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### Coursebook-Based ISIS' Propaganda: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Arabic History Texts in ISIS' School Environments

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#### Abstract

*This research aims to investigate forms of propaganda spread by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) as represented in an Arabic History Coursebook they prepare for ISIS' school environments. It utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its research method to examine and reveal values and ideologies behind choices of words, grammar, and text structures. Using an ISIS' Arabic History Coursebook entitled Al-Tarikh: li al-Shaff al-Khamis al-Ibtida'i (published in 2016/1437H) as the data source, this research is primarily focused on the analysis of clauses and phrases which contain words of daulah and qital. The data were analysed utilizing functional linguistics and propaganda techniques as its analytical framework. Results of analyses show that as an organization ISIS fights for ideologies which underlie the idea of the Islamic State and spreads values of radicalism to its targeted communities. Propaganda techniques such as name calling, glittering generality, transfer, plain folk and bandwagon are found to be dominant in ISIS' propaganda projects.*

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, ISIS, Propaganda, History Coursebook.

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#### Introduction

By using its "Islamic State" propaganda, ISIS has managed to gain many support from other radical groups. Rohan Gunaratna, terrorism researcher from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, released eighteen radical groups in Indonesia that stated their support for ISIS, fifteen of them had pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi as caliph and three others just expressed support. At the global level, thirty-one radical groups have expressed support for ISIS, one of which is Boko Haram, which has caused the deaths of tens of thousands of Nigerians and displaced a million others in recent years (international.kompas.com, 2015). ISIS supports also come from Malaysia as discussed by Osman & Arosoaie, (2020), their journal article mainly stated that Malaysians who joined ISIS have lack of Islamic training and strong sense of righteousness. Moreover, Piazza (2021) claimed



that 'nondemocratic Islamists' countries—those who favor the implementation of Shari'a law and clerical rule but believe Islam to be incompatible with democratic principles—are significantly more likely to express support for ISIS. While 'democratic Islamists'—those who view Islamic Government to be congruent with democratic rule—are not more likely to endorse ISIS goals or tactics.

The amount of support for ISIS cannot be separated from their efforts to spread propaganda in various media; internet, social media, print, and electronic (Hikam 2016, Al-Rawi and Groshek 2018, Pashentsev and Bazarkina 2021, (Magdy, Darwish, and Weber 2016)). The first strategy is hard propaganda, by spreading propaganda in the form of videos, images, and texts containing threats, atrocities, and clarifications or claims of an act of terror. These efforts are intended to frighten their enemies, as well as to spread threats throughout the world. In addition, ISIS also often publicizes their military strength and war fleet for the same purpose (Al Ibrahim and Shi 2018). Second, ISIS spreads soft propaganda, with the same format as above, but contains positive conditions in ISIS-controlled areas, such as brotherhood between militants, celebrations of religious holidays, education, salaries and facilities provided to militants, and even showing women who are willing to be married by the mujahideen (Bonino, 2018). In addition, ISIS also spreads *syar'i* arguments and testimonies of ulama who support what they are doing. This effort aims to influence Muslims to support ISIS and to recruit members from various countries (Ceron, Curini, & Iacus, 2019).

One of the ISIS's threatening soft propaganda efforts is the distribution of coursebooks to be taught in schools in order to spread their understanding and ideology (Benigni, Joseph, & Carley, 2017). In some areas of Iraq and Syria that are ISIS-controlled, all national anthems and national anthems that teach patriotism are strictly prohibited in schools. Apart from implementing the new curriculum, they also removed some subjects such as philosophy and chemistry, and modified science courses to suit their ideology. The curriculum seems to have been created by ISIS leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi himself (Arvisais & Guidère, 2020). In the curriculum guide, any reference to Iraq or Syria must be replaced with an Islamic state/ISIS. The images in the book that violate the ultra-conservative interpretation of Islam will be torn up. The national anthem and lyrics that encourage love for the homeland are considered as idolatrous and blasphemy against religion, and are strictly prohibited. The new rules are contained in a two-page bulletin and posted on mosques, markets or electricity poles. The circular of the new curriculum ended with a stern warning accompanied by threats (beritasatu.com). As adherents of transnationalism, ISIS has spread the curriculum throughout the world along with their ideology (Arvisais & Guidère, 2020), including Indonesia (Maskur, 2018).

ISIS coursebooks, that are hadith coursebooks, history coursebooks, and mathematics coursebooks, at first glance look like coursebooks in general. However, if we examine more deeply, we will find the propaganda content carried out by ISIS in real terms. As in the mathematics coursebook on pages 7 and 18, ISIS uses the visualization of images of 'firearms' (ISIS Author Team, 2016). In mathematics books for elementary school children in general, the objects used are those that are close to the children's environment and have a positive stigma, such as oranges and pencils (Fajariyah & Triatnawati, 2008).

