AN ANALYSIS OF RELIGION BIAS IN ENGLISH COURSEBOOK OF HIGHSCHOOL STUDENT ISSUED BY INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT

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Abstract

The demand of English as a global language has become the most popular issue in ESL world. It results to the growing demand of English course book to assist student accelerating their competence. It is therefore the presence of a course book in teaching and learning process is fundamentally important. As well as the massive number of course books, the analysis towards its contents is believed to be an urgent conduct among educators. However this analysis has rarely been practiced today. Most importantly to the external factor surrounding the process of course book design in which the course book is made such as religion, gender and culture. It is due to the fact that the process of course book writing is always be adjusted to the local culture or religion where the course book is used. Hence, this research will further assess the religion bias as appeared in student's English course book. The researcher has analyzed five English course books issued by the Indonesian government in which the researcher performs literature study and observation to attain the result. After collecting the data, researcher uses critical

discourse analysis to further process the data. The research suggests that there is a huge tendency of bias in every coursebook that tends to expose the practice of certain religion group in Indonesia. This research will be a good reference where coursebook writers or designers could create a coursebook that is free from any bias. Further, it could maintain fairness in education without any bias to certain community or group only.

Keywords

English Course book, Religion Bias, Critical Discourse Analysis

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1. Introduction

Coursebook is an important instrument in classroom activity. The development of English language teaching in Indonesia has triggered the rapid use of coursebook as a medium of teaching and learning. It lies under the assumption that the use of coursebook benefits the learning process. There are some benefits of using coursebook in classroom activity. Firstly, it can promote independent learning (Hutchinson & Torres, 1994). Student can independently access the coursebook through its easy to use nature. Secondly, coursebook can also help student to improve their understanding upon particular material. (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Further, Sheldon (1988) asserts that the use of coursebook is based on some reasons. Teacher may not be equipped with enough skill to desing the material. Furthemore, coursebook design is somewhat time consuming. In the other hand, teachers have to accomplished many other demanding task apart from teaching. Thus, almost all schools in Indonesia are equipped with coursebook for their students as the avenue to ease learning process.

It is equally important to acknowledge that textbook are socially motivated and constructed (Budairi, 2012). Textbook is produced within certain social, cultural and political context, knowledge and culture presented in textbook are not neutral but represent certain interests of particular individual, group or institution (Budairi, 2012). For instance, textbook does not only carry material for educational purposes but also value or belief embeded in society where coursebook is constructed such as religion, race or culture. For further extent, Apple (1992) believes that textbook functions as an ideological message system of transmitting dominant values and beliefs in society. Thus, it is obvious that coursebook can be used as a tool of transfering hidden messages beyond its original purpose. Coursebook, therefore features some

values of dominant group as to how it also contains material that is ideologically bias.

This research performs descriptive qualitative method under Fairclough and Van Dijk critical discourse analysis. Many expert define CDA as relation to the power and dominance I society (Rasman, 2014). Fairclough (in Eriyanto, 2001) asserts that CDA aims at exploring the relationship of casuality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts with wider social and cultural structure, relation and process. In short, CDA functions as a medium to figure out meaning, value or message that is brought by text or any practice.

In Indonesia, the source of coursebook is coming from two different sectors. They are private publisher and governement publisher. Commonly, private publisher sell their product to both private and public school. In some extent, this private publisher have made a long termagreement with some schools to sell their product to students. In order to prevent monopoly and unaffordable price of coursebook,ministry of education launched a free coursebook accesible at onlinewebsite (Ministry of Education, 2008). The format of coursebook is electronic book (e-book) that can be freely downloaded by teacher, student or any institution (Ministry of Education, 2008). The coursebook was issued for the sake of achieving a fair distribution of school facility and to promote affordable coursebook for all students.

Based on the above explanation, the researcher has put a very strong interest to analyze the content of governement coursebook as to whether there is a religion bias in it or not. The researcher formulates two main problems. Firstly, knowing what religion bias is. Secondly how religion bias is practised in coursebook. The researcher found some interesting example such as texts that expose the practice of religion and the use of image that symbolize the certain religion as well.

