Authorial Voice on Hijab Discourse in Singapore: Discursive Reading on the Reputed International Journal Article

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ABSTRACT

Hijab discourse is extensive as it keeps offering new understanding and perspective to the progressing discussion on the cultural, social, and religious spheres. Singapore with its parliamentary representative democratic politics is one of the countries that allow its citizens to practice and wear their symbolic spiritual attributes (in this hijab's case) in public. This discourse analysis (as part of multiyear research) aims to dismantle the authorial stances in the veil cases in Singapore represented in the Q3 Scopus-indexed journal article (stratified purposeful sampling was employed). This study deployed the Hallidayean transitivity system and language appraisal theory developed by J.R. Martin and P.R.R White. The preliminary finding reveals that the authors reaffirm textually aligned neutral representation by using the recognition and strategy of concessions in the language used of redefining the discourse in hijab in Singapore.

Keywords: Authorial voice, Veil, Singapore, Discourse analysis, Q3 Scopus-indexed journal article

1. INTRODUCTION

This research will focus on the journal article's rhetorical language in conveying the author's arguments and positions, and the voices of other researchers used to back up the writer's claims on the hijab discourse. This research analyzes one article journal on the issue of hijab using Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Transitivity (SFL) System for inspection ideational metafunction and Appraisal Theory, as studies derived from SFL, for examining the interpersonal metafunction, specifically to find out how the researchers conveyed the argument and position of the author and the voices of other researchers used to back up the claims made by the author on Muslim women's political issues regarding hijab. Transitivity system and three fields of Appraisal - attitude, engagement, and graduation as a textual analysis method used in this study. In this case, journal articles can be considered a social semiostructured with a choice of words and structures. The author assumes that the journal's two author(s) react to Muslim women's political problems in Singapore. The veil worn by some Muslim women has assumed recognizable proportions around the world [11]. It symbolizes piety to some; oppression to others. For some, it currently exists a rejection of western tradition and modernity. Such diverse characteristics illustrate the strength of nonverbal communication to the degree that words and objects do not possess any intrinsic meaning. While various scientific researchers are interested in veiling, most of them appear to "ascribe importance to Muslim women rather than explain its meaning" [7]. All of them call for additional studies that allow Muslim women to speak for each other: Read and Bartowski (2000), Marshalls (2005), and Droogsma (2007) [7]. I agree with and believe that veiling is vital in many places because practices differ according to cultures and contexts. The individual stories of Islamic women in the Middle East, such as Al Munajjed, 1997; El Guindi, 2000; in the United States and Canada (e.g.,
Read & Bartkowski, 2000; Bullock, 2002) are based on numerous studies published in English. Hijab has many meanings, including something that prevents representation. The word has an Islamic meaning that makes it distinct from the veil. There are no references to the word ‘veil’ Muslim women have a wide range of practices across different countries and ethnic groups. In certain parts of the world, two terms are used to describe two styles of veils. The words veil, headscarf, jilbab, and tudung will be used interchangeably in this article. The creation of authorial voices in academic texts is considered essential [9], but given its apparent exact meaning, voice is an ambiguous term to be described. Generally, the voice could be defined as a simplification of one's point of view [9] or negotiation of one's discursive identity or academic visibility, based on Western rhetorical tradition [20]. Constructing authorial voice in the article journal is often a problematic issue [14], notably among writers who like to use English as an additional language [12]. A recognizable voice is a common feature of English academic texts, although perspectives on the voice's exact meaning may be as disparate as the voices themselves. Within these perspectives of citation activities [9], this study focuses on exploring how authorial voices regarding the politic of hijab in Singapore are constructed in Islamophobia Studies Journal, published by Indonesia and The Malay World Journal (2016). It is "Managing Minorities in Competitive Authoritarian States: Multiracialism and The Hijab Issue in Singapore" by Walid Jumblatt Abdullah (2016).

