

Online Media News Strategy On Vaccination Discourse: Theo Van Leeuwun's Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The vaccination discourse is one of the discourses that is always reported by the mass media because of the increasing cases of Covid-19. News about vaccinations elicited various responses from the public. This study aimed to examine the strategy of online media news related to the vaccination discourse that had resulted in various public responses. The research was conducted using Theo van Leeuwen's theory on critical discourse analysis. Four online media consisting of *KOMPAS.com*, *detik.com*, *Liputan6.com*, and *Tribunnews.com* were chosen as data sources for this research. This study uses a qualitative method. Data in the form of phrases, clauses, and sentences were collected through reading and note-taking techniques. Then, the data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. The research results showed that the online media of *KOMPAS.com*, *detik.com*, *Liputan6.com*, and *Tribunnews.com* used exclusion and inclusion strategies in producing news discourse. However, *KOMPAS.com* and *detik.com* online media tended to use exclusion strategies that included passivation, nominalization, and substitute clauses. Furthermore, *Liputan6.com* and *Tribunnews.com* online media tended to use inclusion strategies such as nomination-categorization, nomination-identification, and differentiation-indifference. Commonly, in this vaccination discourse, the news written by these four online media were not over-criticizing the government but more emphasized driving opinions

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concerning various public responses to vaccination. These findings suggest readers to read information in the mass media critically. Thus, readers are not easily influenced by the conflicts that are reported.

Keywords: Discourse, Media, News, Strategy, Vaccination

INTRODUCTION

Vaccination is one of the government's efforts to deal with COVID-19 cases. However, this effort raises pros and cons among the people. Many people are not willing to be vaccinated. It is influenced by various information related to vaccination reported by the mass media, especially online media. The information received is not necessarily under the existing reality.

News media is one media that seeks to describe a situation, event, or object. In other words, the media functions as a compiler for the reality of various events that occur so that it becomes a meaningful discourse (Anderson et al., 2016; Gutsche Jr, 2015; Lloyd & Toogood, 2014). In this case, the main task of the news media is to construct various realities that will be reported.

In compiling reality, the news media must, of course, use language. As revealed by Badara (2014) language is the main element in describing the process of reality. Furthermore, the language in news media can also affect the reader's view of the reported reality. The choice of words and strategies for presenting reality also determine the meaning that emerges. The use of language has implications for the meaning generated. It is as illustrated in the news about vaccinations.

News media, in this case, online media, is the most important form of media in influencing the spread of the information in the community. It is due to online media that is very easy to access; online media information can be received very quickly; and old information or data can be reopened easily at any time. In Indonesia, several online media are quite mainstream, with quite a lot of readers, including *KOMPAS.com*, *Tribunnews.com*, *detik.com*, and *Liputan6.com*.

This research described the strategy of news coverage and alignments of online media of *KOMPAS.com*, *Tribunnews.com*, *detik.com*, dan *Liputan6.com* in preparing vaccination discourse. According to the Digital News Report 2021 released by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, these four online media are included in the best news portals. In addition, the media *tribunnews* and *kompas.com* are online media that will receive the Adam Malik award in 2022.

Media alignments can be expressed by studying the language used in the news text. Studies on the use of language that can reveal media alignments can be carried out using critical discourse analysis. Critical discourse analysis was discourse analysis that focused on language and

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related it to ideology (Fairclough, 2013; Jinxuan Ma, n.d.; Richardson, 2017) Critical discourse analysis was more concrete to see that language grammar carries specific ideological meanings. In critical discourse analysis, the language factor is crucial. This is because language is used to see the power imbalance that occurs in society (Silaswati, 2019). Critical discourse analysis investigates how language is used by certain social groups (Fairclough, 2013).

