

# How does a Celebrity Politician's Diction Attract Public Empathy for Parliamentary Election? A Critical Discourse Analysis

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**Abstract.** Every text embeds an ideology. A language is not only seen as a neutral entity, but also an ideology that brings power to its contents. Both ideology and power are reflected in the use of lexicon, sentence, and discourse structure. The discourse of a celebrity politician's image is seen as a text. It covers an organized symbolic system and reflects the attitude, beliefs, and particular values. A celebrity politician's lexical choice is intentionally constructed to make the public confused. Construed words are implicit. It is expressed as ideology manifestation and built for the positive political images. This research implements a qualitative research design with a critical pragmatic method. The object of the research was the lexical choice of a celebrity politician when she verbally reacted after she got fired from a political party. To analyze the data, this study used Fairclough's critical discourse analysis with three components: texts, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. The study showed that the lexical choice tends to be formal style as seen from its choice of modality, pronouns, negative and positive sentence structures, and conjunction.

**Keywords:** *celebrity politician, lexical choice, critical discourse analysis, parliamentary election, public empathy*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language has been essential and embryonic in the political world. The constructed language becomes a power for instilling ideology, gaining and maintaining power [1], [2]. Various linguistic tools are used (1) to gain sympathy, (2) attract attention, (3) draw public perception towards a problem, (4) control public thoughts, behaviour and values [3], [4].

A language functions as a means to control ideology and power [5]. The processes of instilling ideology and controlling power need language as a means of expression. One of the tools used for this research is the discourse on the constructed sentence and the lexical choice that may indicate positive images in mass media.

Through mass media, someone's political image is expressed by deploying linguistic features to gain power and popularism [6], [7]. The lexical choice and the use of language by

politicians are not merely the matter of linguistics, but rather the expression of power and ideology. It aims to form a public opinion by supporting and declining an argument, yet the validity of the information is still questioned. There are many strategies that politicians use to express what is right seems wrong and vice versa. Likewise, many ways can be used to express personal problems so that they appear to be public problems. Politicians use countless strategies to say what is right is wrong and what is wrong is right. Not to mention, some personal problems turn into public issues.

One interesting phenomenon to be investigated is the discourse and lexical choice of a celebrity politician called Wanda Hamidah after her dismissal from her political party affiliation, PAN. Wanda Hamidah is a celebrity politician who started PAN. She was dismissed from her party due to supporting the presidential candidates of a different party. In response to this, she held a press conference to attract public empathy through her lexical choice and discourse. The diction is considered having a particular ideology, attitudes, beliefs, values, and power. The strategy may have a direct impact on leading public opinion to choose her president candidates in 2014. The political elite sees the effort to save her positive image.

Wanda's lexical choice and discourse are associated with a positive face. It is appealing to investigate the lexical choice using a pragmatic approach and critical discourse analysis. The integration of both research design aims to explain the phenomenon could not be explored in a pragmatic approach.

Pragmatics and critical discourse analysis could theoretically be integrated because both considered context as its variable even though both have different scopes. In pragmatics, context is seen as the shared background knowledge between a speaker and a listener. It helps the listener construes its meaning. The context in pragmatic is limited to the situational setting that encompasses interpersonal speech. Meanwhile, in critical discourse analysis context involves some scopes, including setting, situation, history, power, and ideology. It is not every discourse could be analysed with critical pragmatics. The subject of the study tends to be the discourse (either spoken or written forms) that consists of motives, ideology, and power relation that may have a broader impact.

## **2. METHOD**

This study deployed Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. Fairclough built a discourse analysis based on the integration of linguistic features by considering the social and political change. Thus, the object of the analysis is on how language is formed and constructed from the results of social relations and specific social contexts [8].

The object of the study was the speech uttered by a celebrity politician, Wanda Hamidah after her dismissal from the affiliated political party. The study used recording and notes to gather the data. For analysing data, this study utilized Fairclough's critical discourse analysis on three different indicators, such as texts, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice [8].

In the Fairclough model, the speech is analyzed linguistically by looking at vocabulary, semantics, sentence structure, and pragmatics. The analyzed elements are used to look at the following three problems. First, an ideational problem that refers to certain representations that want to be expressed in the text, it usually carries a precise ideological meaning. Second, relation refers to the analysis of construction between a discourse maker and a speaker, such as whether the text is delivered informally/formally or openly/closely. Third, identity refers to a particular construction of the identity of discourse maker and readers, and how personal and identity could be displayed.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The positive face uttered by Wanda Hamidah upon her dismissal from her political party could be seen in her lexical choice. The lexical choice emphasizes the formal lexical forms of modality, pronouns, positive-negative sentence, and conjunction. It is seen from the interview session on television on Tuesday 16 September 2014, as follows.

As a person who co-founded this party, PAN in 1998, I would accept all of the logical consequences of towards my choice on the previous presidential election. It is unfortunate, and I would be sad because it has been 16 years since its establishment. I did not regret it. On the contrary, I am disappointed towards what is threatening us now, i.e., it is the power of the political elite who would control my political voice, your political voice, and public voice. My political endeavours at the previous presidential election were not without any reasons. I chose the Jokowi and Jusuf Kalla because I had to loyal to the vision of my previous party and the reformation dream.

The discourse on the formal of lexical choice would be discussed from its forms encompasses modality, pronouns, positive-negative sentence, and conjunction.