2. Theoritical Framework

2.1 Coursebook

Coursebook or textbook is defined as a manual of instruction or a standart book in any branch of study. It is produced based on the demand of the educational instituition (Hutchinson an Torres, 1994). In many studies coursebook is also believed as a teaching material which presents the subject matter defined by the curriculum (Hutchinson and Torres,1994). Principally, coursebook carries on a purpose as a medium of instruction in teaching used in classroom activity. Coursebook is commonly presented to assist student's learning process. For instance,

there are some materials provided by a coursebook to be practised in a classroom. Coursebook plays an important role in teaching and learning of english (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). They further asserts that it provides neccesary input into classrom lesson through different activities, readings and explanations. Richard (2001) also outlines that any learning program may have no impact if it does not have a textbook as they provide structure and syllabus. In conclusion, textbook functions a very important part in every classroom activity as they provide defined material which is based on fixed curriculum to assist student's learning.

2.2 Religion Bias

Religion in itself is really hard to define. Many researchers and schoolars are still trying to fromulate what religion really means. At some extents, religion is believed as a practised of belief upon some groups of people. However, a fundamental theory of any religion is, or should be an explanation of the link between the two most observed aspects of religion, the individual aspect and the social aspect (Razin, 2006). For further explanation Razin (2006) asserts that individual aspect commonly referred to as beliefs of the individual about the power or ablities of some supernatual entity. The social aspect refer to the observation that most religious rituals are conducted by the collective and not by individual, and that most religions would prescribe how to behave in social interaction. The concept of religion lies under the assumption that individuals have a demand for supernatural goods and thus a market emerges for the supply of these goods Berman (In Razin, 2006). The demand for religious group endogenously arises as social need and individual join a religious group as it alters both their behavior and the behavior of others towards them (Razin, 2006). This assumption results to the various types of beliefs and religion bringing different values and thoughts to their follower. The concept of different religion, in itselt has formulated a religious tendency where people will tend to choose particular religion which they fit the most. This is truly in line with what Razin (2006) believes that inherent heterogenity of beliefs in society might be interpreted as religious tendencies.

This religious tendency, in some extent, is referred to as a bias. Bias in religion can be promoted by the different concept of beliefs wherepeople hold the value of certain religion. The diversification of values in religon lies under the various types of concept living in society's mind. In Indonesia, a country with strong religion diversification, has at least five different acknowledged religions namely Islam, Christian, Hindu, Budha and Kong hu chu. This

differences may result to social conflict and elicit dominance and power in which it has different interest. Dominance and power is triggered by the different history and starting point of every religon above. Islam, for instance has stronger position than any other religion in Indonesia. It is due to the fact that Islam is a religon with the biggest follower. 70 % of Indonesian are moslem following a stronger domination which affects many sector in society and public area. This domination can be seen in government policy, education and any important aspect. These facts are narrowly believed as bias of interest of religion. In broader range, It creates a social gap and difference in society life which practically result to conflict of interest in education and other field. This phenomenon is seen by the researcher as a bias of religion. The researcher further access the data from coursebook of english issued by the government.

2.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is defined by many experts as a relation to dominance and power in society. CDA concerns to the power abuse, dominance, and inequality that is enacted, reproduced and resisted by the text and talk in the social and political context (Van Dijk, 2001). Accordingly, there is a distinctive terms refelcted to the discourse which is power and dominance. These two terms are basically fundamental in CDA as to how it gives a framework to analyze particular phenomenon lies under practices and other medias. This is inline with what Rasman (2014) outlines that discourse is the product of the society's beliefs or ideologies. Thus, this scope of context has been the main focus issues in critical discourse analysis.

Fairclough (1989) outlines three interrelated dimensions of discourse and three interrelated aspects in CDA.They are description, interpretation and explanation. Description mainly focused on the formal properties of the text while interpretation concerned with the relationship between text and interaction. It sees the text as a product of a process of production and as a resource in the process of interpretation. In contrast, Explanation concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context. The analysis in each step is different and may change accordingly. For instance, the analysis in description stage is different than that of interpretation and explanation. Labeling the formal features of the text can be seen in description stage. It employs categories of descriptive framework. In the other hand, there is a cognitive process in interpreation in which it prevails the relationship between transitory social events and durable social structures which shaped and are shaped by these events (Rasman, 2014). Thus,

every stage of CDA contains defferent classification and process.

