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The Contribution of Kh. Said Agil Siradj's Leadership in Fighting Radicalism: A Language Communication Strategy

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Abstract

Radicalism and terrorism have become a real threat to world peace and human values. In Indonesia, it has been categorised as an extraordinary crime, particularly since the Bali bombings in 2002. The act of anticipation has been issued by forming anti-terrorism regulation to prevent and crackdown of its action. Nevertheless, this effort is not sufficient to eradicate terrorism action. Collaboration with religious institutions is needed to deal with the questions of the religious doctrines. Therefore, the participation of religious leaders from the Islamic organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is essential. This article aimed to describe Said Agil Siradj's (SAS's) communication strategy at the anniversary of Fatayat NU in 2019. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach of critical discourse analysis, focusing on the illocutionary acts of speech acts theory. The data of the research was transcribed from the video of SAS's speech on YouTube channel. The result shows that the speaker used types of illocutionary acts; representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. These expressions are used to command, persuade, and warn the listeners. Meanwhile, the Islamic terms were used as a discursive practice to maintain a good relationship between a leader and the followers.

Keywords: Radicalism; Discourse analysis; Speech acts; Communication strategy

Abstrak

Radikalisme dan terorisme telah menjadi ancaman bagi perdamaian dan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan. Di Indonesia, tindak terorisme telah menjadi bentuk kejahatan yang luar biasa sejak kejadian bom Bali 2002. Bentuk antisipasi telah dilakukan yakni dengan menerbitkan undang-undang anti-terorisme untuk menangkal dan mengatasi aksi terorisme. Penegakan hukum dan kebijakan regulasi telah dikeluarkan dalam rangka menangkalnya. Namun demikian, tindakan ini belum cukup memadai dalam pemberantasan terorisme. Kolaborasi dengan Lembaga-lembaga keagamaan diperlukan guna menjawab terkait doktrin-doktrin keagamaan. Oleh karena itu partisipasi para pemimpin agama dan organisasi keislaman seperti NU adalah penting. Namun demikian pelibatan organisasi keagamaan dalam konteks ini telah memicu munculnya perdebatan terutama Ketika organisasi tersebut mendominasi peran dalam ranah public. Tulisan ini menjelaskan tentang bagaimana Said Agil Siradj (SAS) mempengaruhi pendengarnya pada acara ulang tahun Fatayat NU ke-73 tahun 2019. Studi ini didesain berdasarkan deskripsi kualitatif pada pendekatan analisis wacana kritis yang berfokus pada tindak ilokusi berdasarkan teori tindak tutur. Data penelitian ini diambil dari transkripsi Video SAS yang diambil dari YouTube. Selanjutnya data dianalisis menggunakan teori tindak ilokusi dan analisis wacana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembicara menggunakan tipe-tipe tindak tutur pada bentuk representasi, direktif, komisif, ekspresi dan deklarasi. Ekspresi-ekspresi tersebut digunakan untuk memerintah, membujuk dan melarang para pendengarnya. Adapun istilah-istilah keislaman digunakan sebagai praktik diskursif guna membangun hubungan social antara pemimpin dan pengikutnya.

Kata Kunci: Radikalisme; Analisis wacana; Tindak tutur; Strategi komunikasi

Background

Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world. The Muslim population in Indonesia has reached 207 million

people or 87,2% of its population. However, Indonesia is not a country with a religious constitution. Given this context, the participation of religious figures in maintaining the nation is essential for its preservation. Given



the constant change that takes place, the involvement of the religious elites is necessary in order to foster true religious understanding in all levels of society. Thus their presence in the public discourse is essential.

The phenomena of religious figures participating in state politics have become more acceptable and even necessary, even though in some cases it causes a conflict of interest, due to the competition required to get into positions of political power.¹ Historically, religious figures have played a significant role in Indonesian society, especially during the struggle to gain independence from the colonialism. This was the case, for instance, for Hasyim Asy'ari, the founder of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU); Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of Muhammadiyah; Wahid Hasyim, H. Agus Salim, and other religious leaders. As a result, religious figures have a special position that is well-respected in society, particularly in a patriarchal society.

