



**CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS ON A TEXT “FRIDAY PRAYER AT HOME FOR MOST BUT SOME RISK INFECTION AT MOSQUES” BY THE AL JAZEERA ENGLISH**

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**Abstrak**

This study aimed to investigate a discourse conveyed in an article published by a news agency namely Al Jazeera English (AJE) relating to prohibition of the Friday Prayer in many countries and power presented by the certain countries due to prevent Covid-19. A descriptive-qualitative method was applied in the study. A three-dimensional critical discourse analysis (CDA) stated Fairclough (1995; 2004) was used as the fundamental theory. The results were observed through micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analyses. Data analysis performed by using the microlevel of analysis showed that the text contains active transitive structure to demonstrate subjects of the sentences. There are words which mostly appear in the text such as Muslim and prayers. In the mesolevel of analysis, intertextual analysis describes that there are assumption in the text. The data also depict that people showed disobedience to the governmental regulation and the worshippers still practiced prayers at the mosques. The macrolevel of analysis illustrates the text published by the AJE generally converse updated issues because people recognize the news agency with a good reputation. The study concluded that the text mainly discussed the prohibition of communal prayers by many countries which is originated from other related texts. The text displays power of the governments power via transitivity structure by regulating policy to stop the communal prays due to the Covid-19. Critics as a protest against the regulation from some people were also found in the discourse.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis, covid-19, Muslim prayers, power

**ANALISIS WACANA KRITIS PADA TEKS “FRIDAY PRAYER AT HOME FOR MOST BUT SOME RISK INFECTION AT MOSQUES” OLEH AL JAZEERA ENGLISH**

**Abstract**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis wacana yang disampaikan dalam sebuah artikel yang diterbitkan oleh kantor berita Al Jazeera English (AJE) yang berkaitan dengan larangan ibadah salat Jumat di banyak negara dan kuasa yang ditunjukkan oleh sejumlah negara untuk mencegah Covid-19. Metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Analisis wacana kritis tiga dimensi yang diungkapkan oleh Fairclough (1995; 2004) digunakan sebagai teori utama. Hasil penelitian diperoleh melalui analisis level mikro, meso, dan makro. Analisis data yang dilakukan dengan menggunakan analisis level mikro menunjukkan bahwa teks berisi struktur aktif transitif untuk menegaskan subjek kalimat. Terdapat kata yang sering dimunculkan dalam teks, seperti *Muslim* dan *prayer*. Dalam analisis level meso, analisis intertekstual menjelaskan bahwa munculnya asumsi dalam teks. Data tersebut menggambarkan sekelompok masyarakat menunjukkan ketidakpatuhan terhadap peraturan pemerintah dan

para jemaah masih melakukan sholat di masjid. Analisis level makro mendeskripsikan teks yang diterbitkan oleh AJE umumnya membahas isu yang sedang hangat karena masyarakat mengenali kantor berita itu dengan reputasi yang baik. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa teks tersebut secara khusus membahas larangan ibadah bersama yang dicanangkan oleh sejumlah negara yang telah diberitakan dalam teks-teks terkait lainnya. Teks ini menampilkan kuasa yang ditunjukkan pemerintah melalui struktur transitivitas dengan mengatur kebijakan untuk menghentikan doa bersama karena Covid-19. Kritik sebagai protes terhadap peraturan dari sekelompok masyarakat ditemukan dalam wacana ini.

Kata Kunci: Analisis wacana kritis, covid-19, ibadah umat Muslim, kuasa

## INTRODUCTION

Information becomes daily need for most people. Previously, newspapers or magazines were published daily, weekly, or monthly. People today can receive news feeds hourly or even every minute. As printed version is no longer popular in this era, everybody reads news from their mobile phones along with the internet connection. Putra & Triyono (2018) illustrated language used by journalist has uniqueness as an informative language along with expressions and directions namely language press. The news spread all over in the world so that anyone can access online websites provided by news agency. There may be hundreds of populous news agencies widely known, therefore, one of them is Al Jazeera English (AJE).

