

DISCOURSE OF IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY: THE TALIBAN'S WOMEN EDUCATION BAN POLICY IN AFGHANISTAN

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Abstract: In every country in the world, education is supposed to be for everyone, without any limitations and different treatments to the students. This is what happened in Afghanistan in the last month of 2022. Taliban has been ruling Afghanistan since 2021 after the US left the country. In their illegal reign, they have promised to the international world to fulfill the rights of Afghanistan people, especially for women. This leads to large scale report in UK news agencies, BBC and NPR, Pakistan new agency. Both news depicting the situation in Afghanistan using the discourse of identity and community. This study investigated discourse markers used in both newspapers. This study was aimed at finding out: a) point of view used in the news of educational banned for women, and b) the most dominant types of discourse used. The study utilizes qualitative descriptive. In data analysis, this study emphasized Van Dijk (2008), Critical Discourse Analysis is a discourse investigation that investigates social power, dominance, and imbalance. However, this study uses the framework proposed by Theo van Leeuwen, which is social actor analysis. So, therefore, thus, then, result indicate that, the writing style, focus, and tendency of both sources Both sources also managed to collect and provide data sufficiently, complete with its remarks from the people or the authorities of Afghanistan. This study concludes that the portrayal of "woman", "the Taliban", and "Afghanistan", it is found that NPR portrays "woman" and "Afghanistan" in a higher regard than "the Taliban" because of their detailed individualization and because "the Taliban" is made to be less appealing by backgrounding many of its actors.

Keywords: newspaper, discourse, identity, women, discrimination

Abstract: Di setiap negara di dunia, pendidikan seharusnya diperuntukkan bagi semua orang, tanpa ada batasan dan perlakuan berbeda terhadap siswanya. Hal serupa terjadi di Afghanistan pada bulan terakhir tahun 2022. Taliban telah memerintah Afghanistan sejak tahun 2021 setelah AS meninggalkan negara tersebut. Dalam pemerintahan ilegalnya, mereka telah berjanji kepada dunia internasional untuk memenuhi hak-hak masyarakat Afghanistan, khususnya perempuan. Hal ini mengarah pada pemberitaan berskala besar di kantor berita Inggris, BBC dan NPR, kantor baru Pakistan. Kedua berita tersebut menggambarkan situasi di Afghanistan dengan menggunakan wacana identitas dan komunitas. Penelitian ini menyelidiki penanda wacana yang digunakan di kedua surat kabar tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui: a) sudut pandang yang digunakan dalam berita pendidikan yang dilarang bagi perempuan, dan b) jenis wacana yang paling dominan digunakan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Dalam analisis data, penelitian ini menekankan Van Dijk (2008), Analisis Wacana Kritis adalah penyelidikan wacana yang menyelidiki kekuatan sosial, dominasi, dan



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ketidakseimbangan. Namun penelitian ini menggunakan kerangka yang dikemukakan oleh Theo van Leeuwen, yaitu analisis aktor sosial. Jadi, dengan demikian, hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa, gaya penulisan, fokus, dan kecenderungan kedua sumber Kedua sumber tersebut juga berhasil mengumpulkan dan menyediakan data secukupnya, lengkap dengan sambutan dari masyarakat atau penguasa Afghanistan. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa penggambaran “perempuan”, “Taliban”, dan “Afghanistan”, ditemukan bahwa NPR menggambarkan “perempuan” dan “Afghanistan” dalam penghargaan yang lebih tinggi daripada “Taliban” karena individualisasi mereka yang mendetail dan karena “Taliban” dibuat menjadi kurang menarik dengan memberikan latar belakang pada banyak aktornya.

Kata Kunci: surat kabar, wacana, identitas, perempuan, diskriminasi

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important things to get at a young age. This is really needed to evolve the mindset of students in the early growth timeline. It is also essential to provide the young generation with all the knowledge to face their future as the next generation replacing the previous one. With education, the world would be in a safe place because it plays important roles in running society. In every country in the world, education is supposed to be for everyone, without any limitations and different treatment to the students. Therefore, if this term is violated, it would cause enormous chaos in the country, especially for the people who feel harmed.

This is what happened in Afghanistan in the last month of 2022. Taliban has been ruling Afghanistan since 2021 after the US left the country. In their illegal reign, they have promised to the international world to fulfill the rights of Afghanistan people, especially for women. However, the reality is not what was expected before because they still use some particular limitation in fulfilling the rights of people. Recently, they made a controversial policy to ban women from getting college education. After implementing strict rules to the women, they still exacerbate its education condition by making such a decision to limit women's education. Some women staged demonstrations in its capital city due to the Taliban's new policy to ban women from college education (*Afghanistan: Taliban Don Close Universities to Women - BBC News Pidgin*, n.d.). This controversial move leads to condemnation from several countries in the world. Not only among the country's leaders, but the Taliban's education ban policy is also much talked about by international people.

