The Political Language of Disaster: Indonesian Government Communication for Handling the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Indonesia is one of the most populous countries exposed to Covid-19 with a high mortality rate. The pandemic has been in Indonesia since March 2020, but before the Covid-19 virus was officially declared to enter Indonesia, the Indonesian government previously took this threat lightly. It showed that the Indonesian government was using political language such as disaster communication. Some disparaging comments left public officials. This research uses a qualitative approach with content analysis techniques. The primary data is derived from President Joko Widodo's speech at Bogor Palace and the tweets of @kemenkes @BNPB and @Jokowi's Twitter accounts related to Covid-19. This research examines how the Indonesian government communicates its policies in overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this research is intended to reveal the narrative developed by the Indonesian government in campaigning for policies to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic. The results show that there are doubts from the government in determining the policies to be taken to overcome the spread of Covid-19. The narrative developed by the government—like the phrase "new normal" and "enggak mudik" phrase—is a narrative that is intended to create calm, even though it can endanger public health.

Keywords:
language; communication; disaster; pandemic; covid-19; Indonesia

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit more than 215 countries. This pandemic has made people panic and nervous (Abdullah, 2020, p. 488; Manshur, F. M & Husni, 2020, p. 209; Harapan et al., 2020, p. 699; Munandar, 2020, p. 112). In Indonesia, this panic is expressed in many ways, among other things, by doing "panic buying" which has an impact on the hoarding of foodstuffs by wealthy people (Djalante et al., 2020, p.8). While on the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic also brings anxiety (Wijaya, 2020). One of the sources for this anxiety can be seen from the efforts of the government in various countries in dealing with this pandemic (Bavel et al., 2020, p. 462; Zundert, 2020, p. 8). In Indonesia, this anxiety is reflected in the government's attitude toward overcoming the pandemic. Various policies were taken to deal with this pandemic. Interestingly, there have been many debates and communication problems that have caused quite a stir in the community. This shows that there are problems with problematic disaster communication management (Haÿry, 2020, p.1-2; Prayoga, 2020, p. 448; Masduki, 2020, p. 108).

In Indonesia, President Joko Widodo announced the first and second positive cases of coronavirus-infected patients on March 2nd, 2020. Sometime after President Joko Widodo announced this, two people who were declared positive for corona found out from the news that she was infected. In this case, the President announces the status of the positive patient to the public administration before the health worker is informed. This shows that there is a problem with problematic disaster communication management. In addition, the narratives

developed by policymakers in Indonesia in the early days of this virus were said to have spread around the world, tending to underestimate and take it lightly. Since WHO established the global health accuracy status on January 30th, 2020 (Djalante et al., 2020, p. 1), many countries such as Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, India, the Philippines, several European countries, and the United States have reported similar positive cases. At the same time, the Indonesian Minister of Health, Terawan Agus Putranto, chose the opposite attitude. The Minister of Health responded to the global emergency status lightly and repeatedly raised it to the media. One of the controversial statements raised included "Don't panic. Don't fret. Just enjoy. Eat enough, live a healthy lifestyle. If you have a cough, wear a mask (Arcana, 2020)."

The narratives aimed at reducing panic continued until a few weeks later the fact emerged that Indonesia was included in the category of major countries in Asia that did not have positive cases of Covid-19, even though at that time there had been reports of returning migrant workers from Wuhan. The condition of Indonesia is declared as a country with zero positive cases of Covid-19. The Minister of Health again issued a statement that was expected to have a cool effect on the public. In front of the mass media, Terawan stated that the lack of positive cases of Covid-19 was a blessing from God (Da Costa, 2020). When he heard that there was a study from Harvard University that stated the possibility of a positive case of Covid-19 in Indonesia, the Minister of Health denied this, stating it as a form of insult and challenging the researchers to prove it.

This article is intended to examine the narratives and language used by the Indonesian government in overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. By using a qualitative approach that seeks to describe chronologically, this research intends to observe the narrative created by the government in overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic.

