

## CAMOUFLAGE THEORY IN POLITICAL DISCOURSES AS SEEN IN TAN MALAKA'S LETTERS

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***Abstrak :** Mengungkap makna teks politik dalam wacana tidak semudah seperti itu. Orang atau kelompok tertentu mencoba menjadikannya sebagai taktik untuk menutupi beberapa kepentingan dari kelompok yang tidak diinginkan. Salah satu teks politik yang menarik yang ditutupi oleh banyak makna yang tertipu adalah surat-surat Tan Malaka di era penjajahan Belanda. Dengan menerapkan teori Analisis Wacana Kritis (CDA) khususnya teori Van Leeuwen (2008) yang fokus pada konsep wacana sebagai rekontekstualisasi praktik sosial, mewakili aktor sosial, fungsionalisasi dan identifikasi, dan konstruksi diskursif dengan sengaja; memulai cara untuk menggali makna yang tidak terungkap di balik wacana politik. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana fungsi teks politik dapat memanipulasi dan menyamarkan pembaca baik untuk anggota maupun orang luar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa produsen teks politik telah diatur dan dilakukan dengan baik sehingga praktik kamouflase dalam teks ini seperti multi deskripsi di mana makna multi-lapisan untuk melindungi informasi hanya untuk konsumen terbatas. Dalam hal ini, ada hubungan fungsi strategis dan taktis yang tersembunyi dalam surat-surat ini*

**Abstract :** Revealing meaning of political text in discourse is not as easy as it is. Certain people or group tries to create it as a tactic in covering some interests away from the unwanted group. One of the interesting political text which covered by many deceived meaning is letters of Tan Malaka in the era of Dutch colonization. By applying theory of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) especially theory of Van Leeuwen (2008) which focus on the concept of discourse as recontextualization of social practice, representing social actors, functionalization and identification, and discursive construction on purpose; commences the way to dig up the unrevealed meaning behind the political discourse. The objective of this research is to know how the function of the political text can manipulate and camouflage the readers either for the members or the outsider. The result shows that producer of the political text has been arranged and well done planned so that the practice of camouflage in this text is like the multi description where the multi layers meaning in order to protect the information for limited consumer only. In this case, there is a relation of strategic and tactical function which are hidden in this letters.

## A. Introduction

The application of language recently is not merely concerns on delivering information as it is. Nevertheless the practice of language is growing further, since the environment and society which use it develop either. The most significance phenomenon can be seen in the language practice in the political environment where almost the participants involved are coming from the intellectual field. The way of these people interact each other implies many interests which related to unexpected meaning or intention.

Arrangement and meaning which are embedded in the political text or discourse reflect or sign complex purpose and intention. Meaning which reveals in the form of political discourse generally produce in normal way for some readers who did not know its background. However, there is a concealed mission attached in this discourse if the consumer of this text familiar with the tactic and strategic. Those people are involved in the homogenous group. For example the members of political party can digest all of the political discourses which related to their party as they have similar cognition and purpose.

One particular form in political discourse could present something bigger than surface. Sometimes, in certain group of people the use of code and sign is the best way to communicate and exchange secret information aiming at the significance info which can be known by members only.

The occurrence of language practice of politicians orients into the tactical camouflage and further it has the non discursive of political discourses features. The problem is these features are different from the normal or common use of language. The context brings and forces the users (politicians) to give precedence of political interest in their discourse. To break down and peel the essential things behind this problem cannot be accomplished by the usual linguistic analysis and without assisting from other linguistic fields.

The unique political language saves and hides something that left behind its text. The focus and goal of this paper is to appraise the use of tactical discourse in political text in concealing camouflage or hidden intention from the producer of the text. The camouflage tends to secure the tactical interest and hinder the uncontrolled effects in purpose. It means the producers of this text try to protect it from the unexpected intervention from others.

