

**THE REPRESENTATION OF BASUKI TJAHAJA PURNAMA AND ANIES  
BASWEDAN IN *THE GUARDIAN* AND *THE TIMES*' ARTICLES OF UNOFFICIAL QUICK  
COUNT RESULTS OF JAKARTA GOVERNOR ELECTION**

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**Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to present a critical discourse approach to compare two articles about unofficial quick count results of Jakarta Governor Election in *The Guardian* and *The Times*. Firstly, I will begin with the background analysis of why this issue is investigated and then I will explain how *The Guardian* and *The Times* represent social actors, social actions and visual representation of the social actors in their articles. Finally, I will discuss the content evaluation of these articles and end it with a conclusion. It can be concluded that both *The Guardian* and *The Times* use similar representational strategy to represent the main social actors. In their articles, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is more activated and more prioritised despite being overtly described as a minority.

Keywords: *critical discourse approach, visual representation, content evaluation*

**Introduction**

Jakarta Governor Election in Indonesia has been controversial this year because one of the candidates Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, the current governor, is on trial for blaspheming against Islam. He made a joke using a verse from the Qur'an which is Al Maidah 51 during his campaign where he said that voters should not believe Islamic leaders who claim that this verse forbids Muslims to choose non-Muslim leaders. Thus, his action has hurt many Muslims considering the fact that he is a non-Muslim. The outrage culminated in large protests multiple times demanding him to apologize and urging the court of law to convict him of blasphemy. The unofficial quick count results on 19 April 2017 suggested that Basuki Tjahaja Purnama lost the election over a Muslim candidate, Anies Baswedan. This unofficial result was published in both national and international media in different manners.

Two British newspapers publishing this news with the headlines '*Muslim candidate beats Christian in divisive Jakarta governor vote*' and '*Christian loses in bitter fight to rule*

*Jakarta* are *The Guardian* and *The Times* respectively. As can be seen from the headlines, *The Guardian* activates ‘Muslim’ and passivates ‘Christian’ while *The Times* activates ‘Christian’ and excludes ‘Muslim’ although both of the social actors are backgrounded i.e. assumed to be known to the readers and can be inferred in the text. It is done to reduce the frequency of specific social actors referred to (Van Leeuwen 1996: 41). The Muslim referred to here is Anies Baswedan who gained victory in the election and the Christian referred to here is Basuki Tjahaja Purnama. The lexical choice used in the headlines and in the content of the news as well as the visual elements added could reveal the communicative aims on how these social actors and their actions are represented by *The Guardian* and *The Times*. Therefore, a careful observation and analysis of these elements will allow us find the reasons of the occurring patterns and construe meanings that these newspapers wish to convey.

## Method

This paper looks at two British newspaper -*The Guardian* and *The Times*- in terms of how these two newspaper represent social actors, social actions and visual representation of the social actors in their articles. The lexical choice used in the headlines and in the content of the news as well as the visual elements added could reveal the communicative aims on how these social actors and their actions are represented by *The Guardian* and *The Times*. The analysis will be carried out by referring to the work of Leeuwen (1996).

## Results and Discussions

### 1. Representation of Social Actors

The articles by *The Guardian* and *The Times* are about the unofficial quick count results of Jakarta Governor Election in Indonesia which involve representation of included and excluded social actors. The social actors are represented differently by these newspapers in their discourse. This will be teased apart using Van Leeuwen (1996: 66) ‘Social Actor Network’ in order to reveal the interests and purposes that these newspapers have created.

The included and excluded social actors represented in *The Guardian* and *The Times* are summarized in the table below:

VARIABLES	THE GUARDIAN	THE TIMES
Included	Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, Anies Baswedan, Sandiaga Uno, pollster, supporters, Islamic hardliners, poor riverside	Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, Anies Baswedan, Joko Widodo, Jakartans, opponents, fundamentalist

	communities, voters, Asep Suribayana, residents, a leader, observers, security personnel, Joko Widodo.	organisations.
Excluded	Thos who used quick counts, those who released official results, those who closed the voting, those who accused Basuki Tjahaja Purnama of insulting Islam on the campaign trail, those who denied Islamic funeral rites, those who circulated threats of funeral rites, those who accused Anies Baswedan, those who deployed the security personnel, those who conducted voting, those who intimidated voters, those who expect the official results and those who release them.	Those who claimed Basuki Tjahaja Purnama said a blasphemous commentary and those who would convict him on trial for blasphemy.

