

Covid-19: Good vs. Evil Dichotomy in News Media

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Abstract : Dichotomy may be expressed through the languages used on social media. When it comes to Covid-19, a pandemic that began in 2020, the global population is still unfamiliar with the problem and is in the process of adapting through various ideologies and strategies represented on social media. The objective of this research is to identify the dichotomy that surfaced during COVID-19 based on five reports from three YouTube channels. Qualitative discourse analysis was used by the researchers. This research focuses on the opinions of netizens on five reports that were posted on three YouTube channels about COVID-19 between January and May 2020, when Indonesia was enacting a "stay at home" policy. The findings show that comments from netizens fall into two categories. They are comments that support remaining at home to reduce the spread of Covid-19, as well as those that oppose staying at home for economic reasons. Furthermore, the remarks from one categorization overshadow the comments from the other classification. The remarks for each categorization see them as good and the other as wicked. Nonetheless, discourse analysis serves to reinvigorate social activity. As a result, mutual understanding is critical in dealing with this problem.

Keywords : Dichotomy, Discourse Analysis, News Media.

Abstrak : Dikotomi dapat diungkapkan melalui bahasa yang digunakan di media sosial. Terkait dengan Covid-19, pandemi yang dimulai pada tahun 2020, masyarakat global masih belum terbiasa dengan permasalahan tersebut dan sedang dalam proses beradaptasi melalui berbagai ideologi dan strategi yang terwakili di media sosial. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi dikotomi yang muncul selama COVID-19 berdasarkan lima berita dari tiga saluran YouTube. Analisis wacana kualitatif digunakan oleh para peneliti. Penelitian ini berfokus pada opini netizen terhadap lima pemberitaan yang diposting di tiga saluran YouTube tentang COVID-19 antara bulan Januari hingga Mei 2020, saat Indonesia memberlakukan kebijakan "stay at home". Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa komentar netizen terbagi dalam dua kategori. Mereka adalah komentar yang mendukung tetap di rumah untuk mengurangi penyebaran Covid-19, serta yang menentang tinggal di rumah karena alasan ekonomi. Selain itu, komentar dari satu kategorisasi menutupi komentar dari klasifikasi lainnya. Keterangan untuk setiap kategorisasi melihat mereka sebagai baik dan yang lainnya jahat. Meskipun demikian, analisis wacana berfungsi untuk menghidupkan kembali aktivitas sosial.

Oleh karena itu, saling pengertian sangat penting dalam mengatasi masalah ini.

Kata Kunci : Analisis Wacana, Dikotomi, Media Berita.

INTRODUCTION

Dichotomy is an irrefutable phenomenon that occurs inside people's perceptions of 'something' that occurs in the human world. Dichotomy is constantly present in society, and it is mirrored across the age through various forms of speaking or media, as differing points of view on 'something' may be the cause of its occurrence. When it comes to Covid-19, a pandemic that began in 2020, the worldwide population is still unfamiliar with the event and is adapting in various ways and ideologies.

Since social media is becoming the primary means of two-way communication between the media and its audience, issue of good against evil perception in the society as well as pro and contra are reflected there during this moment of revolution. Investigating these events will help you understand how the Covid-19 epidemic gives rise to this dichotomy. The researcher thinks that by exposing individuals to this duality, they would realize that it is a reality that differing perspectives on the same issue represent two sides of the same coin.

The purpose of this study is to identify the dichotomy that emerges during COVID-19. The dichotomy that emerges in Indonesia—the nation that is the second most exposed to COVID-19 in Southeast Asia—is the focus of the research. In addition, the data used in this research are from Covid-19-related YouTube news videos that were published between January and May 2020, when the Indonesian government declared a "stay at home" period, during which the country's citizens were instructed to work from home unless they had an urgent business to attend to.

The scope of this study is the larger society. In particular, the researcher will use discourse analysis to observe social phenomena involving a large number of individuals with diverse viewpoints who seem to place blame on one another. Hopefully, it will alert Indonesian society to the fact that, in order to cope with an emerging problem, they should be able to perceive it from several angles and not exclude other versions while asserting that they have the finest version in their hands.

Critical discourse analysis is used in this work. The reason for this is because, although social media is seen as a new medium for social interaction where language and ideology are heavily present, critical discourse concentrates on how power, ideology, and marginalization or victimhood are amassed (Mendrova, 2018). An examination of language used is called discourse analysis. Certain goals are achieved by it (Dipper and Pritchard, 2017). It views text and context as one cohesive whole rather than as two distinct entities. Analyzing the text's relevance to the social setting is very permissible. Discourse analysis is concerned with oral and written texts (Darma, 2009, as cited in Stubbs). Furthermore, the emphasis of discourse analysis extends beyond the phrase and clause (Stubbs, as cited in Baker, 2011). As a result, a deeper comprehension and context and text analysis are required.

