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## Critical Discourse Analysis of Interfaith Marriage News from Cyber Media in Indonesia

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### Abstract

In Indonesia, there are three preconditions for a successful marriage: being of legal age for marriage; parental approval, especially from the father; and religious and ethnic compatibility. The Indonesian Marriage Law provides that "a marriage is legitimate, if it has been performed according to the laws of the respective religions and beliefs of the parties concerned". This clause indirectly prohibits inter-religious or interfaith marriage. Therefore, every religion in Indonesia encourages its followers to marry someone of the same religious faith. This research examines the issue of interfaith marriage as reported by Indonesia's cyber media. Case studies are presented to explain why different media institutions have differing stances on the issue. Using a qualitative approach, the research uses the analytical data technique of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. The authors analyzed three cyber media, *Republika Online*, *Kompas.com*, and *Sinarharapan.co* from September to December 2014. One key aim was to discover which media have the tendency to support diversity, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Results indicated that Islam-oriented media, such as *Republika Online*, tend to reject the movement for the legalization of interfaith marriage, as interfaith marriage is banned by Islamic shari'a law. Secular online media, such as *Kompas.com* with an independent ethos of transcendental humanism, lean toward support for rights and legal certainty for interfaith spouses. Meanwhile, Christian-oriented *Sinarharapan.co* tended to neglect the issue, as if deeming it irrelevant to its readership.

**Keywords:** diversity of journalism, cyber journalism, interfaith marriage, critical discourse analysis

### 1. Introduction

Islam was brought to Indonesia in the 13th century by Muslim traders and by the 16th century it had become the dominant religion in Java and Sumatra islands, surpassing Hinduism and Buddhism. One of the ways Islam spread in Nusantara (the Indonesian archipelago) was through marriage. Muslim merchants who settled in the archipelago married local women and their children became Muslims, in the custom of following the father's religion. Islam is still the country's largest religion, although Indonesia is not an Islamic state.

In the months before Indonesia declared independence from the Dutch in August 1945, there were calls by some Muslim groups for the establishment of the Indonesian Islamic State (*Negara Islam Indonesia*). However, the idea was rejected by founding fathers Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta through the Committee for Preparatory Work for Indonesian Independence. Although Indonesia now has the biggest Muslim population in the world (about 225 million of the nation's 259 million people are Muslim), there are millions of followers of other religions, such as Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. These minority groups must be embraced by the nation – that was the aim of Soekarno and Hatta. With the motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), Indonesia's proclaimers of independence decided the archipelago would be unified as the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> This was followed on 1 June 1945 by the announcement of the state ideology *Pancasila*, the first principle of which is 'Belief in the one and only God'.<sup>2</sup>

Unfortunately, Soekarno's successor Soeharto, who took power in 1966, seemed to forget the credo of Unity in

<sup>1</sup> *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*, the national motto, literally means "in pieces, yet one" and is officially translated as "Unity in Diversity".

<sup>2</sup> *Pancasila* is Indonesia's philosophical basis and the state ideology. It comprises five guiding principles: Belief in the one and only God; just and civilized humanity; Indonesian unity; democracy guided by consensus through deliberation among representatives; and social justice for all Indonesians.

Diversity. The Islamization of Indonesia strengthened during Soeharto's New Order regime, although radical elements were harshly repressed. Islamic doctrine became widespread in Indonesia's laws, taking over many aspects of civilian life and state policies. Belief and ethnicity became sensitive issues due to the upheaval of the era, especially following anti-communist purges over 1965–67. Freedom of religion and the spirit of diversity were fading. Subsequently, Marriage Law No.1 appeared in 1974. It can be argued that much of the law did not need to enter the state domain because it concerns individual matters.

The 1974 Marriage Law applies to all Indonesian citizens, regardless of religion. Previously, there were different marriage laws in place for citizens of European or Chinese origin and for Indonesian Christians, while the Muslim population was "subject to unwritten customary (*adat*) law and to Muslim religious law". The two main purposes in reforming the old marriage laws were "the development of codification and uniformity in Indonesia's legal system and the improvement of women's position". (Retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/religious-marriage.php>).

Following the fall of Soeharto in 1998, Indonesia entered a reform period, which also saw a rise in conservative Islamic values and attacks on "liberal Islam". Against this backdrop, in August 2014, three graduates and one student from the University of Indonesia's School of Law filed for a judicial review of the Marriage Law. The four petitioners—Rangga Sujud Widigda, Damian Agata Yuvens, Luthfi Sahputra, and Anbar Jayadi—requested the court review the law's Article 2, paragraph 1, which states: "a marriage is legitimate, if it has been performed according to the laws of the respective religions and beliefs of the parties concerned."

The petitioners argued that the clause forces people to choose a specific religion as a basis for marriage, preventing spouses from enjoying freedom of worship and religion. They criticized Article 2 for causing an ambiguous interpretation that could prohibit interfaith marriages. They also argued that religion and belief are private matters that should not be interfered in or restricted by state. Furthermore, they maintained, Indonesia is a pluralistic nation so interfaith marriages should be possible.

In some countries, interfaith marriage may not be an issue, but in Indonesia it is a controversial topic. It attracted considerable media attention over 2014–2015. Some of the media coverage was weak, some was balanced, and some was biased. The longstanding polemic continues at a grassroots level as there remains no legal certainty over interfaith marriage.

News is a product of media companies and reflects the interests of their proprietors, managers, and editors. The media can deliver news neutrally, but it can also package reports with narrow, prejudiced leanings. The Indonesian media, wittingly or unwittingly, contributes to the fluctuation of inter-religious relations and the diversity of behavior in the nation. When there are inter-religious tensions or problems, the media becomes the conduit for public notification. The media's way of reporting on tension and conflict, including interfaith issues, becomes important here, because it can influence society.

Companies within the Indonesian media have individual styles and make differing decisions when it comes to covering an event or issue. They decide what will be their basic viewpoint and main ideology, while their news direction shapes their identity. Some of the nation's early newspapers chose religion as their base. The *Kompas* newspaper was launched on 28 June 1965 by the Indonesian Catholic Party. Initially called *Bentara Rakyat (People's Herald)*, it was supported by founding President Soekarno and the military to give a voice to Indonesia's Catholics. Founded by P.K. Ojong and Jakob Oetama, *Kompas* grew into the nation's largest media conglomerate, the Kompas Gramedia Group, which upholds the principles of nationalism and transcendental humanism.