The Indonesia Muslim is now living in a dynamic condition, especially since 1998 in the post-Reformation period, which has seen a new form of religiosity dominating the public scene. Many Islamic movements that were underground during the New Order regime are not emerging in the public realm. This is the response to the emergence of new liberal ideas in Indonesian society. Indeed, during this period, due to increased globalisation, many different ideologies have emerged and flourished in Indonesia.²

There are two big Muslim organisations, NU and Muhammadiyah. Both are committed

to the ideology of the state, Pancasila, and the form of state, namely the Unified State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI).³ These concepts are considered non-negotiable, and they are in direct opposition to other forms of statehood, such as the Islamic caliphate (*khilafah*).⁴ This latter ideology is based on the desire to implement an Islamic state system that implements Islamic law.⁵ NU, as the representation of traditionalist Sunni Islam (*ablus sunnah waljama'ab*) has the most followers in Indonesia. Most of its members live in the village or peripheral areas, rather than cities.⁶ This organisation was established on January 31, 1926. The first head of the organisation was Hasyim Asyari.⁷ Meanwhile, Muhammadiyah is very different from NU. For one, their support mainly comes from urban areas. It was also established earlier, on November 18, 1912. Today there is no specific border between NU and Muhammadiyah. In the past, during the independent era, the proliferation of NU members concentrated in the peripheral regions, while Muhammadiyah concentrated their efforts in the city. But today both NU and Muhammadiyah have a diverse spread of its members, based on geography and social stratification.

In the political context, NU has had its ups and downs. For instance, NU once joined with a political party, Masyumi, and became head of its *Majlis Syura* ("consultative council") during

¹ Indonesia has felt in fragmented society since the election 2014 and even emerged in the presidential election 2019 present. Edward Aspinal and Ward Berenschort, *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2019), p. 12

² Haedar Nashir, *Understanding the Ideology of Muhammadiyah* (Surakarta: Muhammadiyah University Press, 2015) p.1

³ Ahmad Baso, K Ng H Agus Sunyoto Rijal Mummaziq. *KH. Hasyim Asy'ari: Pengabdian Seorang Kyai untuk Negeri* (Jakarta: Museum Kebangkitan Nasional RI,

2017), p. 32; Achmad Jainuri, "The Formation of Muhammadiyah Ideology, 1912-1942", Disertasi (McGill University: the Institute of Islamic Studies, 1997), p. 3

⁴ The idea to make Islamic state or manage the government based on Islamic rules.

⁵ The context has become debatable issues at the earlier of Indonesian government and emerged again in the post-reformation era.

⁶ Muhammad Hasyim Asy'ari, *Risalah Ablussunnah wal Jama'ab : Analisis Tentang Hadits Kematian, Tanda-tanda Kiamat, dan Pemahaman Tentang Sunnah dan Bid'ah*, (Jakarta: LTM PBNU dan Pesantren Ciganjur, 2011) p.12-22.

⁷ Baso.



this the Old Order period.⁸ During New Order, NU fused with the PPP (United Development Party), although it later on left this coalition during the national congress (Muktamar) in 1982. In 1984, it was decided then that NU would not be further involved in politics.⁹ Despite being a non-political organisation, the cadres and elites of NU have a significant role in the political process, even during the recent presidential election of 2019. The political activity of NU's members is inevitable, especially given the close relationship between the chairman of NU's executive council, Said Agil Siradj (SAS), with the current leadership of the government. He also is one of the most prominent and formidable Islamic thinkers produced by NU after the late Abdurrahman Wahid.

The alliance of the Indonesian state and religious leaders has become the new political trend.¹⁰ In both local election and national elections, religious leaders have proven to be successful in courting public voters.¹¹ Given this context, SAS' controversial statements on religious discourse, particularly on the concept of "Islam Nusantara" can be considered as an effort to counter radicalism and to get close to the government.

On the other hand, elites and cadres of NU argue that the motivation behind SAS' controversial statement is to protect their members and to counter radical groups that are currently flourishing in Indonesia. Therefore,

this paper provides a critical analysis of SAS' controversial statements related to the issues of radicalism and terrorism. This study focuses on a number of SAS's controversial statements made at the 73rd anniversary of Fatayat NU in 2019. This analysis deploys Fairclough's analytical framework¹², and speech acts theory of illocutionary acts.¹³

This article is a descriptive qualitative study. The video of SAS's speech was transcribed into a data datasheet. The transcription of the speech was used as the original data form used for analysis. Since critical discourse analysis (CDA) provides multiple entry points of analysis¹⁴, this article synthesises CDA and speech acts theory to describe the data found in this study.