Discourse analysis, according to Roger Fowler in Eriyanto (2001), differs from quantitative research. Discourse analysis focuses on "how" the material is delivered, while quantitative research concentrates on "what." Dialectical relationships between the circumstance, the institution, and the social structure that supports it will be created through the use of language. By presenting disparate representations, discourse may result in an unequal power dynamic between the majority and minority, as well as between genders and socioeconomic classes.

Furthermore, as noted by Van Dijk (1977), critical discourse analysis addresses the themes of power, domination, and inequality in the text's social and political domains. It observes how a text's interaction occurs. Critical discourse analysis, according to Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, and Joseph (2005), provides an explanation for the connection between language and social activity. Ulinnuha, Udasmoro, and Wijaya (2013) state that the social research technique and framework apply critical discourse analysis.

Discourse also discusses threat and accusation. It may be used to marginalize or discriminate against people or ideas. Eight principles underpin critical discourse analysis: discussing social problems; social relations are discursive; discourse is society and culture; discourse has ideology; the production and understanding process of text and society relationships requires the application of a socio-cognitive approach; critical discourse analysis uses an interpretive, explanatory, and methodical approach to concept building; and critical discourse analysis is a scientific paradigm that is continuously at odds with context.

Fairclough and Wodak (as cited in Van Dijk, 1997) identified eight critical discourse analysis principles: (1) concentrating on social issues by studying the language structures that society uses; (2) thinking that language is the means by which power is exercised in discourse; and (3) thinking that discourse is not only a reflection of society but also a component of it and reproduces society itself. Four: ideology is created through discourse; Five: discourse is always connected to earlier and later discourses; Six: discourse connects text and social and cultural structures; Seven: it is interpretive; and Eight: it revitalizes sociopolitical and communication practices.

According to Roger Fowler (as cited in Eriyanto, 2012), language utilized in the media is ideologically weighted rather than neutral. Furthermore, Fowler (as cited in Eriyanto, 2012) uses language and its use to make ideology clear. He begins by using terminology to identify the phenomenon and the person involved. This terminology serves as a marker as well as a connection to a certain philosophy that the reader is meant to understand. This term has the power to make one side feel good while making the other feel bad. Second, he concentrates on sentence structure or word order. Word order is a function of both linguistic practice and skill. If a party is helped or hurt, or if an event is understood differently, this order will have specific consequences.

Fowler (as cited in Nilawati, 2018) defined vocabulary as the ability to categorize, restrict the scope, marginalize, and engage in interaction. Additionally, the passive voice effect—which omits the subject—nominalization—which also omits the subject—and the analytical framework make up the word order or phrase.

Vocabulary

Classifying

Language categorizes things on its own. While the other may be placed in a different category, one can be placed in one. The purpose of this categorization is to manage knowledge and expertise.

Limiting the scope

When it comes to categorization, language really serves to restrict the range of ideas or interpretations that are acceptable. Nothing from the outside affects what was within.

Discourse contention

Vocabulary comprehension is essential for discourse argument. Everyone has an opinion in every situation. They all have their own arguments, truths, and defenses. It serves to support their opinions and public stance. They choose the language they want to use for this.

Marginalization

Words are employed to demonstrate that one speaker is correct and the other is not. As a result, the terminology is not neutral.

Sentence

Passive voice effect – omitting the subject

When using the passive voice in a sentence, the action is emphasized rather than the doer.

Nominalization - omitting the subject

Furthermore, when a phrase is nominalized, the event itself is highlighted rather than the subject or the action.

Asmara (2016) argues that language, sentence form, and discourse structure all convey power and ideology. Fowler's arguments support this claim. Furthermore, Thompson (as cited in Jorgensen and Phillips, 2007) claims that ideology generates meaning that is forcefully emphasized in order to hold onto power.

METHODS

In order to get a deeper understanding through a study of media utterances, the research used the qualitative discourse analysis approach. Discourse analysis is a broad field, thus in order to disentangle the dichotomy of utterances on the mentioned medium, the study will be narrowed down to the recurrence of conversation and situational registers.

