

## QUESTIONING THE AUTHORITY OF CONVERTS' PREACHING: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SIDOGIRI MEDIA EDITION 211

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### Abstract

*This study aims to analyze how Sidogiri Media, as a pesantren media, represents the discourse of the authority of converts' da'wah in its 211th edition entitled "Converts Preach, Isn't It Dangerous?" This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research type and applies Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model which includes three main dimensions: text structure, social cognition, and social context. The results show that Sidogiri Media frames the phenomenon of converts' da'wah as an issue that needs to be controlled and directed by religious scholars, especially pesantren. Through evaluative diction, instructive sentences, and contrasting patterns between "those with knowledge" and "those who are just learning," this bulletin emphasizes the position of pesantren as a scientific authority and guardian of the legitimacy of Islamic da'wah. From a social cognition perspective, the author's view is influenced by traditional pesantren values that uphold sanad and knowledge as the basis of da'wah authority, while from a social context, this text is a form of pesantren's ideological response to the disruption of religious authority in the digital era. Thus, Sidogiri Media not only functions as a medium for preaching, but also as a means of reproducing Islamic boarding school ideology in maintaining the structure of religious authority in the Islamic public sphere. Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Da'wah Authority, Converts, Islamic Boarding School Media, Sidogiri Media*

### Abstrak

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana Sidogiri Media sebagai media pesantren merepresentasikan wacana otoritas dakwah muallaf dalam edisi ke-211 yang berjudul "Muallaf Berdakwah, Gak Bahaya Ta?". Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi pustaka (library research) dan menerapkan model Analisis Wacana Kritis Teun A. van Dijk yang meliputi tiga dimensi utama: struktur teks, kognisi sosial, dan konteks sosial. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Sidogiri Media membingkai fenomena dakwah muallaf sebagai isu yang perlu dikontrol dan diarahkan oleh kalangan berilmu agama, khususnya pesantren. Melalui diksi evaluatif, kalimat instruktif, dan pola kontras antara "yang berilmu" dan "yang baru belajar", buletin ini menegaskan posisi pesantren sebagai otoritas keilmuan dan penjaga legitimasi dakwah Islam. Dari sisi kognisi sosial, pandangan penulis dipengaruhi oleh nilai-nilai pesantren tradisional yang menjunjung sanad dan ilmu sebagai dasar otoritas dakwah, sedangkan dari konteks sosial, teks ini menjadi bentuk respon ideologis pesantren terhadap disrupti otoritas keagamaan di era digital. Dengan demikian, Sidogiri Media tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai media dakwah, tetapi juga sebagai sarana reproduksi ideologi pesantren dalam menjaga struktur otoritas keagamaan di ruang publik Islam.*

*Kata kunci: Analisis Wacana Kritis, Otoritas Dakwah, Muallaf, Media Pesantren, Sidogiri Media*



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## INTRODUCTION

Mass media not only functions as a channel for conveying information, but also as a place for producing meaning and ideology.<sup>1</sup> Through language, the media can frame social reality in a certain way, thus shaping society's perspective on the issues raised.<sup>2</sup> In the context of religious media, the discourse conveyed often reflects the ideological values of the institution that oversees it. One interesting example is Sidogiri Media, a bulletin published by the Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School in Pasuruan, East Java. As the school's internal media, Sidogiri Media functions not only as a disseminator of information but also as a representation of the school's distinctive religious perspective on contemporary issues.<sup>3</sup>

In its 211th edition, Sidogiri Media featured the theme "Converts Preaching, Isn't It Dangerous?", specifically in the Perspectives section. Through this article, Sidogiri Media highlighted the widespread practice of preaching by converts in public spaces, both in person and through social media. In its narrative, the bulletin questions the suitability and competence of converts to preach, as well as their position within the structure of Islamic preaching authority.<sup>4</sup> Questions like these reflect the critical attitude of Islamic boarding schools towards the practice of preaching by groups who are considered to be new to Islam from a scientific perspective.

This phenomenon is interesting to study through the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK), because the issue of the authority of converts' preaching is not solely about individual capacity, but also concerns the power relations in the production of religious knowledge and scholarship. Sidogiri Media, as a representative of an Islamic boarding school,<sup>5</sup> holds a dominant position in determining a person's religious legitimacy. Therefore, an analysis of this bulletin text can reveal how pesantren ideology operates through language, as well as how the media frames converts as subjects of da'wah who need to be regulated.