There are a number of scholars have made use of critical discourse analysis in dealing with the issues dealt by this paper. First is a study on the speeches of world leaders and how they express political agendas through ideology and power.¹⁵ Another, by Shukry¹⁶, research on an analysis of Mahatir Muhammad's speech on the "war on terror." This research shows the support and critique levelled at the former Prime Minister of Malaysia for his speech criticising human rights violations in the US president's war in Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁶

Another article elaborated on Barack Obama's speech announcing the death of

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⁸ Robin Bush, *Nadhlatul Ulama & the Struggle for Power within Islam & Politics in Indonesia* (Singapore: ISEAS Publish, 2009), p. 32

⁹ Faisal Ismail, 'The Nahdlatul Ulama: Its Early History and Contribution to the Establishment of Indonesian State', *Journal of Indonesian Islam*, 5 (2011), 241, 10.15642/JIIS.2011.5.2.247-282

¹⁰ Greg Fealy & Hugh White, *Indonesia's 'Great Power' Aspirations: A Critical View. Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*, 3(1) (2016), 9. doi:10.1002/app5.122

¹¹ Fealy & Hugh White.

¹² Three layers on 23st, discursive practice and sociocultural practice. Norman Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: the Critical Study of Language* (New York: Longman, 279), p.98.

¹³ Illocutionary acts; John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 2

¹⁴ Jan Blommaert, *Discourse: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.35

¹⁵ Ana Caballero Mengibar, 'Critical Discourse Analysis in the Study of Representation, Identity Politics And Power Relations: A Multi-Method Approach', *Communication & Society*, 38 (2015). 2. 10.1558/1103.28.2.39-54

¹⁶ Azimah Shurfa Mohammed Shukry, 'A Critical Discourse Analysis of Mahathir Mohamad's Speeches on the "War on Terror"', *Intellectual Discourse*, 21:2 (2013).



Osama Bin Laden¹⁷. She found that Barack Obama used neither directive speech acts and declarative speech acts. Representatives are frequently used in Barack Obama's speech because the purpose of the speech is to announce the death of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. In a similar fashion, Gusthini and her team analysed the US presidential debate in 2016¹⁸. Their analysis found that the speech in the debate is the instrument to influence the voters on election day.

Furthermore, Altikriti¹⁹ underlined Obama's political speeches in 2009 and 2013. He found that Obama used more sentences in constative speech acts than other speech acts. Meanwhile, assertive illocutionary acts were used by Barack Obama for persuasion. For the Indonesian context, Kusumawati²⁰ examines Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's international speech text. She found that word choice and sentence elements were built to attract international sympathy. In a similar vein, Yuniawan and his team also examined Joko Widodo's speech at his inauguration²¹. They found extensive use of the persona deixis, place, and time in Jokowi's speech: persona deixis "I" for singular and "we, us" for plural, then deixis place for "this, that, there" and deixis time "now, per year, per month, next five years" and "five years ago." Those deixis were used by Jokowi to attract the attention for the second term of his periods.

Based on the CDA and speech acts studies above, this current article sheds light on religious leadership speech.

Leadership and Communication Strategy

All NU figures are talented and skilled in making speeches, including SAS. Speech is an important skill for religious leaders to have in order to be able to communicate and convey their intentions to their followers. Therefore, a strong capacity for making speeches and exuding leadership through language is essential for a leader. Through them, the leader can define and articulate the purpose of the organisation in a meaningful way.²²

Furthermore, Conger explains that a leader should have two skills to succeed in leadership; first, the ability to frame a discourse and the second is the ability to craft rhetorical expressions or symbolic language. Framing is a way of the leader to interpret his or her organisation's purpose. An effective framing will contribute to a sense of confidence on the part of the organisation's members. Meanwhile, symbolic language is the most common way for the leader in delivering the speech, and it is used not to hurt their listeners. It is more effective rather using direct statement to the listeners. The two skills are essential in delivering the speech.