The AJE published articles regarding to the Covid-19 outbreak which had been raising attention broadly and became the global emergency situation during the first semester in 2020. The people had been recommended to apply physical distancing due to the pandemic said the Director-General's World Health Organization (WHO) in opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 18 March 2020 which published in their websites (WHO, 2020). It turned into problems for Muslims to find out information whether they could pray in the mosques. A previous study by Mulyani (2014) demonstrated that a text

may contain ideology and objectivity which has certain meanings constructed through social language or discourse. The topic discussed among Muslims one of them related to praying at home which had grown into controversy.

Due to avoid the spread of Covid-19 several countries had forbid the communal Muslims prayers in mosques, particularly for the Friday prayer. Then, the AJE published articles regarding the situation in Muslim majority countries. According to a study by Putra & Triyono (2018) critical discourse analysis (CDA) communicates news illustrated through text which does not only involve linguistics instruments but also the correlation between language and distinctive contexts, such as sociocultural news. Policy having regulated by the governments indicates power presented as the authorities. Ramanathan & Hoon (2015) argued the society that performed such religious and principle endeavors cover propositions which are important to their social practice which enclose power and cause ideology. The study by Putra & Triyono (2018) augmented discourse and mass media are bounded together to establish emergence of discourse which will be very dependent on the readers.

The fundamental model used in this study implemented Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework. Tampubolon et al. (2017) elucidated theorization locates Fairclough's CDA in the current



sociological debate on structure and agency. By claiming that discourse involves correlation between situation, organization, and the society, thus, it emphasizes that social representativeness is established by discourse. The CDA can be used to analyze linguistics aspects included in the news feeds. Therefore, this study examined how the AJE deliver information of the Friday Prayer and power demonstrated by the countries to prevent Covid-19 by prohibiting the communal prays.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a three-dimensional CDA approach by Fairclough (1995, 2004). The micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analyses are used to elaborate characteristics of the data. The microlevel analysis describes textual examination applies linguistic instruments found in the text. The mesolevel analysis belongs to the discourse practice such as distribution process and intertextual aspect. The third one depicts description regarding to sociocultural process. Fairclough (1995) claimed ideology as a modality of power which has contradiction to various views of ideology such as attitudes, beliefs, perspectives, etc. of social groups without reference to relations of power and domination between such groups. No wonder if the text describes muslims still went to the mosques to attend the prayers. It is necessary to examine ideology by using mixed sociocultural and linguistic aspects.

Data were obtained from a text entitled "Friday Prayer at Home for Most but Some Risk Infection at Mosques". The article was published by AJE on March 20, 2020 and can be retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2020/03/friday-prayer-home-risk->

[infection-mosques-200320152315576.html](https://www.aljazeera.com/amp/news/2020/03/friday-prayer-home-risk-infection-mosques-200320152315576.html). The AJE delivers fresh information relating to popular issues around the world and is managed by the Qatari Government (WHO, 2020). Muslims might prefer to read the news feeds released by the publisher to find references relating to the situations today, particularly prohibitions on Friday prayers and other prayers held in the mosques due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

A descriptive-qualitative method was used in the study (Sedarmayanti & Hidayat, 2011) explained researcher examined the data descriptively and the results generate valuable meaning than generalization. Due to commence the study, the text had been read consecutively to discover the discourse. Afterwards, notes were taken and data were selected to be examined. Data were then classified and analysed by using framework of the CDA based on Fairclough which were presented in the study.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The article discourses communal Muslim prayer prohibitions in many countries. It presents disputes due to the governmental policy which had become phenomena around the world. Based on a new media theory, Susanti (2015) describes two definition of the media era, social interaction presents the media by closeness model of interaction and social integrity demonstrates media is not only information but also in the form of tradition or the way people creating community due to ideology. Based on that description, this study tried to observe the discourse by using the three-dimensional CDA by Fairclough to reveal the distinctive situation illustrated in the text.



### Microlevel of Analysis

Linguistics components are frequently used in textual analysis. It describes transitivity of a character or authority that show power. Pratama (2016) explained commonly the analysis can be in the form of structures and meanings. Then, in the study the data were investigated through grammatical aspect, coherence, and lexicalization.