Language, Social Media and Pandemic Prevention

Many studies have stated that language plays an important role in overcoming pandemics. Rafi's study (2020) entitled *"Language of COVID-19: Discourse of Fear and Sinophobia"* has successfully revealed that the narratives generated by the mass media through reporting using the diction of "war rhetoric" and negative expressions, a culture of meetings and greetings portrayed as being taken over by strange forms of language, such as social distancing, physical distancing, and social isolation creates a deep fear in society. Given these facts, research conducted by examining the headlines of the New York Times recommends that the use of neutral and contextual language can be used as a vaccine to control the spread of fear and racist feelings.

Research by Salahuddin et.al (2020) on how the Indonesian government uses Twitter to campaign for programs and policies to control the Covid-19 pandemic found the fact that social media has a significant and important role in which is sed as a means of overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic. Through social media, communication and coordination in overcoming Covid-19 are focused on the theme of overcoming Covid, namely requests and directives from the central government to unite against corona, know and understand the coronavirus, comply with central government policies, pay attention to the interests of the state, and care for Indonesia. Although from this research there is a fact that there is a degree of difference in attention between President Joko Widodo and DKI Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan, in general, this study concludes that all government officials have the same vision, namely accelerating the prevention of the Covid-19 pandemic.

On social media, particularly Twitter, President Joko Widodo emphasized that all government officials, central and regional, as well as the wider community, must unite,

work together, and collaborate to support the acceleration of overcoming Covid-19 in Indonesia. The governor is also trying to respond and implement President Joko Widodo's policies to support the acceleration of overcoming the pandemic in Indonesia. Overall, the Twitter content of government officials in Indonesia is related to efforts to bring people together, to convince the public that Indonesia is capable, and to invite all parties to support central government policies and Indonesia's national interests. These findings show that President Joko Widodo has succeeded in maximizing the function of Twitter's social media (Salahudin et al., 2020: 3913).

The leading anthropological linguistic expert Wertheim (2020) explores the potential and role of language in accelerating the response to the corona pandemic. He sees that language has an important, even key position -as a vehicle to fight the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on his experiences and in-depth observations, it was concluded that the basic problem that made the overcoming of the Covid-19 pandemic look slow was the problem of the low level of awareness of the community. The message that Covid-19 is a dangerous virus with a fast transmission process does not "reach" the public. In consideration of the conditions and facts he obtained, he emphasized two things.

First, in every official announcement regarding the number of victims who have tested positive for the coronavirus, the phrase "known cases or uncovered cases" should be used. This phrase is much clearer than if it is simply used as a case term. The mere mention of cases is considered to reduce the number of cases so that what is worrying is the impression that this virus is not too dangerous. Second, get clear on the subject. A lot of information and writing circulating regarding the coronavirus tends to obscure the agency or subject of the spread. Phrases such as "the virus spread very fast" - for Wertheim as well as followers of critical linguistics schools such as Fowler (1986) as well as Kress and Hodge (1979) is an act of reducing meaning. The coronavirus does not spread independently. There is a medium and there are subjects who are active intermediaries so that it accelerates the spread. The subject in this context should not be omitted. It is humans who spread the virus.

The message that humans have a big share in spreading the coronavirus must be conveyed properly to the public. Sentences that tend to obscure the role of humans in accelerating the transmission of the coronavirus must be eliminated and as much as possible avoided. On the one hand, sentences that tend to obscure the (human) subject in this context will create a social responsibility crisis that causes policies made by the government to be threatened that they cannot run well. In the context of Indonesia, for example, policies on social restrictions and social quarantine are running relatively unevenly due to one of them being affected by its social responsibility crisis.