The strong ability in making speeches on the part of a leader allows him or her to maintain and establish the relationship between his colleagues and subordinates.²³ In other

¹⁷ Atiya Mahmud Hana, 'Speech Acts in Barack Obama Speech's in Announcing the Death of Osama Bin Laden', *WEJ*, 2.2 (2018). 10.31943/wej.Vol2.Iss2.336

¹⁸ Misji Gusthini, et.all. 'A Pragmatic Study of Speech as an Instrument of Power: Analysis of the 2016 USA Presidential Debate', *Studies in English Language and Education*, 5.1 (2018), doi.org/10.24815/siele.v5i1.6906.

¹⁹ Sahar Altikriti, 'Persuasive speech acts in Barack Obama's Inaugural Speeches (2009, 2013) and The Last State of the Union Address (2016)', *International Journal of Linguistics*, 8.2 (2016). 10.5296/ijl.v8i2.9274.

²⁰ Anggara Jatu Kusumawati, 'A Discourse Analysis of SBY's International Speech Text: A Study on Critical Linguistics', *Journal of English and Education*,

5.1, 35 (2011). <https://journal.uui.ac.id/JEE/article/view/4454/3939>.

²¹ Tommi Y., Rustono, Luk A.F., Harits A. Wicaksono, and Yoris A. M., 'Deixis Analysis In The Speech Of President Joko Widodo At The Inauguration', *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 9.3 (2020), www.ijstr.org.

²² Jay A. Conger, 'Inspiring Others: the Language of Leadership', *Academy of Management Executive*, 5 (1991). 31. 10.2307/4164992.

²³ Frans Wijzen, 'Discourse Analysis in Religious Studies: The Case of Interreligious Worship in Friesland', *Anthropos*, 105 (2010). p1-15



words, the leader's ability to use literal and symbolic language while delivering the speech plays a vital role in successful communication that can bolster legitimacy and support.⁹ Furthermore, Fairclough stated that language is seen as a social practice, which implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) that frame it.²⁴

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a general approach for incorporating varying scenario of research analysis in the study of text and speech, and it cannot be defined as a specific approach of a unitary nature on search analysis. Therefore, CDA theoretically has never been and has never attempted to be or to provide one single or particular theory and method for analysis.²⁵ Meanwhile, speech acts (SA)²⁶ can be defined as an utterance which has the speaker's intention and the effect it has on a listener. Therefore, the integration of CDA and SA in this study is important to describe the speech.

This article uses Fairclough framework and the illocutionary act theory to reveal SAS' utterances when delivering a speech at the 73rd anniversary of *Fatayat* NU in 2019. There are five kinds of illocutionary acts; (1) representatives, (2) directives, (3) commissives, (4) expressives, (5) declaration²⁶.

SAS' Speech Analysis

The analysis on this paper employs three models of analysis as articulated by Norman Fairclough: text, discursive practice and sociocultural practice. However, in-text analysis, the speech is categorised into the generic form that consists of introduction,

content, and closing. Searle explores Austins' classification²⁷ that the illocutionary act has fivepoints, which are representative, directive, commissive, expressive, declarations.²⁸ Here, the illocutionary acts can be summarised as follow; *First*, representatives; statements that may be judged true or false because they purport to describe a state of affairs in the world:

“predict, classify, describe, identify,” e.g., “It is a beautiful day outside”; “I predict that h³ will come.”

Second, directives: statements that attempt to make the auditor's action fit the propositional²⁵ content or request, beg, plead, to do something. Verbs denoting members to this are :ask, order, command, request, pray, entreat, invite, and advice,” e.g., “Shut the⁷ door, please!”; “I order you to leave.”; *Third*, commissives: statements which commit the speaker to a course of action as described by the propositional content, e.g., “I promise I will be there at 7:00”; “I vow to get revenge”³ “I promise to you the money.”

Fourth, expressives: statements that express the “sincerity con²⁸dition of the speech act.” These expressive characteristically require a gerund transformation of the verb in the lower node, e.g., “I am feeling happy today”; “I really enjoy watching films”; “I thank you for giving me the money”; “my apologise for my bad behaviour.”⁷

Fifth, declarations: statements that attempt to change the world by “representing it as having been changed,” e.g., “My work here is done”; “I pronounce you man and wife”; “I appoint you chairman”; “I declare the meeting adjourned”; “I resign.”

