

**A TRAVEL ADVICE ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND TRADE OF AUSTRALIA
(A POLITICAL VEHICLE)**

**Slamet Riyadi
ryadies@gmail.com**

Abstract

This critical discourse analysis tried to reveal that a discourse is never neutral, even though it tends to become normative with repetitive use. In this case revealing the social problems and power relations exist in a part of advice issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia, and also the ideology represented, the intertextuality, and the connections between social and cultural structures that may exists become the aims of the analysis . The analysis using CDA proved that the advice issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia may means 1) there was an exercise of power from the authority to its citizens, 2) The ideology of terrorist threat which existed in parts of the text served as a black campaign for Indonesia, and 3) the discourse also challenged the Australian Identity especially for the Aborigine.

Key words: power relations, exercise of power, Australian identity.

1. Introduction

This paper aims to analyze a part of advice issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia based on principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997). Therefore, the focus of the discussion are revealing the social problems and power relations exist in it, the ideology represented by the text, the intertextuality of the text, and the connections between social and cultural structures that may exists. The analysis is both interpretative and explanatory and are open and affected by new readings and new contextual information.

The analysis is more on socio-cognitive aspects and focuses on the macro structure of the text as it is proposed by Young (2004).

The aim of the analysis is to intervene and bring about change in communicative and socio-political practices.

2. Literature Review

Traditionally, formal definition of discourse refers to a unit of coherent language consisting of more than one sentence, and the functional definition refers language in use (Schiffrin, 1994)

Discourse can be either planned or unplanned (Ochs, 1979). Unplanned discourse include most conversations and some written texts such as informal notes and letters. Planned discourse includes prepared speeches or sermons in oral discourse and carefully edited or published written work.

The primary interest of critical discourse analysis is to deconstruct and expose social inequality as expressed, constituted, and legitimized through language use— notably in the public media such as newspapers, radio, television, films, cartoons, and the like, but also in settings such as classrooms, courtrooms, news interviews, doctor-patient interactions, as well as in everyday talk. Neither does CDA primarily aimed to contribute to a specific discipline, paradigm, and school or discourse theory. It is primarily interested and motivated by

pressing social issues, which it hopes to better understand through discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1995).

Critical discourse analysts believe that discourse tends to become normative with repeated use and thus appears to be neutral; however, in actual fact, discourse is never neutral.

Critical discourse scholars want to make a more specific contribution, namely to get more insight into the crucial role of discourse in the reproduction of dominance and inequality (Van Dijk, 1995).

3. Discussion

Below is part of an advice issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia on Friday, 28 October 2011, 18:04:20

Travel Advice

Safety and Security

Terrorism

We advise you to reconsider your need to travel to Indonesia, including Bali, due to the very high threat of terrorist attack. Ask yourself whether, given your own personal circumstances, you're comfortable

travelling to Indonesia knowing there is a very high threat from terrorism and you may be caught up in a terrorist attack. Ask yourself whether travel could be deferred or an alternative destination chosen. If, having considered these issues, you do decide to travel to Indonesia, you should exercise extreme caution.

We continue to receive information which indicates that terrorists may be planning attacks in Indonesia, which could take place at any time. Since early 2010, police have disrupted a number of terrorist groups in North Sumatra, Lampung, Banten, Jakarta and Central Java. Police continue to conduct operations against these groups. Police have stated publicly that terrorist suspects remain at large and that they may seek to attack Western targets.

Terrorists have previously attacked or planned to attack places where Westerners gather including nightclubs, bars, restaurants, hotels, airports and places of worship in Bali, Jakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia. These types of venues could be targeted again. Attacks against Westerners in Bali and

Jakarta indicate that these areas remain priority targets for terrorists.