In addition to the visualization of the violent image, in the history coursebook in the introduction, there are two *دولة* lexicon which are in two different clauses. In the first clause, the lexicon *دولة* functions as a subject, as well as an actor. In that clause, *دولة* is combined with the adjective *الإسلامية*. In the next sentence, although there is no *دولة* lexicon, the sentence still refers to it. Likewise, in the second clause, the lexicon *دولة*, also functions as an object as well as an actor, and is combined with the adjective *الخلافة*. The functional position of *دولة* as an actor shows that ISIS is an active concept and has power in the construction of the discourse.

First clause:

فإنه بفضل الله تعالى وحسن توفيقه تدخل الدولة الإسلامية اليوم عهدا جديدا

Thanks to the grace and help of Allah, now the **Islamic State** is entering a new phase (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p.3).

Second clause:

و بعد ما تركت هذه الوافدات الكفرية وتلك الانحرافات البديعية أثرها الواضح في أبناء الأمة الإسلامية نهضت دولة الخلافة بتوفيق الله تعالى بأعباء ردهم إلى جمادة التوحيد الزاكية ورحبة الإسلام الواسعة تحت راية الخلافة الرشيدة ودوحتها الوارفة بعد ما اجتالتهم الشياطين عنها إلى وهادات الجاهلية

After leaving the viruses of *kufr* and deviations that clearly affected generations of Muslims, the **Caliphate State** arose with the help of Allah to restore the firmness of pure monotheism and the wide field of Islam under the banner of the Caliphate which was straight and the shade of its trees after being distorted by the devil to return. to the abyss of ignorance and its hills of destruction (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p.3).

In these two clauses, there are two concepts that ISIS wants to emphasize towards its goals, namely the Islamic State and the Caliphate State. In the first concept, ISIS emphasized that the establishment of the Caliphate State was by the grace and help of Allah. This means that the process of establishing the ISIS Caliphate State does not conflict with Islamic teachings (Chulov, 2019). The propaganda technique used by ISIS in this clause is Plain Folks, which is a propaganda technique used by propaganda speakers in an effort to convince the target that he and his ideas are good because the concept is in accordance with Islamic teachings (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p. 290). While in the second concept, there is a lexicon الأمة (ummah) which seems to want to show that the concept of an Islamic State founded by ISIS is a solution to the problems of Muslims, so it deserves to be supported by all Muslims. However, the propaganda technique used in the clause is Bandwagon, which is this technique used to convince the target that Muslims have accepted the ideological concept of ISIS (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012, p. 292). Therefore, the target must follow the idea conveyed by ISIS and immediately join it. Therefore, in this discourse, it is seen how ISIS' efforts through the concept of *Daulah Khilafah* and its *Daulah Islamiyah* have made efforts to legitimize the power of Muslims. This is in line with what was conveyed by Van Dijk that Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on how discourse structures are lifted, legitimized, and reproduced or against power relations and domination in society (Van Dijk, 2008).

Seeing a number of facts and assumptions above, the author wants to further examine how ISIS makes coursebooks that are applied in ISIS territory in Syria and Iraq and distributed to its sympathizers around the world as propaganda media, what techniques are used, and what are the effects of this propaganda. Therefore, the author gives the title of this research with "ISIS Propaganda in Coursebook: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Arabic Texts in History Coursebooks in ISIS Environment."

## Method

This study uses a language approach, that is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The aim is to examine more deeply the coursebooks that have been published by ISIS. The term CDA does not only refer to the study of language itself, but tries to relate it to context. It means that the meaning of language is used for certain purposes and practices, including ideology and power. Specifically, this research uses CDA theory with the perspective of Foucault and Wodak (Wodak & Fairclough 2013, Jäger & Maier, 2009). According to them, apart from being understood as a series of words or prepositions in a text and as a social practice, discourse is also seen as something that produces other things, such as ideas, concepts,

effects, and ideologies. Discourse can be detected because systematically an idea, opinion, concept, and view of life is formed in a certain context so that it affects the way of thinking and acting.

In its application, this CDA refers to the analysis proposed by Teun A. Van Dijk (Van Dijk 2005, and Van Dijk 1999), but will be complemented by the analysis proposed by Roger Fowler, Robert Hodge, and Fairclough (Fowler 1997, Fairclough 2017), particularly on vocabulary and intertextuality. Because, in their view, vocabulary in discourse becomes very important for making classifications, limiting views, fighting discourse, marginalizing, including conveying ideology and power. Meanwhile, intertextuality studies are needed to strengthen the ideology conveyed.