This research uses Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach, which emphasizes the relationship between text structure, social cognition, and social context in the formation of meaning. Van Dijk views media texts as not standing alone, but rather as the result of the cognitive processes of the text creator, influenced by certain social structures and ideologies.<sup>6</sup> Using this analysis, the researcher attempts to explain how Sidogiri Media constructs a discourse of the authority of Islamic preaching for converts linguistically, as well as how Islamic boarding

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<sup>1</sup> Eriyanto, *Analisis Framing: Konstruksi, Ideologi, Dan Politik Media* (LKis, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Edward S. Herman and Noam. Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (Pantheon Books, 1988).

<sup>3</sup> Eriyanto, *Analisis Wacana: Pengantar Analisis Teks Media* (LKis, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Sidogiri Media, *Muallaf Berdakwah Gak Bahaya Ta?* (Sidogiri Media, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Hasyim, *Knowledge Development Through Information Technology in Salaf Pesantren*, 03, no. 02 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.57060/jers.v3i02.100>.

<sup>6</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

schools position themselves as guardians of the legitimacy of Islamic preaching amidst social change and digital media.

Several previous studies that also addressed the issue of da'wah authority in the digital era demonstrate that this phenomenon has become an increasingly important topic in contemporary religious communication studies. Naamy, in her study, "Da'wah on New Media and Religious Authorities in Indonesia," revealed that the emergence of digital da'wah has shifted the pattern of religious authority from the traditional, pesantren-based model to a form of popular authority rooted in media visibility.<sup>7</sup> This phenomenon aligns with research conducted by Kuswana and Puzian through a case study at Sabilul Huda Islamic Boarding School, which demonstrates how Islamic boarding schools are attempting to renegotiate the role and legitimacy of their da'wah amidst the changing digital communications landscape.<sup>8</sup> Both emphasized that the presence of new media is not only a means of preaching, but also an arena for the struggle for legitimacy between traditional and new authorities.

In addition, research entitled *The Role of Digital Media in the Formation of Religious Literacy of Islamic Boarding School Students in Indonesia* written by Raharjo highlights how Islamic boarding schools use digital media to strengthen the capacity of da'wah literacy so that it remains in line with Islamic scientific values.<sup>9</sup> This finding is reinforced by the study of the *Transformation of Islamic Preaching Communication and Its Influence*, which explains that digitalization has changed the pattern of Islamic preaching communication while simultaneously challenging the epistemic foundations of traditional religious authority.<sup>10</sup> The relevance of these findings to this research lies in Sidogiri Media's efforts as a representative of traditional Islamic boarding schools in responding to changes in the authority of da'wah in the digital space, particularly to the phenomenon of converts preaching which is the object of analysis in the 211th edition of the bulletin.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a library research approach. This approach was chosen because this research seeks to deeply understand the meaning contained in the text, not

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<sup>7</sup> Nazar Naamy, "Da'wah on New Media and Religious Authorities in Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 43, no. 35 (2023).

<sup>8</sup> Dadang Kuswana and Muhamad Hilmi Puzian, "Religious Authority in the New Media Era : Sabilul Huda Islamic Boarding School Da ' Wah on Social Media," *Ilmu Dakwah: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies* 17, no. October (2023): 415–44, <https://doi.org/10.15575/idajhs.v17i2.26480>.

<sup>9</sup> Novianto Puji Raharjo, "Peran Media Digital Dalam Pembentukan Literasi Keagamaan Santri Di Indonesia," *Ta'wiluna: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Quran, Tafsir Dan Pemikiran Islam* 5, no. 2 (2024).