The description on the text of SAS' speeches here does not provide a rigid and

²⁴ Fairclough.

²⁵ Ruth Wodak, & M. Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (Great Britain: SAGE Publications, 2001), p. 23

²⁶ See John R. Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in Theory of Speech Acts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979)p. 1-19

²⁷ Austin classified speech acts into locutionary²² illocutionary and perlocutionary. On illocutionary, he classified into his five basic categories of verdict¹⁷ expositive, exercitive, behabitive, and commissive. J.L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, (Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 34

²⁸ Searle.



detailed analysis of the linguistic, syntactic, analytic aspects thereof, but rather on the general features of the lexicon³⁴ usage of his utterances. For this reason, it is important to understand the utterances of SAS' speech in order to articulate the whole meaning of the speech. First, the listeners should obey the whole context because the utterance meaning can differ with the literal meaning when the expression is uttered. Therefore, the analysis starts on the text-level analysis of this speech. The identification primarily focuses on the vocabulary used. Based on the data gathered, the vocabularies featured by SAS' speech adopted Arabic language terms. This finding can be identified when SAS opened the speech, stating the argumentation, and giving the closing statement at the end of the speech.

Other features, like inserting other languages, is common for a religious speaker who has more than one language, mainly Arabic. At this context, the loanwords process, in which the speakers adopted words or sentences from a different language to explain the argumentation, is an ordinary situation. The study found that SAS utilised the Arabic terms to articulate the Islamic terms, e.g., "alhamdulillah, wasathan, tasammub, syubada', tsaqafiyyan, a'adzdzabullaab, syubundan diniyyaan," and still many others. He uttered these utterances when he opened and closed the speech and when engaging with Islamic discourse.

The terms of the Islamic discourse at a living Muslim community, particularly NU, use the authoritative texts as the primary source of references, such as the Qur'an and Hadith literature. The sources are used to strengthen the argumentation mainly when engaging in a matter of scholarly debate or when stating a religious opinion or *fatwa*.²⁹

Furthermore, in SAS's organisation, the Islamic terms are used as a common expression in religious speech because it is part of NU's tradition, so as a leader and an influential person in the organisation, SAS tried to teach the culture and institutional tradition to his members. Additionally, by inserting the Arabic terms, SAS wants to get closer to the listeners in order to strengthen the legitimacy of his institution, particularly in Islamic teaching.

The Structure of SAS's Speech

Introduction of SAS's speech

The structure of SAS' speech consists of three main points: introduction, content, and conclusion. In the introduction, the texture of the speech consists of a religious statement, such as a greeting. Overall, SAS used the Indonesian language while delivering the speech. Even though some of the utterances feature the Arabic and Javanese languages.

At the 73rd anniversary of *Fatayat NU* in 2019, SAS opened his speech by using the Islamic greeting "Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullah wabarakatub." This is a common greeting in both formal and informal situations in the Muslim living society. Then, he continued his speech by uttering this statement.

Excerpt 01

"Bismillab, alhamdulillah wassalamu 'ala sayyidina wa-maulaana wa-syafi'ina Muhammad Rasulillah wa-'ala alibi washabbihi wa-man tabi'a sunnatabuu wajama'atab min yauminaa badza ila yauminnabdbab" ("In the name of Allah, the Most merciful, praise is due to Allah. Peace be upon him, Muhammad, the chief and messenger of Allah, his family, friends and followers and all people who obey and follow until hereafter.")

After stating the utterances, SAS continued the speech by giving the greeting to all

²⁹ a ruling on a point of Islamic law given by a recognized authority. In Indonesia, MUI (the Indonesian Ulama Council) is the body that issues the fatwa.



audien³³. At this stage, he gives special greeting to the president of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, the first lady, and then followed by all cabinet ministers in attendance. Then, SAS ended the greeting for his internal members in NU “all of the region and the branch leaders of Muslimat”.

Excerpt 02:

Dear members of DPR [i.e., the Legislative Assembly] the Habaib [i.e., Muslim preachers linked to the descendents of Prophet Muhammad], *ash'habal ma'abid, ash'habal thuruqishshufiyyah*, all of the region and the branch leaders of Muslimat.