Third, multiply it to use the pronoun "we". In the context of the war against the coronavirus pandemic, mentality is a crucial issue. The paradigm and point of view that should be used is not the perspective of "me" for the survivors and "them" for the affected. This perspective must be changed. Information and news with the choice of "those infected with the virus referred to a hospital" should be avoided. This perspective tends to dig the gap between the ``healthy" and the "ill," even though, in the context of this pandemic, all humans are "us," while what they, in the sense of the enemy, is the Covid-19 virus.

Methods

This research used content analysis techniques with the main data derived from President Joko Widodo's speech at Bogor Palace and the tweets of @kemenkes @jokowi and @BNPT related to Covid-19. Content analysis

was chosen because it can be used to describe the content of a person's communication or media. Meanwhile, according to Atali and Gurer, (2015, p. 104) content analysis can be used to see the relationship between content, communication objectives and description of meaning.

The data for this article was taken from two sources: (1) the text of President Joko Widodo's speech on March 15th, 2020 at the Bogor Palace (2) the tweets from @BNPT @Jokowi and @Kemenkes on the topic of Covid-19 from January 1st to June, 30th 2020.

The reason for choosing the text of the President's speech is because it is President Joko Widodo's first official statement in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This speech can be used as a reflection of the government's attitude and plan to manage the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the data taken from the Twitter account @BNPB @jokowi and @Kemenkes are useful for reviewing and further elaborating on how the campaign and policy outreach was carried out. Social media accounts in the context of overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic have a very important role.

The data analysis procedure was carried out in three stages. First, collect data from President Joko Widodo's speech, tweets from the @kemenkes @jokowi and @BNPT accounts regarding the covid-19 issue. Second, selecting relevant data to analyze based on the focus of the study. The selection of data is based on tweets, text, and visual images, which is selected based on the relevance and substance of the analysis. Third, conduct a content analysis of the data that has been collected with a focus on examining how the Indonesian government communicates its policies to the overcoming Covid-19 pandemic.

Results

Since President Joko Widodo officially announced that there were Indonesian citizens who were positively infected with coronavirus on (2/3/2020), only two weeks later (15/3/20) President Joko Widodo made an official speech to convey his stance in overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic. The President officially conveys his main thoughts at the Bogor Palace. After a while, many debates followed, as to how a policy was done.

Apart from the debates that mostly revolve around mechanisms and decisions taken from the political and economic side, this article tries to explore the important and key aspects of the President's speech in the case of overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic from the linguistic side. This is important to do for the reason that language is the medium used by the president in an official speech. A speech script is carefully prepared and written material. The manuscript is not a one-seater script. The manuscript of the speech is prepared, discussed, and seriously analyzed before it is read in public. Therefore, discussing the content of the speech becomes interesting. From the manuscript, we can see and dissect what is in the minds of the President and the government in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

> Assalamualaikum Wr.wb Greetings everyone,
> Ladies and gentlemen, since we announced the Covid-19 case earlier this month, I have ordered the Minister of Health and related ministries to take extra steps in dealing with the global pandemic of Covid-19.
>
> We see several countries that have experienced a spread earlier than us, some have conducted lockdowns with all the accompanying consequences. However, some countries have not conducted lockdowns, but have taken strict steps and policies to prevent the spread of Covid-19. The government continues to communicate with WHO and use WHO protocols and consult with health experts in dealing with Covid-19.

The government has also formed a task force to accelerate the handling of Covid-19, chaired by the Head of the BNPB, Lieutenant General Doni Monardo. This task force has worked effectively to synergize our national strength, involving local governments, ASN, TNI-POLRI, and involving private support, social institutions, and universities. As a large country and an archipelago, the level of the spread of Covid-19 varies from one person to another. Due to this, I ask all Governors, Regents, and Mayors to continue to monitor all regions and consult with health experts to examine any existing situation. Later, continue to consult with BNPB to determine the status of the area whether it is emergency standby or non-natural emergency response.