The camouflage is brought by the situation in politic. The competition and the desire to achieve, gain, and make the ambitions happen lead the role of political language becomes differ from the common language. The probability from opponents of politicians who wants to defeat mission shapes the awareness of a politician in doing and running his actions in politic. As the result there is an attempt to protect his intention. The process of

camouflage in political text is a common thing in politic, corruption, maintenance image, and others discourses which contain of strategic orientation.

### **B. Objective of the study**

The aspects of political discourses is not simple even it is complicated since the discourse itself includes the multi layers of political strategy of language. Therefore it needs a complex research or an investigation which combines several approaches to cover up this problem based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By applying theory of Critical Discourse Analysis commences the way to dig up the unrevealed meaning behind the political discourse.

This paper is proposed to clear the pattern or features of political discourse in its role and function for the politician counterpart. The object of this analysis is some discourses in political such as Tan Malaka Letters and article related to corruption. This type of discourse is chosen because it has the strategic and meaningful of meaning which cannot be understand by the outsider comrade of the environment. Therefore, it is quite interesting to know how the function of the political text can manipulate and camouflage the readers either for the members or the outsider.

The theory of Van Leeuwen about the discourse and practice will be a tool to break the meaning behind the political discourse. However, I am not roughly accept all of the concept, since in this theory is not completed by how the role of function can camouflage the readers of text who thought that they comprehend the text as it is, yet it has a disguised intention.

### **C. The Concept of Discourse and Practice in CDA by Van Leeuwen**

Van Leeuwen (2008:3) proposed about the concept of discourse as recontextualization of social practice. He describes the essential thing of the context of role related to the social practice of people. Hence, its social practice affects on the interaction of readers after reading the discourse (text). The background knowledge of participants in the text and the outsider participant should be concerned to assist the exploration of meaning in social practice of text. As Bourdieu (1977) in Van Leeuwen (2008:4) said that “the primacy of practice and the fundamental difference between participant knowledge and “outsider” knowledge”. It is very obvious to say that the knowledge of participants involved on text and the outsider is diverse. This concept is called recontextualization, where the text can represent social practice based on the social cognition in understanding and knowing the meaning. Through the representation of contextual in the text may create explicit way in passing the filter of practices in which is inserted. However, in term of the political text, the context which builds the form is not merely a representation of social practice in common; it is beyond the context seen in the text. There is a deep meaning which just comprehends by a group of people. This action occurs because of the secret intention.

Further, the mission to convey the exact meaning in a discourse, it can be investigated from the representing of social actors (Van Leeuwen :23). This concept is emphasized on the participant or social actor in the text. Van Leeuwen remarks that he prefers on choosing one word may not congruent with the grammatical system which is brought by Halliday (1985). The text can be consisting of the words that did not fix in the grammatical, instead of its reality. In addition convincingly, He states meanings belong to culture rather than to language and cannot be tied to any specific semiotic (1988:24). To strengthen the commitment in determining meaning by looking its social actor, then there is a Role Allocation. This term is glided by Van Leeuwen as result of representation of social actor which can reallocate or arrange the social relations between the participants. So that, through this combination is possible to procedure of text in hiding meaning for the participants. That is always happening in political discourse so the potential to camouflage meaning opened.

Related to the above description, the problem of seeking meaning through the concept of social actor and representing of context are not enough yet. To fulfill it, Van Leeuwen propounds Functionalization and Identification. Functionalization here means the activity of social actor does meanwhile identification view social actor in terms of what they are. Nevertheless, in this way, the role of functionalization and identification cannot guarantee to the play of camouflage meaning in the political meaning. The position of function here is related to the influence of political text toward the readers, or in other word the effect of political discourse.

Crucially to speak about the political discourse is the purpose. The discourse practice tends to construct the discursive purpose. However the strategic ideas which follow this discourse are different since the political text brings the unusual form of practical language. The text implied by the non discursive such a camouflage and concealment toward the arrangement of words in aim at disguising real intention. In general the discourse and practice in Van Leeuwen perspective based on the representing of context in social practice, representing social actor, and the discursive construction on purpose.