1.1 Literature review

1.1.1 Hijab/veil women

The veil that certain Muslim women carry may be the most visually powerful sign of this assumed Islamic backwardness. In the last few months, it has been clear that, because of the Syrian refugee crisis, there have been pressing questions in Europe about whether these people may assimilate in the context of the cultural difference [21]. The headscarf is an essential part of this. Islamic law (sharia) consolidates numerous injunctions and calls for Muslim women's status. Hijab remained one of the central issues in Islamic Near Eastern societies concerning the status of women. Western leaders saw the veil of inferiority as a symbol of coloniality in the eyes of covered women. In Egypt, over the last 20 to 30 years, numerous married and single middle and upper-class wives have been reappearing and taking on new Islamic dresses. Today, the veils are being worn by young educated girls and Muslim women. On the other hand, the veil is a symbol of the oppression of women, patriarchal hegemony, slavery, violence, and victims for Muslim and non-Muslim feminists. The most visible symbol of the refusal of patriarchy and their right to participate in society was the Velo [25]. The veil is the refusal of a diverse society and the sing out of inequality [15]. The dominant worldview of women from Abayas, Shailas, and Niqab, particularly the western world, is that they are symbols of oppression. However, this view is not only simplistic, as with most world views, but inaccurate in most Middle Eastern Gulf countries. As she indicated, El Guinea (1999) may be decisive not only symbols of modesty or privacy, but of resistance in her research on the abayas, sheilas, hijabs, and burkas. The veil in Qatar is a symbol of women's devotion to Islam rather than women's oppression. Women are indeed forced to wear a hijab and/or a burqa (a burqa cover the whole body with only a net square over the eyes used by the wearer to see) in some countries (the Saudi Kingdom, for instance, and Iran). Women can not even go to school in some countries. Girls' schools were banned and bombed. However, these are exceptions to most Islamic/Arab countries. Think of the Christian nuns and the costumes that cover them from head to toe, and even of the Catholic women, who would wear a scarf in the church, at least historically.

1.1.2 Veil cases in Singapore

The suspension in Singapore of two Muslim schoolgirls put the Republic's little known Muslim community at the forefront. After failing to meet the authority's deadline to remove the headscarves they wore with their school uniforms, Nurul Nasiha and Siti Farziwah, both seven and in their first school year, were suspended. A third student, Khairah Faroukh, is likely to be interrupted to remove her headscarf by the three after February 11 deadline. Another girl's parents, Siti Amir, remain defiant and decided to teach her home for a private lesson.

In Singapore, Muslim groups protested quietly, bearing in mind that the regime had just moved against Muslims in an ‘anti-terrorist’ car. Nevertheless, the choice to reject the Islamic headscarf (as is commonly known in Malay) has triggered protests from nearby Malaysia that have demonstrated rarity in condemning Singapore's intolerance. This is a case of rivalry between government, Islamic groups. One of the reasons Singapore did not allow girls to go to school in the Hijab is ‘racial unity.’ Muslims consider such an excuse to be naughty, for Muslim women in workplaces and college are not prohibited from wear the veil. What is worrisome is that the argument of 'racial unity' might
well be the first step toward extending the ban to areas where Muslim dresses were previously supported. Many Singaporean Muslims are concerned with this fear and feel that they are the only people to bear the brunt of the regime's efforts to promote "cultural uniformity."

Therefore, the standoff of the veil is not only a 'religious' issue; it represents, under the Constitution of Singapore, "all to profess and practice their religion and promote it, the increasingly vociferous claim of Muslims for their rights to be respected." Muslims long felt that a systemic process of 'uniforming' the Singaporean citizenship tested its tactics against its Malay-Islamic culture. Indeed, there are concerns about more than the right to practice Islamic duty – which is an apology for the parents not to take the veils but also their insistence that their daughters may wear the tudung in the conviction that they have a constitutional right to practice Islam and raise their kids in Malay-Islamic culture. After all, the veil is only obligatory for girls up to puberty age.

Muslims in Singapore, who are almost all Malaysians before the British came to live on the island, compensate 15 percent of the 3 million inhabitants. The protesters quietly against the ban on veils, as the Republic was independent of Malaysia in 1965, is no different from their silent disapproval of systemic marginalization of their culture and lives. It is no wonder that four schoolgirls' parents' actions have surprised many in a state that can not tolerate even the official policies' mildest criticism. The surprise is not caused by the prohibition against the veil, but by Muslim parents' rare courage. The veil range is the newest in a series of "rare courage" demonstrations of Muslims, energized by intense anti-Islam propaganda in strictly controlled official media and the recent attack on "muslim" activists imprisoned without trials. Singapore's government has previously exaggerated by attempting to silence the loose Muslim group's spokesperson, Zulfikar Mohamad Shariff, for criticizing Muslim government officials for their silence in official Muslim demonization.