Based on the emergency status of the area, the ranks of the regional government assisted by TNI-POLRI and the central government continue to take effective and efficient steps to deal with the impact of the spread of Covid-19. Making policies regarding the learning process from home for students and college students. Make a policy concerning some ASN being able to work from home online while still prioritizing excellent service for the community. Later, postpone activities that involve many participants and improve services for Covid-19 infection testing and treatment by utilizing RSUD and collaborating with private hospitals and research and higher education institutions recommended by the Ministry of Health.

I have ordered adequate budget support to be used effectively and efficiently. First, referring to Law 24/2007 concerning Disaster Management which allows government and local governments to prioritize using the budget quickly. In addition, the Minister of Finance has also issued regulations on budget provision required by all ministries/ agencies, regional governments, and task forces to accelerate the handling of Covid-19. This regulation provides a legal basis so that relevant parties can use and submit additional budgets to deal with the spread of Covid-19.

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has slowed down the world economy significantly and massively, including the Indonesian economy. To that end, the government has taken steps to anticipate this impact. The government ensures that it provides sufficient materials to meet the needs of the community. The government has also provided economic policy incentives as announced by the ranks of the Coordinating Minister for the Economy to keep current business activities running as usual. I also ask the regional heads to support this policy and implement adequate policies in the regions. The entire cabinet and I continue to work hard to prepare and protect Indonesia from the spread of Covid-19 and minimize its implications for the Indonesian economy.

As announced, one of our ministers was positively infected with Covid-19. Anticipatory steps have been taken and I am sure the ministers will continue to work as usual. Their days are even tougher, even if part of it is done online to address the health and economic impact of Covid-19.

Finally, to all Indonesian people, I ask to remain calm, not panic, stay productive by increasing vigilance so that we can block the spread of Covid-19 and stop it. With this condition, it is time for us to work

from home, learn from home, and worship at home. This is the time to work together, help each other and unite, and work together. We want this to become a community movement so the Covid-19 problem can be handled optimally.
Thank you.
Assalamualaikum Wr.wb

Source: President Joko Widodo's speech at Bogor Palace (15/3/2020)

There is a fundamental problem concerning how the government responds to the Covid-19 pandemic. The problem lies in its seriousness. The lack of seriousness can be seen in the speech of President Joko Widodo at Bogor Palace. President Joko Widodo's speech still implies hesitation in what strategic steps to take in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic (Syakir, 2020). At the beginning of the speech, the President mentioned two response models that had been carried out by the earlier countries that had been affected by the corona pandemic. First, lockdown, and secondly, there's no need for lockdown by implementing strict policies. It must be understood that this sequence of mention is not a mere coincidence.

For followers of critical linguistics, language is a "location of ideology," namely the locus of a perched ideology.

"There is a textual variant of this location: ideologies reside in texts. While it is used that the forms and content of texts do bear the imprint of ideological processes and structures, it is not possible to 'read off' ideologies from texts. This is because meanings are produced through interpretations of texts and texts are open to diverse interpretations, and because ideological processes appertain to discourses as whole social events--they are processes between people--not to the texts which are produced, distributed, and interpreted as moments of such events" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 71-72).

Language problems are not just technical problems in composing sentences, putting diction, and choice of words alone. However, more than that there are "politics" and ideological values that lie behind every wording and choice of words (diction). In the context of the speech above, we can see that the government is still reluctant to carry out the lockdown option in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. The argument is simple, that if there are two options mentioned as in the sentence:

"We see several countries that have experienced a spread earlier than us, some have conducted lockdowns with all the accompanying consequences. However, some countries have not conducted lockdowns but have taken strict steps and policies to prevent the spread of Covid-19."

Source: President Joko Widodo's speech at Bogor Palace (15/3/2020)

This sentence implies that the government prefers to choose the second option. The conjunction used in the sentence is "but". The conjunction "but" implies subtle denial of the previous option, namely lockdown. Therefore, it is not surprising that what the government chooses is the PSBB (Large-Scale Social Restriction) policy. This was reinforced by President Joko Widodo's tweet on his Twitter account (March 24th, 2020). On this account President Joko Widodo wrote:

"Every country has a different character, culture, and level of discipline. With that in mind, facing Covid-19, we do not choose the lockdown option. In our country, the most appropriate is physical distance — asking every citizen to maintain a safe distance."