Further, Van Dijk (2008)classifies CDA into three main parts. They are text, social cognition and context. Van Dijk classified text into further extent in which he divided it into some parts. Macro structure of the text deals with broader scope of analysis including the topic of the text or the theme it carries. In this stage, researcher can view a text from general perspective in wider range. In the next stage, Van Dijk classified super structure of the text. It principally covers the organization of the text such as how writer structurize text into one unit of complete structure. Lastly, Van Dijk's CDA concern on the micro structure of the text. Micro structure covers local meaning of the text represented in word choice, writing style and the syntactical structure of the text. Second classification in Van Dijk's CDA is social cognition. This aspect tries to figure out how a particular text is produced. It includes the reason behind the construction of a text. It aims at knowing the motivation lies behind the procces of text writing. Lastly, Van Dijk explores the context of the text. Context describes the discourse existing in society as well as the problem sorrounding it.

A group of researcher in University of East Anglia tried to define CDA in a different extent. They are Roger Fowler and co who define CDA into two major parts. Fowler (In Eriyanto, 2001) define that framework of analysis of CDA can be classified into vocabulary and grammatical structure of the text. Fowler believes that word itself contains classification of reality. This classification then provides an avenue to control information and experience. He further asserts that vocabulary influenced on how human understand and comprehend phenomenon and fact. Grammatical strucure also gives a strong influence to the discourse. For instance, Fowler differentiate the structure of active and passive voice. Those two form of sentences may illustrate different meaning eventhough they are constructed similarly. Passive voice, further can also create different sense of information and will decrese the emphasis on the sentence.

To sum up, the above explained concepts are well known concepts in CDA. However, in this research, the researcher would like to go with Van Dijk framework. This is based on a number of reason. Firstly, Van Dijk's model offers broader specturm of analysis in which a researcher could explore the text at its fullest extent. Researcher could also analyze the construction of the text based on the reason behind. Secondly, Van Dijk's framework provides

more relevance to the researcher case of study about textbook. This is due to the fact that textbook is written for some numerous reasons. Hence, the researcher believes that this concept would fit the most to the analysis of religion bias in english couresbooks.

3. Methodology

This is a qualitative case study focusing on the analysis of religion bias in english coursebook of highschool student. The analysis of text book was conducted under critical discourse analysis framework. CDA focuses on analyzing written or spoken to figure out the discursive sources of bias, power, dominance and inequality (Van Dijk, 2001). Similarly, Fairclough describes the aims of CDA as to systematically explore often opaque relationship of casualities and determination between discursive practices, events and texts and wider social cultural structures, relations and processes; to analyze how such practice arises and how the relation of the practices to the ideology it brought. As a method, Dijk (1994) believes that CDA does not have a fixed theoritical framework or methodology but rather functioned as a shared perspective encompasing various range of approaches. Therefore, this research covers wider range of possibilities of results. This is due to the fact that the coursebook may or may not contain the neccesarry data to which a framework of analysis can be readily applied. Thus, it was very essential to explore the book at the fullest extent in order to search the most appropriate feature from which the discourse and power relation could be revealed. The other crucial reason of the choice of methodological approach is based on Huckin's (1997) suggestion that a researcher first approach a text in uncritical manner, like an ordinary, undiscerning reader and then come to it again with critical manner. In short, the most essential factor of using this approch is to avoid a preconception of the researcher towards the text. The researcher, therefore should compeletely explore the text by performing a case study to ultimately search the feature of the text. In conclusion, this research intended to exlpore both textual and contextual properties of the text as its corpus of analysis.