### **I. The Relation of Strategic and Tactical Function of Political Discourse**

The production of political text in beginning is to communicate the information about politic issues for society. In the normal way, the critic and support toward perspective in political environment is ordinary. The producer of the text drags away several meaning to create the normal point of view, nonetheless there is a strategic and trick to deceive particular group easily divined. Consciously thinking, producer of the political text has been arranging and well done planned. The practice of camouflage in this text is like the multi description where the multi layers meaning in order to protect the information for limited consumer only. Because of the development of ideas and for the privacy, the producer of the text tries to present his text in normal way, so that there is no

one suspicious to think the serious meaning behind. All of these thing, the way of protection and security for the information become the primary task.

## II. Analysis of Camouflage in the Political Discourse

As I said before, the object of this research is about political discourse such as corruption, politic, maintenance image and other strategic discourses. From these types of political discourse, I choose the Letters of Tan Malaka. The text is attractive since the arrangement and choices of the words imply the camouflage which is hidden something but cannot be expelled in plain investigation. Tan Malaka's Letters contain about the political strategy against colonialism. The contextual background of this letter is influenced by situation of reformation to unchain the lower class (Indonesian's labors) and Indonesian's people in general from the colonization of Dutch. The communism which is believed by Tan Malaka becomes his mindset to fight the right of lower society (Indonesian's labours) form colonization of Dutch.

### Data 1

*The discourse "TOEAN HADJI HASSAN" camouflages the name of "TAN MALAKA". (Letter from Mughtar to Members of communist entitled Minta dibatja oleh sekalijan lid2nja : Boar of Directors).*

Context: In the moment of Dutch colonialism, the term or name Tan Malaka is a threat for the colonizer so that he becomes one of the most wanted persons. The presence of Tan Malaka brings the unexpected situation for the dignity of Dutch. Considering this condition, members of Indonesian communism Party (PKI) create the unusual system. They produce the different discourse "TOEAN HADJI HASSAN" to hide the real discourse. By changing the name in Arabian style in Indonesian context give the normal perception toward the readers. So that no one will realize the tactic to deceive the enemy if this letter spreads to the public even the Dutch. The name as a camouflage is to protect image of Tan Malaka. In other hand, the camouflage of HADJI HASSAN conveys the meaning effect which prevent the suspicion from the opponent's side.

In the way of this happen, I refer to Van Leeuwen concept of represent of social actors and context. Nevertheless, although the social actor is represented in this letter, it is not enough to reveal the deepest meaning. It happens because the social actor directly is represented but implicitly either protects or hides the real actor. This is what Van Leeuwen cannot cover it.

Because of some reason the producer of the text exposures design the text by using natural signs or codes to communicate the statement which is closed for certain group. By looking this discourse "TOEAN HADJI HASSAN" implied "TAN MALAKA" identity. This identity consciously is hidden in order to trick the enemy, Dutch who wants to defeat Tan Malaka. This part differs from the Van Leeuwen concept, where the social actor

sometime in particular context, political discourse cannot be exposed frankly. There is tactical and strategic culture of producer of this text to keep and guard the internal information among members.

If the discourse follows the concept of representing social actor, it can be dangerous. The identity of social actor can be traced and may destruct the mission of Tan Malaka as the promoter behind the rebellion from Dutch's colonization. Tan Malaka is the main actor who leads labors and Indonesian's young generation at that time to abolish the cruelty of colonization. So, the communist's members have agreed to symbol Tan Malaka as Toen Hadji Hassan in the name of security.

## Data 2

*“PERNIAGAAN” means trade camouflages “AKSI” means action (Letter from Muchtar to Members of communist entitled Minta dibatja oleh sekaligus lid2nja : Boar of Directors) p. 341*

Context: Indonesia as the biggest source of spices in the world attracts the attention of others country from the west area such as England, France and Dutch. Then these countries compete to govern Indonesia in order to get the benefit of the richness of Indonesian's nature. Simply to say, the term “trade” means positive and common to be used. As the holding of authority in Indonesian government, Dutch takes in charge of all condition such trade, industry, economic, politic, and society. There is a limitation of action to native people (Indonesian) to develop in their own country. Nevertheless native are colonized, so their rights are restricted.