The Content of SAS' Speech.

In the content of the speech, SAS started by uttering the term “ummat.” The word “ummat” is used to inform the concepts of Islamic thought in general. To strengthen his argumentation about this concept, SAS added information by citing the verse of Qur'an³⁰ “*wa kadzalika ja'alnakum ummatan wasathan* (‘thus We have rendered you a community of the middle path’)” Even though the context of his speech is more of a monologue rather than dialogue, SAS asked the following rhetorical question:

“Please for the hafidz Qur'an [i.e., a person who memorised the Qur'an] have a look; is there the word ‘Islamic ummah’ in the Qur'an? No.”

This means that the speaker requested the audiences who have memorised Qur'an to check whether the term “*Islamic ummah* (‘Islamic community’)” exists in the holy book. In this context, he explains what makes a good society. For this SAS used the term “*ummatan wasathan* (‘community of the middle path),” and again this term is adopted from the verse of the Qur'an.

Furthermore, SAS synthesised his previous explanation by uttering “*li-takunu syubada'*

‘*alannas.*” He explained that the Muslim people should play a major role in society. To underline his statement, SAS described the meaning of the word “*syubada'* (‘martyr’)”. He explained that the utterance meaning of this word is to “play a role.” For this reason, SAS explained further by requesting the audience, especially members of NU to play a religious role in society. For this reason, NU members must occupy all religious institutions. Here is the excerpt:

Excerpt 03

“we should handle the religion role, be the head of mosques, preachers, in the office of religious affairs, the ministry of religion—all these must be from NU. If these positions are not from NU, it will all go wrong. More *bid'ah* (religious innovation) will take place, if these positions are not held by NU. This is *bid'ah*, later sufi dancings will be [deemed] *bid'ah*.”

Overall, the main theme of this speech is the utterance of the controversial concept of “Islam Nusantara” or Nusantara Islam. SAS seemed to conclude that all of his previous explanation contains the core values of Islam Nusantara. The utterance of “Islam Nusantara” is explicitly declared at the end of his speech. For this context, SAS made a declaration, here the excerpt:

Excerpt 04

“This is the Nusantara Islam, the polite Islam, the friendly Islam, the Islam that respects culture, the Islam with character, having integrity. That is Nusantara Islam. [It is] not a *madzhab* (legal school), not a sect, but *khasba'is mumayyizati*, an Islamic typology, a Nusantara Islamic society.”

The Closing of SAS's Speech

At the end of the speech, SAS utilised expressive utterance. He repeated the special thanks to the president and first lady for their

³⁰ See Qur'an, al-Baqarah, verse 143.
<https://quran.com/2>



attendance at the 73rd anniversary of *Fatayat* NU. To end of the speech, the speaker uttered his statements by uttering Arabic terms. Here is the excerpt:

Excerpt 05

“syukuran wa-dumtum fil khairi wa-lbarakati wannajaab, wallahu yahfazdukum minal’afaati wal’abad ya’kudz bi-aydiikum, li-ma fibishshalah walkhayr, wallaahu taufiqi ila aqwamithariq, wassalaamu’alaikum wa-rahmatullah wa-barakatubi”

In excerpt 5, the utterance meaning of the speaker’s purpose is to give honour and thank all of the audiences.

Discursive Practice and Sociocultural Practice

The discursive practice is a process of how a text produced and interpreted. To explain this context, the interrelated text needs to describe sociocultural practice.³¹ The interpretation of social and cultural practice synthesises the aspects of situational, institutional and social contexts. The description above is a moment by moment presentation of SAS speech structure. Therefore, in this stage, the analysis provides an explanation of the social and political context.

The analytical text above found that SAS began his speech by utilising the Islamic greeting. Based on social and cultural practice, SAS employed the social approach to his listeners by producing those statements. Additionally, as seen from his speeches, SAS notified that those utterances become his speech features while stating the greeting, *“wassalamu ‘ala sayyidina wa-maulana wa syafi’ina Muhammad Rasulillah.”* This is because he is an authoritative and powerful person in his organisation.