#### **Modality**

Modality is defined as a tool used by a speaker to describe his attitude [9]–[11]. This attitude is associated with the utterance spoken to his listener. This modality concept was used by Wanda to represent firmness over her political attitude. The used modalities are, as follows. (1) Modality of mind (based on logic), e.g., I would accept all of the logical consequences; (2) modality of appreciative (based on affective), e.g., it is unfortunate, and I would be sad; (3) modality of intentional (expectation), e.g., who would control my political voice; (4) modality of epistemic (certainty), e.g., I had to loyal to the vision. The attitude that is shown to the public through the use of modality is an effort to portray herself as a politician who has strong principles and idealism towards her political choice.

From a historical point of view, Wanda was a former activist of Trisakti Shootings in 1998 who strongly opposed the New Order regime and the suppression of human rights by the military. Her dismissal from her affiliation gave the particular message as if Wanda was oppressed because of her political choice was the opposite of her party who supported Prabowo-Hatta for the presidential election 2014. Prabowo allegedly became a part of human rights violations in the Trisakti Shootings in 1988. It drives public opinion to believe with Wanda's discourse, i.e., choosing her political choice.

#### **Pronouns**

Wanda Hamidah's chose to play with her pronouns in her utterance. According to Kridalaksana [12] pronouns are categories that function to replace nouns. Wanda seemed to choose some pronouns when speaking. The pronouns that she often uses are I, you, we, and the people. In building her positive face, her strategy was to use the word I, you, we, and the people ambiguously as if they are synonymous. These four words have different meanings that are used as a substitution. These pronouns help her to confuse the public by exchanging the organization of the subject and object of the uttered sentences. In that way, Wanda shared her feelings to the public. If it is successful, this blurriness will turn a personal problem into a public issue.

In pragmatics, the pronoun 'we' is the inclusive or combined form of the first person (I) and the second person (you). Put it simply, the pronoun 'we' has been associated as you and I,

or you. Pronouns are the aspects that could be manipulated with an individual language choice in order to create imaginative meanings [4], [6]. The pronouns 'I' and 'we' are used to describe the communicator's official attitude. The pronoun 'we' is the representation and manifestations of a shared attitude in a community. The potential of pronouns 'we' has been realized by politicians could evoke unity. For this reason, pronouns could be used as the medium for creating a positive image to avoid responsibility, show glorification, and attract sympathy.

### **Positive-Negative sentence**

Tense forms may have an ideology that depicts Wanda's discourse and her dismissal. Both affirmative sentences and negative sentences can be used to express certain ideologies to gain sympathy, and at some points, it aims at someone's glorification. The excerpts of positive and negative sentences that have an ideology and positive face are seen below.

- (1) I would accept all of the logical consequences of towards my choice on the previous presidential election.
- (2) It is unfortunate, and I would be sad because it has been 16 years since its establishment. I did not regret it.
- (3) On the contrary, I am disappointed towards what is threatening us now, i.e., it is the power of the political elite who would control my political voice, your political voice, and public voice.

The ideology that elicits positive image is expressed in the affirmative sentence (1). It has clear, firm, and straightforward meanings. The ideology supported by Wanda is expressed persuasively. In contrast, Wanda expresses self-image through negative sentences (2) implicit using negation sentence. Even sentence (3) uses a double negation to express the image indirectly. The use of the double negation is undertaken to avoid confrontation with her party. Wanda did not take a confrontational position for the sake of positive self-image, politeness and respect to her party. It can be seen from her indecisive expression in saying which party would control her political voice and public voice. This strategy is used by Wanda to maintain her self-image in front of the public and to avoid the disobedience to her affiliated party.

Stede [13] suggests that when someone wants to pour something from reality or imagination, a person often chooses different choices in his grammatical process. In this example, Wanda's ideology is represented in two-sentence forms, i.e., affirmative sentences and negative sentences.

### **Conjunction**

The ideology that reflects positive self-image uttered Wanda could be seen from the use of conjunctions. Some of the connecting words that Wanda uses such as the word though, but, on the contrary, because serve to form a contrasting self-image (different) with other politicians, i.e., affirming positive images. The use of coherence may lead to marginal meanings as seen in data (4) and (5), as well as give reward symbol as seen data (6).

- (4) I would accept all of the logical consequences of towards my choice on the previous presidential election. It is unfortunate, and I would be sad because it has been 16 years since its establishment.
- (5) I did not regret it. On the contrary, I am disappointed with what is threatening us now.
- (6) I chose the Jokowi and Jusuf Kalla because I had to loyal to the vision of my previous party and the reformation dream.

Syahril [14] states that symbolic power is the power of creating the world. With symbolic power, social actors have the power to create or destroy, separate or unite, and more importantly, the power to name or make a definition. In the sentences (4), (5), and (6), Wanda has the power to create a symbolic power to her affiliated party.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Wanda Hamidah uttered the discourse of self-image with the lexical choice strategy in response to her dismissal from her political party affiliation. The strategy can be seen in her formal speech. In her discourse, the lexical choice could be made by highlighting formal lexical forms of modality, pronouns, positive-negative sentences, and conjunctions. Modality is used by Wanda to portray herself as a politician who has strong idealism and principles regarding her political choices. The choice of pronouns is to confuse the use of subject-object in a sentence. It makes the public confused. Wanda tried to deviate the meaning of 'my', 'you', 'we', and the people by using them interchangeably as if they were synonymous. The selection of the lexical items appears in the use of both positive and negative sentences. It means that Wanda seeks to express a particular ideology to gain sympathy and ultimately someone (glorification), in this context, the Jokowi and Jusuf Kalla pair. Finally, the use of conjunctions serves to form the contrasting and different images to other politicians, to compare image, and to affirm positive image and boldness.

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