1.1..3 The article journal "Managing minorities in competitive authoritarian states: multiracialism and the hijab issue in Singapore".

The article examines the approach of the State of Singapore to multiracialism by concentrating on the hijab issue. I argue that a combination of elite ideology and type of regime can explain the state's overall religious position, including the hijab issue. When hegemonic, the state's policies were determined by the ideology of its prominent elites alone. However, the dominant party can not act any longer solely based on its ideological predispositions, as the state moves into competitive authoritarianism with the increased electoral competition. This explains why the state held a staunch no-hijab stand in the past while this position appeared to be relaxed in recent years.

The Popular Action Party (PAP) in Singapore's independence ensures that it almost everywhere dominates the socio-political landscape; the party's ideologies are considered 'national' instead of "party" ideologies equated to the state. The authoritarian State in Singapore is 'multiracialism' [29], one of the leading paradigms strongly promoted. It is a strong effort to persistently convince Singaporeans of the version of multiracialism in the PAP. The state's position on religions, including the Hijab (Malay: tudung), is explained by the combination of regime type and elitist ideology. The author of the article relied mostly on statements of the PAP leadership, past and current, and the policies of the government on religion, officially or otherwise, for establishing the views of the party in the world. It should be noted that a study of the PAP ideologies can not but examine the ideas of Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first Prime Minister, who shaped the fundamental ideologies of the country.

2. METHODS

The research uses Halliday's transitivity system, postulated by systemic functional linguistic, and J.R.Martin and P.R.R. White's three interacting fields of the appraisal – attitude, engagement, and graduation. The academic's position on the politic of Muslim women in Singapore is uncovered by J.R. Martin and P.R.R Whites in the article selected. The research implements a descriptive-analytical method to analyze the reputable International Journals selected through stratified, purposeful sampling — "Managing Minorities in Competitive Authoritarian States: Multiracialism and The Hijab Issue in Singapore" by Walid Jumblatt Abdullah (2016) published by Indonesia and The Malay World Journal. The data is obtained and selected from the two reputed international journals regarding Muslim women's veil and marriage issues in Singapore using words, phrases, and sentences (using a stratified purposeful sampling). This research's data source is one reputed International article journals registered as Q3 in Scimago Journal Rank related to hijab discourse in Singapore regarding hijab's issue published in 2016.

My data analyzing procedure consists of splitting each sentence into its (numbered) clauses and then each
clause into constituents, as broadly shown in both texts displayed in the Appendix. The linguistic features at stake, i.e., transitivity patterns, are identified, counted, and encoded in tables of statistics for quantitative analysis. The identified patterns are accounted for, and the implications of meaning are spelled out in Discussions’ part. Moreover, the data analyzing procedure is conducting the second stage of analysis by using the Appraisal Theory. The clauses are examined from the article journal using three interacting domains of Appraisal theory by J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White. Moreover, analyzing how the writers of the article journal's emotions, judgments, and evaluation of Singapore's hijab discourse by using attitude as one of the three Appraisal theory.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Textual Findings

Table 1. Transitivity Analysis

| Process Types  | 1<sup>st</sup> Article (Abdullah) |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Material      | 230 (51%)                        |
| Mental        | 32 (7.1%)                        |
| Relational    | 134 (29.71%)                     |
| Verbal        | 45 (9.97%)                       |
| Behavioral    | -                                |
| Existential   | 10 (2.2%)                        |
| Clauses       | 451                              |

As Table 1 shows, Walid Jumblatt Abdullah's article, the predominant process type from the table above, is the material process with 51 percent. The second dominant process of his article is the relational process, with a percentage of 29.71 percent. The material process predominates in Walid Jumblatt Abdullah's article journal, which reveals how the state system in Singapore interprets multiracialism through the People's Action Party (PAP)'s model. The relational process is used primarily to define the political system adopted from periodically by Singapore's government or the ruling party. The significance of multiracialism and multiculturalism is also defined by the relational process. The use of hijab and the changes to policies that happen in Singapore's country are because the hijab cannot be used in open spaces by its people's race and religion. Based on the interpersonal analysis, it is found that the two articles journal appraise all related contents of the hijab/veil's issues on the article, leading to the hijab discourse stance due to Singaporean cases. The total of appraising items is as follow:

Table 2. Appraisal Analysis

| Three Interacting Domains of Appraisal | Article Journal |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                                       | Walid Jumblatt  |
| Affect                                | (−) -           |
|                                       | (−) 2           |
| Judgement                             | (−) 29          |
|                                       | (−) 20          |
| Appreciation                          | (−) 46          |
|                                       | (−) 18          |
| Engagement                            | Monogloss       |
|                                       | 28              |
|                                       | Heterogloss     |
|                                       | 96              |
| Graduation                            | Force           |
|                                       | 11              |
|                                       | Focus           |
|                                       | 55              |
| Total                                 | 285             |

Through table 2, Walid Jumblat Abdullah mostly used positive appreciation in his article journal. Meanwhile, Walid Jumblat Abdullah mainly conveyed his thoughts in heteroglossia expressions to ensure reliability in the engagement domain. In the aspect of the focus on graduation, these statements are also reinforced. The positive assessment is mainly classified as a positive valuation by the articles used in their articles. It is primarily geared towards PAP's state thought model and the idea of multiracialism that the state elites have grasped. For example, 'worth,' 'undoubtedly,' and 'legal' is some valuation for the PAP paradigm and the concept of multiracialism of state
elites based on history experienced for generations. In the meantime, the negative value is used to interpret Singapore's rule, not to reflect racial and religious tolerance.

The use of monogloss utterances exposes comments only from the author's perspective or as Martin and White refer to as 'naked declaration.' This occurred because much of the source data were developed in the absence of any other sources, based on the author's viewpoint. However, there has been no shortage of references as the researcher has also clarified how heteroglossia is superior to monogloss through references from more experts.

Walid Jumblat Abdullah clarified the government's actions against Muslim women in public space surrounding the use of hijab. In his journal article, Managing Minorities in Competitive Authoritarian States: Multiracialism and The Hijab Issue In Singapore, Abdullah tried to explain the regime adopted by Singapore based on its historical aspects. Abdullah also clarified that the Singapore government or its elites had misused the idea of 'multiracialism' and 'multiculturalism.' Abdullah clarified and is very fearful of the empirical framework under which Singapore recognizes diversity as an issue. Nevertheless, based on evidence and specific sources, Abdullah also made derogatory statements regarding the Singapore regime. Here, Abdullah clarified that what the state elite or the administration itself meant was not evil. They forbid the use of the hijab because the government assumes that other groups may have other demands. Singapore is not an Islamophobic country, therefore, it can be said but there is a past in the country regarding race and religion. It can be seen from the clarification of Abdullah.

Abdullah recognizes that government action does not permit the use of hijab in schools or public places. In contrast, the government of Singapore has finally released no regulation on the hijab but more conveniently. Therefore, by not siding with anyone or anything, Abdullah sided with the truth. Abdullah explained the negative side of Islam that the Singapore elite considered a terrorist because of media problems. However, in reality, this does not cause Islamic hate. Policies do not use the hijab based on the multiracialism principle. At the time, Abdullah explained, however, that, while not implicitly by implementing new laws, the government relaxed the banning policy of the hijab. Abdullah positioned himself as a researcher and did not side with anyone.

3.2 Lexical Grammar Features

"Managing Minorities in Competitive Authoritarian States: Multiracialism and The Hijab Issue In Singapore" by Walid Jumblatt Abdullah clarified how competitive authoritarian states such as Singapore address multiracialism hijab their minority groupings. In other ways, Abdullah's statement explained how Singapore's government handled its minority communities and explained their elite history to Malaysia. This journal article occupies 229 of the 451 clauses (50.78 percent). This analysis explains the conduct that the government and the elites, particularly in handling the minority groups, are Muslims. The verbal groups of the material process are 'were determined', 'appears', 'has ensured', 'dominates', 'associated', 'uses', 'showed', 'generated', 'confirmed', 'could make', 'is becoming', 'have made', 'have also noted', 'has generated', 'is banned', 'carries', 'are gaining', 'are routinely portrayed', 'were treated', 'builds', 'is shaped', 'come', 'crafted', 'will render', 'helps', 'begins', and 'use'.

