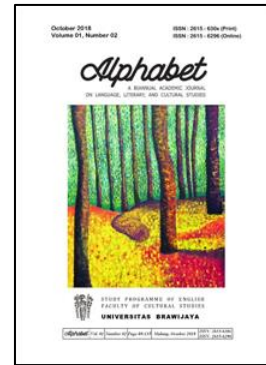


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# Argumentation in Political Interview: Critical Discourse Analysis of Abdurrahman Wahid's Controversial Regime

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## Abstract

Abdurrahman Wahid was dismissed as a president in 2001 due to his controversial acts. Australia Corporation (2001) conducted a political interview to talk about his dismissal and the parliament, which against him. This article observes the microstructure of the interview by providing the reader with illocutionary act analysis as well to support the 'Action' of the discourse (Wahid's utterances). Humanism thought, which underlies his positive actions towards his dismissal, is used. Six values of Wahid are divinity, humanity, justice, equality, liberty, and local wisdom. Then, his leadership is worth appreciating as a charismatic leadership due to his positive (humanism) actions. Findings show that Wahid uses the positive acts toward his dismissal and people who against him. This article suggests for the future researchers to discuss more detail about the whole theory of Teun Van Dijk (Macrostructures, Microstructures and Superstructures).

## Keywords:

Microstructures, political interview, Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency, Critical Discourse Analysis.

Political conditions in Indonesia was at the peak level when Abdurrahman Wahid (also called Gus Dur) became the fourth president of Indonesia. The failure of Wahid to improve Indonesia caused many controversial opinions about his ability as a president. Wahid's government faced many highly controversial issues which were assessed by many people. This study analyzes the microstructures and the illocutionary acts of Wahid's utterances or responses in a political interview conducted by Australia Corporation. Microstructures describe the local meaning through words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and connections between sentences (Van Dijk, 1980), and microstructures are the actually and directly 'expressed' structures of discourse. Thus, microstructures were used to reveal what actions of

Wahid expressed through his utterances. Data on the semantic aspect of microstructures are to know both what the purpose of Wahid's action and the local meanings in Wahid's utterances.

The collected data involve the context of the text, which covers 'Cognition' and 'Society' dimensions. 'Cognition' and 'society' dimensions are used to answer the sociological contribution to the pattern of Wahid's actions that involve the factors of social representations concerning Wahid' regime. Hence, those two dimensions make this research a critical discourse analysis. The uniqueness of this research is the fact that it applies the microstructure theory proposed by Van Dijk (1980) covering the local meanings (semantics aspects) of Wahid' utterances and the speech act

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theory proposed by Searle (1975) in order to find out what the actions of Wahid towards his dismissal. Thus, humanism thought, which underlies Wahid's positive actions towards his dismissal, is used. Then, his leadership is worth appreciating as a charismatic leader due to his positive (humanism) actions. Expert responses to an interview support those interpretations.

Studies on CDA have been long conducted by several researchers (e.g. Musthofa, 2008; Azis, 2013; and Mubarok, 2011). Firstly, Musthofa (2008) analyzed gender stereotyping in the movie "It's a Boy Girl Things" using Van Dijk's theory. He analyzed the aspects of microstructure, superstructure, and macrostructure from the process of the stereotyping formation in which the discourses of gender stereotyping found were classified into nine kinds of discourse formation. Secondly, Azis (2013) researched the word and sentence structures of Barrack Obama's speech in Osawatomie by using Van Dijk's theory. The findings resulted in showing that Barrack Obama used a particular word and sentence structures to create the coherence and cohesion of the discourse as a means to enhance the power of the discourse. Lastly, Mubarok (2013) investigated phrasal and sentence structures of Julia Eileen Gillard's speeches using critical discourse analysis. Her findings revealed that Gillard used microstructure level strategies on phrasal and sentential structures of discourse to enhance the cohesion and coherence of her political speeches.