Another media institution founded on religion is the *Republika* daily newspaper, which was established in 1992 by the newly formed company PT Mahaka Media, led by Erick Thohir, to give a voice to Muslims. Its stance of conservative Islam is reflected by its inclusion of the Hijri calendar system and the angle of its news, content, and rubrics. Initially called *Republik*, it was renamed by Soeharto, who added the letter 'a' to the end of the name. Supported by the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), which was led by Soeharto's protégé B.J. Habibie, *Republika* became the apple of the eye of the New Order regime. The establishment sought to revive the Islamic voice, which was deemed to have eroded at the time.

The *Sinar Harapan (Ray of Hope)* daily newspaper was also founded on religion. It commenced publication on 27 April 1961 to provide a Christian voice to counter the Indonesian Communist Party. Founded by H.G. Rorimpandey under the banner of the PT Sinar Kasih company, the newspaper was affiliated to the Indonesian Christian Party. Originally, its readers were minorities, such as Christians and ethnic Chinese, but it went on to become the nation's second-highest selling daily paper in the early 1980s. *Sinar Harapan* was suspended several times during the Soeharto regime before being banned in 1986 for articles critical of the government. It was reborn as the *Suara Pembaruan (Voice of Renewal)* newspaper. *Sinar Harapan* was resurrected in 2001 and kept its Christian ethos, as evidenced by its *Renungan Sabda*

(Reflection on the Word of God) column, as well its motto: Struggle for independence, justice, peace and righteousness based on love. Financial problems saw *Sinar Harapan* cease its print and online editions at the end of 2015.

Based on the religious background of the media, the researchers intend to address the following questions:

1. The reporting on religion or belief is a sensitive issue in Indonesia. Everyone has a viewpoint or ideology, as well as different interpretations of religion. Are these differences reflected responsibly in the media?
2. Is there a tendency of the media to support, reject, or ignore the issue of diversity in interfaith marriage news?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Mass media reports on interfaith marriage were central to this study. The researchers reviewed the reports considering the theory of mass communication, intercultural communication, the principle of paternalism, the critical discourse analysis devised by Norman Fairclough, and the concept of diversity journalism in Indonesia.

### 2.1 Mass Communication: Online Journalism

This paper focuses exclusively on online journalism, which differs from traditional types of journalism because of its technological component. The online journalist has to make decisions on which media formats best tell a certain story (multimediality), has to allow room for options for the public to respond, interact, or even customize certain stories (interactivity), and must consider ways to connect the story to other stories, archives, resources, and so on through hyperlinks (hypertextuality). This is the 'ideal-typical' form of online journalism, as professed by an increasing number of professionals and academics worldwide. (Retrieved from <http://ojphi.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/893/802>).

Like any other media, online journalism also works based on audience taste and characteristics. Online readers have the following orientation:

1. Users do not generally read long reports on the internet; instead they scan the pages, trying to pick out a few sentences or even parts of sentences to get the information they want,
2. Users do not like long, scrolling pages. They prefer the text to be short and to the point.
3. Users detest anything that seems like marketing fluff or overly hyped language ("marketese") and prefer factual information. (Retrieved from <http://www.nngroup.com/articles/concise-scannable-and-objective-how-to-write-for-the-web>).

Catering to such readership characteristics, online journalists tend to write short articles. One article may be crafted from a single quotation or a one-sided opinion. Sometimes, online journalists just produce a short update as a fresh lead and then pad out the article with content copied from previous news. Online journalism uses hyperlink tools to link to previous or related articles. This hypertextuality differentiates online news from mainstream news.

Online journalism also depends on rankings and page views. Having infinite space to write and post articles, online reporters can produce as many articles as feasibly possible. The news has to be factual and straight to the point, so it is often short. The weakness of some online newsrooms is that they become preoccupied with quantity of reports uploaded and neglect the quality of their news reports.

### 2.2 Diversity Journalism

Diversity journalism may be an unfamiliar term in the journalism world, including in Indonesia. More common is the term 'peace journalism', which was initiated by Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung. In America, there are terms similar to journalism diversity. Those terms are 'diversity in journalism' (diversity inside the newsroom) and 'diversity of journalism' (diversity outside the newsroom). (Kansong, U. in Armando, et al., 2013, pp. 149–150).

Diversity journalism promotes pluralism and differences. Several factors led to the emergence of this idea in Indonesia. First, radical groups had abused the democratic system through excessive expression of their extremist agendas. Second, citizens were disappointed in the state's failure to deal with radical groups or its complicity with them. Third, in a situation where the state shows its weakness, the press, as one of the pillars of democracy, plays an important role in promoting the diversity.

Soeharto's regime muzzled press freedom. The press could not freely preach diversity. After the fall of Soeharto, press freedom flourished in the reform era. The Indonesian media is expected to uphold pluralism; however, several of the mass media institutions—especially those with a religious basis—threaten and reject diversity in their news. The mainstream press has to function as a counterweight to the religious-based press, which often voices anti-diversity and

has even produced news that threatens diversity.

According to the Association of Journalists for Diversity in their book *Diversity Journalism: A Guide to Coverage* (Kansong, U. in Armando, et al., 2013, pp. 193–208), five points need to be underlined in the relationship between the media and diversity:

1. The emergence of a press based on a dominant religion  
In Indonesia, the dominant religion is Islam. The proliferation of the Islamic press is an expression of identity or identity reinforcement. Identity expression which is excessive will reveal the identity's dark side, which is resistance to diversity. This is reflected in the Islamic press' coverage of religious issues.
2. Religion-based press often neglects journalism ethics  
According the Indonesian Journalistic Code of Ethics, opinion pieces and news reports must distinguish between fact and opinion, and must be balanced, covering both sides of the story. Yet these requirements are not always adhered to by the religion-based press.
3. Mainstream press has SARA-phobia<sup>3</sup>  
The mainstream press should position itself firmly by defending diversity. Instead, it often seems to be infected with a phobia of reporting on issues involving ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group conflicts. These issues are known locally in Indonesia by the acronym SARA.
4. Journalists' attitudes are represented  
News coverage of inter-religious issues usually represents journalists' attitudes toward diversity. Journalists are one of the gatekeepers who determine the quality of news in the media. Therefore, if a report is problematic in the context of diversity, it may be a consequence of the journalist's attitude, which may also be problematic when facing diversity.
5. Errant word choice  
Reports are sometimes misleading because of intentional or unintentional bias. This indicates the press is inconsistent in upholding diversity. The press can make many reports on an issue, but when that issue goes to court, the press often reports only on the inaugural session, the indictment, the charges, and verdict.