<sup>10</sup> Marwa Ulfa, "Transformasi Komunikasi Dakwah Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Praktik Keagamaan Masyarakat Muslim Di Indonesia," *NAHNU: Journal of Nahdaltul Ulama and Contemporary Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2024): 385–98.

to measure or test specific variables. According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research functions to explore and understand the meaning perceived to emerge from social or humanitarian issues through rich and interpretive descriptions, where the researcher acts as the primary instrument in the data analysis and interpretation process.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, Robert K. Yin explains that literature study is a research strategy that focuses on in-depth analysis of written documents by considering the social and theoretical contexts that underlie them, so that it is able to reveal the relationship between text, ideology, and power.<sup>12</sup>

The Sidogiri Media Bulletin, Issue 211, entitled "Converts Preaching, Isn't It Dangerous?", specifically the Perspectives section, which discusses the increasing phenomenon of preaching activities by converts, is the primary data source for this study. This bulletin was chosen because it represents the official voice of the Sidogiri Islamic boarding school regarding contemporary religious issues.<sup>13</sup> In addition to primary data, this study also utilized secondary data in the form of books, journals, and scientific articles relevant to critical discourse analysis, Islamic preaching communication, and studies on Islamic boarding school media. All data was collected through documentation techniques from various written sources, then systematically analyzed to identify the discourse structure and ideological meaning contained within.

The data analysis process was conducted using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model developed by Teun A. van Dijk. Through this model, van Dijk focuses on the relationship between three main dimensions: text structure, social cognition, and social context.<sup>14</sup> Through the dimension of text structure, this study examines how ideas and concepts are linguistically structured in the text, both through themes, paragraph organization, and word choice. The social cognitive dimension is used to trace how the bulletin writer's views and values are shaped by the belief system and ideology of the Islamic boarding school, while the social context dimension serves to connect the text to broader social conditions, particularly the power relations between the Islamic boarding school and converts in the discourse of Islamic da'wah. The results of the analysis are not intended to produce statistical generalizations, but rather to understand the construction of meaning and ideology in the text in depth. With this approach, the study is expected to be able to reveal how Sidogiri Media reproduces the ideological values of the Islamic boarding school through the discourse on the authority of converts' da'wah.

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<sup>11</sup> Jhon W. Creswell, *Research Design: Pendekatan Metode Kualitatif, Kuantitatif Dan Campuran*, 5th ed. (Penerbit Pustaka Pelajar, 2021).

<sup>12</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Qualitatif Research from Start to Finish*, 2nd ed. (The Gilford Press, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Hasyim, *Knowledge Development Through Information Technology in Salaf Pesantren*.

<sup>14</sup> Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This analysis focuses on the Perspectives column in Sidogiri Media Issue 211, titled "Converts Preaching, Isn't It Dangerous?" In the article, Sidogiri Media highlights the increasing number of converts appearing as public preachers, both in person and through social media. The bulletin questions the suitability of converts to preach, as they are "newcomers" to Islam.

In general, the discourse constructed by Sidogiri Media depicts a hierarchical relationship between Islamic boarding schools (as holders of religious scholarly authority) and converts (as those deemed to still need to learn). The following analysis explains how this discourse is constructed through Van Dijk's three levels of analysis.

### Macrostructural Analysis

At the macro level, the analysis focuses on the overarching theme framing the Sidogiri Media text, edition 211, titled "Converts Preach, Isn't It Dangerous?" According to van Dijk, macrostructure is a semantic representation of the overall meaning of a text, showing how events, actors, and ideas are ideologically constructed within the discourse.<sup>15</sup>

The main theme of the text in this column is "caution towards the authority of converts' proselytizing." The title "Converts Proselytizing, Isn't It Dangerous?" rhetorically signals concern or skepticism regarding the phenomenon of converts proselytizing. This rhetorical question not only serves as an attention-grabbing opening but also contains an ideological presupposition, namely that proselytizing activities by converts have the potential to cause "danger" if not controlled by legitimate religious authorities.

In the opening paragraph, the author states:

*"Recently, we've seen many converts to Islam acting as preachers. They speak publicly, even through YouTube channels, conveying Islamic teachings from their perspective."*

This sentence positions the phenomenon of increased da'wah by converts as a social phenomenon that deserves attention. However, rather than emphasizing the da'wah spirit or courage of converts, the text directs the reader to the question of "appropriateness." In the following paragraph, it states:

*"In fact, da'wah is not just about sharing experiences, but also conveying knowledge that comes from a teacher and a clear chain of transmission."*

This quote demonstrates that the core issue lies not in the convert's proselytizing intentions, but rather in epistemic legitimacy, meaning who has the right to convey religious teachings. By addressing this issue, Sidogiri Media constructs a central ideological theme: that the authority of

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<sup>15</sup> Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*.