The international news agencies also report this news in large scale and sources. This leads to different styles of writings that can change the perception of the readers. One example comes from the way UK and Pakistan news agencies reported the news with the same topic and problem but with different focus and perspective. Both news agencies come from different political regions, UK with the western political territory and Pakistan

with the non-western political territory. Therefore, the writer is going to carry out a little research about the different style of writing between the UK news agency (BBC) (*Afghanistan: Taliban Don Close Universities to Women - BBC News Pidgin*, n.d.) and Pakistan news agency (NPR) (*Taliban Bans Women in Afghanistan from Attending University : Goats and Soda : NPR*, n.d.) in depicting the situation in Afghanistan using the discourse of identity and community. The writer is also going to classify the way both news sources depict women, Taliban, and Afghanistan in their passages.

METHOD

The differences of writing style and focus in the different news agencies have been properly researched years ago, either from the perspective of discourse of identity or community. Some research findings that have been made show that different identities play important roles in shaping the writing style and focus in the news reports (Coates, 1991), however, some research findings show that different communities contribute much more effort in shaping the tendency and writing character. For example, a study of the discourse of community found that the information in international news media can vary across different contexts and over time, also can reflect the alteration in the social, cultural, and political condition (Poplack et al., 2010).

However, researchers also argue that the difference of writing style and focus in the news can also be resulted by the dynamics in the social life. Therefore, not only identity and community which take part in the variety of news in the world, but there are also other factors. It can be affected by social inequality rate and dominant groups of the countries which impact the dynamics, power, and life of people in the society. Therefore, the use of language in different news agencies in the world can be different after all those aspects in society have been marginalized by the members of the community (Betwell & Stokoe, 2006). For example, news agencies from western countries often reproduce the dominant cultural values and ideologies such as individualism, consumerism, and neoliberalism because those values exist in the society and people live with those values (Van Dijk, 2012). These recent studies have begun to provide insight into how identity and community can shape the writing style and focus of the news agencies.

The writer's focus in this paper is to analyze the way the news from BBC and NPR in portraying the women, Taliban group, and Afghanistan in their news. In the analysis, the writer used the Discourse of Identity and Community as the theories. In the meantime, the writer also used Gee J and Penelope J theories to analyze the example and evidence in the news contents. Moreover, the writer used the qualitative descriptive method in this paper after considering the importance of cultural context in the analysis. It is appropriate with the remark by (Creswell, 2007) that said this method

allows researchers to study in their natural context, rather than manipulating variables in a controlled environment. The data sources were taken from BBC News from the UK and NPR News from Pakistan. The first analysis phase was classifying data into its types, afterwards collecting the source, then checking its accuracy, and the last was concluding the research.

RESULT

After comparing both sides from BBC and NPR writings, the writer found some differences in the terms of writing style, focus, and tendency of both sources. However, the writer got the fact that overall both sources could be similar enough in conveying the information. Both sources also managed to collect and provide data sufficiently, complete with its remarks from the people or the authorities of Afghanistan. Both sources are also informative enough in giving the detail of the event, despite the fact that they used different approaches to do this. The differences in the terms of writing style, focus, and tendency that could be seen from both sources are:

NPR News (Pakistan)

- I. More focus on the Afghanistan female students' experiences
- II. More neutral in providing the fact
- III. Portraying women from a smaller point of view
- IV. Afghanistan is more portrayed as a country under Taliban's dictatorship
- V. Taliban is portrayed with smaller scope (only about the education ban policy)

BBC News (UK)

- I. More focus on the Taliban group
- II. Containing western countries' tendencies
- III. Portraying women from a broader point of view
- IV. Afghanistan is more portrayed as a country of terrorists
- V. Taliban is portrayed with broader insight by relating the previous important events

The first point

- NPR News (I) More focus on the Afghanistan female students' experiences
BBC News (I) More focus on the Taliban group

Analysis: In the first point, the writer had noticed that there is a different focus between both sources. The version of NPR News managed to settle the focus on informing the female students' experiences in the situation after the Taliban's education ban policy. However, this news version still could provide supportive information about the issue. In the meantime, the BBC News version could actually also cover the information about female students amid the education ban policy there. Nevertheless, this news version dominantly informs about the Taliban in Afghanistan rather than the

female students themselves. Even, it literally has a special section to report the Taliban group in the last part of the news. This different focus on informing the problem can be caused by several factors from the difference between Pakistan and UK society, such as culture and ethnicity (Gee, 2015). The writer noticed this movement from BBC as a particular intention from the news agency, because it is supposed to tell about the female student the most which is the main problem of the news. Therefore, from the BBC version, it can be concluded that the Gee J theory about identity is appropriate.

When there is an issue which occurs in France, the way BBC and NPR manage the information to be news would be different due to the difference of culture and ethnicity. Despite the same problem, the news content would be different because of that reason, and this happens because the location between both Pakistan and the UK is far away from each other. The far location makes a lot of differences inside both countries, especially about the local values that are implemented.

The different focus of both BBC and NPR could be seen in the last part, where BBC put the special explaining about Taliban rather than women and female students. The last big line part of the BBC is "*Issue splits Taliban*", while the last big line part of NPR is "*Putting the ban in context*" which discusses more about the policy and female students.