Based on the above table, the main social actors in *The Guardian* and *The Times* are the same; Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and Anies Baswedan. Firstly, the representation of social actors in the headlines is discussed. How *The Guardian* and *The Times* create the headlines is quite similar. Both of them represent the inferred social actors, Anies Baswedan and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, as generic type in terms of their religion although Anies Baswedan is backgrounded by *The Times*. This representational strategy draws attentions as it highlights certain identity of the people associated with the event and could invoke interpretation of a racial point of view in that religious issues did dominate the election process. Such a generic term used is a common practice in newspaper to give a story a ‘racialised’ slant although the newspaper itself does not intend to approach a racist stance (Machin and Mayr 2012: 81).

The sub-headline of *The Guardian* nominates both the main social actors in which Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is activated and Anies Baswedan is passivated as the beneficiary.

*The Times* does not create a sub-headline but a caption under the image. The caption passivates Basuki Tjahaja Purnama in which the representation treats him as an object of defeat in the election. On the other hand, the one who defeated him is backgrounded, creating assumption that detailed information about him is deliberately blocked. He is not nominated but identified and genericised in his religious identity – a Muslim candidate. An unequal power relation is constructed here giving an assumption that the defeated is more prominent

than the winner. This pattern can also be found in the content of this article where both social actors are unequally represented in an embedded clause.

The lead – the first sentence of the news which informs readers of what, who, where, when, and sometimes also how and why – of these newspaper is related to their sub-headline and image caption in that *The Guardian* activates Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, adding a short referential information, and passivates Anies Baswedan as the beneficiary. On the contrary, *The Times* activates and functionalises Basuki Tjahaja Purnama without nominalising him and once again backgrounds Anies Baswedan.

Finally, the representation of the main social actors in the articles' content is examined. *The Guardian* starts with a neutral structuring direct quote from Basuki Tjahaja Purnama congratulating Anies Baswedan and his running mate as well as their team and supporters for winning the election. The quoting verb used here is 'said', implicating that this does not carry any particular feeling or internal mental state of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama about the election result. Here, readers are not given access to empathise. The direct quote continues of his hope using inclusive 'we' and 'our' as in *we all want a better Jakarta, we want Jakarta to be our home together*. The inclusive 'we' and 'our' here includes readers and the general Jakarta population. The following sentence activates Anies Baswedan and passivates Basuki Tjahaja Purnama as the affected. Additional referential information is given here stating the winner as a Muslim and the defeated as a Christian from the country's ethnic Chinese minority. This representational strategy is unequal considering the fact that Anies Baswedan is from Indonesia's ethnic Arabian which is also part of the minority. But this information is deliberately hidden because this manner has an effect to omit the inferred social actor's individuality behind the categorisation given (Machin and Mayr 2012: 101).

In this article, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is represented more than Anies Baswedan. This is contrast to the headline in that if readers are to read the headline in a glance, then they would think that the content of the article is about the winning social actor.

Besides Basuki Tjahaja Purnama and Anies Baswedan who are nominated and functionalised, other nominated and functionalised social actors are the Indonesia's president, Joko Widodo and one of the registered voters, Asep Suribayana although the representation of Asep Suribayana is more generic. This is because they are defined by the degree of significance of what they do in the article. What Asep Suribayana does in the article is just

voting but what Joko Widodo does in the article is calling the mending of political divisions. Both of them are quoted directly using the quoting verb ‘said’. In his direct quoted statement, Joko Widodo uses inclusive ‘we’ and ‘our’ as in *political differences should not break our unity. We are all brothers and sisters. Whoever is elected, we must accept*. Since the statement is delivered by the president, who the inclusive ‘we’ and ‘our’ include is ambivalent as it could construct readers and the general Jakarta population as well as the general Indonesian citizen.