The critical discourse study in this research was the analytical study of Theo van Leeuwen. Theo van Leeuwen's critical discourse analysis is able to reveal media alignments through the figures or groups that appear in the discourse. According to (Van Leeuwen, 2008) two media strategies in constructing news were disguising actors and presenting actors. The process of disguising actors or removing actors from the news was called the exclusion strategy, and the process of presenting actors in the news was called the inclusion strategy.

This research was interesting to study for several important reasons. First, vaccination was one topic that was still widely discussed in the mass media. Interestingly, every vaccination topic was discussed, and there were continuously varying opinions (pros and cons) among the public. It was due to the many incorrect issues related to this vaccination. Second, critical discourse analysis can reveal hidden meanings in a text.

Research related to vaccination has been carried out by several researchers before. These included research on critical discourse analysis on vaccine reporting (Abbas, 2021; Ahmed & Ali, n.d.; Sherman et al., 2021; Spire et al., 2021), refusal of vaccination (Sapitry, 2021), hoax news related to vaccines (Chiou & Tucker, 2018; Rahayu, 2021), and public perception of vaccination (Raghupathi et al., 2020; Zaid, 2021). In addition, research on critical discourse analysis has also been carried out, including critical discourse analysis on celebrities (Syartanti, 2021) and critical discourse analysis of social distance and covid-19 news (Alfaritsi, 2020). Based on some of the results of this study, it shows that critical discourse is able to express media alignments in reporting. The news of vaccination was very political in government circles. Furthermore, there was a misperception of the public about vaccination and public communication about the success of vaccination.

From the previous studies above, we can be seen that how the media reported news about vaccines, whether news of rejection, fake news, or related to the politicization of vaccines. From the studies above, it can be seen that most of the researchers focus on the vaccine discourse itself and there have not been many studies on the bias of the media in reporting vaccines. For this reason, this study will try to explore of several online media in reporting vaccines. Thus, this study will compare the strategies used by several media in reporting vaccines. The strategy used will determine the media's view of the vaccine.

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METHOD

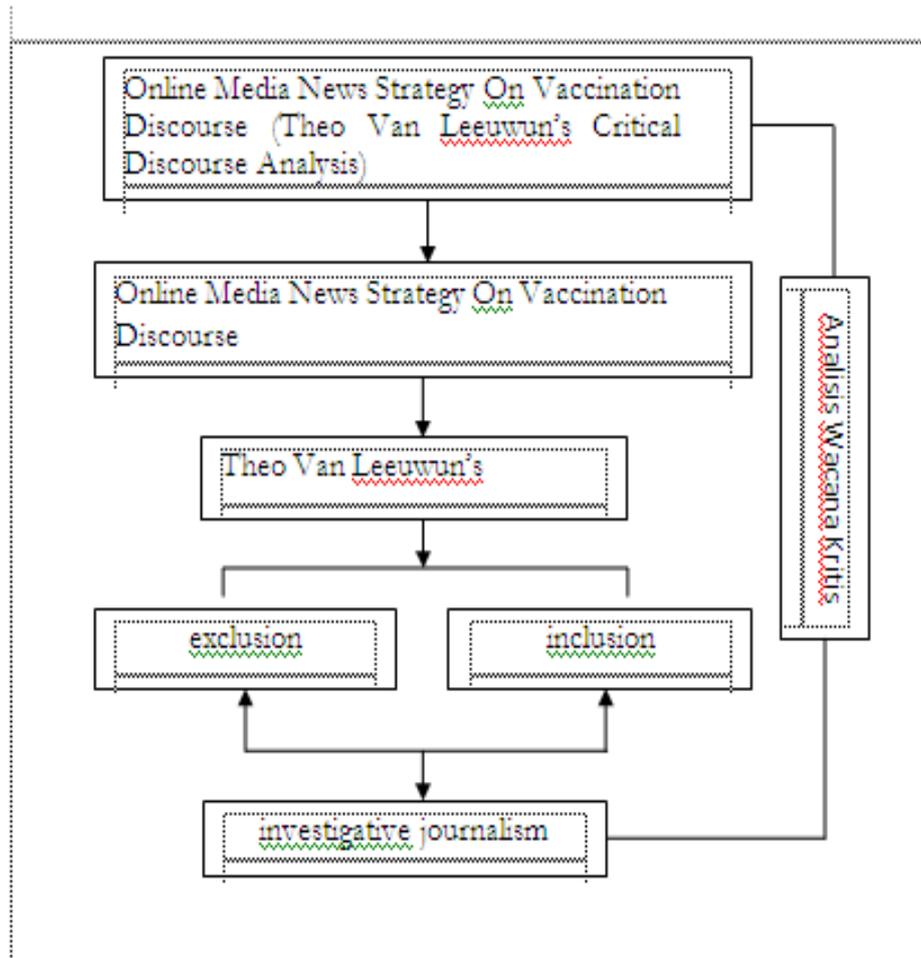
This research was qualitative research using the content analysis method. Content analysis methods were commonly used to understand the symbolic message of discourse or text (Krippendorff, 2018), in this case, they were news texts. These symbolic messages were the social, political, economic, and ideological aspects of vaccination news discourse. Next, this research also used a critical approach, which focused on uncovering hidden aspects behind a reality (Ahmed & Ali, n.d.; Xie, 2018). The critical approach was used to complement of content analysis methods that did not focus on hidden messages. The content analysis method only emphasized the visible message so that the real message in a text could not be found.