proselytizing must be subject to the structure of traditional Islamic scholarship, a system associated with Islamic boarding schools and the chain of transmission of knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

This theme is reinforced by a statement in the text emphasizing that preaching requires "a deep capacity for religious knowledge" and "guidance from a teacher or cleric." This sentence demonstrates a discourse of control over preaching practices carried out by parties outside the pesantren system. In the context of discourse analysis, this theme illustrates the media's efforts to maintain the symbolic capital of pesantren as centers of religious scholarship.<sup>17</sup>

This macro theme demonstrates the symbolic power relations between Islamic boarding schools and converts. In Pierre Bourdieu's view, symbolic power operates through language and knowledge, where authority arises from recognized social legitimacy.<sup>18</sup> In this context, Islamic boarding schools possess symbolic capital as institutions recognized socially and religiously as sources of religious knowledge. Through the bulletin text, this symbolic power is reproduced in the form of discourse that regulates who has the right to speak on behalf of Islam.

Furthermore, this overarching theme also demonstrates Islamic boarding schools' ideological efforts to maintain the status quo amidst the development of da'wah in the digital era. In the context of social media, anyone can become a da'wah preacher without having to go through a pesantren education, including converts.<sup>19</sup> This creates an epistemological tension between traditional and digital authorities. Sidogiri Media, through this edition, appears to be attempting to return control of da'wah to institutional channels, namely the generally agreed-upon official channels, by emphasizing the importance of sanad (chain of transmission) and the guidance of ulama (Islamic scholars).

On a macro level, this text represents a defensive discourse strategy, an attempt to maintain the symbolic power of Islamic boarding schools amidst the fragmentation of religious authority. Van Dijk describes this strategy as part of the ideological square, namely the tendency to emphasize the superiority of one's own group (in-group) and highlight the weaknesses of other groups (out-group).<sup>20</sup> In this text, the group "we" (pesantren/ulama) are described as the guardians of the purity of religious knowledge, while the group "they" (converts) are positioned as those who are just learning and need to be guided.

Thus, at the macro level, this text not only discusses the phenomenon of converts preaching, but also reproduces the ideology that the authority to preach should be held by those with formal

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<sup>16</sup> Nurmahmudah, "Quo Vadis Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Dan Pengaruhnya Otoritas Kiai Dalam Perspektif Filsafat Sosilogi," *Wahana Akademika* 10 (2023): 89–110.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Polity Press, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.

<sup>19</sup> Arnis Rachmadhani, "Otoritas Keagamaan Di Era Media Baru: Dakwah Gus Mus Di Media Sosial," *Penangkalan: Jurnal Penelitian Agama Dan Masyarakat* 5, no. 2 (2021): 150–69.

<sup>20</sup> Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*.

religious legitimacy, referring to the ulama and santri of Islamic boarding schools. This theme not only reflects how Islamic boarding schools view the phenomenon of convert proselytizing, but also demonstrates how language can maintain a hierarchical structure in the production of Islamic knowledge.

### **Superstructure Analysis**

The text's superstructure shows how arguments are structured to form the logic and direction of the message. The Perspective section in this bulletin follows the argumentation pattern typical of Islamic boarding school media: starting with a current phenomenon, continuing with a normative religious review, and then concluding with a moral appeal.

In general, the structure of the flow of the writing can be described as follows:

- 1) Opening: Presenting the phenomenon of many converts who are now actively preaching on social media.
- 2) Argumentation development: Conveying the view that da'wah requires in-depth scientific competence, and emphasizing the importance of a valid sanad (chain of knowledge).
- 3) Conclusion: Remind converts to focus more on deepening their religious knowledge before preaching in public spaces.

This pattern demonstrates how Sidogiri Media employs a moral legitimacy strategy, packaging criticism of converts preaching through religious advice. Thus, the seemingly normative discourse actually contains a hegemonic dimension, namely an attempt to maintain the dominance of Islamic boarding schools as guardians of preaching authority.<sup>21</sup> This kind of superstructure is in accordance with the characteristics of traditional religious discourse, where the text is built hierarchically from worldly phenomena to the authoritative legitimacy of religion, and ends with an ethical call.<sup>22</sup>

### **Microstructure Analysis**

Microstructural analysis focuses on how language choices in a text represent ideologies and power relations hidden behind the sentences. In van Dijk's framework, microstructure includes lexical elements, syntax, local semantics, and rhetorical style.<sup>23</sup> In the context of Sidogiri Media edition 211, the Perspective column presents a number of linguistic constructions that emphasize the hierarchy of knowledge held by Islamic boarding schools and converts.