Source: Official Twitter Account of Joko Widodo (@jokowi)

This proves that from the outset the government did not make lockdown or regional quarantine the main option. The policy of maintaining a safe distance as intended by President Joko Widodo is termed Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). As a follow up to the President's instructions, on April 3rd, 2020 the Indonesian Minister of Health issued the Minister of Health Regulation Number 9 the Year 2020 concerning Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB). This regulation contains, among other things, procedures for proposing the determination of PSBB, implementing PSBB, monitoring reports during PSBB, and so on. For some circles, the Minister of Health's Regulation on PSBB is more technical and administrative, far from being able to handle the Covid-19 pandemic (Azhar, 2020, p. 302; Setiadi, 2020, p. 10).

Likewise, there is one other sentence that is important to be noticed. The sentences in the speech are:

> "With this condition, it is time for us to work from home, learn from home, worship at home. This is the time to work together, help each other, and unity, cooperate. We want this to become a community movement in order the Covid-19 problem can be handled optimally."

Source: President Joko Widodo's speech (15/3/2020)

The styles and types of sentences above fall into an unclear category: whether they are in the form of an appeal or a type of instruction. The sentence above is a sentence conveyed in psychology that is full of insecurity. Looks like you do not have power. The sentence is expressed using an intentional modality that is intended to express a desire (Santoso, 2012; Martin & White, 2005, p. 22; Palmer, 2003, p. 76). Alwi (1992) and Lehmann (1974) emphasized that intentional modality is related to several psychological principles due to it relates to the continuity of events concerning one's consciousness. Therefore, this intentional modality is reflected in the speech expressed by a person regarding "wishes," "hopes," "invitations," and "omissions," or "requests." In this intentional modality, language is used to express the speaker's attitude toward a problem or event. The word "want" in the sentence "We want this to become a community movement in order Covid-19 problem can be handled optimally" is evidence that this sentence reflects the attitude of the wishes of the communicants.

In terms of the intensity of the wording, from the results of the analysis using a text analyzer, it was found that the word that was ranked the highest was Covid 19, which was mentioned 16 times. The second position is occupied by the word "work" which is mentioned 7 times. The third position is occupied by the word "economy" which is mentioned 6 times. The fourth position is occupied by the word "health" which is mentioned 5 times. Referring to this data, it becomes clear and illustrates that there is a hierarchy of priorities that is the government's "ideology" in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. The main attention is indeed focused on handling and overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic, but it happened at a principle level. Meanwhile, at the technical level, there are three words mentioned in terms of the intensity of words: work, economy, and health. These three words are a reflection of the attention of text producers, in this case, President Joko Widodo. However, if the measure of attention is the intensity of the words spoken, later on hierarchically among the three words the concern is that the word "work" occupies the highest position, next is the word "economy" which includes various aspects of economic matters and finally the word "health." It shows that in communicating a disaster, the perspective used by the government is an economic perspective. In fact, the most important thing to pay attention to is the safety

aspect first (Dougall et al., 2008; Masduki, 2020; Lovari & Bowen, 2020).

By using this wording analysis, it can be seen that the point of pressure and priority that is prioritized by text producers is reaching the issue of the Covid-19 pandemic. The intensity of the mention of a word is evidence that describes the ideology behind a text that is believed by text producers (Fairclough, 1989, p. 77; Thompson, 1984, p. 73; Hart, 2014, p. 112).

In mid-May 2020, the government issued a ban on going home (*mudik*) during the Idul Fitri momentum. This policy caused controversy and uproar after President Joko Widodo in a talk show Mata Najwa made a statement that substantially assumed there was a difference between the terms going home (*mudik*) and returning home (*pulang kampung*). On Social Media, the hashtag *#tidak mudik* appeared, driven by social media accounts of government ministries and agencies. The campaign for the prohibition of homecoming (*mudik*) was distributed simultaneously. A video was circulated containing a recording of some Ministers singing songs containing a message prohibiting going home (*mudik*) (Indosiar, 2020).