Abdullah explained the regime adopted by the Singapore state by referring to the writings of Levitsky and Way. The 'Singapore' pronoun in the clause suggests that Singapore is an oppressive competitive country. Furthermore, by the objective of the "law," the material process "is becoming" an informal term, described as "evidence that the Singapore regime is like." Through this context, Abdullah assumes that the dominant parties govern Singapore and that the elite's philosophy is known as a national ideology.

Relational is the second dominant process in the review. This process took place in 134 clauses (29.71%). The relational process was used to identify the multiracialism and multiculturalism that existed in Singapore and the elites' policies.

Abdullah attempted to offer a balanced stance in the two sentences above by describing the details on the Singapore state's hijab policies. "Multiracialism begins with the idea that ethnic and religious diversity" in the clause above explains the meaning of multiracialism and multiculturalism based on the Singapore state definition, and the relational process 'is' characterizes. These clauses are then followed by those clauses that further explain the differences in meaning between multiracialism and multiculturalism.

On the other hand, the second clause was made a defense of the Singapore state. This can be seen from the relational process 'is' and the identifier 'the foundation of all its ethnic policies,' identify 'resulting in skepticism towards religion and a desire for
uniformity'. This implies that Singapore or its elites' policies are not based on the hatred of a minority group, particularly Islam, but on the diversity emerging in the state.

Within this article journal, Abdullah considered the government of Singapore to use positive normality by measuring "solely," "persistently," "primarily", and "special" items. The positive judgment reflects the specific or peculiar existence of an individual. Through his article, Abdullah suggests that party leaders have full judgments on political parties and are known as national thinkers. For all the positives, Abdullah seems to demonstrate the dark side of the establishment through his words.

3.3 Logic structure

In the introduction section, Abdullah explained Singapore's People's Action Party (PAP), the uninterrupted party that rules social and political life in Singapore. Such parties are also equated as governments because their policy is seen as a national decision, not a party's policy. Multiracialism is the official ideology embraced. Material, verbal and relational processes are employed through the process of 'has ensured', 'dominates', 'is often equated', 'are considered', 'are made', 'presupposes', 'argue', 'contend' and 'is'. This paragraph functions to introduce the PAP and multiracialism conception in Singapore.

In the "Authoritarianism and Management of Minorities" section, Singapore's situation deals with minorities from time to time is clarified, then compared with other countries that have more or less the same regime and are unable to sustain minority tolerance, mostly Muslim minorities. It is based on the geopolitical and historical conditions of the country. This section also explains that a dominant party controls Singapore's State, and its ideology is considered an ideology that the state trusts. Islam is often seen and unfairly viewed as a threat. Abdullah also mentioned that freedom of expression was severely restricted to the oppressed, but that it was acceptable for the elite, if they desired to criticize, given that it was at the ruling party's shadow.

Consequently, the people of Singapore have very few freedoms. This paragraph also provides an explicit explanation of how dominant the ruling party with the PAP as the discussion uses material, relational, existential, and mental processes used through the processes of 'has been termed,' 'has resorted,' 'is,' 'associated,' is curtailed, 'and' has also been deemed. This paragraph provides insight into the dominant social-political hegemony of the ruling party in Singapore and the elite-confident multiracial paradigm.

In "Multiracialism Explained: The PAP's Governing Paradigm"'s a section, this section addresses PAP's multiracialism, which has a misleading meaning. However, even if its major ideas are quite different, the Singapore state always uses the concepts of multiracialism and multiculturalism interchangeably. Abdullah also clarified that Singapore has always claimed that race and religion are an issue and that such rights cannot be granted. The true value of multiracialism and multiculturalism is also discussed in this section. Abdullah stated Singapore has formerly been part of the Malaysian Federation in which ethnic disturbances between Malaysia and China have taken place. Therefore, the feeling displayed by the country's founder is focused on historical interactions from generation to generation. Singapore is also Malaysian and Muslim for it to be considered negative and to be opposed. This is what influenced the state elite's thought patterns. Material, verbal, mental, and relational processes are employed through the process of 'is', 'is stated', 'are', 'are very intertwined', 'helps, 'could be made', 'postulate', and 'possible'. This section gives an insight into what the elites of Singapore have in terms of multiracialism, multiculturalism, and understanding based on their historical background.