*The Times* kicks off with a sentence following the lead by nominalising and functionalising both the social actors with additional information in which it is juxtaposed; *a former education minister with the incumbent governor, an ethnic Chinese man from a Christian background who is on trial for blaspheming against Islam*. This unequal representational strategy is akin to what *The Guardian* does. This representation might provoke apples to oranges comparison, creating assumption that Basuki Tjahaja Purnama loses because of his inevitable identity. This type of representation where Basuki Tjahaja Purnama’s assigned representation seems to be reduced to a weaker role only happens in an embedded sentence where Anies Baswedan is present. In the next sentence, where he is embedded with Joko Widodo, the Indonesia’s president, he is only functionalised and not reduced to be identified by his ethnic background anymore. Another social actor nominalised and functionalised in this article is the president of Indonesia, Joko Widodo. He is activated in the embedded sentence where Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is present, creating an equal distribution of power relation since Basuki Tjahaja Purnama fills Joko Widodo’s position as the governor of Jakarta after he is elected to be the president of Indonesia.

## 2. Representation of Social Actions

The representation of social actions in these articles will be described using Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004: 170-171) concept of process types; material, mental, relational, behavioural, verbal and existential. Thus, the process types of the main social actors represented in *The Guardian* and *The Times* are summarized in the table below:

### **THE GUARDIAN:**

Process Type	Anies Baswedan	Basuki Tjahaja Purnama
Material	beats Christian, given concession, had won the runoff,	beaten, concedes defeat, was polling well, was accused, dented his

	given a decisive lead, has been accused	popularity, drew criticism, has done a good job
Mental	-	want
Relational	-	is credited, has good ideas, is branded
Behavioural	-	-
Verbal	deny	said, cited a verse, pledge
Existential	-	-

**THE TIMES:**

Process Type	Anies Baswedan	Basuki Tjahaja Purnama
Material	defeated	loses, have been defeated, not being elected, campaigning, could face, if convicted
Mental	appears to have won	appears to have been defeated
Relational	-	is on trial, was deputy, was formerly popular
Behavioural	-	-
Verbal		joked, said, apologised, saying
Existential	-	-

Based on the above distribution, it can be seen that both newspapers' representation of the main social actors lend support to what Van Dijk (2000 cited in Machin and Mayr 2012:106) has described; where ethnic minorities do something bad, they are represented as active agents. By contrast, they are represented as passive agents where associated with positive things or where things are done against or for them. Here, we can notice which social actor is given more active roles.

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is overtly mentioned as minority by both *The Guardian* and *The Times* in their articles. When he is given an active agent role by *The Guardian*, his actions (material, mental, relational and verbal processes) have positive association except the verbal and material process as in 'when he cited a verse...' and 'Ahok also drew criticism...'. However, this representation is not without any reasons because the first verbal process is embedded in a sentence when he is given a passive role and the latter is followed by the consequence of his perceived negative personal character. Furthermore, he is given a passive role in a negative association and when things are done for and against him. As for Anies Baswedan, his representation accumulates a positive association both when he is given

an active and a passive role. He is associated with something negative in one material process when he is given a passive role as in '*he has been accused by critics of capitalising on the theologically riven electorate*'.

*The Times* shows similar pattern. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is given an active role where positively associated and a passive role where things are done for against him. However, there are two actions, one material process and one verbal process, where his agent role cannot be associated positively as in '*Mr. Basuki joked about opponents...*' and '*...could face five years' prison...*'. The first sentence adds up to '*...his plain speaking*' therefore it could be interpreted that his joking about opponents is because his speaking manner, implying that his joking is negatively associated. The latter invokes a negative association because it is embedded in a sentence where he is given a passive role as in '*He is on trial...and could face...*' although he is an active agent in the sub-clause. When he is given an active role in a verbal process '*apologised*', there is omission of beneficiary of who benefit from his apology i.e. Muslims who have been hurt and offended.

Anies Baswedan is given only an active role in which he involves both in material and mental processes. All the analysis in this section concludes the subtle presence of the dominated and dominating social actors.

### **3. Visual Representation of Social Actors**

Both *The Guardian* and *The Times* add visual communication elements in the form of images because those images can reinforce dramatization effect of the news as well as giving the authors manoeuvre opportunities which cannot be entirely achieved by the language use (Machin and Mayr 2012: 31). These newspapers use images that reflect their headlines thus denote different social actors. These images will be interpreted based on three dimensions namely distance, angle and gaze as noted by Van Leeuwen (2008: 141) that these three dimensions connote social distance, social relation, and social interaction between viewers and the depicted people.