The primary data sources for this research were 16 news stories taken from the online media *KOMPAS.com*, *detik.com*, *Liputan6.com*, and *Tribunnews.com*. All of this data can be accessed on https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1JrKI3_839wv_zDuuVpY2JkDUtY7ncJbW?usp=share_link. Each online media selected four news related to vaccinations published between Juli-Februari 2022. The selection of vaccination news was based on various public comments regarding vaccination. These comments were in the form of comments on vaccine rejection, the Covid-19 vaccine being made for the benefit of pharmaceutical corporations, and also support for vaccines. Therefore, the news chosen to be used as a data source was vaccination news related to the issue of acceptance and rejection of vaccines by the public. The research data were in the form of phrases, clauses, and sentences contained in the text of the vaccination news. Data were collected in two stages: searching for written data sources in online media and purposively determining the news to be analyzed (Rukajat, 2018; Wertz, 2011). At the data analysis stage, the data determined was analyzed using critical discourse analysis techniques. Data analysis was carried out in three steps, namely (1) determining the main topic of a discourse; (2) do review discursive strategies; and (3) analyzing real meanings in linguistics, as well as linguistic meanings in other forms. The critical discourse framework used was Theo van Leeuwen's analytical framework. The analytical framework was shown in the following figure.

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Graphic 1:
Theo Van Leeuwun's Framework



The validity of the data in qualitative research was needed. Thus, two essential things must be done to test the validity of the data, namely checking the reliability and checking the validity (Rukajat, 2018). Based on this, checking the validity of the data was carried out seriously by reading, checking, and intensifying data analysis. Reading validation activity is done by reading each word repeatedly. Data checking is done by checking data from various sources. Source triangulation is done by checking the data that has been obtained through several sources. In addition, theoretical triangulation was also carried out, linking the theoretical analysis results with other theories. In this case, theoretical triangulation was carried out using the theory of social cognition proposed by Teun van Dijk.

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FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis results of the vaccination discourse reporting strategy found on *Kompas.com*, *detik.com*, *Liputan6.com*, and *Tribunnews.com* showed that the four online media used an exclusion strategy and an inclusion strategy. The following is an explanation of the use of these two strategies

Exclusion Strategy

The exclusion strategy was carried out by not bringing up actors or perpetrators in the reported text. In other words, this strategy tried to disguise the perpetrator so that the victim became the center of attention of the reader (Idul, 2020). Some of the exclusion strategies described in the four online media are as follows.

a. Passivation

One of the exclusion strategies was passive sentences (*passivation*). The use of passive sentences focused the reader's attention on the object. It was due to the absence of actors in the text (Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2008). This passivation strategy protected the actor or perpetrator from the reader's focus. Thus, it would lead the reader's mind to the victim. The use of this passivation strategy can be seen in the following quotes.