In "Analyzing The PAP's No-Hijab Stance" section, the government banned hijab use in public institutions and schools, it was clarified. However, when the government dominated the media and made lies, the activist eventually went to Australia, and the issue of the hijab vanished. Even though the community has made many movements, the government never made an official hijab policy. The State's power has diminished, and the State is not easy to control, despite social media's nature. Thus, the State made vague declarations and gave treaties of peace. No official comment on the hijab in Singapore has been made until the present. This section also explained the Muslim community's changes and movements in Singapore to fight the government. Start the support by creating a silhouette of a woman wearing Singapore national flag hijab. The image suggests state policy that the compliance of religious rights and loyalty to the State is not in dispute. World Hijab Day in Singapore (WHDS 2014) is preparing to set up an event in partnership with non-Muslims to demonstrate the hijab's elegance on the highway. Nevertheless, the spray is not approved, and the State cancels it. So online media were upset, and the State said there was no parliamentary pressure or threat.
Material, mental, relational, and verbal processes are employed through the process of 'signifies', 'is evaluated', 'aptly encapsulates', 'were not', 'is expressed', 'was emphasized', 'encounters', 'was formed', 'was passed down', and 'was ingrained'. This segment describes that the Muslim minority community in Singapore has made significant reforms and resistance since the social media era. This segment also demonstrates the government's softening of this issue of the hijab.

The last sub-section is "Multiracialism: Guiding Philosophy Behind the No-Hijab Stance." Abdullah started to justify his defense of Singapore in this section based on the evidence stated in the past section that the fear of diversity in Singapore was focused on and inherited tradition. It had been clarified that the Singaporean nation did not adopt Islamophobia but accepted that the multiracialism culture was scared to trigger problems of the State. This section also highlights some of the reasons why the hijab is banned: 1. The government believes that it would be 'public space' to allow the veil to be worn (Law 2003: 56). No explanation is obtained on the significance of public space; 2. Singapore is a secular society, not mixing faith with politics. Still, eventually, many ethnoreligious groups will continue to make their respective claims if the nation agrees with the Muslim community's wishes. The PAP's race and religious orientation guide its agenda. However, multiracialism, which treats disparities as an issue rather than power, is the foundation of its entire ethnic policy, ultimately generates cynicism about religion and the need for uniformity. Increased mistrust is reflected in Islam, Malay, and Muslims, together with the complex nature of geopolitics, political background, and the threat of terrorism; the overt presence of Muslim religiosity can be expected with skepticism.

Material, mental, relational, and verbal processes are employed through the process of 'may not have experienced', 'can surely learn', 'have', 'attained', 'posed', 'could scuttle', 'were killed', 'have resolved', 'anchors', 'is understood', 'intrudes', 'does not encourage', 'articulated', 'enunciated' and 'singled out'. This section describes the author's defense based on evidence and indicates that even though no legal framework has been developed, the government has started to moderate the framework on the use of hijab. The author does not condemn anyone, but the authors determine the truth before the government is permitted, and the approach to the use of the hijab has been softened.

4. CONCLUSION

The author of the article paper reveals the neutral stance on hijab representation in Singapore using the analytical exposition genre. Walid Jumblatt expresses the use of the transitivity framework and evaluation items as the writing. From the Singapore perspective, the author redefined his hijab concept mainly through the transitivity system's related mechanism. The State of Singapore cannot be said to be an islamophobe. Indeed, the country has a problem with diversity or with the principle of multiracialism, which considers diversity to be a problem. However, it has begun to change over time. This can be proved by the State of Singapore, which still supports Islamic marriage law to respect other religions. The hijab article of Walid Jumblat Abdullah revealed a rational approach because Abdullah had proposed the matter based on proof. The use of "material" to justify government acts that do not yet issue a policy for the Hijab and are accompanied by the appraisal's conduct emphasizes the author's opinion, namely that the government does not want the use of Hijab. This is because the government's multiracialism policies are treating diversity as an issue.

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