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<sup>21</sup> Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (Routledge, 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Ade Yamin et al., *Islam Indonesia: Dialektika Agama, Budaya Dan Gender*, 1st ed. (LKIS, 2020).

<sup>23</sup> Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*.

1. Choice of diction and evaluative framing

The title "Converts Preaching, Isn't It Dangerous, Ta?" as the face of this bulletin is the most fundamental element in understanding the discourse surrounding this phenomenon. Linguistically, the use of the rhetorical question "Is It Dangerous, Ta?" serves to convey an assessment or evaluation, not to solicit an answer. This sentence contains a negative presupposition, that the preaching activities of converts are potentially dangerous if not balanced with adequate religious knowledge.

One of them is like the following text:

*"Many converts are enthusiastic about preaching on social media, even though they've only just discovered Islam. A lack of understanding of religious teachings can lead their preaching to misdirection."*

This quote uses the terms "just getting to know Islam" and "misguided," which create the association that converts are a group that is neither spiritually nor intellectually mature. This diction then functions as a symbolic delegitimization strategy, asserting that they (converts) do not yet possess the knowledge and skills to become legitimate preachers.

Furthermore, the phrase "spirit to preach" is positioned ambivalently, with its meaning being acknowledged as a good intention on the one hand, but also as a reason for reprimand. This structure represents a form of paternalistic rhetoric, with the author positioning himself as a parent advising a group of newcomers to Islam.<sup>24</sup>

2. Modality and Imperative: Instructive Tone

Sidogiri Media also often uses imperative sentences and modalities that have an instructive tone, such as:

*"It is better for them to deepen their religious knowledge first before conveying da'wah to other people."*

*"Da'wah is not just sharing experiences, but conveying the truth accompanied by knowledge."*

The sentence contains deontic modality ("should," "must"), which indicates a moral demand. According to Van Dijk, the use of modality is a linguistic strategy to assert a position of power, meaning the author positions himself as an authoritative source with the legitimacy to determine what is right and wrong in preaching.<sup>25</sup>

These instructive sentences reflect not only a cautious attitude but also the pesantren's social control function toward groups outside the formal educational structure.

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<sup>24</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, *Ideology and Discourse Analysis* (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*.

Language serves as a means of establishing boundaries for the authority of da'wah, emphasizing that only those with a valid chain of knowledge may preach.

3. The Contrast Pattern and Dichotomy of "Us" vs. "Them"

One of the distinctive features of the ideological discourse in this text is the contrasting pattern between the "knowledgeable" and "new learners." For example, another passage states:

*"A true preacher is one who has a foundation in knowledge, not one who only relies on life stories or feelings."*

This quote reveals an explicit dichotomy between "those with a foundation in knowledge" (identified with Islamic boarding schools or ulama) and "those who merely tell stories" (represented as converts). This contrast represents a polarization strategy, distinguishing between the ideal "us" and the less legitimate "them."

According to Van Dijk, this strategy is used by dominant groups to maintain their hegemonic position through language, by highlighting the moral and intellectual superiority of their own group while emphasizing the weaknesses of other groups.<sup>26</sup>

4. Use of Rhetorical Style and Euphemisms

In addition to dichotomy and modality, this text also uses euphemism, a softening of language used to convey criticism without appearing overt. For example, in the sentence:

*"We are certainly happy to see the enthusiasm of converts in preaching, but that enthusiasm needs to be directed so that it does not lead astray."*

The word "directed" is a euphemism for "controlled" or "limited." This style of language softens the ideological message to appear as moral guidance, not domination. However, in terms of discourse, the meaning remains the same: the Islamic boarding school asserts itself as the guardian of the truth of Islamic preaching.

According to Fairclough, euphemistic strategies like this allow power to operate without coercion, because they are accepted as morally valid advice.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the text operates in the form of symbolic, not coercive, power.