The aim of this study is to examine forty comments on five news stories from three news outlets—Kompas, Jawa Pos, and CNN Indonesia—discussing the information about COVID-19 from January to May 2020 on YouTube. The media is widely disseminating similar news with both pro and con perspectives. Formal linguistics, Empirical, and Critical are the three categories of meta discourse, according to Hodges (2008). The optimal analysis, given the nature of the study, is to examine the discourse's critical side. Furthermore, in accordance with Tennen (2015), the study used analysis on the idea of language usage in the media, everything that goes beyond a phrase, and a wider spectrum of social activities, such as ethics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The following remarks from netizens are derived from news reports about COVID-19 that were posted on YouTube channels Kompas, Jawa Pos, and CNN Indonesia between January and May 2020:

First, four comments were made on a news article published on Kompas on March 19, 2020, with the heading "I Stay at Work for You, You Stay at Home for Us, Support Medical Personnel against Corona Virus Pandemic" demonstrate the idea that remaining at home may prevent contracting COVID-19. It is thought that being at home inevitably maintains social isolation. Furthermore, it seems from these statements that those who choose not to remain at home are likewise unaware of the need to limit the spread of Covid-19. As an illustration, one of these remarks, *"I beg the civilians, do not be stubborn. Stay at home. My prayers are with you."*

In addition, four remarks contradict the previously given remarks. These statements demonstrate that they choose to work outside the house in order to earn money. These remarks also demonstrate how critical the previously described remarks were against those who did not remain at home. The example is, *"Don't give void statement. Not all works can be done online. Most of them should be done onsite."*

Second, there are seven comments on the March 31, 2020, Kompas article headlined "Wow! Many Crowds – AIMAN (Bag2)" that point the finger at those who refuse to remain at home and instead insist on staying there, such as *"It's redundant to limit people's moves. They prefer to gather and don't care about Covid-19. The rule will be finally disobeyed."* The other eight comments, however, are insistent on working outside owing to financial constraints, refusing to remain at home. In addition, the remarks accuse the government of failing to provide them with assistance. The example is, *"Why civilians are blamed? We're okay staying at home, but please fulfill our needs."*

Third, on the other Youtube channel, Jawa Pos, on news entitled "Avoid Corona Virus in Juanda Airport Terminal 2", published on January 30, 2020, there is a statement that argues those who fear COVID-19 do not fear God, *"Don't be afraid of Covid-19 virus. Be afraid of Allah SWT. Angel will not mistakenly hold our lives. Avoid the virus, do ablution, and pray."*

Fourth, on CNN Indonesia Youtube channel, on news "The Progress of Covid-19 Case in the World – Covid-19 Update by 18 April", published on April 18, 2020, two remarks see those who choose to leave their homes and go outside as poor examples. One of the examples is, *"The*

US citizens also did something wrong, like going outside, even having parties and going to concerts. At this moment, we need to cooperate with the government. South Korea is the good example.” Two other comments, however, accuse the government of causing them to suffer from financial loss by requiring them to remain at home. One of the examples is, *“I am living at Jakarta and have been at home for about a month with no significant activity. I hardly find the aid from local government. How can I deal with this situation which I do not have enough money and starve?”*

The last comments were made on March 15, 2020, on the CNN Indonesia YouTube channel in an article titled "Learning from Covid-19 Management in Taiwan." These comments were critical of those who choose to leave their homes, and they were shared throughout the Covid-19 outbreak. Among the instances is, *“The holiday has just come, but people hurriedly have picnic. They have been asked to stay at home, but they prefer to hang out. They never go wrong.”*

Discussion

Vocabulary

Classifying

The comments made by users on the data that was provided might be divided into two categories: advantages and disadvantages of remaining at home. The message that remaining at home is the greatest approach to reduce the spread of Covid-19 is sent by the comments that support staying at home. Conversely, the comments that highlight the drawbacks of remaining at home provide information on why, in this instance, going out and earning money is the wisest course of action, particularly in light of the challenging circumstances brought on by COVID-19.

Vocabulary related to the previously described facts is used to convey the information. Several terms that were used in the comments to support remaining at home include *“stay at home”, “I’m afraid that Covid-19 cases will get worse”, and “ordered to stay”*. Meanwhile, some vocabulary examples from the comments that highlight the drawbacks of staying at home include *“money”, “daily needs”, “food”, and “help”*.

Every remark aims to provide readers or viewers with relevant information. According to Fowler (in Nilawati, 2018), discourse ensures that the information it presents may be effectively conveyed.