Retrieved from <http://www.asianewsnet.net/home/news.php?id=18585>

The analysis:

Exercise of power from the authority to its citizens

The text that tells the doubt of Australia government on Indonesia security, especially related to the recent information about terrorism movement shows power relation between the writer that represent the more powerful party (the authority) with the reader that represent the less powered party. It is an object of analysis of Critical Discourse Analysis since CDA takes a clearly sociopolitical stance in its investigations of the relationship among discourse, power, and social inequality (Van Dijk 1993). The choice of words in the sentences shows how the government effort to give impression of a democratic country by respecting its citizen's choice

Let's see the following sentences in paragraph 1.

"We advise you to reconsider your need to travel to Indonesia,

including Bali,...”. Since it is issued by the Australian government, “we” in the sentence represents the government body, and “you” represents the Australian. The use of polite and negotiable expression may impress readers in general about the Australia government view on democracy, and this style of impressing democracy expressions is repeated in the following other beginnings of sentences such as “*Ask yourself whether.....*” . This statement is repeated three times, as if the government does not want to force their citizens with something they believe it is very important to obey. However, the statement following each of the beginning of those sentences shows how the government mildly oppress the citizens with their statements such as “*due to the very high threat of terrorist attack*”; *knowing there is a very high threat from terrorism and you may be caught up in a terrorist attack*. And the first paragraph is closed with a very strong recommendation: *If, having considered these issues, you do decide to travel to Indonesia, you should exercise extreme*

caution.”The expression “*exercise extreme caution*” psychologically give a very strong impression in readers’ mind that make them think more than twice to travel to Indonesia. They become subject of the government’s oppression.

It is clear that the power relation in the text is between the government (authority) that have power and the Australian who are put in the less powered position. The government tries to exercise the power that it has in a very gentle way. This conclusion is based on claim that the relationship between language and meaning is never arbitrary in that the choice of particular genre, rhetorical strategy, or use of vocabulary, for example, brings with it particular presuppositions and (often hidden) meanings and intentions (Kress, 1991).

The ideology of terrorist threat as a black campaign for Indonesia

Any text bears an ideology. As it is claimed that whatever genre we are involved in and whatever the register of the situation, our use of language will also be influenced by our ideological positions; the values we hold (consciously or

unconsciously), the biases and perspectives we adopt (Eggin, 1994). The ideology of this text is terrorism is a threat to westerners. It is clearly seen in the theme of most of the sentences. If we have a closer look at the text we can see that from the total number of sentence which is 11 sentences in three paragraphs, the expression of 'terrorist attack' and other expression that represent similar idea is repeated ten times. The expressions are as follows:

"due to the very high threat of terrorist attack" (sentence no.1).
"there is a very high threat from terrorism" (sentence no.2) *"you may be caught up in a terrorist attack"* (sentence no.2) *"having considered these issues"* (sentence no.4) *"terrorists may be planning attacks"* (sentence no.5) *"terrorist suspects remain at large"* (sentence no.8) *"they may seek to attack Western targets"* (sentence no.8) *"Terrorists have previously attacked"* (sentence no.1) *"or planned to attack"* (sentence no.1) *"Attacks against Westerners"* (sentence no.1)

This kind of repetition make it easy for the reader to conclude that

one topic offered by the text is about terrorist attack. The text also makes it clear that target of the attack are the westerners by repeating the expression and the expression that represent similar idea for four times, consider the following expressions: *"they may seek to attack Western targets"*, (sentence no 8) *have previously attacked or planned to attack places where Westerners gather"*, (sentence no 9), *"Attacks against Westerners in Bali and Jakarta"*, *"these areas remain priority targets for terrorists."* (sentence no 11).

From that fact, it is clear that the ideology offered in the text is terrorist attack threats westerners.

What is the impact to Indonesia?

This ideology put Indonesia in less fortunate position in two ways. First, economically it will result in income loss from trade as well as tourists sector since it may become less preferred country to visit by westerners, not only Australian. Lets see the suggestion (from Australia government), *"Ask yourself whether travel could be deferred or an alternative destination chosen"*.

