

**The Resistance against Racism: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Anti-Asian Racism
relating to Covid-19 Outbreak**

THESIS

*Submitted as a Partial Fulfilment for the Requirement to Obtain Strata One (S1) Degree in
English Department*



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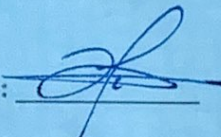
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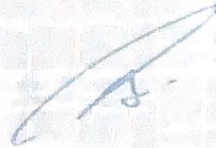
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ABSTRACT

Putri, Fadhila Hananta (2022). The Resistance against Racism: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Anti-Asian Racism relating to Covid-19 Outbreak. Thesis. Padang: English Language and Literature Department. Faculty of Languages and Arts. Universitas Negeri Padang.

This study is aimed to find out (1) the discourse topics and (2) the discourse strategies from the utterances produced by Asian-Americans as the victim of the racist attack during the Covid-19 outbreak to reveal how they voice their ideologies in defending themselves and maintaining their existence in society. The researcher employs a qualitative method considering the data are in the form of written-text and also analyse the humanities and social sciences. Specifically, the researcher analysed the discourses presented in several videos from YouTube that being transcribed into written discourses. This study focuses on how Asian-Americans portray themselves and others in their discourses based on their beliefs. From seven videos being analysed, the researcher has collected 80 data that consist of the Positive-Self and Negative-Others presentation. By utilizing Van Dijk's Ideological Square, the researcher found out there are 16 discourse topics implied in Asian-Americans' utterances, such as 'We are also Americans', 'Anti-Asian-Americans is terrifying', etc. Furthermore, there are 22 discourse strategies used by Asian-Americans in defending themselves. The study reveals Asian-Americans as the racist-victim attempt to emphasize the Anti-racism movement. Moreover, the researcher has found that several discourses consist of negative-attitude towards majorities or Americans society.

Key words: *Asian-American, Ideological Square, Discourse Topics, Discourse Strategies*

ABSTRAK

Putri, Fadhila Hananta (2022). Perlawanan terhadap Rasisme: Analisis Wacana Kritis dari Rasis Anti-Asia terkait Wabah Covid-19. Skripsi. Padang: Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris. Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni. Universitas Negeri Padang.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui (1) topik wacana dan (2) strategi wacana dari ujaran yang dihasilkan oleh orang Asia-Amerika sebagai korban serangan rasis selama wabah Covid-19 untuk mengungkapkan bagaimana mereka menyuarkan ideologi mereka dalam membela diri dan mempertahankan eksistensinya di masyarakat. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif mengingat data berupa teks tertulis dan juga menganalisis humaniora dan ilmu-ilmu sosial. Secara khusus, peneliti menganalisis wacana yang disajikan dalam beberapa video dari YouTube yang ditranskripsi menjadi wacana tertulis. Studi ini berfokus pada bagaimana orang Asia-Amerika menggambarkan diri mereka sendiri dan orang lain dalam wacana mereka berdasarkan keyakinan mereka. Dari tujuh video yang dianalisis, peneliti telah mengumpulkan 80 data yang terdiri dari presentasi Positive-Self dan Negative-Others. Dengan memanfaatkan Ideological Square karya Van Dijk, peneliti menemukan ada 16 topik wacana yang tersirat dalam tuturan orang Asia-Amerika, seperti 'Kami juga orang Amerika', 'Rasis Anti-Asian-Americans mengerikan', dll. Selanjutnya, ada 22 strategi wacana yang digunakan oleh orang Asia-Amerika dalam membela diri. Studi ini mengungkapkan orang Asia-Amerika sebagai upaya rasis-korban untuk menekankan gerakan Anti-rasisme. Selain itu, peneliti menemukan bahwa beberapa wacana mengandung sikap negatif terhadap mayoritas atau masyarakat Amerika.

Kata kunci: Asia-Amerika, Ideological Square, Topik Wacana, Strategi Wacana

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The researcher realizes that her paper actually has not been perfect yet, there are many mistakes contained in it. At the end, the researcher hopes that this paper will be a guidance for some literary study, especially about Critical Discourse Analysis.

Padang, 2022

The Researcher

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Research Problem

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is one of analytical tools in linguistics and social studies to uncover social and political issues related to power, social inequality, domination, and discrimination in spoken and written discourses. It is also able to reveal how minority individuals or communities are presented negatively in discourses by dominant groups and how the minority community defend themselves through discourses. According to Van Dijk (1996), “Domination is seldom absolute; it is often gradual, and may be met by more or less resistance or counter power by dominated groups”. It means in analysing any social issue, we should see from both sides; the dominant and the dominated. However, there are many unbalanced understandings between the dominant and dominated found in reality. The minorities’ voices tend not to be heard. It causes there is not much attention in CDA studies relating to the resistance discourses produced by minorities. It can be said that we have a very little understanding of the minorities and their discussion.