The dictionary chosen to campaign for the ban on going home (*mudik*) is the word "fun" (*asyik*). In a Twitter upload of the Ministry of Manpower, it is written, Amid the current #Covid19 pandemic, *#notgoinghome* is the best choice for our common good. Not going home is still fun." The phrase *#enggakmudik* is a negation phrase. In this context, if what you want to campaign for is health considerations and breaking the chain of the spread of Covid-19, later propaganda using these phrases is problematic. This is due to the phrase negation "not going home" (*enggak mudik*); it is neither an invitation nor an order. It is a declarative phrase that has the function of providing news or information. It is different if the policy campaign for the prohibition of going home is expressed by using imperative sentences. The

imperative sentence in this case describes the persistence of text producers to emphasize the forbidden policy of going home. The phrase "not going home" has a different effect on understanding. The first phrase is declarative, while the second seems more powerful due to it being expressed in an imperative language. More than that, phrases not going home are strung together with phrases that are still fun.

Still fun (*tetap asyik*) phrases in this context can be categorized as phrases that contain linguistic violence (Gay, 1999, p. 140; Ross, 1981, p. 21; Alnizar et al., 2021, p. 10). One of how linguistic violence operates is through the use of words and sentences which have an oppressive level of harm to the communicant. The campaign "not going home is still fun" manipulates people's cognition and understanding. As a sacred tradition, for some people not going home means something is missing from their habit. In this context, losing the opportunity to meet family, relatives and also missing the moment of Eid with family are issues that fall into the category of "not fun." Why do text producers not choose to use imperative sentences such as "don't go home for the sake of your family's health at home." In fact, what is interesting is that the campaign to ban homecoming is increasingly being amplified in an unclear form and narrative as was done by BNPB which chose a campaign with the phrase "*pliss tidak mudik* (please do not go home) *#dirumahaja*."

On May 24th, 2020, President Joko Widodo paid a visit to a mall in Bekasi. The visit was intended to check the readiness of the mall's services in welcoming a new chapter called the new normal. The term new normal has previously been widely discussed in cyberspace. On Twitter on May 16th-27th, 2020, an analysis made using SNA by Drone Emprit succeeded in showing the fact that Indonesia is the country most excited concerning discussing "new normal," followed by the United States and the United Kingdom (see figure 3). Uniquely,

**Figure 1.
Ministry of Manpower and
Transmigration's Prohibition Campaign
for Homecoming**

*Source: Official Twitter Account of Kemenaker
RI*

**Figure 2.
BNPB's Prohibition for Homecoming
Campaign**


Source: Official Instagram Account of BNPB

the new normal campaign was dominated by accounts supporting the government and also the police. At that time, the SNA also noted that there were two hashtags used as a means for the government to campaign for the new policy plan: #newnormal and *#TataKehidupanBaru* (Fahmi, 2020).

**Figure 3.
"New Normal" Conversation Trends are
taken from SNA Drone Emprit**

Source: Ismail Fahmi (@ismailfahmi) Twitter

**Figure 4.
The distribution of "New Normal"
conversation is taken from the SNA
Drone Emprit**
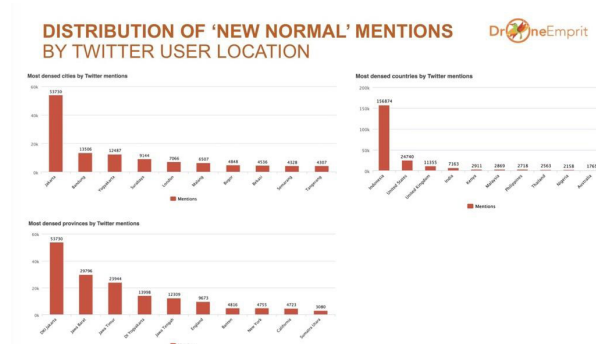
Source: Ismail Fahmi (@ismailfahmi) Twitter