Fighting and doing some revolution acts are the best way to expel or thrown out the Dutch authority in Indonesia. Yet, it is not as a simple as chase the cat out from the house, the revolutionaries need to do strategic and tactic to govern all power of peoples. So, to assist their mission, the members of communism create and construct the systematic symbols contain of complete information to gather civil action against the Dutch colonialist.

The symbol of “trade” camouflages “action” which leads to the insurgent opposes Dutch colonialist. The reality of representing action here is not clearly exposed if the reader cannot comprehend the meaning of symbol behind it. This is part of strategic function to hide and conceal the fact of action. The writer intentionally presents the surface layer differs from the deep layer. Action for the reality is buried deeper because it is related to dangerous actions to defeat Dutch imperialism.

This symbol is in accordance with the real maneuvers to defeat position of Dutch as colonizer in Indonesia. The occurrence of symbols implies the construction tactical to build certain reality in readers of the letters particularly for the communist members. The goal of the writer of this political letters is to initiate mindset or belief of communists, and then

they can be the missionaries in arising spirit of fighting on colonialism. This concept will collect great effect toward the readers either the communist members or the colonialists.

Logically, communist's members who already have the strong belief to take out proletariat from their sorrow because of Dutch will be calmer to confront it. After reading and taking the hidden info implied in the symbol "trade" will bring more spirit to fight for communists. In contrary, for the unexpected incident happen will be cover up and predicted soon. So the opportunity for the symbol becomes known by enemy is lower.

### Data 3

*The discourse "MENGELOEARKAN BANKNOTE" means "giving Banknote" camouflages the term "MENGADAKAN PEMBERONTAKAN" means "doing rebellion". (Letter from Mughtar to Members of communist entitled Minta dibatja oleh sekalijan lid2nja : Boar of Directors). p 341.*

Context: All of the destructive and corrosive actions toward the colonialism governed by The Dutch were forbidden to occur. So, to show the issue of fighting in against the authority of Dutch was closed in action. The writer of this letter uses the "MENGELOEARKAN BANKNOTE" to hide the Rebellion (Pemberontakan) since this term is very sensitive word to be revealed roughly in the public. If the Dutch, colonizer heard, automatically they will investigate the information of the letter and will destroy the members as it is a thread for their position in Indonesia.

The tactic of the writer on this letter by disguising the reality behind, it will help to maintain the secret information. The writer does not convey the reality as it is. He gives the different surface layer of discourse which is naturally used and no contains of something danger toward the readers. It is done at aiming to equip a great wall in hindering the curiosity of enemy who will stole and know the mission in case. This protection is doing related to the security system of mission. So if this letter misleads to the wrong person and it might be enemy, the secret is still secure. The used of term "chasing out banknote" as the surface layer to cover up the reality of rebellion is normal, because in general the letter talks about the trade. Trading is ordinary action since there is a lot of transaction of spices in Indonesia. Then, term of banknote communicates effect of trade. It is kind of payment.

Referring to the above camouflage discourse "trade" for reality "action" describes how structure of this letters construct the discursive term to save the peculiar meaning, that is action. Moreover the use of code "cashing Banknote" and "trade" have correlation toward its reality "action" to achieve the goal of "rebellion". It means, in the way the surface layer of text has already organized functionally. Hence, the deep structure of meaning that is "action of rebellion" against Dutch colonialism can be covering up safely. Here, the representing of contextualization in this political discourse does not occur. Since the context here is hidden to secure secret information. Based on Van Leeuwen, representing the action in the discourse is one way to seek out the meaning, whereas this

system does not exist in political discourse. It is proven by the release of banknote intentionally to disguise rebellion as the real intention of writer of text.

