups. This leads the audience to know the purpose or plan of the discourse producer in influencing the audience to agree with the statements presented and disseminated by them. It can be said that the topic of the discourse presented is the efforts of council members to bring down and destroy minority groups in order to get negative stigma from society. The discourses constructed from these discourse strategies serve to reinforce and sharpen their statement of discrimination against the ethnic group.

## **D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

### **1. Conclusion**

Based on the results of research and discussion, it was found that many discriminatory statements made by members of the council in Indonesia to ethnicity were spread on their social media as well as when they discussed in meetings broadcast on tv. The reasons also vary, ranging from hate, bullies, and troublemakers. From the analysis conducted using 13 discriminatory discourse strategies, only six strategies are widely used by council members to present and disseminate their statements of discrimination against ethnicity. These include problematisation, blaming the victim (scapegoating), metaphor, prejudice strategy, negative attribution, and disclaimers. from 53 statements collected on social media, such as YouTube, Twitter and Instagram. 10 statements belong to the problematisation category, 1 statement to blaming the victim (scapegoating), 4 statements to metaphor, 15 statements to prejudice strategy, 21 statements to negative attribution, and 2 statements to disclaimers.

## 2. Suggestion

This paper analyzes the statement of discrimination by members of the board by using the ideological square of van Dijk. There is a lot of information that can be studied in this statement. In this paper, the author only looks at the topics and discourse strategies of the statements of council members that they display and disseminate on social media. This paper is not perfect. Therefore, the author suggests that others conduct relevant studies using different theories. And hopefully there will be further research that can improve research using this theory.

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