This research employs five english coursebooks for senior highschool issued by government. They are *Interlanguage*for grade X*, Developing English Competencies* for grade X, *Bahasa Inggris* for grade XI, *Bahasa Inggris* for grade X second semester and *Bahasa Inggris*

for grade XII. To begin, the researcher firstly play a role as typical reader who were trying to comprehend the textbook at the fullest extent with uncritical manner. The text were then revisited by offering question, doing a brief comparative analysis and outlining why the coursebook were constructed in such manner critically.

As a tool of analysis, the researcher uses *Padan* analysis. Padan analysis is seen as a method who compared words with the context in the text (Sudaryanto, 1993). *Padan*in itself means a synonymy word that is compared to other words in a text. Comparison of the meaning to the context or social context of the text is the main focus in *Padan* analysis.

The focus of analysis was then limited to the two coursebooks namely *Interlanguage* and *Developing English Competencies.* It isbecause they are somehow different in the way the text constructed in comparison to the rest of textbooks.The two coursebooks had specific theme in each and have been used mostly by the education institution in Indonesia. The chosen textbooks were written by Joko Priana and Achmad Dody.

Afterwards, the researchersets a platform of categorization and classification to the textbooks. Different themes and topics were then identified, assigned and classified to the diffent categories. The same rule was also applied to the pictures, graphs, charts and any visualizations. This categorization resulted to the set of data in terms of texts and images.

5. Findings and Discussion

The researcher uses Van Dijk's framework of analysis to analyze the data in this session. Van Dijk outlines some aspects of analysis such as thematic, schematic, detail, conditional coherence, graphic and lexicon. Further explanations will be as follows.

5.1 Thematic

Thematic aspect deals with general picturization of the text which includes main idea, topic, and summary (Van Dijk, 2001 in Eriyanto). Topic illustrates the main purpose of the text because it plays a central role asa focus of discussion in a text. Further, the other parts in a textbook is commonly adjusted to the main topic of the text.

Thematic analysis will be discussed in the following data :*Interlanguage* for grade X consists of ten chapters in which each chapter has different topic. The ten topics are *introduction*

and greeting, showing sympathy, instruction, appointment, thanking, responding to thanks, compliment, expressing disbelief, surprise and excitment. All of the topics aboveare basically general topics in English coursebook.

The paragraph below concerns with religious practice as its main theme. *Ijab*, a legal process of marriage is refferred to as an Islam main practice in marriage. Here is the data taken from the coursebook.

- *In the following morning, <u>Ijab</u> Ceremony (religious marriage consecration) was held. I sat right behind the bride. I really didn't want to miss this moment because it is the most important phase in the wedding. After Ijab, there were some Javanese ceremonies following the wedding celebration. They were Panggih, Balangan Suruh, Wiji Dadi, Sindur Binayang, Timbang, Tanem, TukaKalpika, Kacar Kucur, Dahar Klimah, Sungkeman and Mertui Ceremony. I waoo busy in the reception table so I did not follow all of those ceremonies.*

The above theme was found in unit two (Page 29). In this unit, the main theme was about showing a practice of marriage. The theme of the text mainly focused in a religion practice which was Islam. The researcher found that there was a tendency to explore a practice of particular religion. *Ijab*, for isntance, a marriage ritual of islam was shown in this text. It proved that there was a bias portayal of religion in thematic aspect.

5.2 Schematic

Schematic aspect is described by Van Dijk as the composisiton of the text. For example, a paragraph organization consists of Introduction, discussion and conclusion. This composition is described by Van Dijk as a way to hide the truly important information in a text. Writer may place the most important information in the end of the text as an attempt to decrease the importance or the emphasis so that the real negative information can be hidden. Further, a writer could also blur the information by not exploring deeper the infomation. Instead, the writer will prioritize other information to weaken the real message behind. This analysis can be seen in the below data.

- *In the following morning, <u>Ijab</u> Ceremony (religious marriage consecration) was held. I sat right behind the bride. I really didn't want to miss this moment because it is the most important phase in the wedding. After Ijab, there were some Javanese ceremonies*

following the wedding celebration. They were Panggih, Balangan Suruh, Wiji Dadi,
Sindur Binayang, Timbang, Tanem, TukaKalpika, Kacar Kucur, Dahar Klimah,
Sungkeman and Mertui Ceremony. I waoo busy in the reception table so I did not follow
all of those ceremonies

This paragraph, which explored the Ijab as a practice of Islam,found in page 29 of 34 in the unit. It can be considered as last page placement to weaken the essence of Ijab itself and rather prioritze other topic of discussion. Thus, the hidden message about religion will be seen as a minor part.