To further sharpen the analysis of the discourse, the authors use the propaganda technique put forward by Alfred McClung Lee and Alizabeth Briant Lee (Lee, 1944). This is to reveal how ISIS' efforts are to make its discourse acceptable and influence the ideas of target readers. Furthermore, the analysis is also expected to obtain the right strategy to counter the idea through counter-propaganda.

## Discussion

### 1. A Critical Discourse Analysis on History Coursebooks of ISIS

#### 1.1 Lexicon دولة

In History coursebooks, the word دولة is found in seven clauses. All lexicons are markers as well as attributive markers so that each phrase containing the دولة lexicon is special. The classification of the دولة lexicon in History coursebooks is as follows:

**Table 1:**  
**Location of the دولة lexicon**

Location	Translation	Phrase
Introduction	Caliphate State	دولة الخلافة
Introduction	Islamic State	دولة الإسلامية
Discussion	State in Medina	دولة في المدينة
Discussion	Constitution	أسس الدولة
Discussion	State Formation	إقامة الدولة

The word دولة in the introduction refers to the Islamic state founded by ISIS. Furthermore, to fight for the legitimacy of the country it formed, ISIS threw the discourse of the State of Medina in the content section. The concept of the Islamic State built by ISIS and the concept of the Medina State built by the Prophet Muhammad are clearly different. Said Aqil Siroj said that the State of Medina was a civilized country (Siroj, 2016). There are already several different tribes and religions living side by side. There are the Muhajirin, the Ansar, the Jews, and various other tribes. In Medina, the Prophet Muhammad taught Muslims not to harm non-Muslims, and to live side by side with one another. While the Islamic State formed by ISIS shows an intolerant attitude, they carry out intimidation, coercion, and even genocidal efforts against certain groups (Cheterian, 2021), as happened to the Yazidi ethnic group in Iraq (kompas.com, 2016).

Furthermore, the structure of the comparison phrase دولة with the noun خلافة and the adjective الإسلامية shows that the discourse writers want to show that the State they are building is a State that is in accordance with Islamic teachings on the one hand, and on the other hand is a claim of a legitimate form of Caliphate government ('*ala minhaj al-nubuwah*).

In the clause structure, almost all clauses in the discourse in history coursebooks, ISIS places the word دولة as the subject and the actor. This shows that the Islamic State formed by ISIS is likened to the driving force of Islamic ideology today. The Islamic state is



used as a reference as well as a goal for its followers.

## 1.2 Lexicon قتال

In ISIS history coursebooks, fifty-five قتال vocabularies and their derivatives were found. The majority of this lexicon is in the form of a verb. Quantitatively, the large number of قتال lexicons found, shows that ISIS intensively wants to convey messages and ideas about the concept of 'war' against its targets, elementary school children, through this history course-book.

In sentence structure, it is interesting for us to analyze the use of the *qital* (kill) lexicon in the story of a Medina Jew, Ka'ab ibn Al-Asyraf, who often blasphemes against the Prophet. As a result, the Prophet also gave a challenge to the companions who were able to kill Ka'ab considering that he was known to have many guards so it was not easy to kill. In the context of this history coursebook, the text is written as follows:

ويستدل من قصة قتل ابن الأشراف على عدة أمور منها

1. وجوب قتال شاتم الرسول ص م في كل حال, فإن كان ذمياً أو موادعاً برئت منه الذمة وسقط عهده.
2. جواز استعمال الحيلة والخدعة في الإيقاع بأعداء الله وقد قال النبي ص م الحرب خدعة.

Based on the story of the murder of Ka'ab ibn Asyraf it can be concluded as follows:

1. It is obligatory to kill a blasphemer of the Messenger of Allah under any circumstances, even if the blasphemer is an *kafir dzimmi* or someone whose status is *dzimmi* based on a court decision.
2. It is permissible to use tricks and deceit in fighting the enemies of Allah. The Prophet said: "War is a Deception" (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 48-49).

The sub-chapter which contains the story about the story of Ka'ab ibn Asyraf is actually entitled "The Invasion of the Bani Qoinuqo," the objectives of this lesson as written after the sub-chapter are: first, students can mention the cause of the Bani Qoinuqo invasion; second, students can know the seriousness and assistance given by hypocrites to infidels; third, students can explain why the Prophet killed Ka'ab ibn Asyraf (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 48-49). Based on this purpose, the author of the book wants to convey the emphasis on the obligation to kill elementary school students. This is certainly considered very contrary to the psychological development of children.

Based on the macro structure proposed by van Dijk, the theme and quantity of the concept of war raised by ISIS has a global meaning to strengthen their defence base while preparing a reliable generation. As a group that rides on the concept of jihad to achieve its goals, ISIS sees education as an important part of supporting the effort of jihad. According to the author, that is the reason (global meaning) why history education is their priority and must be given from an early age.