Grammatical rule based on Fairclough (1995) indicates three aspects: transitivity, modality, and aspect. However, this study only used transitivity analysis than the ones. It is suitable to elaborate the data briefly. Purpose of transitivity is to discover dominant character that has power in the discourse. The analysis of the linguistic components is portrayed.

- (1) In Cairo, where mosques stayed open, religious authorities **urged** imams to shorten sermons and prayers and said the faithful should perform their ritual ablutions at home.
- (2) But from Morocco to Libya, governments **have shut** mosques, a step never taken before even in times of war or revolution.
- (3) But as the pandemic spread, some governments **suspended** communal prayers or closed mosques entirely, leaving many of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims to pray at home, at work, in parks or in the street.

Datum (1) urged means the Egyptian religious authorities encouraged the imams not to deliver the sermons and lead the prayer too long. Datum (2) have shut transmits Morocco and Libyan governments prohibited people to pray in the mosques which had never been done before. After explaining many countries that took the regulation, datum (3) does not communicate the countries although it has the same meaning as as in datum (1) and (2) via suspended. It

remains that other countries in the world had been regulating similar policy by preventing communal prayers.

Transitivity in datum (1) to (3) comes along with active transitive structure. Subjects of the sentences are several of many Muslim countries. Therefore, the text infiltrates power to the governments. It shows the governments are major parties which have the authority to regulate the policy. This finding is in accordance with a study by Ramanathan & Hoon, (2015) which argue the social theory of discourse is linguistically-oriented as it aims at analysing social and political event in society. The theory regards the discourse as a social practice which establishes power.

Correlation between sentences should be established in the text. Readers may find difficulties in comprehending distorted information due to writing mistakes. A kind of analyses in discourse is to validate correlation constructed between words, sentences, and paragraphs. Therefore, CDA analyses are suitable to discover coherent or incoherent parts found in the text. A study by Salkie (1995) expressed that there are indicators used in structural analysis as well as repetition and synonym.

Repetition is commonly ascertained in many texts. In some cases, authors rewrite phrases or clauses for many purposes. These denote that repetition can be used to build important image toward the discourse. It also can guide readers' point of view to take side to certain situation, policy, or character. This study discovered repetitions is described.

- (4) The **coronavirus stopped communal Muslim prayers** for the first time in living memory in many **mosques** from Indonesia to Morocco on Friday, but in some



places, believers defied medical advice to join together in worship.

- (5) **Prayer** is one of the "five pillars" of Islam, performed five times a day by the devout, but enjoined as a **communal** activity only at noon on Fridays.
- (6) A religious gathering in Malaysia last month, attended by 16,000 people, generated 670 cases of **COVID-19**, the disease caused by the **coronavirus**, in four countries in Southeast Asia. Weekly **prayers** were later **called off** in Malaysia.
- (7) "We, as Muslims pray to God to help us overcome this **disaster** because as you can see, we are praying on the verandas, all the **mosques are closed**," said worshipper Abdalla Hakim.

In data (4) to (7), there are words mostly found in the text such as communal, prayer, and mosque which relate to Muslims. The text elucidates that many prays in Islam can be practiced individually and all together. Muslims are allowed to perform individual prays at their homes but there are prays which should be done with others in the mosques. Among those communal prayers, Muslims recognize the Friday prays contain important values. As reported in the text due to the universal Covid-19 outbreak, even Muslim countries had decided to close the mosques. The text tries to describe current situation by comparing a government to another. Thus, repetition cannot be avoided.

There are alternative ways to prevent repetition, including synonymy. It becomes solution to express the same idea with other words. Based on analysis in the study, the text uses synonymy because there might be endless ideas which should be represented. For instance, it can easily be discovered in datum (1) to (7), such as coronavirus,

Muslims, and close. Terminology of coronavirus in datum (4) may vary so that other words which appear with the same meaning in the text as pandemic in datum (3) and disaster in datum (7). As the highlighted topic, Muslims are frequently found in every paragraph which represent similar meaning to believers in datum (4) and worshipper in datum (7). Close has similar meaning to shut in datum (2) and suspended in datum (3). According to the three words above, the text mainly discourses the coronavirus which had caused the Muslim governments to close the mosques and avoid communal prays.