### 2.3 Intercultural Communication

The importance of intercultural communication, which is particularly significant to this research, is well summed up in two quotes. "It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences," said Audre Lorde, a celebrated African American poet. Similarly, the Chinese philosopher Confucius stated, "Human nature is similar, but practices make them far apart."

In Indonesia, a long history of colonization ruffled the nation's tolerance and local wisdom. Indonesian is a complex and diverse nation, both in customs and traditions. One of the final governors general of the Dutch East Indies, Hubertus van Mook, used a political strategy called *divide et impera* (divide and conquer) to divide the Indonesian people. Some of Indonesia's subsequent leaders have adopted a similar strategy in their efforts to achieve and maintain political power.

Larry A. Samovar, a Professor Emeritus of Communication at San Diego State University, has said the relationship between communication and culture is reciprocal, complex, and interrelated. There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and influenced or altered by culture. There are five main elements of culture that impact on our daily life and national life: (1) history, (2) religion, (3) values, (4) social organizations, and (5) language (Samovar, et al., 2005).

If we look at the past, Indonesia's people have long lived in mistrust, prejudice, and deep sentiment regarding religion and ethnic or social organizations. The other elements of culture—history, values, and language—cannot be ignored by this research. The elements can be interconnected sometimes, but the researchers have focused on differences of religion in marriage, frequently caused by diversity in ethnic or family background.

### 2.4 Importance of Religion, Family, and Marriage

George Bernard Shaw wrote that there is only one religion, though there are a hundred versions of it. What determines the different versions of religion is worldview. Religion as a worldview has been found in every culture for thousands of years. For most people in the world, religious tradition such as family, tribe, or state becomes their identity. Religious tradition provides the structure, discipline, and social participation within their community. The interesting part of religion

<sup>3</sup> SARA is an acronym for *Suku* (ethnicity), *Agama* (religion), *Ras* (race) and *Antar-golongan* (inter-group relations). The Soeharto regime promoted national unity through repressive policies that discouraged discussion of SARA issues.

is that it has bound people together intimately and maintained their cultural perspectives for thousands of years. Either through institutions such as cathedrals and mosques, spiritual and social leaders such as Buddha and Confucius, or literature such as the Vedas, Torah, I-Ching, Bible, and Qur'an, people have always felt the desire to look beyond their own values toward the values they use in organizing their daily lives (Samovar, et al., 2005, pp. 123–124).

The Indonesian word for religion, *agama*, comes from Sanskrit and means 'not screwed'; from 'a' meaning 'not' and 'gama' meaning 'screw' or 'chaos'. This indicates that religion is a precept that straightens out human life so that it will not be a mess. (Saefullah, 2013, p. 159). In other words, religion exists to bring peacefulness into human life. However, the double-faced nature of religion is like two sides of a coin. Alif Muhammad (in Saefullah 2013, p. 160) propounds that there are two schools of thought about religion. First, religion is a doctrine and gospel contained in scriptures; and second, religion is an actualization of historical doctrines.

Religious doctrines lay out ideals. Adherents are required to implement a doctrine in its best form, but the reality is that actions committed in the name of religion are often far from noble ideals. All religions, for example, espouse peace, unity, and fraternity, but in reality they can appear as a ferocious force, spreading conflict, even sometimes leading to war. This double-face of religion is reflected by its doctrines. Those who have found salvation are obliged to invite others to the same salvation in a precise way. Every religion has these two sides, and it is usually from the second side that conflict and violence occur.

Concerning the main forms of religion in the world, Endang Saefuddin Anshari (in Saefullah, 2013, p. 163) has categorized two types: (a) divinely revealed religions of monotheistic faiths such as Islam, Christianity and original Judaism; and (b) cultural or non-revealed natural religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism and Taoism.

Each religion has its own forms of tolerance for people of other faiths. However, respect for diversity has restrictions. Islam, for example, views pluralism as permitted for political, social, economic, and cultural matters, but not for matters of faith (*akidah*). In Islam, faith or belief in God (Allah) is true and the truth cannot be equated with other religious beliefs. It then becomes difficult for Islam to tolerate interfaith marriage. In Indonesia, which follows the traditional Eastern view, marriage is not just about the union of two people, but also unifies two large families to become one.

The English word 'religion' and the Dutch word '*religi*' are derived from the Latin *religare*, which means 'to tie, fasten, or bind'. This indicates that religion binds humans with sacred matters (Samovar, et al., 2005, p. 123). One of the sacred matters arranged in religion is the sacred bond of marriage.

Marriage, according to the Chairman of the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace, Djohan Effendi, is an institution to certify the relationship between two human beings of different sexes so that a husband and wife become intimate partners (Baso and Nurcholish, 2005, p. xiv). This institution developed in accordance with the socio-cultural development of mankind. Generally, marriage is intended to establish a sustainable family life that is intact and harmonious, as the necessary conformity of both parties will be united into the smallest unit in society. Not surprisingly, it is considered extremely important that both parties share a similar background. The term background covers various aspects of human life, such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, education, ideology, and religion.

## 2.5 Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

This research collected data through the study of documents and interviews. The data was then analyzed before conclusions were drawn. Michael Quinn Patton, an author and lecturer on qualitative research and evaluation, has described data analysis as the process of reducing large amounts of collected data to make sense of the information. He says data is organized, patterns and categories are identified, and the basic units are described (Moleong, 2009, p. 280). This is also known as a comparative data analysis model (Pawito, 2007, pp. 108–110).