5. Ideological Meaning: Language as Control of Authority

The language choices in this column demonstrate how Islamic boarding school media use language to assert the boundaries of religious authority. Through careful diction, exhortations, and moral opposition, Sidogiri Media subtly reproduces the hierarchical structure of traditional Islamic scholarship.

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<sup>26</sup> Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*.

<sup>27</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*.

Converts are presented not as agents of equal da'wah, but as subjects in need of guidance. Thus, language becomes a tool of ideological control that maintains the legitimacy of the pesantren as a legitimate source of da'wah authority. Within Van Dijk's framework, this practice explains how the author's social cognition is influenced by the pesantren's institutional ideology, namely an ideology that places knowledge, sanad (chain of narrators), and authority as the foundation for the legitimacy of speaking in the name of religion.<sup>28</sup>

### **Social Cognition Analysis**

In Teun A. van Dijk's framework, social cognition is the bridge between text and society. He explains that the meaning of discourse arises not only from language but also from the mental processes of the text's creator. This means how the author interprets social reality, organizes knowledge, and constructs ideological attitudes.<sup>29</sup>

In the context of the Sidogiri Media bulletin, the author's social cognition is formed by the value system and thought structure typical of traditional Islamic boarding schools, which place religious authority as something that originates from sanad (the chain of transmission of knowledge) and tafaqquh fi al-din (deepening of religious knowledge).<sup>30</sup> This view then influenced the author's view of the world of da'wah, including his interpretation of the phenomenon of converts preaching.

In the Perspectives section, the author positions converts not simply as new individuals learning about religion, but as subjects who have the potential to stray from the correct path of preaching if not under the guidance of a religious scholar. Narratives such as:

*"Converts must be careful in preaching so as not to fall into misunderstandings and mislead others."*

The narrative demonstrates a cognitive representation of converts as at risk in their da'wah. This indicates a mental model formed by the author based on the institutional belief that only those with knowledge and a valid sanad (chain of transmission) can da'wah correctly.

This social cognition is greatly influenced by the ideology of Islamic boarding school science, where religious authority is hereditary and hierarchical.<sup>31</sup> In this system, the validity of preaching is not only judged by intention, but also by the legitimacy of knowledge, namely the teacher, the source of their chain of transmission, and the depth of their knowledge. Therefore, when

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<sup>28</sup> Van Dijk, *Ideology and Discourse Analysis*.

<sup>29</sup> Teun A. Van Dijk, *Discourse and Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

<sup>30</sup> Azyumardi Azra, *Jaringan Ulama Timur Tengah Dan Kepulauan Nusantara Abad XVII–XVIII* (Prenada Media, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> Ririn Inayatul Mahfudloh, "Peran Sanad Keilmuan Dalam Pengembangan Pondok Pesantren," *QOMARUNA Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies* 01, no. 01 (2023): 23–30.

converts preach in public spaces without a pesantren background, this disrupts the existing traditional cognitive structure.

From a social cognitive perspective, this discourse demonstrates two things. First, the collective belief (social belief) within Islamic boarding schools that religious authority is exclusive and cannot be obtained instantly. Second, the formation of a protective feeling to safeguard the purity of Islamic teachings from outsiders who are perceived as not yet understanding the complexities of religious knowledge.

Thus, the social cognition of the bulletin writers is the result of internalizing the values of Islamic boarding schools which emphasize the importance of the hierarchy of knowledge, and reflect the traditional ideology that links the authority of da'wah with epistemic legitimacy and moral submission to the ulama.

### **Social Context Analysis**

In Van Dijk's analysis, social context relates to the social structures and power relations that underlie the production and reception of discourse. Discourse never stands alone; it is always connected to broader social, cultural, and political systems.<sup>32</sup>

In the context of this research, Sidogiri Media is produced by the Sidogiri Islamic Boarding School, which is one of the oldest and most influential Islamic boarding schools in East Java. Historically, the Sidogiri Islamic boarding school has held a reputation as a guardian of traditional Islamic orthodoxy, affiliated with the Ahlussunnah wal Jamaah (Aswaja) and Nahdlatul Ulama traditions.<sup>33</sup> Thus, every text produced by this institution automatically reflects the ideological and social position of Islamic boarding schools in the map of religious authority in Indonesia.