*The Guardian* uses the image of Anies Baswedan which is taken from a close proximity. This is because *The Guardian* could have decided to allow readers share the mutual inner state and feelings expressed by Anies Baswedan. *The Times*, on the other hand, uses the long shot image of Basuki Tjahaja Purnama wearing a striped inmate outfit in a jail

which is pasted in a poster edited and brought by protesters written '*Islam Defensive Action. Imprison Ahok. Qur'an Blasphemer*'. Unlike the image used by *The Guardian* which focuses on the actual state and feelings of the social actor after winning the election based on the unofficial quick count results, *The Times* does not capture the actual image of the social actor. Instead, *The Times* uses the social actor's image made and brought by the protesters, juxtaposed his position as 'other' among the majority. The social actor is excluded in the reality context in that he is absent from where he is supposed to be at the time when the image is taken therefore the image cannot be said his actual image but an image that contains quasi-human participant. Kress and Van Leeuwen (1999: 367) describe this kind of image an 'offer' which means the image offers the depicted social actor "as items of information, objects of contemplation, impersonally, as though they were specimens in a display case". However, this can be interpreted that *The Times* might try to lead readers' attention to the issue surrounding the loss of the social actor which the image denotes. By doing this, *The Times* might intend to inform readers of why this social actor loses in the election as well as the distanced social relation that the protesters hope to have with him in that he would be imprisoned for blasphemy, hence his image depicts isolation. This visual element choice lends support to Van Leeuwen (2008: 138) social distance account in the image in that "distance becomes symbolic. People shown in 'a long shot', from far away, are shown as if they are strangers; people shown in a 'close-up' are shown as if they are one of us".

The angle where the images are taken varies from both newspapers. The angle itself represents power and involvement i.e. social relation between readers and the depicted people (Van Leeuwen 2008: 139). The angle of the depicted social actor in *The Guardian* is at eye level where readers can see him frontally and this signals equality. Whereas in *The Times*, the angle of the depicted social actor is below eye level which signifies that the readers have abstract symbolic power over him. These angles also exemplify the social interaction between readers and the depicted people. The depicted social actor in *The Guardian* does not look at the readers. His gaze positions readers as the spectators of his excitement. In contrast to this, the depicted social actor's gaze in *The Times* looks directly to the readers but it does not articulate that he intends to establish contact with the readers because this image contain quasi-human participant.



## **Evaluation**

Both *The Guardian* and *The Times* represent the main social actors in their articles in an identical pattern; the defeated social actor predominates the winning social actor. He is made overcommunicative i.e. he is given too many detailed reference and this could stir compassion for those supporting him. In the election, the expected result is often about who wins it. The spotlight is normally given to the winner instead of to the defeated. However, this is not the case with these articles. What is presented is not what is expected but what is unexpected. Although *The Guardian* mitigates its headline activating the winning social actor, the rest of the article content is mainly about the defeated one.

## **Conclusion**

The critical discourse analysis approach of the articles presented allows rigorous and socially scientific objective analysis about the dominated and oppressed social actor against the dominating one (Fairclough, Mulderrig & Wodak, 2011). It helps unfold the relationship between social events, social practice and social structures. Thus, these articles allow us contextualise them in order to interpret and explain the occurring patterns. Given the previous analysis, it can be concluded that both *The Guardian* and *The Times* use similar representational strategy to represent the main social actors. In their articles, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is more activated and more prioritised despite being overtly described as a minority. On the other hand, the winning social actor who is supposed to be the focus of the news is given less roles and representation. This could invite readers to interpret that these newspapers take up a stance towards one of the main social actors.

## **About the writer**

Dian Kurniawati has been teaching English for more than 10 years. She obtained her Bachelor of Education in German Language Education from the Faculty of Language and Arts, State University of Surabaya. Then, she developed her career by designing syllabi and the teaching system for several different English Language institutions as well as becoming a translator and a conference interpreter. After that, she went on to study for a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics with TESOL at the University of Sheffield, UK. She is currently a freelance Linguist who enjoys creative writing.

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## **Appendix**



## Muslim candidate beats Christian in divisive Jakarta governor vote

Basuki Tjahaja Purnama concedes defeat to Anies Baswedan after campaign in which religious and ethnic tensions were key

**Kate Lamb in Jakarta**

Wednesday 19 April 2017 13.02 BST

Jakarta's governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, better known by his nickname Ahok, has conceded defeat to rival candidate Anies Baswedan in a runoff election after a polarising and fraught campaign that exposed religious and ethnic divisions in Indonesia's capital.