Comparative analysis involves comparing data of groups for similarities and differences. In this case, the comparison examines the level of pluralism and support for diversity from three national cyber-media—Republika Online, Kompas.com, and Sinarharapan.co—in their news on interfaith marriage.

Data analysis can be done by identifying trends in the issue and then comparing the tendencies of different cases. In this study, the comparison involved online news headlines, the choice of words (diction), and the selection of people quoted in articles. There was also a comparison of the online media's statements on interfaith marriage.

A base analysis performed with the comparative analysis concerned the following aspects of the issue: the type of media used (in this case, cyber media), what issues or matters would be examined (multiculturalism in interfaith marriage news), the motives of the media, assessments of the news, patterns of interaction within the group, its influence on the

motivation of media use, and its influence on the stance of the news. Last, a general trend is formulated as a conclusion of the study (Pawito, 2007, p. 110).

Data analysis in this study was based on the critical discourse analysis technique developed by Norman Fairclough, Emeritus Professor of Linguistics at Lancaster University, England. First, data was analyzed from news articles uploaded by Republika Online, Kompas.com, and Sinarharapan.co. Second, the data processing results were tabulated according to Fairclough's framework model of discourse analysis, as shown in Table 1 (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 288).

**Table 1.** Framework Model of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

LEVEL	METHOD	OBSERVABLE UNIT	
Microstructure (Texts)	Critical linguistic, literature review	<u>Representation</u> How events, people, groups (sectarian), situations, circumstances or anything are shown and described in texts.	Representation within clause -vocabulary - grammatical
			Representation within combination of clause -explanatory elaboration -contrast extension -enhance the cause
			Representation within sequences of sentence Implicit sentence as background issues discussed
		<u>Relation</u> How is the relationship between journalists, audiences, and news participants displayed and described in text?	Participative journalists, participative audiences, and participative public.
Mesostructure (Discourse Practice)	Depth of interviews and newsroom	<u>Identity</u> How are the identities of journalists, the audience, and news participants displayed in the text?	Identification toward journalists, audiences, and news participants.
		<u>Structure of media organization</u> Production of text that includes the company which makes the text and the topics raised, and how the text is distributed and consumed.	a. Journalist individual factor b. Relation between journalists and media structure c. Media routines
		<u>Situational</u> Texts which come from rubrics that tell us about issues, topics, a theme relevant to what happens in public.	The request of a judicial review of Marriage Law no.11/1974 by the Constitutional Court, submitted by Anbar Jayadi et al.
		<u>Institutional</u> To see how far an institution or organization has influence in discourse production.	Religious background of the media institutions, media ownership, and readership demographics.
Macrostructure (Social Culture Practice)	Literature and informant review	<u>Social</u> Social aspects are influenced by the macro aspect, such as the political system, economy, and local culture. In this context, it is necessary to look at how social context has affected the content of text.	Pluralism, sectarian, paternalism, and religion as dominant culture.
Conclusion		Contains a summary from observable texts that observe in terms of microstructure level (texts) and mesostructure level (discourse practice). Examines production, distribution, and consumption of texts, and macrostructure level (social culture practice) from informing interfaith marriage news as bustling issue raised by the mass media in Indonesia during the period of September to December 2014.	

**Source:** Result of data analysis

Discourse is a term that is used in a variety of ways in linguistics and other social sciences. We can distinguish between two main uses of the term. One, predominant in language studies, sees discourse as 'social action and interaction, people interacting together in real social situations'. Second, discourse as 'a social construction of reality, a form of knowledge' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 18). Thus, in critical discourse analysis, Fairclough focuses the discourse on language. He divides discourse analysis into three dimensions: text analysis, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice.

Text analysis looks at vocabulary, semantics, and syntax. Fairclough also considers coherence and cohesiveness, how each word or sentence could combine to form meaning or discourse. All of the elements of language are analyzed to



see their functions. One of these is ideational, which refers to a particular representation desired in the text, which generally carries a certain ideological charge or bias. This analysis is to see how data displayed in the text or message can contain specific ideological values (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 287). Fairclough analyzes this kind of representation in how people, groups, and ideas can be represented in a clause, in a combination of subordinate clauses, and show up in sequences of clauses. For representation in clauses, the language user (journalist/reporter) faces two choices. First is at the level of word choice or vocabulary. Second is selection based on the level of grammar: whether certain matters are displayed as an action, event, circumstances, or simply as a mental process.

Next is the relational textual aspect, which involves how the pattern of relationships between journalists and audiences is shown; between public participants (quoted public figures) and audiences, and between journalists and public participants, presented in text. Relational refers to analysis of the construction of the relationship between journalists and readers, such as whether the submitted text is informal or formal, open or closed. Hence, the media is viewed as a social arena, where all groups of people, sectarian or parties and related audiences, express their own opinions and ideas. So, in the relational aspect, we observe the media's pattern of relationships. Identity refers to a particular construction of the identity of journalists and readers, as well as how personally this identity is displayed (Eriyanto, 2001, p. 287). Thus, observing identity is means to review whether journalists have a tendency to be biased toward their audience or a participant, or whether they stand independently and impartially.

Discourse practice is a dimension associated with the production and consumption of texts. There are in-depth interviews with newsroom staff and readers (informants) related to the theme of this study, and observing the newsroom. Qualitative research is not does not depend on the number of informants, it depends on the results of the research purposes (Kanto in Bungin, 2003, p. 53).

The last dimension is sociocultural practice. Social contexts outside the media affect how discourse is represented in the media. There are three levels of sociocultural practice:

1. Situational level: news texts produced in a specific condition or situation, so there is a possibility for text to form differently depending on its case.
2. Institutional level: the influence of institutions of organization on discourse production, including advertisers, circulation/ratings, and media competition.
3. Social level: discourse which appears in media is also determined by changes in social factors (Setiawan, 2011, pp.16-17).