#### Data 4

*The discourse “DJOEAL OBRAL CHOCOLATE” which means “chocolate sale” camouflages “MENGADAKAN PEMOGOKAN- PEMOGOKAN” which means “strikes”. (Letter from Mughtar to Members of communist entitled Minta dibatja oleh sekalijan lid2nja : Boar of Directors). p 341.*

Context: chocolate as one of commodity in industrial area in Indonesia. As the source of spices and others export commodities such fruits, coffee, and rice make Indonesia as potential area to be cultivated. Dutch uses this chance to take over the land of Indonesia. So, talking about the chocolate will not be peculiar. This context may protect the extremely action which is truly intended in it. The combination of the word “sale” and “chocolate” makes sense of the technique of marketing becomes easier. Sale brings the meaning of spreading.

Spreading in this case creates the situation where the action is done in all location. Related to the reality of the discourse that is enshrouded has deep meaning. It is “strikes action” to protest about domination of industrial by Dutch. Further, communists influence labor and proletarian to strike from factories where their work for Dutch. The motivation is to accumulate people, especially proletarian to do strikes in all factories and industrial area. This action will paralyze all activities and destroy the economic system of industry owned by Dutch.

Attempting to disguise the mission above, the planner as part of communists’ members is endeavoring to attach code on their language. This mission will fail if the mission leaks out to the intruders. The effect of using ordinary term in symbolize something will decrease the effect of curiosity from the enemy.

#### Data 5

*The discourse “AGENT2” which means “agents” camouflages the discourse “PEMIMPIN- PEMIMPIN” which means “leaders”. (Letter from Mughtar to Members of communist entitled Minta dibatja oleh sekalijan lid2nja : Boar of Directors). p 342.*

Context: in doing the revolution for lower class society (labors and proletarian) without the pioneer is nothing. These people need someone or persons to fight their rights. The person is the one who can leads them in assisting and solving all problem related to social, political, and economical aspects. Automatically, this person must be smart, skillful, and responsible to unfortunate people. Related to this data, the writer of this letter also reveals the actor behind the action. Nonetheless the format of its structure depicts something else happened in the organization of this text. Over all from the above mentioned, this agent is the director of all action such strikes and rebellion to be



independence from the colonizer. The spirit of revolution is brought by the person who can be trusted and has power to manage all people together in objecting discrimination of Dutch in labors and proletarians.

It is clearly to view that this writer always emphasizes to show the things connected to the trade, starting from the beginning till the end. The consistency of using trading terminologies, from the commodity, trade, the payment, and at the end is the agent. The structure and organization of this term is very effective to camouflage the actor. This idea is contrast to the Van Leeuwen theory of representing actor.

## **F. Conclusion**

These letters are kind of political discourse since they belong to a group of people, exactly the communist group who against the government of Dutch before Indonesia got its independence. The colonialism of Dutch is judged as uncontrolled and arbitrariness in action toward Indonesian's society particularly labors and workers (proletariat). By looking at the miserable condition of people which is caused by colonialism, communists try to defend and plead labor's right from its discrimination. The strategy to defeat was done secretly in order to avoid the abolishment from the Dutch because it is potential happened.

To cover up all of members activities (communists) attempt to create and construct the different way of communication among group, which is by coding language. However, looking from the Tan Malaka letters contain of the political information and secret mission is not seems as it is. The organization of word and the choices is normal. Nevertheless, the reality conceals several things related to destroyed mission by gathering proletarian's power to oppose Dutch authority. There is a theory of camouflage here that saves the mission to be leak.

The theory of Van Leeuwen is that to reveal the meaning from the discourse is included by representing the action, context, and actor. Unfortunately, those concepts can not be applied effectively to this political discourse. That is the lack Van Leeuwen's theory in figuring out the meaning of the text. Not every discourse can freely show those things. There is also special aspect of intention which encourages the producer of the political discourse not bluntly demonstrate his meaning. The producer design the connotative condition as mask to program the code or symbol of language. It is proposed to help among members (communists) are secure to communicate without intervention from the outsiders. Moreover, it is functioned to control the effect of the discourse.

## G. REFERENCES

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