In practice, minority community or the dominated actually start having the courage to defend themselves through several media such as videos on YouTube, Twitter threads, Instagram stories, etc. It is different with the era before social media appeared, probably before 2010 when iPad still did not appear (Zhaksybaeva, 2015), minority community cannot defend themselves since the media existed in

the past is only print media. It is written for a mass audience and it tends to have the tendency to majority community. It makes the minority community's voice tends to be silenced. In line with Yan (2021), before the existence of social media, people cannot voice their opinions freely. They are passive and just accept information from government. However, after the electronic media appear, the resistance discourses of minorities are spread over the social media. As stated by Yan (2021), the dominated finally can obtain and access information easier that has given them opportunity and power to promote the social movement and control the information.

Resistance in CDA is discourses that try to establish, sustain, and reinforce oppressive power on those who have been defined as being racially or ethnically different. It is seen as the ways certain individuals or groups struggle over signs and meaning in order to change the way people think about the social world. In fact, the resistance discourses are analysed not as much as discriminatory discourses. In point of fact, it is important to identify how the resistance discourse is used by minority community to know the discourse topics and strategies used by them to have understanding of the minorities and their discussion so that we can raise the awareness, achieve social improvements and develop our worldviews to fight against any acts of racism.

Discourse topics and discourse strategies are found out in this study to get knowledge about the minorities' viewpoints. Generally, discourse topic is the theme or central idea to answer 'who' and 'what' the discourses are about. Whereas, discourse strategies are the ways used by minorities to utter their perspective about

an issue. This study is conducted using Van Dijk's Ideological Square 'Positive-Self and Negative-Others presentation'. Ideological square is chosen as an analytical tool for this study since Van Dijk's theory will help the researcher to find the ideology of the discourse producers by looking at their discourses emphasizing the positive-self presentation and negative other-attitudes. Moreover, it helps to show the meaning of text embedded by the producers in the discourse, likewise in their minds.

One of the issues relating to resistance can be identified in the discourses presented by Asian-American community that is portrayed negatively. This negative portrayal is triggered by the emergence of Covid-19 virus that was firstly found in Wuhan, China. It leads the white community to call the corona virus as "Chinese Virus" and finally influences the other community to start prejudicing and treat people with Asian background unfairly. The vulnerability of Asian-American, who are considered as foreigners in their birthplace, has increased during the outbreak. According to Stop AAPI HATE forum on December 31th 2021, a total of 10,905 hate incidents against Asian-American were reported to Stop AAPI Hate and verbal harassment reaches 63% of the total incidents reported.

There are several studies have investigated the use of language and ideology (Li and Zhu, 2019; Mengting, 2021; Davis, 2018; Amarilisyaringtyas, 2021; Ayuningtyas, 2020; Tran, 2021; Asakitikpi & Joanah, 2020). The findings of those studies show that discourses as social interactions can reveal the ideology of the discourse producers. Moreover, several researchers investigated how minority community defend themselves toward the racism against them (e.g., Nartey 2020;

Davis 2018; Amarilisyaringtyas 2021). Although these previous studies have provided comprehensive analysis about resistance discourse of minority community, these studies still do not find the discourse strategies used by the minorities in defending themselves. These studies also do not put attention to the issue of racism toward Asian-American during the outbreak. Gover, Harper, & Langton (2020) actually have investigated the issue about Asian-American during the outbreak, but it still focuses on how the spread of racism toward Asian-American in historically entrenched and intersecting individual-level without paying attention to the discourses used by the Asian-American. Moreover, Gover, Harper, & Langton do not use Van Dijk's ideological square as their analytical tools. In fact, the Van Dijk's Ideological square as the analytical tools will reveal and emphasize the ideology of the discourse producers explicitly. On the other hand, Tao Li and Yifan Zhu (2019) and Mengting Wang (2021) conducted research related to Van Dijk's Ideological Square Positive self and negative others-presentation. However, the objects analysed are different with the present study. There is a study that is quite similar with the present study which was conducted by Anggi Fian Febrianty (2020). She investigated the discursive strategies used in the comments written by Asian-Americans users in voicing their ideologies of growing-up as minorities in the US with Van Dijk's Ideological Square.

Several studies presented above show that discourses as social interactions are connected to people's ideologies either in racial matter, religious, ethnicity, etc. The previous studies mostly analysed the discriminatory discourses produced by majorities or elite parties. Regardless of the several studies above, the present study

aims to examine the ideologies conveyed in the minorities' discourses by investigating the discourse topic and strategies used by the minorities, especially Asian-American in facing the Anti-Asian racism since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is conducted since the researcher thinks the investigation about this issue still cannot be found yet. Therefore, this study is conducted to have understanding about minorities and show that their discourses need to be highlighted so that there is a balanced understanding about discourses both in dominant and dominated viewpoints.