There are also previous studies on Abdurrahman Wahid conducted by Khusnita (2013) entitled *The Implicature of Humor Utterances in Humor Lucu Ala Gus Dur* and by Muhlalim (2016) entitled *Konsep Negara Islam Substantif Dalam Sosiologi Politik Indonesia Kontemporer (Studi Pemikiran Negara Nir Kekerasan Abdurrahman Wahid)*. These studies observed Wahid's government based on the language used by Gus Dur (Abdurrahman Wahid). However, they applied different theories; the first research examined the implicature while the latter was a critical discourse analysis by using Foucault's theory. On the other hand,

this research investigates an interview which is one of the discourse genres. Wahid's political interview is selected for analysis because microstructure would be easier to be found and observed in an interview rather than in many other genres. Discourse genres are frequently identifiable, and some genres have relatively stable and delimited properties based on the pragmatics of usage. The interview is among such relatively delimited genres (Jucker, 1986).

Another similar research on Wahid's thought is entitled *Orientasi Kiri Islam Pemikiran Politik Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur)* was executed by Hatta (2008). This study examined Wahid's political thoughts toward an Islamic orientation by using Critical Discourse Analysis. He found that Wahid's political thought toward an Islamic orientation is a social equity aspect without getting out of humanity's line. Hatta concluded that Wahid (Gus Dur) was an Indonesian scholar who was appreciative of democracy and used the basis of western scholarship and classical Islamic treasury into the idea of Islam. However, this study lacks data since it only used library research and left any theories out to support the discourse of Wahid. In short, this study did not show any sociological theory that underlined Wahid's political thoughts toward Islamic orientation.

Ishamudin's (2010) research entitled *K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) Sebagai Political Man (Studi Ketokohan Gus Dur Tahun 1999-2000)* examined Wahid's thought that made him a 'Political Man' and his roles toward the political field in Indonesia. Ishamudin attempted to examine pluralism ideas proposed by Wahid. This study just focused on library research and did not use any theories to investigate the discourse of Wahid. To be similar to Hatta's, this study did not consider any sociological theory that underlined Wahid's political thoughts toward Islamic orientation.

The major differences between those given previous studies and this article are on the theory used i.e. microstructures theory, the research object i.e. Abdurrahman Wahid's in-

terview, and the analysis focus i.e. the local meaning conveyed through words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and connections between sentences found in Wahid's utterances. In principle, dis-course should normally exhibit sentential and textual structures to be acceptable in a language community. Furthermore, speech acts theory proposed by Searle (1965) is also used to support the 'Action' of the discourse (i.e. Wahid's utterances).

## METHOD

A descriptive qualitative method was used to describe how Wahid realized power through his utterances in his political interview with William (Australia Corporation). The data were taken from Youtube. Later, analyses on the dimensions of discourse, cognition, and society, which referred back to Van Dijk's step of Critical Discourse Analysis, were conducted through some steps. First, Wahid's utterances which contained ideology were examined by categorizing the utterances' illocutionary acts by using Searle's theory i.e. assertives or representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations. This step revealed the 'discourse' dimension. Second, interview responses were collected to obtain information on the accuracy of 'Cognition' and 'Society' interpretations. It was held by using the snowballing technique. An expert who is knowledgeable about Wahid's regime was interviewed. Finally, the interpretation from articles, magazines, or newspapers was combined with the information or opinions of the expert (interviewee).

## RESULT

### Actions Performed by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) to Realize Power.

There are five categories to show the action and power of Wahid. They are Representative Illocutionary Act, Directive Illocutionary Act, Commissive Illocutionary Act, Expressive Illocutionary Act, and Declarative Illocutionary Act. Representative Illocutionary Act covers 'stating' (4), 'informing' (3), and

'believing' (5); Directive Illocutionary Act only covers 'suggesting' (1); Commissive Illocutionary Act covers 'refusing' (5) and 'promising' (2); Expressive Illocutionary Act only covers 'disappointing' (1). Wahid did not use any declarative acts on his utterances.

### *Detailed Information of Assertive Illocutionary Acts*

#### *Stating*

William : "Some parliamentarians have said that they don't believe that you took any money, that you didn't do anything very wrong - but they're worried about the style of management."

Wahid : "If they think so why don't they talk to me - if it's style it can change any time I'm not so valuable as to not to listen to them."

"I'm not so valuable as to not to listen to them." is included into *Representative Illocutionary Act of stating*. Wahid stated that there is no distance between himself, as a president, and the citizens. This utterance contains Wahid's future ambitions, that is, Wahid wanted the citizens to talk to him directly.

#### *Informing*

William : "What's your reaction to the fact that clearly Megawati has allowed the PDI P to vote against you like this in the Parliament?"