Given the context, this utterance is a common utterance and is frequently used by NU’s leaders when they open their speech in religious events. Additionally, the speaker also wants to show that he has a commitment to maintaining the NU tradition; second, he

intends to inform the audience regarding the importance of continuously respecting the Prophet Muhammad. We also note the use of the word *“sayyidina* (‘our liegelord’)” that is frequently used by NU religious leaders (kyai) when referring to the Prophet Muhammad.

To welcome the audience, SAS uttered a number of expressive utterances, by giving greetings to the president of the Republic of Indonesia. He continued expressing his respect with the directive utterance: “the Excellency Mr. President of the Republic of Indonesia and Mrs. Iriana Joko Widodo, *a’adzdzabullaah* [may Allah protect them both], the President of Republic of Indonesia 2019-2024.” With respect to this utterance meaning, first, it is common to welcome dignitaries at the beginning of the ceremony, especially when the president himself is in attendance. Second, there use of symbolic language by mentioning the utterance, “The President of the Republic of Indonesia 2019-2024”. This is because the context of the situation was during the political contestation for the presidential election in 2019 and Joko Widodo was making a bid for a second term. Therefore, there was an implied meaning in the utterances from the speaker. He seems to want to persuade the attendees to vote for Joko Widodo for the upcoming presidential election.

Meanwhile, as for the content of the speech, SAS tried to inform and give his considered opinion on current issues in Muslim society. He mentioned and is worried about the current situation, particularly with the existence of other Muslim groups that observe rigid rules in Islamic practice. He indicated that those groups have been very resistant and antagonistic towards NU members, particularly on the issue of religious practice. SAS explained that these groups often call the traditionalist practices of NU as religious innovation (*bid’ah*).³² Therefore, for further action, SAS instructed NU members

³¹Fairclough.

³² Innovation and creation in religious practice.



to play active roles in religious institutions. In this context, the speaker highlighted the existence of radical groups occupying some religious institution that has proven to be a real threat to the future of religious harmony in Indonesia. Therefore, proactive action by dominating in the religious institutions is a reaction to the existence of radical groups that flourish currently. However, the single domination on the religious roles is a paradox and contra-productive in the democratic sphere today.³³

In the political context, the speaker's statement also can be interpreted as an expression of concern regarding the proliferation of radical groups in Indonesian Muslim society. Therefore, SAS' statements is relevant to restrict the movements of radical groups. Thus NU members must support and give their voice to the incumbent president, Joko Widodo. SAS used the directive statement for this purpose:

Excerpt 06

"Listen! Listen! Syubdan siyasiyan, role of politics. So in 2019, must be the winner in order that NU plays a role syubdan siyaasiyan, syubuudan? (siyasiyyan) siyaasiyan, Alhamdulillah, understood, especially mothers."

In excerpts 03 and 06, the speaker utilised the directive utterance. He reminded that the Indonesian Muslim community, particularly NU members are under the threat of radical groups. On the other hand, he gave the signal that Joko Widodo has shown commitment to eradicate radical groups. Therefore, NU voters have significant clout in the presidential election. In this context, the speaker seemed to warn his members that radical groups are supporting of Joko Widodo's political opponent. As a result, during the elections, SAS³² persuaded his members to give their votes to Joko Widodo in the 2019 presidential election.

Conclusion

The speaker utilised his speech at the 73rd anniversary of *Fatayat* NU in 2019 as part of an overall communication strategy to respond to the transnational radical Islamic movements that has been flourishing in Indonesian society. SAS' speech comprises of commanding, persuading, and prohibiting in the use of Islamic terms. This is part of his strategy in conveying religious message (*da'wah*).

Referring to speech acts of illocutionary²⁹ acts, SAS' utterances consist of five elements: representative, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. The illocutionary acts used by the speaker is to utter religious terms. Then, based on the discourse practice and sociocultural practice on discourse analysis, SAS succeeded in leveraging his position in the organisation to garner support for Joko Widodo in the next presidential elections. SAS built his argumentation by employing Islamic discourse while delivering the speech. At the end of the speech, he introduced the concept of "Islam Nusantara" as the grand theme of his speech. However, SAS' maneuver and his organisation in the religious roles have triggered critics from other figures and scholars because it seems to dominate Indonesian Muslim living society's religious roles that heterogeneous. As a result, the argumentations regarding the concept of Islam Nusantara has led to intense debate in the contemporary Indonesian Muslim community.

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