5.3 Detail

Detail related to the adding of information which benefited particular party. As long as the information will give benefit, the writer will continously glorify the information and abandone the other which the writer think will be harmful. For instance, one would focus on detail information which will be good for the position in scoiety and prefer to delete the rest of information that will treath them. It can be in the form of repetition or highlight.

- *Inul aims to drill after hajj*

  JAKARTA: Dangdut singer Inul Daratista says she will not stop performing her raunchy
  hip-gyrating dance, "the drill" after recently completing a spiritual pilgrimage to Mecca.
  "Uztad (cleric) advised me to run my business as usual after the haj. He only told me
  to stop if I was too tired. How am I supposed to feed my family if I don't sing and
  dance?" saidthe singer whose dancing was once the source of a major controversy here.
  Inul said she wouldn't be changing her typically-tight stage out_ ts like many other
  actresses and female singers who start wearing headscarves after coming back from the
  haj." ..... (the costume) depends on the songs: If I was ordered to sing qasyidah (Arabic
  songs). I'd have to adjust. "Inul said quoted by Detikcom.Inul who travelled to Mecca
  with her husband, Adam Suseno, said they had been
  impressed by the beauty of the city and were planning to make a return trip within the
  next four months.
  "Next year, four months from now, we'll take the umroh (minor haj program), " she said.
  Adapted from: The Jakarta Post, December 27, 2007

This paragraph was taken from *Interlanguage* page 182. This paragraph discussed the story of public figure who went to hajj pilgirmage in Mecca, an Islam practice. The writer continously added information about this practice by adding Uztadz (a spiritual figure in Islam) advices. Further, there is adding information about *Qasyidah,* (an arabic song) which is identical to moslem. Lastly, there talked about umrah and the beaty of mecca. The detailed information are all underlined. Thus, the detail aspect can be seen from the continous information that are highlighted in the paragraph.

5.4 Conditional Coherence

Conditional coherence involves the use of clauses to add the detail information about certain object. It commonly uses conjungtion to add complement to the sentece. For example, the sentence *Indonesian government canceled the implementation of new curriculum* would mean differently compare to *Indonesian Government cancelled the implementation of new curriculum which is very controversial.* The adding of clause *which is very controversial* gives different sense to the sentence. This practice is seen not only to givefurther explaination to the object but also as the way to give bad or good labelling toward the object.

- *Inul who travelled to <u>Mecca</u> with her husband, Adam Suseno, said they had beenimpressed by <u>the beauty of the city</u> and were planning to make a return trip within the next four months.*

This sentence is taken from *Interlanguage* page 182. There is written a detailed infromation that Mecca, Islamic sacred city is very beautiful. This creates a tendecy to picturize Islam as a religon in Indonesia.

5.5 Graphic

Graphic includes all appearance of the text including the font choice, font style and font size. It all symbolizes different meaning. Using bigger font would mean to give a strong emphasis and to increase the importance. Most importantly, the text is equipped with visual aid such as pictures,, graphs or table. These all visual aids also give different sense to the text.
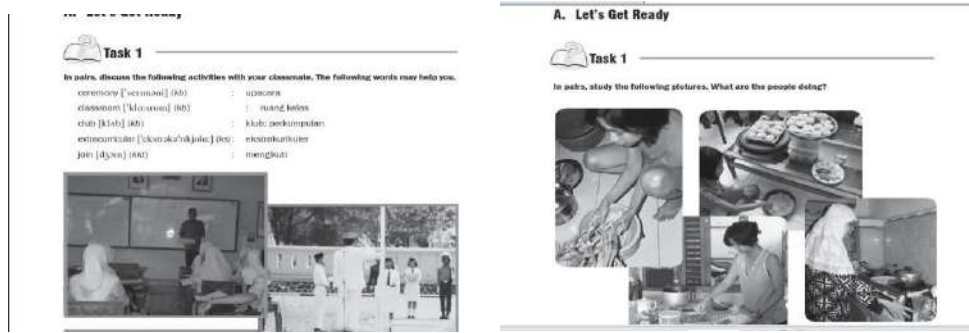
Figure 1: *Interlanguage Page 3 and page 37*

The pictures above were taken from *Interlanguage* page 3 and page 37. The pictures show a classroom activity and home activity with people wearing veil, an identical symbol for moslem women. This is believed as practice of showing the interest of particular religion.