Wahid : "That's her device for letting the steam out of the party... so now the steam has been let out that's ok. But she said through a messenger to me that last night that she will not entertain any kind of special session of MPR."

The utterance "But she said through a messenger to me that last night that she will not entertain any special session of MPR." is included into *Representatives Illocutionary Acts of*

*informing*. Wahid informed that Megawati did not hold any special meeting with MPR.

#### *Believing*

William : “And you still believe the Vice President is still fully behind you?”

Wahid : “Oh yes, she is close behind me - ask her.”

“Oh yes, she is close behind me.” includes into *Representatives Illocutionary Acts of Believing*. Wahid was asked whether the vice president (Megawati) was fully behind him or not. Wahid tranquilly answered “Oh yes, she is close behind me.” He believed that Megawati was on his side. Wahid did not express any expression of anger. Wahid also did not give a high intonation on his utterance. Wahid believed that Megawati did not do any negative actions against him and she supported him as her partner.

#### ***Detailed Information Of Directive Illocutionary Acts***

##### *Suggesting*

William : “People are saying you are finished. That your days are numbered, that the Parliament is now against you, questions about Megawati's support etc. What is your message to the parliament first of all, but also to the world about your future?”

Wahid : “My message? - Don't be misled by what seems to be the winning side - no, no, no. I will never step down. I will be in the office. You see I'm a Moslem - but if I'm not a Moslem then I can bet with you - I will be here until the end of my term.”

The utterance “Don't be misled by what seems to be the winning side.” is included into *Directives Illocutionary Act* which causes the

hearer to take a particular action. It is classified as *Suggesting* because of the phrases ‘Don't be misled’, ‘my message’, and ‘the winning side’ conveyed Wahid's intention to give a message for future parliament. The words ‘my message’ and ‘the winning side’ assumed that not all the winners were honest because they did not use a sportive way to win. Wahid's ideology behind ‘my message’ and ‘the winning side’ is Wahid wants the viewers to know that not all ‘the winning side’ was honest.

#### ***Detailed Information Of Commissive Illocutionary Acts***

##### *Refusing*

William : “People are saying you're finished. That your days are numbered, that the Parliament is now against you, questions about Megawati's support etc. What's your message to the parliament first of all, but also to the world about your future?”

Wahid : “My message? - Don't be misled by what seems to be the winning side - no, no, no. I will never step down. I will be in the office. You see I'm a Moslem - but if I'm not a Moslem then I can bet with you - I will be here until the end of my term.”

“...no, no, no. I will never step down.” is included into *Commissives Illocutionary Act* because in this sentence Wahid was refusing his dismissal as a president. It is emphasized in the words ‘no, no, no.’ Moreover, the clauses of “I will never step down” and “I will be in the office” show that he also committed that he would stay until the end of his term.

##### *Promising*

William : “People are saying you're finished. That your days are

numbered, that the Parliament is now against you, questions about Megawati's support etc. What's your message to the parliament first of all, but also to the world about your future?"

Wahid : "My message? - Don't be misled by what seems to be the winning side - no, no, no. I will never step down. I will be in the office. You see I'm a Moslem - but if I'm not a Moslem then I can bet with you - I will be here until the end of my term."

By saying "I will be here until the end of my term", Wahid was emphasizing his promise at the last part of the answer. Therefore, this utterance is included into *Commissive Illocutionary Act*.

### **Detailed Information Of Expressive Illocutionary Acts**

William : "Some parliamentarians have said that they don't believe that you took any money that you didn't do anything very wrong - but they're worried about the style of management."

Wahid : "If they think so why don't they talk to me - if it's style it can change anytime. I'm not so valuable as to not to listen to them."

"If they think so why don't they talk to me - if it's style it can change anytime"

### **Abdurrahman Wahid's (Gus Dur) Humanism and Charismatic Leadership**

Some people perceived Wahid's actions as controversial based on his humanist thoughts. Wahid's six values are divinity, humanity, justice, equality, liberty, and local wisdom. Those are found frequently in assertive and commis-

sive illocutionary acts of Wahid's utterances in the interview with William.

The value of divinity could be found in Wahid's thinking. It can be seen from his following utterance in the interview:

Williams : "People are saying you're finished. That your days are numbered, that the Parliament is now against you, questions about Megawati's support etc. What's your message to the parliament first of all, but also to the world about your future?"