### **3. Method**

This study observed 103 news articles on interfaith marriage from September to December 2014 by Kompas.com, Republika Online, and Sinarharapan.co. There were 71 articles from Republika Online, 31 articles from Kompas.com, and only one published by Sinarharapan.co. The research was examined using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. Results were numerous because more than 100 articles were examined, so this study focuses on some of the most crucial results.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

#### **4.1 Microstructure (Texts)**

The microstructure or texts from the three cyber media were analyzed from three main points: (1) representation; (2) relation; (3) identity. In cyber media, the strength lies in having headlines that can lure readers to click on the news. So this study focuses on representations of texts from headlines.

In Republika Online, there was a tendency toward bias in news articles tagged 'interfaith marriage'. Sixteen articles carried headlines that represented rejection of the legalization of interfaith marriage, as shown in Table 2.



**Table 2.** News Articles from Republika Online Represent Rejection of Legalization of Interfaith Marriage

No.	Translated Title:	Original Title:
1.	Minister of Religious Affairs Sure that Interfaith Marriage Lawsuit will be Rejected	Menteri Agama Yakin Gugatan Nikah Beda Agama akan Ditolak
2.	MUI: Interfaith Marriage Legalization, State Violates Constitution	MUI: <u>Legalisasi Nikah Beda Agama</u> , Negara Langgar Konstitusi
3.	Efforts for Legalized Interfaith Marriage Cannot be Tolerated	Upaya Pelegalan Nikah Beda Agama Tak Bisa Ditoleransi
4.	PBNU: We Won't Approve Interfaith Marriage	PBNU: Kami <u>Tak Menyetujui</u> Pernikahan Beda Agama
5.	Interfaith Marriage Prohibited by Confucianism (I)	Nikah Beda Agama, Konghucu Melarang (I)
6.	Interfaith Marriage, Buddhism: Must be the Same Religion, Non-Negotiable (II)	Nikah Beda Agama, Buddha: <u>Harus Seagama</u> , tak Bisa Ditawar (II)
7.	Government Officially Refuses Legalization of Interfaith Marriage	Pemerintah secara <u>Resmi Tolak</u> Legalisasi Nikah Beda Agama
8.	Religious Affairs Ministry: Headmen Must Refuse Interfaith Marriage Requests	Kemenag: Penghulu <u>Harus Tolak</u> Permintaan Nikah Beda Agama
9.	Muhammadiyah Firmly Refuses Request for Interfaith Marriage	Muhammadiyah Tegas Tolak Permintaan Nikah Beda Agama
10.	PBNU Asks Constitutional Court to Refuse Interfaith Marriage	PBNU Minta MK Tolak Kawin Beda Agama
11.	Hinduism: Interfaith Marriage Considered Illegitimate and Fornication	Hindu: Pernikahan Beda Agama <u>Tidak Sah dan Dianggap Zina</u>
12.	PHDI: Interfaith Marriage Would Always be Considered Fornication	PHDI: Pernikahan Beda Agama Selamanya <u>Dianggap Berzina</u>
13.	In Interfaith Marriage, Confucianism Doesn't Issue Blessing Document	Untuk Nikah Beda Agama, Konghucu <u>Tidak Keluarkan Surat Pemberkatan</u>
14.	MUI: In Islam and Other Religions, Interfaith Marriage is Forbidden	MUI: Dalam Islam dan Agama Lain, <u>Pernikahan Beda Agama Haram</u>
15.	Expert: Many Muslim Women Are Single, So Why Interfaith Marriage?	Pakar: Banyak Muslimah Belum Berpasangan, <u>Mengapa Nikah Beda Agama</u>
16.	Legalize Interfaith Marriage, Unintellectual Way of Thinking	Sahkan Nikah Beda Agama, Cara Berfikir <u>Tidak Intelektual</u>

Of the 71 articles published by Republika Online, very few mentioned the request for a judicial review filed to the Constitutional Court by the five petitioners from the Law Faculty of the University of Indonesia. If read from the headlines alone, we can see that all the news on Republika Online was presented with a negative view of interfaith marriage. Only two articles had the petitioners as the main speakers or sources. Most of Republika Online's focus was only on the issue of interfaith marriage, not the fact that a lawsuit for a judicial review had been filed to the Constitutional Court. Rather than cover development of the lawsuit, Republika Online presented the opinions of conservative mass organizations and individuals opposed to interfaith marriage. Four articles focused on the notion of legalization of interfaith marriage being difficult to accept in Indonesia. Another 11 articles focused on interfaith marriage being considered detrimental. Six articles mentioned that enforcement of religious law should supersede human rights law. Also, there were two news articles that featured quotes from irrelevant sources: "Myanmar Monk Forbids Interfaith Marriage (*Biksu Myanmar Larang Menikah Beda Agama*)" and "Pevita Pearce: Better to Marry with Fellow Believers (*Pevita Pearce: Lebih Baik Menikah dengan yang Seagama*)".

The comment made by the Myanmar monk was more than one year old by the time Republika Online picked it up. So, it was not just an irrelevant source, it was also out-of-date in the fast, factual world of cyber news. Even for the print media, an irrelevant comment made one year ago is hardly considered newsworthy. The other article concerned Pevita Pearce, a young Indonesian actress. The issue of interfaith marriage in Indonesia concerned the lawsuit and culture. It is normal for the media to seek comment from law experts or religious leaders. But is there any connection to an unmarried actress? What is her expertise that qualifies her as a newsworthy interviewee? In fact, she has never been in an interfaith marriage movie, nor has she been married to someone of a different religion, nor were her parents married under different religions. So, it was obvious that Republika Online has an agenda to oppose interfaith marriage. It used all of its channels to oppose the legal effort and to influence its readers to share the same stance.

**Table 3.** Kompas.com Article: 5 September 2014 at 08:30 a.m.

Title	Minister of Religious Affairs: Difficult to Legalize Interfaith Marriage
Actor	Minister of Religious Affairs: Lukman Hakim Saifuddin
Action	Minister of Religious Affairs talks about the petition for a judicial review of Marriage Law No.1/1974
Occasion	-
Situation	Desire for interfaith marriage legalization in Indonesia is hard to realize
Mental Process	-

**Source:** Observation result

Compare the Kompas.com article with one on the same subject and date by Republika Online. It quotes the same person, the minister of religious affairs, but presents the information with a different headline and angle.