Although it has become a debate at the global level, at least since March 2020 (Berwick, 2020, p.21-25), the term New Normal has in the end become the government's choice (Pragholapati, 2020, p.5; Muhyiddin & Nugroho, 2020, p. iv). Several public activities, such as activities in shopping centers, both modern and traditional markets, shops, and offices have started to implement the new regulation. However, facts on the ground show that the number of victims who are declared positive for being exposed to Covid-19 is increasing. New Normal, which was originally intended to relax and open up the excesses of

the economy while still implementing the right protocol, was not successful. What happened was the opposite. Casualties increased and the number of residents exposed increased.

The term New Normal linguistically has a fundamental problem. This phrase can fall into the category of an oxymoron, which is a figurative phrase that has the opposite meaning. The New Normal has two opposing sides. One side refers to newness and at the same time refers to the meaning of normality or habit. For Arif (2020) New Normal is a phrase that implies action. This can be seen from the syntactic side, which indicates that the term New Normal refers to the existence of hidden code related to how (should) we behave. Therefore, in this context, the phrase "New Normal" is likely to be used as an effective communication tool to lead people to certain actions. More than that, in terms of grammar, the phrase "New Normal" which in Indonesian means "*normal baru*" leads the communicant to focus on the word normal. In Indonesian, the applicable law is DM (being explained - explain), which is different from the law in English (MD: explain-being explained). In the case of "New Normal", the word explained is "normal" and the word explained is "new". The essence of the phrase is in the word which has the position explained, namely the word normal. Likewise, the phrase "new normal" applies to the law of DM. The word "normal" is in the explanatory position and the word "new" is in the explaining position. Thus, it becomes clear that the word "normal" in the phrase is a keyword of the essence. Therefore, it cannot be blamed if in fact what stands out in society is the euphoria concerning normality, compared to a novelty rule by obeying health rules and protocols as expected. When examined further, the New Normal narrative can be interpreted as an attempt by the government to calm the public, although it must be realized that this carries very dangerous risks.

Efforts to build tranquility in society are also expressed by using the hashtag campaign *#RilisSehat* carried out by the Twitter account @ Kemenkes. The hashtag was uploaded on July 8th, 2020, which incidentally at that time the number of positive cases of Covid-19 in Indonesia had reached one of the highest, namely 1853.

With this high number of additional cases, the hashtag uploaded as a campaign narrative was *#RilisSehat*.

Figure 5.
#RilisSehat campaign by the Twitter account @Kemenkes

Source: Official Twitter Account of Kemenkes RI

Discussion

Underhill in *Creating Worldview: Metaphor, Ideology, and Language* (2011) argued that one way to examine the ideology that lies behind a text issued by a text producer is to examine the usage of the metaphor. For him, metaphor is a mirror of the perspective and perspective of the text maker who is seeing a problem. In this context, it is interesting to examine the metaphor usage. From a linguistic point of view, the choice of metaphor which is used by

likening the coronavirus to a wife is a pejorative and degrading parable.

There are two ideological messages contained in this metaphor. First, for text producers, the wife (should be) the party that the husband must control. In the metaphor above, the text producer uses the word wife which in KBBI (2018) means a woman (female) who is married or has a husband, a woman who is being married. The metaphor above does not use the word pair which has a more neutral connotation and spectrum of meanings. Instead of choosing the word wife which specifically refers to a certain gender. Second, the metaphor reveals the ideological veil that lies behind the text. It is clear how the misogynist and patriarchal nature of the text producers are embraced. In the context of this metaphor, the wife is positioned not as a partner, but as a party who (should) submit to her husband. The relation between submission and subjugation is a discourse that text producers want to build. Text producers interpret the relationship between husband and wife in the context of the subjugation relationship.