Wahid : (commissive illocutionary act of promising) My message? - Don't be misled by what seems to be the winning side - no, no, no. I will never step down. I will be in the office. You see I'm a Moslem - but if I'm not a Moslem then I can bet with you - I will be here until the end of my term.

In the given utterance, Wahid said "I am a Muslim, if I am not a Muslim, I can bet with you." The use of the word 'Muslim' in the sentence was due to his belief in God as a Moslem. Whatever he did was inseparable from the rules of his religion, Islam. Furthermore, he emphasized his belief with the use of the words "I will never step down", "I will be in the office", and "I will here until the end of my term" to show that his acts had gone beyond his faith.

Wahid defended humanity unconditionally. This can be proved by Wahid's utterances in his interview with William as follows:

Williams: "And you still believe the Vice President is still fully behind you"

Wahid: (the assertive illocutionary act of claiming) "Oh yes, she is close behind me - ask her."

The sentence shows that Wahid's answered that Mega was still supporting him. He used the words "she is close behind me" to show

that he still believed in Megawati although she had betrayed him. Wahid still respected and appreciated Megawati due to his humanism thoughts, to glorify the human means to glorify the creator.

Justice is the basic value in building a society, which is justice, equality and democracy. The justice, can be seen in Wahid's utterance in his interview:

Williams: "What's your reaction to the fact that clearly Megawati has allowed the PDI P to vote against you like this in the Parliament?"

Wahid: "That's her device for letting the steam out of the party... so now the steam has been let out that's ok. But she said through a messenger to me that last night that she will not entertain any kind of special session of MPR."

Wahid's response shows that he applied justice for everything including the justice in making choices. Although Megawati is his deputy, Wahid did not impose her to elect or support him. The following sentence shows it. "That's her device for letting the steam out of the party... so now the steam has been let out that's ok."

Equity requires fair treatment, equal relationships, lack of discrimination and marginalization in society.

Williams : "Some parliamentarians have said that they don't believe that you took any money, that you didn't do anything very wrong - but they're worried about the style of management."

Wahid : "If they think so why don't they talk to me - if it's style it can change any time I'm not so valuable as to not to listen to them."

Wahid stated that there was no distance between himself, as a president, and the citizens. In this utterance, Wahid wanted the citizens to talk to him directly. He assumed that all humans were the same. He kept up equality. Everybody could talk to him although he was a president.

The following sentence shows the liberty value which was adopted by Wahid:

Williams : "What's your reaction to the fact that clearly Megawati has allowed the PDI P to vote against you like this in the Parliament?"

Wahid : "That's her device for letting the steam out of the party... so now the steam has been let out that's ok. But she said through a messenger to me that last night that she will not entertain any kind of special session of MPR."

Wahid gave the freedom to choose. Likely, letting Mega's people vote for him or against him. It is shown in the sentence, "That's her device for letting the steam out of the party... so now the steam has been let out that's ok."

Wahid mobilized local wisdom and made it a source of ideas and socio-cultural-political-naturalist grounding of justice, equality and humanity, without the loss of open and progressive attitudes toward the development of civilization. The following sentence shows the local wisdom of Wahid which was uttered in the interview:

Williams : "Will you call your people on to the streets to show the support you have?"

Wahid : "Not to the streets. Letters, statements on the press, many things can be done without putting people to the streets. A few days ago I prevented 35 thousand people coming to Jakarta to burn the DPR and MPR buildings - crazy you know."

Wahid's statement shows his wisdom in facing his people's anger. He prevented his thirty-five thousand people from burning the DPR and MPR buildings. Likely, as being uttered in his sentence, "A few days ago I prevented thirty-five thousand people coming to Jakarta to burn the DPR and MPR buildings - crazy you know."

Wahid's utterances in the interview, which are analysed by using illocutionary acts theory of Searle (1975), show his positive and humanism acts to solve his problems. Assertive and commissive illocutionary acts frequently emerge in the findings. The sampled data show that Wahid is worth appreciating as a charismatic. It is uttered in the last part of the interview:

Williams: "Thank you very much for the time. Good luck in the battle ahead."