**Table 4.** Republika Online Article: 5 September 2014 at 01:36 p.m.

Title	Minister of Religious Affairs Sure Interfaith Marriage Law will be Rejected
Actor	Minister of Religious Affairs: Lukman Hakim Saifuddin
Action	Minister of Religious Affairs rejects legalization of interfaith marriage
Occasion	Minister of Religious Affairs believes Constitutional Court will reject judicial review of Marriage Law
Situation	Marriage Law requires that marriage must be based on religious values
Mental Process	Lukman said interfaith marriage is inappropriate to Indonesian values

**Source:** Observation result

Two different journalists in two different media produced different news output. Republika Online seems to write with a pessimistic tone. It clearly stated the minister of religious affairs would not accept an amendment to the Marriage Law. He was quoted in the article as saying that although Indonesia is not a religious state, its people adhere strongly to religious values. Therefore, he felt it appropriate that the Marriage Law requires that marriage should be based on religious values. He did not care if other countries have legalized interfaith marriage. Above all, he maintained that interfaith marriage is inappropriate with Indonesian values.

The article by Kompas.com presented the minister's comments more softly than had been done by Republika.com. Kompas.com paraphrased the minister's stance in its lead paragraph as follows: "The desire for interfaith marriage legalization in Indonesia is very hard to realize." The sentence was not inside quotation marks in the article, but was written based on the journalist's interpretation of what Lukman had said. So we do not know whether those were the exact words spoken by the minister or whether they were just the reporter's interpretation. There is uncertainty because the quotations of the minister in Republika Online on the same day were different.

The article from Republika Online stated, "The minister of religious affairs is sure that an interfaith marriage law will be rejected", whereas Kompas.com wrote: "Lukman just stated that interfaith marriage is difficult to legalize". The latter indicates that it is not impossible for interfaith marriage to be legalized, only the constraints are too large or the probability is too small.

**Table 4.** Comparison between Republika Online and Kompas.com on quotes by Minister of Religious Affairs [5 September 2014]

Republika Online	"I am confident, the judges of the Constitutional Court understand the values adopted by this nation, so they won't issue a ruling that <u>could have a large follow-up impact</u> ," Lukman told Republika Online, Friday (5/9). <u>Even though Indonesia is not a religious state, the Indonesian people hold religious values firmly</u> . It isn't just happening among Muslims but also among other religions. "That is what made our Marriage Law require that marriage should be based on religious values," said Lukman.
Kompas.com	"Indonesia's people are very religious, very upholding of religious values. In any country, marriage is something sacred, and the ritual of marriage cannot be separated from the religious values which they profess," Lukman said when contacted on Thursday (04/09/2014) night. Lukman said if interfaith marriage were legalized, then other issues that that are no less difficult would arise.

**Source:** Observation result

Table 4 shows the different quotations used by Republika Online and Kompas.com when reporting on comments by the Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim. The point was actually same, just the package was different. When talking about the character of the Indonesian nation related to marriage and religion, Republika Online delivered the message with the journalist's reinterpretation, while Kompas.com presented the sentences in quotation marks. When it comes to the effects feared by Lukman Hakim if interfaith marriage really is legalized, Republika Online presented his comment in quotation marks, while Kompas.com presented it through a narrative sentence. The vocabulary used was also different. In Republika Online, the minister said, "... could bring a large follow-up impact", while Kompas.com quoted him as saying, "... then other issues that that are no less difficult would arise". Looking at the reporting of the minister's

statements, Republika Online confirmed the minister's rejection of interfaith marriage, while Kompas.com opened the possibility of improvement of the marriage clause.

What caused these differences? First, it could be because interviews were conducted at different times and places, so Lukman did not submit the exact same statement. Second, it could be because the two journalists posed questions with a different emphasis, resulting in different answers from the minister.

## 4.2 *Mesostructured (Discourse Practice)*

There are three main points to discuss in examining discourse practice. First, the individual factor, which looks at the journalist. Second, the relationship between the journalist and the newsroom editors or media structure. Third, media routines.

### 4.2.1 *Individual Journalist Factor*

Almost 100 percent of journalists employed by Republika Online are Muslim. Only one is a Catholic and he is a new employee there. Based on an interview with one of Republika Online's editors, it is certain that Republika Online remains a religious media with a tendency to carry Islamic voices. The religious background of reporters at Kompas.com is more varied. Of the Kompas.com reporters writing news about interfaith marriage, 12 are Muslim, three are Catholic, and four are Protestant. From this sample, it can be seen that the majority of journalists at Kompas.com are Muslim. The 12 Kompas.com reporters whose articles were analyzed here, worked under seven editors, of whom three are Muslim, three are Catholic, and one is Protestant.

Unlike Republika Online and Sinarharapan.co, Kompas.com no longer breathes a particular religion. Despite the Christian beginnings of *Kompas* newspaper, the majority of Kompas.com journalists are Muslims. Although most of the news editors are Catholics and Protestants, Kompas.com still cares about the issue of interfaith marriage, unlike Sinarharapan.co, which tended to ignore the issue. Looking at the religious background of Sinar Harapan's journalists, 60 percent were Protestants and 40 percent were Muslims. There can be no breakdown of the religion of those who reported on interfaith marriage, as none of them wrote about the issue. The only article on interfaith marriage published by Sinarharapan.co was taken from state news agency Antara and it kept the same headline.

### 4.2.2 *Relations between Journalists and Media Structure*

Researchers have applied the concept of *habitus*—a person's way of being in the world—to the journalistic and media fields (for example, Couldry, 2003; Downing & Husband, 2005). According to these researchers, a range of media practices represent journalistic *habitus*. Editors, reporters, and media staff share a *habitus* and embrace common rules of news publishing, standards of journalistic integrity, norms of establishing legitimacy, practices of selecting information, styles of writing, and ways of constructing meaning. For example, in newsrooms and editorial meetings, media professionals rely on journalistic "gut feeling" to select newsworthy information (Schultz, 2007). This journalistic gut feeling may be cultivated in connection with other fields, including structural factors that influence "definitions of newsworthiness" (Herman & Chomsky, 2000, p. xi). Nevertheless, this "feeling" remains a distinct habitual characteristic of the journalistic field.