1.2 Identification of Research Problem

The reports about physical attacks and verbal harassment against Asian-American community have been submitted in television, newspaper, and social media. Such attacks have had a tremendous negative impact upon these people. Reported from BBC News (2021), Two Asian-American women were stabbed at a San Fransisco bus stop, An Asian-American woman in New York City was struck in the head with a hammer. The Asian-American community have also been the target of bullying whether in the school, office, and public places since the start of the corona virus pandemic. Reported from NBC News (2021), A 14-year-old student in Dallas was followed home by several boys who pretended to cough on him and yelled "Ching chong! You have Chinese virus!". Due to the term 'Chinese Virus' and continued blame of Covid-19 spread on China, Asian-American individuals have been targeted.

The problems underlying in this study are based on the lacking of CDA studies to investigate discourses addressing the issue of Anti-Asian racism during the Corona Virus pandemic. If there some, those studies only focus on discriminatory discourse. The lack of CDA in this issue study remains a problem that has not been answered yet. It is about how the minority community's voices are not heard that results we have little understanding of minorities and their discussion. It results the society tend to follow the majorities' ideologies without knowing the minorities' voices. The resistance discourses from minorities will point out the self-defence toward the harmful dominant ideologies. Specifically, this study analyses how the Asian-American respond to the negative presentations and what discourse topics and strategies they employ in defending themselves against the Anti-Asian Racism which was started since Covid-19 pandemic begun.

This CDA analysis can provide a comprehensive and detailed analysis of how Asian-American in the United States stand up for themselves discursively. It is noteworthy for future researchers to expand the discursive analysis of minorities' ideologies. This study can also help the other minorities in other parts of the world that may also have been experienced similar problems. For example, the other dominated or minorities may learn about the discourse topic and strategies that are used by the Asian-American to resist racism and discrimination.

1.3 Limitation and Scope of Research Problem

Based on the identification above, the problem of this study are limited to the resistance discourses attempted by Asian-American in the United States against

the discourses undermining them due to the corona virus which was firstly found in Wuhan, China. This study is conducted under CDA framework by Van Dijk's approach Ideological Square 'Positive-Self and Negative-Others Presentation' to find out the discourse topics and strategies used by Asian-American since it allows the researcher not only to present analysis on the speeches' textual features but also the ideologies of the discourse producers. This way will make the result of the study more trustworthy.

1.4 Formulation of Research Problem

Based on the limitation of the problem elaborated above, the problem of this research is formulated into following questions:

- 1) What are the discourse topics used by Asian-American in defending themselves against Anti-Asia racist?
- 2) What are the discourse/ linguistic strategies used by Asian-American in defending themselves against Anti-Asia racist?

1.5 Purposes of Research

This study aims to understand the discourse presentations that show the self-defence of Asian-American community. The specific purposes are:

- 1) To find out the discourse topics used by Asian-American in defending themselves against Anti-Asia racist.
- 2) To find out the discourse/ linguistic strategies used by Asian-American in defending themselves against Anti-Asia racist.

1.6 Significances of Research

This research would give contribution in enriching Van Dijk's Ideological Square theory such as identifying the current context of Covid-19 issue that focuses on racism against Asian community which is portrayed negatively as the source of the deadly virus. This research can also prove that Van Dijk's theory can be used in every context such as political, health, and other social contexts by identifying the discourse topics and discourse strategies used by the discourse producers.

This present study contributes in practical to help the readers to understand the discourse topics and linguistic strategies in understanding resistance discourse produced by minority community. Moreover, it will be helpful for the other minorities in the other parts of the world to defend themselves against racist by learning the discourse topics and strategies used by Asian-American in the United States. This study is also expected to empower people to be more open-minded and tolerant to every ethnicity

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

The definition of key terms of this research is elaborated as:

- Analysis: the process of understanding something carefully or using statistical methods to understand it. (Collins Dictionary)
- Discourse: Any kind of written, spoken, and any other symbolic forms that are used in people communication. (Collins Dictionary)

- Critical Discourse Analysis: The study which is used to elucidate how the discourse used in social and political problems such as inequality, power abuse, and dominance (Van Dijk, 2004). According to Van Dijk (2004), CDA is a type of discourse analysis research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by the text and talk in social and political contexts.
- Resistance: The attempts in written and spoken discourses which are produced by minorities to defend themselves toward the discourses undermining them.
- Ideological Square: One of the theories from Van Dijk that will help the researcher to see how the discourse producers portray themselves positively in their discourses and the put the negative attribute to others.
- Discourse topic: The theme or central idea to answer 'who' and 'what' the discourses are about.
- Discourse strategies: The ways used by minorities to utter their perspective about an issue.
- Racism: The action, beliefs, and attitudes toward some individuals and groups because of their colour, national origin, and race. (Collins Dictionary)
- Asian-American: Americans of Asian ancestry. (Collins Dictionary)

- Covid-19 virus: An infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. (WHO)
- Pandemic: A disease outbreak that spreads across countries or continents. It affects more people and takes more lives than an epidemic. (WebMD)