Wahid: "Oh no - (Laughs) the battle is already won - (Laughs)"  
(commissive of refusing illocutionary acts)

This utterance is included into commissive illocutionary act of refusing. It is the last part of the conversation. Wahid was not asked a question. The interviewer (William) thanked him for the time and said "Good luck in the battle ahead." Wahid replied by using the refusing statement "Oh no (there is no battle), because the battle is already won." He refused William statement by laughing. "Oh no - (Laughs) the battle is already won- (Laughs)", this sentence shows that Wahid had already won the battle. It means that Wahid did not do anything wrong, such as the two corruption scandals which suspected on him. Wahid felt that citizens made those issues by themselves because there were no facts available.

## DISCUSSION

Looking at the utterances produced by Wahid in the political interview, he tends to use '*assertive illocutionary acts*' which were uttered fifteen times. The speech act analysis

was done to show how the action of Wahid towards people's opinions on controversial acts which were done by him. Therefore, 'Cognition' and 'Society' are used to answer the sociological aspects contributing to the pattern of Wahid's actions. It involves the factors of social representations concerning on Wahid' regime. Hence, those two dimensions make the research to be a critical analysis of discourse. Humanism and Weberian leadership and charismatic are the last theory reviewed to integrate between the discourse and linguistic discipline (society). This study found that Wahid's action, which some people perceive as controversial, was based on his humanist thoughts. The six values adopted by Wahid are divinity, humanity, justice, equality, liberty, and local wisdom. Thus, for assessing the leadership and charisma toward Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), his leadership cannot be examined only when the leadership is considered a job or a leading position. However, the history of the formation of Wahid's personal from the beginning must be overlooked. In addition to the long process, the leadership context of the presidential period in hand might require a different leader figure. Due to this charisma, charismatic leaders can generate personal loyalty toward themselves among their followers, which sets apart from any other potential leaders within their organizations. Abdurrahman Wahid's experiences may be seen through the lens of Weber's theory of charismatic leadership.

Studies on Abdurrahman Wahid have been conducted many times by using several theories. In facts, many researchers concluded that Wahid used his positive thoughts to solve his problems. For example, Hatta (2008), who examined Wahid's political thoughts toward an Islamic orientation by using Critical Discourse Analysis, found that Wahid's political thought toward an Islamic orientation is a social equity aspect without getting out of humanity's line.

Different from the previous research, the findings of this research expand more about the reason of Wahid's to do controversial acts based on his humanism thoughts through his



utterances (Illocutionary acts). This study investigates the utterances produced by Wahid in his political interview with William from Australia Corporation in order to find out the actions of Wahid towards his dismissal. Thus, humanism thought which underlies his positive actions towards his dismissal, is used. Then, his leadership is worth appreciating as a charismatic one due to his positive (humanism) actions. Furthermore, this study has adopted some theories to find out the discourse, cognition, and society of Wahid. Illocutionary acts were used to support the discourse (Wahid's utterances) and humanism and charismatic leadership theories were used to find out the sociological factors contributing to Wahid's action. Those interpretations were strengthened by conducting the interview response (expert). In short, the findings show that Wahid uses the positive acts toward his dismissal and people who against him. It happens due to his humanism paradigm used so as the charismatic leadership is worth appreciating to Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur).

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This article reveals how speech acts have been used in oral communication. The investigation found out that the interviewer, William, and interviewee, Wahid, have tried to build a mutual understanding in the interview by demonstrating their speech acts, especially Wahid. The analysis of the data has shown that the four main functions of Illocutionary Act were demonstrated in the interview, consisting of mainly 'Representative Illocutionary Acts' which were demonstrated fifteen times, 'Directive Illocutionary Acts' (once), 'Commissive Illocutionary Acts' (seven times), and 'Expressive Illocutionary Acts' (once). Wahid did not use any 'Declarative Illocutionary Acts' in his political interview. Wahid's actions that some people perceive as controversial were based on his humanist thoughts.

This study uses one level of Critical Discourse Analysis of Van Dijk's theory. Therefore, based on the finding of this research, it is

suggested that future researchers discuss the problems using the whole theory of Van Dijk (Macrostructures, Microstructures and Superstructures). Another possibility is the next researchers could make their research more specific by focusing their analysis using one of the other two parts of the level accompanied by other relevant theory. Lastly, the next research could use books or articles, which were written by Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), and his speech to complete the data analyzed in this study.

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