Figure 2: *Developing English Competecies page 113.*

The second picture also illustrates the classroom activity where student were wearing veil as a symbol of moslem women.

5.6 Lexicon

Lexicon here means the words choices the writer chose in the text. The choice of word could also affect the meaning or the message it conveys. The word choice also covers the name choice, figure or any possible words.

Figure 3: *Developing English Competencies page 7 and 63*

The above picture shows the tendecy in word choice. There used the name of Ali, an arabian name. It is very essential because Ali is very close to an Islamic name. Further, Ismail is also appears in the textbook. Ismail is also very close to an islamic name as he is one of acknwoledged prophet in Islam. Thus, the researcher concluded that there is a tendency of bias in word choice, in this context is name choice.

6. Conclusion and Suggestion

Based on the above findings, the researcher concluded that there is a tendency toward particular religion. The researcher viewed this phenomenon based on Van Dijk's framework of analysis which covers thematic, shcematic, detail, conditional coherence and lexicon aspect. In thematic aspect, the researcher believed that there is a religon bias reflected in the writer'schoice of thetext that is themed a religion practice. It can be seen in the text entitled *Religious ceremony* page 29 where the author of the book tried to explore a religious ceremony called *ijab,* an Islamic marriage ceremony. This is seen by the researcher as bias because the author prefer more to the theme than the other. This choice of the theme reflected a bias to Islam as a major religion in Indonesia. So that, the author covered it in the text. Moreover, such practice is actually a very well known moslem practice particularly in marriage in Indonesia.

Secondly, in terms of schematic, the researcher found that the bias of religion happened in systematical scheme such as limiting the importance by putting the religious information in the end of the text to create less important sense. This is believed as religious tendency because there is an attempt to include religious information inside the text. Further, this information is written in the end of the page. The researcher found this as a way to hide the message.

Thirdly, the researcher also found the detail aspect as well. This is due to the fact that there is detail information about hajj pilgrimage provided in the text. It is believed as a bias or tendicious aspect toward religion. Hajj pilgrimage was descibed in *Interlanguage* page 182. The detail pont about the hajj was explained under the supporting sentences which mainly talked about *Uztad* (cleric) suggestion in doing hajj. Further, there was also an explanation about Mecaa, the most important city for moslem in conducting hajj and also the practice of *umroh,*

aminor hajj. These all detail information was merely attempts to explore and explain hajj pilgirmage.

Afterwards, Conditional coherence also exemplified the same outcome where the writer put further extention to exlplain mecca as the city of Islam. Next, researcher found pictures and visual aids which show a bias. It is because the figure reflected there were all showing an Islamic tradition in wearing veil.

Lastly, in the aspect of lexicon, the researcher viewed that the bias is reflected in the form of name choice. The author of the book tends to chose an arabic name such as Ali, Ismail and so on in representing the figure in the text. This choices were seen as a form of bias because those name is related closely to Islam. This analysis, therefore is included in the lexicon aspect respectively.

To conclude, this research can significantly contributes to both theoritical and practical aspect. Theoritically, it can broaden a scope of analysis of CDA where other researchers could use it as a reference in the other research. Moreover, this research could also be a reference for coursebook authors to design free-bias content in the future. Practically, this research would benefit in providing neccesary information for teacher, school or any institution to avoid bias in teaching and learning process. The researcher further suggests that in the process of coursebook writing, an author should not relate or put their interest into the text. This is essential because tendencious manner would endanger the harmony in strongly diversified country like Indonesia. Education should be free from anyinterest of particular group.

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