"Congratulations Anies and Sandi and their entire team and supporters," Ahok said, referring to Baswedan's running mate, the businessman Sandiaga Uno. "We all want a better Jakarta, we want Jakarta to be our home together."

Unofficial, "quick count" results from Wednesday's election suggested that Baswedan, a Muslim, had won the runoff comfortably against Ahok, a Christian from the country's ethnic Chinese minority.

Quick counts, which are based on samples of votes from polling stations, are often used for guidance in countries where official results are not released until weeks after an election.

Hours after the voting closed, several credible pollsters gave Baswedan a decisive lead of about 15 points.

Religious issues dominated the campaign in the capital of the world's largest Muslim-majority nation. Ahok, who is credited by his supporters with cracking down on corruption, streamlining bureaucracy and tackling infrastructure woes, was polling well until he was accused of insulting Islam on the campaign trail in September when he cited a verse from the Qur'an, Al Maidah 51. An ongoing blasphemy trial ensued, which has significantly dented his popularity.

Several mass protests spearheaded by Islamic hardliners late last year branded Ahok a kafir, called for his arrest, and helped generate momentum for the idea that Muslims should reject non-Muslim leaders.

Banners and pamphlets with discriminatory messages, including threats that Muslims who voted for Ahok would be denied Islamic funeral rites, were widely circulated among Jakarta's dense neighbourhoods.

Ahok also drew criticism for his brash manner and the controversial eviction of poor, riverside communities, but in the minds of some voters his religious affiliation overshadowed all other issues.

Asep Suribayana - one of more than 7 million residents registered to vote in Wednesday's election - said he voted along religious lines.

"Ahok has done a good job, he has good ideas. The problem for me is really just in relation to Al Maidah," he said. "I want Jakarta to be peaceful so I chose a leader who follows Islam."

Voters such as Suribayana believe Al Maidah 51 obliges Muslims to choose Muslim leaders.

Baswedan, a former Indonesian education and culture minister, has been accused by critics of capitalising on the theologically riven electorate. Baswedan, and his running mate Uno, deny the charges.

Ahok pledged to work hard during his remaining six months in office and to assist the winning pair with any requests.

Wednesday's result, seen as having a bearing on the 2019 presidential vote, is being closely watched by observers.

With more than 60,000 security personnel deployed across the capital, voting was largely conducted smoothly across more than 13,000 polling stations, although there were some reports of voters being intimidated.

After voting in central Jakarta, the Indonesian president, Joko Widodo, himself a former Jakarta governor, called for the mending of political divisions.

"Political differences should not break our unity," he said. "We are all brothers and sisters. Whoever is elected, we must accept."

The official results are expected to be released in the first week of May.



# Christian loses in bitter fight to rule Jakarta

Richard Lloyd Parry, Age Editor

April 20 2017, 12:00am,

in Times



Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, who is on trial for blaspheming against Islam, appears to have been defecated by a Muslim crowd (age 2017/04/20 12:00am)

Indonesia's most prominent Christian politician has been defeated in his attempt to be re-elected as governor of Jakarta after a bitter campaign that exposed old and sometimes violent divisions between the country's Muslim majority and other religions.

Exit polls in Tuesday's election indicated a decisive victory for Anies Baswedan, a Muslim and former education minister, over the incumbent governor, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, an ethnic Chinese man from a Christian background, who is on trial for blaspheming against Islam. Before the election, polls had suggested a close result but Mr Anies appears to have won by about 58 per cent to 42 per cent.

Mr Basuki, known as "Ahok", was deputy to the former governor of Jakarta, Joko Widodo, who stood down in 2014 after becoming Indonesia's president. Despite not being elected, he was formerly popular among ordinary Jakartans for his plain speaking.

Last year, while campaigning for the Jakarta election, Mr Basuki joked about opponents citing Koranic verses to argue that a Christian should not hold high office. He said that they had "deceived" their audience, a statement claimed to be a blasphemous commentary on the Koran by a non-Muslim.

Mr Basuki apologised, saying that his criticisms were directed against his opponents, not Islam. But the outrage culminated in large and sometimes violent protests by fundamentalist organisations. He is on trial for blasphemy and could face five years' prison if convicted.