This suggestion which is followed by some strong arguments will influence the target reader much. The second disadvantage is related to the image of Indonesia as the country which is not safe and become the nest of terrorist. The following sentence clearly state this position: *“Police have stated publicly that terrorist suspects remain at large and that they may seek to attack Western targets”* ;in other words it can be said that there are still threats of terrorist attack that choose westerners as their target. *“Police have disrupted a number of terrorist groups in North Sumatra, Lampung, Banten, Jakarta and Central Java”*. This sentence for readers (Australian/westerners) may mean Sumatra and Java (including Bali), two biggest islands in number of population and business in Indonesia, are the two most dangerous area to visit. When it is done consciously, it becomes a black campaign. It is a high class political conspiracy conducted by Australian government to give pressure to Indonesia, to give bad colour of Indonesia on western countries, not only Australia. Therefore, the text choose to use the

‘westerners’ a term that represents people in western countries rather than the Australian. Eventhough from the beginning it is clear that the text is a kind of suggestion from Australia government to their citizens, overall it is read as the government advice to westerners in general. Moreover, when we find that this advice is issued through website in which not only Australian who have access to it.

The next problem for Indonesia is the sentence *“We advise you to reconsider your need to travel to Indonesia, including Bali....”*. It shows how the government of Australia as well as the citizens see Indonesia and Bali. As Eggins (2004) mentioned that like the traffic lights, linguistic system are also system for making meanings. Logically, the additional expression *“including Bali* “means that initially the Australian exclude Bali from the case discussed in the text. In other words, Australian think that Bali is not part of Indonesia, even they put Bali in similar position as Indonesia. It is dangerous politically since it may grow nationalism among Balinese, which eventually may

make them want to separate from Indonesia. It is not impossible since the history has proven that it happened to a province in Indonesia, East Timor, which is now become a separated country Timor Leste.

Challenging Australian Identity

As it has been analyzed before that this text is a kind of communication from Australian government to their citizens. The following sequence of sentences from the text give an impression on who the Australian the government communicates to, since, texts are not produced and interpreted in isolation but real world contexts with all their complexities.

(Huckin, 1997).

“We advise you to reconsider your need to travel to Indonesia, including Bali, due to the very high threat of terrorist attack.”

We represent the government and you represent the Australian or citizens of Australia. The government asks the citizens to think again their intention to go to Indonesia because of terrorist attack threat.

“Police have stated publicly that terrorist suspects remain at large

and that they may seek to attack Western targets.”

“Terrorists have previously attacked or planned to attack places where Westerners gather including nightclubs, bars, restaurants, hotels, airports and places of worship in Bali, Jakarta and elsewhere in Indonesia.”

The following two sentences are still on government advice to the Australian.

The two sentences give clearer description on who the Australian the government communicate to. Indirectly the government tell that *the terrorist may seek to attack Western targets.”* and you are, Australian, the *western targets*. Besides, in the next sentence the government reminds that *“Terrorists planned to attack places where Westerners gather”* so you should be very careful because you are *Westerners*.

The question is why the government regard Australia citizen as western? How about Aborigines and other ethnic groups who are also Australia citizens? Why there is omission of the Aborigines and other ethnic group? This reveal the social-

politic connection in Australia. It is a sign that the ruling society in Australia are the westerners. While the aborigines and other ethnic groups are not significantly represented in the authority system. The westerners domination in the authority system makes those ethnics are neglected and excluded from this text. Moreover, when it is statistically found that more western Australian than aborigine ones that travel more. The activity of traveling is a sign of power, especially economic power.

Therefore, the use of term *westerners* in this text threat the

citizenship identity of Aborigine and other ethnics as Australian.

4. Conclusion

CDA shows to the reader what is implicit in a discourse. As the case of Travel Advice issued by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia on Friday, 28 October 2011, on Safety and Security that deals with Terrorism. Through the CDA analysis it can be interpreted that the authority exercises their power to their citizens, spreads black campaign that Indonesia is the nest of terrorist, and even more the discourse challenges Australian Identity.

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