The three media entities examined in this research, Kompas, Republika, and Sinar Harapan, each had such a relationship between their journalists and their respective media structures. Kompas has a humanism ideology, so its journalists are directed to conduct interviews or seek information from humanists. Republika, which promotes the development of an Islamic society and favors Islamic law, has its journalists selecting information based on readership tastes and compatibility with its media ideology. Sinar Harapan, with its Christian background, gave its journalists relative independence in reporting.

One difference is: Kompas has separate divisions of management for its print media and its cyber media. Republika has the same newsroom management for its print media and cyber media. Sinar Harapan, before it folded at the end of 2015, also used a single management for its print and online editions.

### 4.2.3 *Media Routines*

Like other reporters in Indonesia, cyber journalists are commonly assigned a specialist area of coverage (such as

politics, crime, business). Every morning, or at other assigned hours, they could immediately travel to locations to cover news. Some online reporters have to write up to 10 articles per day, fewer if their coverage area is difficult or 'dry'. Sometimes, when there is breaking news, a reporter can be asked to continuously update the same story by writing up to a dozen or more articles.

This is a major difference between conventional media and online media. In conventional media, especially print media, the journalist needs to find out the whole story, in depth, and should write a balanced article. Whereas in cyber media, the focus is on brevity, speed of uploading, and the number of articles. Short articles are acceptable, as long as they are accurate and good enough to publish. That's why it is now common to see online news reports with only one interviewee and one-sided coverage.

#### **4.3 Macrostructure (Sociocultural Practice)**

News reports by Kompas.com, Republika Online, and Sinarharapan.co on interfaith marriage were not shaped by editorial ethos alone. Environmental conditions also influence the appearance of the news. Especially pertinent is the social context that exists outside the media. According to Eriyanto (2001, p. 320), sociocultural practice is not directly related to the production of the text, but it determines how the text is produced and understood. Social and cultural factors practically illustrate how the forces in society interpret and propagate the dominant ideology to the public.

In situational form, the interfaith marriage issue came under the media spotlight in Indonesia, triggered by the lawsuit submitted by the student and four alumni of the University of Indonesia's Law Faculty. They had requested a judicial review of Article 2, paragraph 1, of Marriage Law No.1 of 1974, which reads: "Marriage is legitimate if done according to the law of each religion and belief."

In the petitioners' opinion, the clause was contrary to the provisions of the 1945 Constitution, namely Article 27, paragraph 1; Article 28B, paragraph 1; Article 28D, paragraph 1; Article 28E, paragraph 1; Article 28E, paragraph 2; Article 28, paragraph 1; and Article 29, paragraph 2. In addition, the petitioners said the law violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which gives people the right to build a family and marriage, as well as religious freedom.

The three media researched had different perspectives on the lawsuit. Kompas.com saw the lawsuit as a demand by citizens for legal certainty in Indonesia. Republika Online saw it as an attack on religion, mainly the Islamic faith. Sinarharapan.co, despite its rubric of pluralism, considered it an ordinary issue, barely worthy of coverage.

In terms of demographics, Sinarharapan.co's readers were in the upper-middle income bracket, with an age range of 30 and above. Kompas.com's readers include the productive class. Together with Republika Online, 80 percent of online visitors are male. About 73 percent of readers are aged 21–40. Their average education is undergraduate (56 percent), while 64% are professional employees. About 35% of readers had an income of six million rupiah per month, well above the national average.

Indonesia's media, when focusing on religious issues, tends to cover only the six religions accepted in the country. The media often forgets or deliberately omits covering Indonesia's traditional beliefs. Such ancient beliefs, which pre-date the arrival of Islam and Christianity, are considered unattractive and not part of Indonesia's official diversity. In this study alone, it can be seen that the religions covered were only the six major faiths recognized in Indonesia. There was no coverage of animistic or minority mystic religions, such as the Sundanese Wiwitan in West Java, Javanism in Central Java and East Java, and Kaharingan in Central Kalimantan. Yet the followers of these faiths are also citizens of Indonesia.

Followers of traditional, non-official religions often have the saddest fate when dealing with the legality of marriage. As disclosed by Kompas print journalist Ilham Khoiri, adherents of non-recognized religions can be married according to local customs, but such marriages will not be deemed valid unless conducted according to one of Indonesia's six recognized religions, even though the bride and/or groom has never believed in such a religion. In this way, the state not only imposes its will on the right of individual citizens to belief, but also violates the notion that every citizen is equal before the law. A customary marriage can be performed, but in the eyes of state law, the couple is still cohabiting. When brought before a Civil Registry Office, a wedding will not be registered as valid if not conducted according to one of the six state-approved religions.

#### **4.4 Comparison of Online News Articles**

The Indonesian Marriage Law has been interpreted as prohibiting marriage between people of different religions. However, this interpretation is disputed by some scholars, and the Supreme Court of Indonesia has found there is a

"legal vacuum" in this area. In practice, the law and administrative processes make it difficult to register an inter-religious marriage. Couples may therefore choose to marry overseas or one party may decide to convert to the religion of the other. Divorce laws also distinguish between marriages conducted under different religions, requiring that an application be submitted to either a General Court or a Religious Court depending on the religion involved. (Retrieved from <http://www.loc.gov/law/help/religious-marriage.php>).

Interfaith marriage is a sensitive issue in Indonesia because it involves a matter of doctrine or religious requirements, and frequently also relates to ethnicity. In certain branches of certain religions, it is taught that marriage must be between fellow believers only. Fellow believers means the couple must be of the same faith, that is, the same religion. If a person decides to marry into another religion, their family may fear the person would be led astray from their true religion. The word heretic may seem too harsh. But in fact, some religious doctrines are implicitly just like that. Those who profess to a particular religion may believe it is the only true one and that other religions are false. According to the Minister of Religious Affairs, Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, interfaith marriage is too complicated a matter to be legalized in Indonesia.

The dominant cultural pattern in Indonesia is religious culture. Especially Islam. This is reflected in the fact that 87 percent of Indonesians are Muslims. Indonesia is home to the world's largest population of Muslims – about 225 million, or 13 percent of the world's population of Muslims. Thus, some of the mass media in Indonesia is influenced by and adopts Islam's values and ideology.