Another microlevel analysis, lexicalization, is used to display any word which has to be widely known universally (Salkie, 1995). In this analysis, the data are in the form of lexicon and metaphors. The text enclosed many lexicons, but there is a frequently used lexicon to strengthen the identity. Metaphors are used to show style of the publisher in putting the certain unique nuance.

The lexicon dominantly appears in the text is Muslim. Since the text discussing Islamic prayers, Muslims may take viewpoint by comparing the policy regulated in many countries as described in the study.

- (8) Elsewhere, **Muslims** flocked to mosques from Cairo to Mogadishu, whatever the risks.
- (9) Many **Muslims** in the Indonesian capital Jakarta prayed at home, and Southeast Asia's biggest mosque, the Istiqlal, stopped prayers.
- (10) However, elsewhere in the world's most populous **Muslim** country, people crowded into their mosques. Data (8) to (10) specifically expresses Muslim never stop praying although the Covid-19 spread. Datum (8) and (10) explains people persistently practiced prayers against the prohibition of the



communal prayers. The text does not include the particular countries that had regulated indulgence policy. Assumption may appear that some places were reportedly confidential. However, in datum (9) Indonesian Muslims tried to pray at home due to abide both governmental regulation and recommendation of the Islamic scholars.

(11) Most major mosques worldwide **close doors** to Muslim worshippers for 'Jummah', but there were bouts of communal praying.

(12) The Blue Mosque of Istanbul, with its pencil minarets and cascading domes, Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock under its gilt roof, and the huge Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca with its ornate square minaret **had all shut their doors**.

(13) Some mosques **broadcast** an altered version of the call to prayer, exhorting the faithful to stay at home.

Texts may have distinctive characteristics in presenting information, including figure of speech utilization. One of several figures of speech found in the text is metaphor. The text includes metaphor to express somebody or something which does not represent the real meanings. Basically, the data above explains that the mosques around the world had been temporarily closed due to the Covid-19. However, every datum has difference strategy than the others. Datum (11) and (12) have the same idea that the mosque like people who could close doors. Datum (13) shows that mosque broadcasted altered call to prayer, however, someone namely muazin who truly sang the call to prayer.

### **Mesolevel of Analysis**

In this section, the CDA analysis relates to discourse practice. It describes processes to examine discourse such as production, distribution, and

consumption. Based on the Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA, intertextuality and interdiscursivity are included in the discourse production.

In discourse production process, the analysis presents association between the writer and publisher who have responsibility to publish the text. The writer was not shown because the text was initiatively taken from other articles. As the writer does not appear, the AJE might composed the text from several news feeds related to the Islamic prayers. Therefore, the discourse could be built comprehensively to capture the current situation as a reference for the readers.

(14) In Islam's holiest sanctuary in Mecca, the usually crowded courtyard around the Kaaba in the Grand Mosque, towards which all Muslims pray, was silent and empty.

(15) But in Karachi, Pakistan's biggest city, mosques were crowded as a religious scholar told his congregation via loudspeaker: "We are not too weak to let this one virus empty our mosques."

(16) "Why should I be afraid to go out, shop, work, pray or go anywhere else? But only after taking precautions, taking care of my hygiene, and all those rules that Islam dictates," he said.

In discourse distribution, intertextuality helps readers to predict units of structures found in the text. Fairclough (1995) stated that intertextuality also plays important role to emphasis idea of the discourse including discourse representation, assumption, presupposition, and irony. However, the study examined assumption and irony. Datum (14) portrays the Grand Mosque in Mecca had been being visited continuously by the Muslims all over the countries every time. The text aims to





communicate that thousands or million people had visited there for the prayers and Hajj so that the writer uses usually crowded. It meant that today only few people or none of them were not allowed to enter the mosque. Meanwhile, datum (15) describes Muslims had flocked to several mosques in Karachi, Pakistan. It shows contradiction to description relating to other countries that had closed the mosques. Therefore, no evidence was found in the text which illustrates the situation in Karachi today. The text only assumes that many people still prayed went to the mosques.