“Booster vaccination will be given to districts/cities whose vaccination achievements have met the criteria for 70 percent of the first dose and 60 percent of the second dose.” (detik.com)

In the excerpt of the news text, the passivation strategy was indicated by using the word *given*. The choice of the passive formed *given* obscured the actor or who was giving. The party providing the vaccine was excluded from the news. If the whole context were known, it would be apparent that the party providing the vaccine was the Indonesian government. In this sentence, the actor did not appear because the object was more important in the news, namely the *district/city whose vaccination achievement has met the criteria of 70 percent of the first dose and 60 percent of the second dose*.

“More people have not been vaccinated and were hospitalized than people who have received the vaccine”.

The third dose was given to Israeli citizens aged 40 years and over who received the second dose at least five months earlier (Kompas, 26/8/2021).

In the excerpt of the news text, the passivation strategy was indicated using the words 'vaccinated' and 'treated' (in sentence 1) and the word 'given' (in sentence 2). The words 'vaccinated', 'treated', and 'given' in the two quotes above also hid social groups in the news. One of the goals of

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journalists who did not involve actors in reporting was so that readers were more focused on the object of the news, namely patients who were being treated or citizens of Israel.

The choice of the passive form given obscures the actor or who was giving. The party providing the vaccine was excluded from the news. If the entire context were known, it would be apparent that the party providing the vaccine was the Indonesian government. In this sentence, the actor did not appear because what was more critical in reporting was the object.

b. Nominalization

Nominalization was also one of the exclusion strategies, namely, eliminating a particular group of actors (Idul, 2020; Yaghoubi-Notash & Nouri, 2016). This strategy could be characterized by changing the *verb* into a *noun*. Generally, nominalization was done by giving the suffix *-an*. the purpose of using the nomination strategy is to hide or omit the actor/subject: by changing the verb form to a noun, the presence of the subject or actor does not need to be indicated in the sentence. Thus, nominalization can eliminate the subject/actor of the action. It was as seen in the following quote.

Although at this time, the victim claimed to be paralyzed after receiving the injection, according to Junaidah, it could not be confirmed medically. (Tribunnews.com)

The word injection was included in the type of noun. The word injection came from the active verb to inject. When applied in a sentence, the active verb must present a subject. By changing the word inject to injection, the actor doing the injection could be hidden. The use of this nominalization made the reader uncritical.

"He said that the implementation of the first vaccination was part of the socialization to convince the public to be willing to be vaccinated for the next wave." (tribunnews.com/10/02/2021)

The word "implementation" above is a type of noun. The word implementation comes from the verb "to carry out". Based on this, who the actor/actor who carried out the first vaccination was not seen or not discussed.

Inclusion Strategy

The inclusion strategy was a news strategy by displaying something, someone, or a group in the news text (Van Leeuwen, 2008). There were several types of inclusion strategies, namely differentiation-indifferentiation, objectivation-abstraction, nomination-categorization, nomination-

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identification, determination-indetermination, assimilation-individualization, and association-dissociation. However, not all these inclusion strategies were used in the online media *tribunnews.com*, *tempo.com*, *kompas.com*, and *detik.com*. Some of the strategies used by the four online media are as follows.

a. Differentiation- Indifferentiation

Differentiation-indifferentiation was a strategy of presenting more than one event or another actor. In writing a news text, an event or an actor could be presented independently, or the comparison could be made by displaying other events or groups in the news. The appearance of other events or actors in the news text indirectly showed that the group was marginalized. The following is an excerpt that uses a differentiation-indifferentiation strategy.