At the time of Indonesia's formation in 1945, there were proposals for the nation to be an Islamic state. But the founding fathers decided to embrace all religions and ethnicities, rather than abandon them. With the motto Unity in Diversity, Soekarno unified the nation as the Republic of Indonesia under the state ideology Pancasila. The first principle put forward is of Indonesia as a state, not a religious state, but a country which believes in "the one and only God," even though its people have diverse religious backgrounds and traditional beliefs.

Media reports on interfaith marriage can be different. Following is a comparison between reports by Kompas.com and Republika Online.

**Table 5:** Comparison of Kompas.com and Republika Online News Articles

Differences	Kompas.com	Republika Online
Diction	Judicial review of Marriage Law	Interfaith marriage legitimation
	A student and alumni of University of Indonesia's Law Faculty	Four alumni and a student of University of Indonesia's Law Faculty
Newsworthy	Legal certainty	Interfaith marriage legitimation
Newsmaker	Petitioners of judicial review of Marriage Law	Public figures and religious leaders
	Spouses and children of interfaith marriages	Religious Affairs Ministry and legal scholars
Tendency	Supports the separation of religion and state administrative affairs	Supports laws that contain religious values
	Human rights as a priority	Islamic doctrine as a priority

**Source:** Results of data analysis

Table 5 shows substantial differences between Kompas.com articles and Republika Online articles. Generally, Kompas.com focuses on human rights, while Republika Online prioritizes the foundations of Islam.

## 5. Conclusions

This study analyzed 103 online new reports on interfaith marriage: 71 from Republika Online, 31 from Kompas.com, and only one from Sinarharapan.co. There was a clear difference in the ways they covered the issue.

Most of the news reports by Republika Online on interfaith marriage were based on quotes by prominent figures. Just look at the headlines. For example: Priest Magnis: Interfaith Marriage Could be Legalized (*Romo Magnis: Pernikahan Beda Agama Dimungkinkan Sah*). Then look at the lead. The first thing mentioned is the name of the public figure giving an opinion. For example: "Prominent Catholic Franz Magnis Suseno says there is a need to open the possibility of legitimate marriage before the nation, even if the marriage does not follow the rules of one particular religion."

Most of the interfaith marriage reports made by Kompas.com were straight, factual news. Of the 31 articles produced, the news was presented with a coherent chronology. The reports commenced from the time when the five

petitioners requested the judicial review of Article 2, paragraph 1, of the 1974 Marriage Law. Many of the Kompas.com reports outlined the petitioners' demands and efforts, as these were part of the news. The news also described whether there was a feeling of justice in the court.

Republika Online's presentation of the news tended to solicit opinions and gather assumptions. None of its articles, published during the research period, contained direct interviews with inter-faith couples. There was one article about an interfaith celebrity couple whose marriage ended in divorce, but the article was only a summary and did not contain original reporting. Republika Online only disseminated various opinions without presenting evidence from real cases. The Chairman of the Association of Journalists for Diversity, Ahmad Junaidi, says Republika Online tends to set an agenda through editorializing, "by borrowing the mouths of others to voice the interests of the editor". News published by Republika Online often contained unfiltered public comment. Unfiltered in this case means abusive statements from interviewees were sometimes presented in overly emotional reports. This indicates that Republika Online does not contribute to peaceful journalism.

The readership of Sinarharapan.co was focused on business and economic matters. Although its website featured a 'Pluralism' content section, this media published only one article about interfaith marriage. It was just an article adapted from state news agency Antara. Thus, it can be concluded that Sinarharapan.co tended not to care about or ignored the practice of diversity in journalism. At least one of the editorial staff was in an interfaith marriage, but this background did not make the news portal concentrate on the issue of interfaith marriage.

Republika Online journalists know there are liberal Muslim groups with progressive views on Islam. Such groups uphold a doctrine of religious inclusiveness, in which Islam respects differences. But Republika Online reporters only interview people they know tend to be conservative. This is in contrast to Kompas.com, which seeks to uphold the principle of balanced reporting, covering both sides of the story and seeking impartial sources. Why does Republika Online persist with the opinions expressed by conservatives and not attempt to contact known liberal Muslim figures? The answer is because Republika Online prefers to promote a conservative stance.

In terms of language use, the research found that Kompas.com and Republika Online used different terms when reporting on interfaith marriage. There were also significant differences between Kompas.com and Republika Online in terms of the focus of reports, sources, and opinions.

In terms of diction, Kompas.com often highlighted the case as a request for a judicial review of the Marriage Law's Article 2, paragraph 1. Hence, the interviewees questioned for relevant information here were the petitioners as newsmakers. The five scholars were indeed responsible for the interfaith marriage issue re-surfacing and becoming a public polemic. Republika Online tended to ignore the case and essence of the petitioners' claim. Its reports were more focused on the possible "danger" that interfaith marriage could be legalized if the Constitutional Court granted applicants' request. Its first report on the issue concerned the stance of the minister of religious affairs, and can be viewed as an effort to persuade readers that rejection is the correct stance. This was followed by reports that quoted conservative opinions of religious leaders, community leaders, and public figures, all of whom were also opposed to the lawsuit.

Based on the selection of newsmakers, there were also significant differences in opinions promoted by the two media. Republika Online, which is based on Islamic doctrine, often interviewed leaders of Muslim organizations for their views. While Kompas.com, which upholds nationalism and transcendental humanism, often interviewed human rights organizations such as the National Commission on Human Rights, Setara Institute, and Human Rights Watch. Kompas.com also consulted members of the public to inquire whether interfaith marriage would have negative or positive effects.

The situation observed in the Indonesian online media lends credence to Fairclough's assumption that there exists an ideology of power upon discourse production. Fairclough explains that media discourse is a complex field involving two sides. First, in the newsroom and media institutions, there are many individual interests, from the ideologies of journalists, the demands of the journalism profession, and the catering to audience tastes and advertisers. Second, the structure of a society in which dominant groups oppose each other, so that their stance on an event or issue is received by their audience.

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