The global emergency issue was not able to stop Muslims pray to the mosques. It can cause irony for many reasons. They might be infected by the virus and showed disobedience to the governmental policy. Datum (8) and (16) describe that some people showed disobedience to the governmental regulation which urge them to practice prayers at home. Datum (8) explains in several countries such as Egypt the worshippers flocked to the mosques while there might be crowded. Datum (16) shows someone's point of view that he could go outside and do daily activities as usual as long as he apply the rules suggested by the religion. According to those data and discourse in the text, the governments had tried to suspend the spread of the virus. It became irony that people still did various activities outside which were harmful for the society.

The intertextual analysis can be completed by conducting examination by means of interdiscursivity analysis. Fairclough (1995) argued interdiscursivity introduces types of the discourse used to produce the text. Based on the topic used in this study, the discourse mainly describes governmental regulation to prohibit prayers in the mosque temporarily due

to the Covid-19 in many countries. In other news feeds which did not included in this study, the AJE also reported that thousands people in the world died caused by the virus. By delivering such the news feeds though the short-tem religious regulation, the AJE attempts to deliver awareness about the situation abroad.

Discourse relating to prohibition of Muslim communal prayers had became problematic issue. The issue was commenced by the close of mosques in the world. Then, many governments regulated prohibition of Islamic prayers in the mosques and advised the worshippers to pray at home. Therefore, the discourse mainly talked updated issue at which news agencies might not interested in investigating such the certain religious matters. Many news agencies today only posted news feeds relating to the numbers of confirmed positive and deaths caused by the virus.

Discourse distribution process of the text was examined in this study. The text portrayed not only the governments but also the Islamic scholars advised the people to pray at home. The readers could evaluate the policy regulated in the certain countries. Therefore, the text might also influence decision of the readers to pray either in the mosques or at homes.

### **Macrolevel of Analysis**

The AJE generally releases current news which have become the epistemic issues. For instance, the text examined in the study informs that the governments showed power to regulate the policy. The datum (1) to (3) illustrates that the governments had power to suspend the communal prayers in the mosque. However, the text does not render punishment which might be regulated if the people broke the rule. This precaution was essentially required



because there might be people who did not recognize relating the dangerous effect of the virus. Ulinuha et al. (2013) said that the identical issue relates to the correlation between particular aspects such as society, religion and culture. The text conveys that there were groups of people still practice communal prayers in the mosques. This finding is similar to a study by Tampubolon et al. (2017) which claimed that many social situations happen in society because the solution to this social situations are reluctant. The places were confidentially reported such as stated in datum (10). In Indonesia, the government and the Islamic scholars had advised Muslims to pray at home. It occurred because the AJE does not have enough data to be shown. Certain surveys may be required to prove this statement.

As the AJE is managed by the Qatari government, it becomes a subdivision of a news agency namely Al Jazeera which publishes news in Arabic. It has a good reputation so that Muslims access their website or read the news feeds and to acquire knowledge. Unfortunately, the text examined in the study was not originally written by their journalist. Objectivity of the text may be different from the sources. Adaptation in reproducing the text could be carried out for dramatic discourse.

The publisher combined several articles which had been published by the RNA. The RNA is closely affiliated with the news agency located in London, United Kingdom. The AJE may have agreement so that the AJE is allowed to repost the news.

## **CONCLUSION**

The AJE had published article related to the Muslim prayers practiced during the spread of Covid-19. The AJE comprehensively constructed the paragraphs by using the common words. The text implicitly notes several Muslim majority governments showed power by having regulated policy to stop temporarily the communal prayers in the mosques as presented in the text. The governments had authority to regulate the policy through transitivity construction stated in the text. Therefore, the text does not only deliver information about prohibition the Friday Prayer but also other prayers practiced in the mosques and rejections by some people. This condition can be proved by investigating the critics to the regulation given in the text.

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