Actions using metaphors that tend to demean a party and are carried out by a public official by Battistella are classified as "bad language". In *Bad Language: Are Some Words Better than Others?* (2005) he emphasized that bad language is the language that comes out of bad thinking patterns and has meaning implications that have the potential to hurt others.

It is also important to note, the question is why in campaigning policies against the Covid-19 pandemic, the government tends to use foreign terms. Terms such as Social Distancing, Physical Distancing, Work From Home (WFH), Lockdown, and New Normal are some examples of terms widely used by the government in campaigning its policies. There is a tendency for the government to use complex communication patterns so that the messages conveyed do not actually arrive and

are successfully understood by the public. This is not purely a question of language, but more than that, there is something more complex: a matter of public communication patterns, psychologically, and even anthropology. Later, is it true that Indonesian does not have equivalent words for the terms above? Is our language so poor? If so, this condition will be increasingly relevant to Pramodya Ananta Toer's (1980, p. 115) questions:

"Will it be able to be written in Malay? Poor language like that? Striped with the words of all nations around the world? Just to say a simple sentence that self is not an animal?"

The question of Pramodya Ananta Toer's is based on the fundamental question of what language is most appropriate to be used to raise national awareness. Is it Dutch, Malay, or Javanese? Pramodya has doubts concerning the Malay language which is described as a poor and stripped language. If indeed we do not have equivalent words, of course in this context, we are still worthy of being said to be a developing country in the view of Regugui (1988). For him, "developed countries are in a situation where vocabulary is available while developing countries are in a situation where vocabulary is empty." The fact we have the term "*pembatasan sosial*" (social retirement) for social distancing, *karantina lokasi* (location quarantine) for lockdown, *kerja dari rumah* for work from home, *kebiasaan baru* (new habits) for new normal, Piviko-19 (coronavirus 19 infection disease) for Covid 19. The problem must be admitted, that generally what happens to Indonesian citizens, including state leaders, is the impression that they are more proud to sprinkle Indonesian vocabulary with foreign terms, particularly English. This can be described as a "language pandemic".

A recent example, *takarir* (generally we know it as a caption) in the President's Instagram post some time ago reads "We are

Figure 6.
***Takarir* (caption) of Instagram account @jokowi on March 19th, 2020**

Source: Official Instagram Account of Joko Widodo (@jokowi)

working on a rapid test with a greater scope so that we can do early detection of the possibility of someone being exposed to Covid-19. I have ordered more rapid test kits, as well as more test stations. "Rapid test with greater coverage, the results will be accompanied by a health protocol that is clear, simple, and easy to understand, whether by self-isolation or requiring hospital services." In this short sentence, there are two English terms that our language has the equivalent: *tes cepat* (rapid test) and *karantina mandiri* (self quarantine).

At this point, there is a big challenge to fight against the larger-scale hypothesis that the Indonesian nation does not contribute anything to science, both classical and modern (Simanungkalit, 2020). How can we donate if our condition is poor?

Conclusion

In terms of expressions issued by President Joko Widodo, there are still doubts and hesitation in regard to determining the direction of government policy of overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic. On matters requiring emphasis, the President's speech was mostly expressed by using declarative sentences, not imperative sentences. The communication narrative developed by the Indonesian government in campaigning for policies to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic is a communication narrative that tends to try to create conditions so that people are calm. This can be seen from the various campaigns carried out by BNPB and the Ministry of Health that use the word negation and avoid the imperative word prohibition. That shows there is no sense of urgency from the government to prohibit people from using *mudik*. Technically, this narrative is campaigned using terms that under certain conditions can create a reality engineering such as the term new normal which is supposed to bring fresh air to the community. In addition, the use of humorous metaphors in this context can also be interpreted as an effort to create a sense of calm and reduce fear in the

community. Jokes are used to fight panic and anxiety.

Acknowledgments

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