The second point

NPR News (II) More neutral in providing the fact

BBC News (II) Containing western countries' tendencies

Analysis: In the second point, the writer had noticed that the BBC news version included the western countries in the discussion. Despite the fact that both BBC and NPR versions have mentioned countries in their passage, the BBC one specifically put the western countries in the important part. In the BBC's version, it includes specifically western countries' demands about the problems, it is in the part of "*Western countries have demanded all year that the Taliban improve female education*". In the NPR's version, it indeed includes the US, but the rest of the countries mentioned are created with the term "*International community*" rather than mentioning specific countries' political zones. Therefore, what has been done by BBC's version matches with the discourse of community which says that the tendency can be a site of contestation, as members may use language to challenge dominant narratives (Coates, 1991)The NPR version could manage to be neutral, just providing facts without mentioning a particular countries' political area. Hence, the western country tendency from BBC shows that it is appropriate with discourse of community. For example,

American media often include Canada or European countries in discussing international conflicts because they are America's best partner in distance and area. However, the news content is supposed to be neutral without having a political tendency.

The BBC's version uses western countries in the part of "*Western countries have demanded all year that the Taliban improve female education...*", while NPR uses international communities in almost all parts where it mentions the partiality of other countries.

The third point

NPR News (III) Portraying women from a smaller point of view

BBC News (III) Portraying women from a broader point of view

Analysis: In the third point, the writer noted that NPR news provides smaller scope in portraying women in Afghanistan because they only discuss the education ban that affects them. In the meantime, the BBC's version covers a bigger scope of life that women in Afghanistan face in the difficult times when Taliban are ruling. This version includes the other women activities outside the education field which are affected by the Taliban, such as going to parks, gyms, or swimming pools.

The NPR is supposed to provide bigger scope to emphasize the actual condition that faces women or female students in Afghanistan. They could provide the freedom rate or the rules that have been made by the Taliban which affect the social life of women. The part where BBC includes another perspective of women's life is in the last part "*Issue splits Taliban*", where there is a statement that women are banned from visiting certain public spaces.

The fourth point

NPR News (IV) Afghanistan is more portrayed as a country under Taliban's dictatorship

BBC News (IV) Afghanistan is more portrayed as a country of terrorists

Analysis: In the fourth point, there is an equivocal difference on depicting Afghanistan as a country. In NPR's version, Afghanistan is depicted as a country that is occupied by an illegal Taliban group. It is placed in its early part when it refers to 2021 when Taliban gained power in the country. Meanwhile, in BBC's version, Taliban is more depicted as a terrorist country. It is different from the previous version because it emphasizes as if Afghanistan has more brutal people than the normal civil people. It also several times demonizes Afghanistan, but ironically is going to support the

Taliban's reign as recognised official government. It is obviously a contrast and is showing how western media portray the middle-eastern country.

As mentioned before, western media have a tendency to bring their ideologies or values in the writing style in news (Van Dijk, 2012). Therefore, it is clear why BBC's version tends to generalize Afghanistan people into one small group, because the tendency can always exist. If there is a news agency from a certain particular area going to make a news, they are able to set their tendency in acknowledging the subject or people related to the problems based on their values and what they embrace for.

The part of NPR's version showing the Taliban who took control in Afghanistan is in the six earlier paragraphs. Meanwhile, the part of BBC's version generalizing or defaming Afghanistan as unity is in the quotation "*This was the last thing the Taliban could do. Afghanistan is not a country for women but instead a cage for women,*". Although the quotation was made by an interviewee, BBC is actually able to give further explanation after it that says it refers to Afghanistan in the hands of Taliban, not the actual civil people. But in reality, they did not do it.

The fifth point

NPR News (V) Taliban is portrayed with smaller scope

BBC News (V) Taliban is portrayed with broader insight by relating the previous important events

Analysis: In the fifth point, the difference is in the scope both sources use in their writings. The NPR's version mainly only discusses the Taliban in the field of study, without going to deeper root problems in the past. It only mentioned the 2021 event when the Taliban started taking control of the country. In the meantime, the BBC's version managed to portray Taliban in a broader view, relating it to the past events that they related on. Therefore, the BBC's version is more informative because it contains better insight and more complete information than NPR's version.

The informative writings can be seen from their explanation, how deep they can cover the problems and mix it with the available facts. It is what has been done by BBC's version because it could cover more information so that the readers can get the context better.

The BBC has its particular section in explaining the Taliban in the last part of the writing, specifically in the part of "*Issue splits Taliban*". It also has quite deep information about the Taliban before entering the last part.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, both sources actually have different advantages in the writing style and focus area. There are also several differences between them which are really unique and could represent the origin countries from both news agencies. The discourses of identity and community that have been used also could be proven in the discussion part, where the evidence of the writing style is appropriate with the theories. Despite the fact that NPR's version is less informative than BBC's version, it can really bring the topic and mix with the data and remarks from Afghanistan people in such a decent neutrality. In the meantime, BBC's version can appear with such informative writings full of explanation and additional information. However, it also has a weakness that BBC's version contains much tendencies of western countries than being neutral.

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