The social context of this 211th edition of the Sidogiri Media bulletin is the phenomenon of the digitalization of da'wah (Islamic outreach), where social media has opened up a space for anyone to speak in the name of religion. In this context, many converts have gained widespread popularity due to their rhetorical skills and conversion stories. This phenomenon shifts the center of authority from Islamic boarding schools (traditional authority) to digital platforms (popular authority).

From the perspective of Islamic boarding schools, this shift poses an epistemological challenge: the authority of da'wah is no longer determined by scholarship, but by popularity and

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<sup>32</sup> Van Dijk, *Discourse and Power*.

<sup>33</sup> Muhammad Aminulloh and Rahmat, "Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Aswaja Dalam Kegiatan Kederisasi Annajah Siodigiri Untuk Membentuk Karakter Murid Di Madrasah Miftahul Ulum Tsanawiyah Pondok Pesantren Sidogiri Kraton Pasuruan," *Journal Ability: Journal of Education and Social Analysis* 4 (2023): 37–46.

media algorithms. Therefore, through Sidogiri Media, Islamic boarding schools seek to reaffirm their claim to authority by defining the boundaries of who has the right to da'wah.

This social context is also linked to the dynamics of knowledge classes within Indonesian Islamic society. Islamic boarding schools, based on classical knowledge and the chain of transmission, position themselves as guardians of Islamic authenticity, while converts or digital preachers represent a new form of knowledge that is fast-paced, popular, and not always based on in-depth study. In this relationship, a symbolic contestation emerges between two forms of authority: knowledge and the chain of transmission versus experience and popularity.

Thus, the discourse in Sidogiri Media's 211th edition can be understood as a form of cultural resistance to the modernization of da'wah. This bulletin serves as a medium to protect traditional epistemological values from being swept away by the liberalization of digital authority. In line with Van Dijk's view, this demonstrates how discourse is used to maintain symbolic power through the reproduction of language and ideology.<sup>34</sup>

This social context also demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools play a role not only in religious education but also in legitimizing religious communication in the new media era. Sidogiri Media, as one of the Islamic boarding school's communication instruments, serves as a tool for disseminating conservative ideas in the form of educational, rather than confrontational, narratives—a subtle yet effective ideological strategy.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Sidogiri Media Edition 211 with the theme "Converts Preaching, Isn't It Dangerous?" represents the discourse of authority in preaching that is deeply rooted in the ideology of Islamic boarding schools. Through a qualitative approach of literature study and Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis model, it was found that the text of this bulletin constructs the Islamic boarding school's view of the phenomenon of converts preaching by emphasizing caution and control over religious authority. This discourse is constructed through normative and evaluative language, which emphasizes that the legitimacy of preaching should be possessed by those who have deep knowledge and a valid religious chain of succession.

From a social cognitive perspective, the author's perspective is shaped by traditional Islamic boarding school values that place knowledge as the basis of authority. Meanwhile, in a social context, this discourse emerged as a response to the changing landscape of digital da'wah, which has enabled the emergence of new authorities outside of formal scientific structures. Thus, Sidogiri Media is not merely a means of da'wah but also a tool for reproducing the ideology and symbolic

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<sup>34</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*.

power of Islamic boarding schools in maintaining the legitimacy of Islamic da'wah in the modern era.

## **SUGGESTION and RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study explains how Sidogiri Media represents the discourse of the authority of Islamic preaching for converts within the framework of traditional Islamic boarding school ideology. However, this study still has limitations, primarily because it is a desk study and focuses only on one bulletin edition. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the object of study to several other editions of Sidogiri Media or compare it with other Islamic boarding school media to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the dynamics of Islamic preaching authority in religious media. Furthermore, a critical discourse analysis approach can be combined with digital ethnography methods or in-depth interviews with media managers and readers to create a more holistic understanding of the reception and interpretation of religious discourse within Islamic boarding schools and the wider community.

Furthermore, future research is expected to examine the comparison between the traditional religious authority of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and new forms of authority on social media. Such cross-platform studies will enrich the analysis of how the legitimacy of da'wah is formed in the digital public sphere (cyberspace). Future researchers can also delve deeper into the practical dimensions of converts' da'wah, considering the influence of algorithms, audiences, and public perception on the legitimacy of knowledge. Thus, further research is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic boarding school da'wah strategies that are adaptive to the development of digital media without neglecting the authenticity of Islamic scholarly values.

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