Discourse Contention

With respect to the two categories indicated earlier—comments supporting staying at home and comments opposing staying at home—each category has its own grounds for support. According to Fowler's reasoning (in Nilawati, 2018), discourse dispute centers on providing internal reasons or explanations. It is created with the intention of having a powerful concept or position in society.

The supporters of staying at home claim that the government's advice to do so is correct in order to slow the spread of COVID-19, like *“Please, be obedient to the government. So, the number of Covid-19 patients will not increase. It’s a pity for medical personnels. We hope that this test from God will end soon”*. Meanwhile, those who argue against remaining at home contend that because they had to leave the house in order to earn money, this advice was incorrect. One of the example is *“I am living at Jakarta and have been at home for about a month with no significant activity. I hardly find the aid from local government. How can I deal with this situation which I do not have enough money and starve?”* Additionally, they contend that not everyone is sufficiently well off to be able to work from home (WFH). Some of them have regular jobs that need to be done outside. It is evident from the remark, *“Don’t give void statement. Not all works can be done online. Most of them should be done onsite.”*

Marginalization

Fowler (in Nilawati, 2018) asserts that words employed in discourse are not neutral. It is used to demonstrate the validity of one argument while refuting another. It is clearly seen in the two aforementioned classes.

The arguments in favor of staying at home demonstrate that doing so is the best course of action in response to COVID-19, while staying away from home—especially when it comes to crowding, as some people do—is a worse option. In the meanwhile, the criticisms of staying at home in the comments section demonstrate that going out late, or even overcrowding, is acceptable since it is how internet users generate income, and that following the advice to stay at home is something they are unable to do.

The good vs. evil dichotomy is evident in this instance. According to speakers who have made statements in favor of staying at home, their viewpoint is the best and it is beneficial in their eyes. However, from their perspective, being away from home is the worst thing that humans do, and they consider it to be evil.

On the other hand, speakers who express negative opinions on staying at home believe that their position is the best and that it is beneficial. However, from their perspective, telling them to stay at home is the worst thing that can happen and is even evil.

One of the comments highlights the benefits of staying at home, *“It's redundant to limit people's moves. They prefer to gather and don't care about Covid-19. The rule will be finally disobeyed.”* She/he makes a clear claim to be sane by declaring *“sane”*, whereas those who prefer to stay at home claim to be uneducated by saying *“don't care”*. Furthermore, one of the comments highlights the drawbacks of staying at home, *“The problem is in their economy. The crowd is not afraid of death. Somehow, the death is destined.* It is evident that she/he asserts that she/he has no fear of dying by stating, *“not afraid of death”*. It implies that those who advise staying at home are scared of dying by stating this.

These netizens' comments on Covid-19 news media, with their dichotomy of good vs evil, demonstrate that social media is, in fact, a platform for social interaction among individuals of different languages and ideas. It is consistent with Mendrova's (2018) statements. It also affects how individuals respond to COVID-19 itself and to the responses of others to COVID-19. Every individual has a unique worth to contend with in the disorderly circumstances that compel them to confront their beliefs, which are expressed via their language. They act as if their ideology is the best and others are the worst because of this circumstance. Discourse links text and context, as claimed by Fairclough and Wodak (as cited in Van Dijk, 1997), and this is truly a mirror of how the real situation occurs in society. Additionally, discourse revitalizes social behaviors, according to Fairclough and Wodak (as cited in Van Dijk, 1997). In this instance, it is evident that the issue remains unresolved as long as individuals continue to maintain their moral superiority over others. Rather, this dichotomy ought to give way to understanding between people. Others who are able to work from home and meet their daily necessities may remain at home; it is even better when they can give to others in need. If not, those who had to labor outdoors to meet their daily necessities need to only abide by the health precautions.

CONCLUSION

There are two categories for the comments made by netizens on the five news stories, based on the vocabularies that have emerged. These categories include advantages and negatives of staying at home. The speakers in each grouping provide a discourse disagreement in which they offer their own justifications for staying at home and for leaving. According to the first categorization, people need to avoid leaving their homes in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The other, however, contends that because they had to work, they should not have stayed at home. These disparate viewpoints and arguments ultimately lead to the dichotomy of good and evil. They are seen as the good in the first categorization and as the evil in the second. The reason for this is because they believe that responding to COVID-19 from home is the best course of action, and that leaving the house demonstrates ignorance. If not, the second categorization views the one as the nice person and the other as the bad one. The reason for this is because they believe there is a valid reason why they do not remain at home and that telling them to do so would be less compassionate. The revival of social customs needs to come first. To cope with COVID-19, they should have mutual understanding.

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