Differentiation:

"In the viral video, the woman could argue with some officers because she refused to be injected with the vaccine."

Indifferentiation:

*"In the video that went viral, the woman was seen arguing with some officers because she refused to be injected with the vaccine. An officer in a police uniform was seen explaining, but he insisted on refusing the officer's explanation."
(*detik.com*)*

The first sentence above explains a commotion between a woman and a police officer. In contrast, the facts about the police officer who explained to the woman were presented in the second sentence. The second sentence indirectly distinguished between a woman's attitude and a police officer's. Next, in the third sentence, the female actor was further marginalized with the statement, *"but she insists on refusing the officer's explanation"*. On the other hand, the police were portrayed better than female actors.

b. Objectivation-Abstraction

Objectivity-abstraction was a strategy related to displaying information clearly or concretely, or what was displayed was an abstraction (Liasidou, 2008). It is as shown in the following quote.

Abstract: Dozens of mothers held a demonstration in front of the DPRD of Padang City, West Sumatra, on Monday. This action addressed the issue of the local government circular requiring Covid-19 vaccination for elementary school students (tribunnews.com, 14/2/2022).

The sentence above did not mention the number of mothers concretely. The word *tens* made the information abstract. This abstraction was often not mentioned due to journalists' ignorance of the exact number.

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However, the term abstraction was often chosen by journalists to present something.

*"It was sensitive because, in the world, there were still **many** people who had not received the vaccine; why were developed countries given boosters? Moreover, the issue of injustice in the Covid-19 vaccination globally was very high. Even **some countries** have not received the first dose of the vaccine yet."*
(KOMPAS.com)

The mention of many people and some countries was also one of the abstraction strategies used by journalists. The sentence indirectly wanted to marginalize the position of the Indonesian state, which wanted to give booster vaccinations even though countries in the world still had not received vaccines evenly.

"Supposedly, he said, the task force gave journalists access to cover so that the dissemination of this vaccination would not be questioned. One of the representatives of the Covid Handling Task Force in Bener Meriah, Hendra Yenko Faruly, told the Acehnese that the implementation of the vaccine was carried out simultaneously throughout Aceh. "Today's activity is a grand launching in Bener Meriah Regency and as a notification to the public that the vaccine is needed to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic," he said
(Tribunnews.com/10/02/2021)

The quote above is an example of objectivity, because in the sentence above there are words that give clear instructions. The word "a representative" above shows the provision of clear evidence, no longer abstract.

c. Nomination-Categorization

In constructing an event or an actor, there was often a choice whether the actor was shown concretely or only the categories of social actors were mentioned (Aris Badara, 2014; Liasidou, 2008; Yaghoubi-Notash & Nouri, 2016). The categories displayed by journalists in the news were valuable information about the media's ideology. The categories that arose could be religion, status, physical form, etc. According to van Leeuwen (2008, 31–54), the nomination-categorization strategy is concerned with selecting individual identification submissions, whether stated as they are or in categories (gender, race, religion, physical, etc.).

Hundreds of students at State Elementary School of Paccinang and State Elementary School 1 of Paccinang in Makassar City enthusiastically participated in the mass vaccination event for children aged 6 to 11. They even seemed to be scrambling to be the first to get the vaccine. Undoubtedly, the researchers have informed parents of students so that their children should be

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vaccinated so that we did not return to Online Learning (Distance Learning)," said Zaenab on Friday (Liputan6.com,18/2/2022).

In the quote above, although it was not clearly stated in the media's approval regarding the provision of vaccines to children, the second sentence reinforced the journalists against the government by quoting the words of the school principal (Muttaqin, 2011; Suharyo et al., 2015).

As we all know, there are still many people who question vaccines, so its implementation needs to be done openly and known to the public," he said. (uri)"(tribunnews.com/10/02/2021)

The quote above is an example of a nomination, because in the sentence above the actor is not clearly shown. Actors are simply called "society". The phrase "community" is still common so it is not clear who it refers to.

d. Nomination-Identification

Nomination identification was an inclusion strategy that defined a particular group, event, or action (Aris Badara, 2014). The definition process was done by adding a clause as an explanation. In this strategy, there were two propositions. The second proposition was an explanation or explanation of the first proposition. Generally, these propositions were connected by the word 'who'.

According to van Leeuwen (2008, 31–54), identification nomination is related to the presence of additional clauses or propositions as a form of explanation of the first proposition. This means that journalists want to provide an explanation of who a person is or what the action or event was. Giving an explanation gives a certain meaning, because it is generally in the form of an assessment of a certain person, group or action. This is a discourse strategy in which one person, group, or action is given a bad explanation so that it is accepted by the audience that it will be bad as well. The use of the nomination-identification theory is found in three news headlines on dailyrakyataceh.com totaling four sentences, namely two sentences from nominations and two sentences from identification.

Nomination: *a paralyzed student suspected of being psychotic*

Identification: *a student who was paralyzed after the vaccine, suspected of being psychopathic (Liputan6.com,18/2/2022).*

In the quote above, a paralyzed clause *after the vaccine* was the identification given by the editor. The identification could assess the direction in which the event was taken. The paralyzed clause *after the vaccine* conveyed that the vaccine was the cause of the paralysis. In fact, as an explanatory sentence, the presence or absence of a clause did not affect the meaning of the

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sentence, which informed that a student was paralyzed due to psychosis.

Nomination: "Unlike other areas, the implementation of vaccinations in Bener Meriah Regency is openly considered closed and journalists are not given access to coverage in one of the rooms at the Muyang Kute Bener Meriah General Hospital, Wednesday (10/2)." (*KOMPAS.com*/ 10/02/2021)

The quote above is an example of a nomination, because in the sentence above the actor is not clearly shown. Actors are simply called "journalists". The phrase "journalist" is still common so it is not clear who it refers to.

Identification: "In response to this problem, the Chair of the Bener Meriah Regency Journalists Association (PEWABER) Mashuri said that the Task Force should be able to provide space for journalists so that the socialization process can be known to the public." (*KOMPAS.com*/10/02/2021)

The quote above is an example of an identification strategy. Indirectly, the Task Force was described in a bad way, considered not to give space to journalists so that the process of socializing the COVID-19 vaccine 19 are available to the public.

e. Association-Dissociation

According to van Leeuwen (2008, 31-54) associations relate to social actor reporting that is directed at the individual or associated with other larger groups. In the association strategy, the actor or party is not shown alone, but is associated with another larger group. While in the dissociation strategy, the actor or a party is presented alone

"He added, apart from the pictures that don't look bright, no sound can be heard, so journalists can't listen to what's going on in the room. According to him, the journalists who did the coverage also looked confused by the first vaccination activity that was carried out in Bener Meriah. "We can't describe what's going on in there so we cannot provide accurate information to the public," firmly." (tribunnews.com/ 10/02/2022)

The sentence above is an example of using the association strategy; the actor in the sentence is related to another actor. In his statement, actor journalists who looked confused while covering the inaugural vaccination activity associated with community actors did not receive accurate information.

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CONCLUSION

The research results showed that the online media of *KOMPAS.com*, *detik.com*, *Liputan6.com*, and *Tribunnews.com* used exclusion and inclusion strategies in producing news discourse. However, *KOMPAS.com* and *detik.com* online media tended to use exclusion strategies that included passivation and nominalization. Furthermore, *Liputan6.com* and *Tribunnews.com* online media tended to use inclusion strategies such as objectivation-abstraction, nomination-categorization, nomination-identification, and differentiation-indifference. Commonly, in this vaccination discourse, the news written by these four online media were not over-criticizing the government but more emphasized driving opinions concerning various public responses to vaccination.

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