Judging from the macro structure, the selection of history is an important part of their curriculum, considering that history is a past event that can be used as a basis and a reflection to determine future steps. Through history subject, ISIS seems to want to show the world that what they are doing has actually been passed by the history of Islam which cannot be separated from the history of war in it (Toft, 2007). On that basis, the history subject contained in the book are dominated by the history of war.

At the end of the introduction to the book, they stated a number of goals that they wanted to achieve through the history subject, that are cleaning history of the vanity things that pollute it, introducing the history of the Prophet to students while encouraging them to imitate the history, instilling the values of jihad in the souls of Muslim children, showing the attitude of *walâ'* and *bara'* that occurred during the prophethood and *khulafaur rashidin* to Muslim children (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 6).

The main body of the book contains core material. Some of the titles discussed in the book are the time of the sending of the Prophet Muhammad, his life before he was sent, his life in the Mecca period, the phases of da'wah, the attitude of the infidel towards the Prophet's da'wah, the event of the migration to Habasyah, the allegiance of the Muslims to the Prophet, the life and activities of da'wah after the hijra. to Medina, the establishment of an Islamic state, the phase of the law of war, the sending of war troops, and the names of the wars. The wars discussed are the Battle of Badr, the war of Bani Qunaiqa, the war of Uhud, the war of Hamrâ' al-Asad, the war of Khandaq or the war of Ahzab, the war of the Bani Quraizhah, and the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. While the closing section, the book discusses the final stages of the Prophet's life, such as the *Hajj wada* (the last hajj of the Prophet), his last illness, and his death. In fact, added the names of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, 1437, p. 4-5).

Furthermore, based on its microstructure, the ISIS curriculum discourse very clearly shows the orientation, motives, and ideology of its creators. The first introductory section in this history coursebook is as follows:

الحمد لله معز الإسلام بنصره، ومذلّ الشّرك بقهره، ومصرّف الأمور بأمره، ومستدرج الكافرين بمكره، الذي قدر الأيام دولا بعدله، وجعل العاقبة للمتّقين بفضلّه، والصّلاة والسّلام على من أعلى الله منار الإسلام بسيفه

All praise belongs to Allah, the One who glorifies Islam with His help, the One who humiliates shirk by His compulsion, the One who takes care of all matters by His command, The One who defeats the disbelievers with His deception, The One who determines the time for (upright) countries with His justice, the One who makes good results for the pious by His bounty; May peace and blessings be upon the person whom Allah has exalted above the tower of Islam with His sword (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 3).

Through the introductory text above, they want to convey that Islam is noble with Allah's help, while shirk is despised by His power, everything has been arranged by Allah, the disbelievers will be defeated by His trickery, the state or Islamic power must stand by His justice. Up to that point, certainly undeniable. However, if you pay attention to the continuation of the text, which reads *May peace and blessings be upon the person whom Allah has exalted above the tower of Islam with His sword*.

Through this last sentence, the author of the text wants to fairly communicate an understanding to his readers that Islam was brought by the Prophet and God exalted with the sword (Khadduri, 2006). At the same time, the author of the text wants to erase the notion that Islam was delivered with gentleness and compassion. War is only a last resort when the path of peace is no longer possible. They want to eliminate the understanding that war arises from a violation of the opposing party, not necessarily carried out without cause in conditions that are already peaceful. Then, what makes the reader not realize that the author is carrying out the doctrine of violence is that the author borrows the name of Allah to package his ideology, as it is written in the last sentence: *May peace and blessings be upon the person whom Allah has raised above the tower of Islam with His sword*. It was as if, by the will of Allah, Islam was spread by sword and violence. The face of Islam as a religion of peace is completely invisible in the text message above (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 3).

## 2. Techniques and Propaganda Analysis

### 2.1 Propaganda Technique

#### 2.2.1 Name Calling

نهضت دولة الخلافة بتوفيق الله تعالى بأعباء ردهم إلى جادة التوحيد الزاكية ورحبة الإسلام الواسعة تحت راية الخلافة الرشيدة ودوحتها الوارفة بعد اجتالتهم الشياطين عنها إلى وهداث الجاهلية وشعابها المهلكة

...then the Caliphate state arose with the help of Allah to restore the steadfastness of clean monotheism and the wide field of Islam under the straight banner of the Caliphate and the shade of its trees after being perverted by the devil to return to the abyss of ignorance and its destroying hills (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 3).

In the introduction to history coursebooks, ISIS uses the term ‘Satan’ to refer to their enemy. Talking about this enemy, ISIS considers all countries its enemies, because they do not recognize any government except the Islamic State, even they do not recognize governments in the Middle East that partially adopt the Islamic system. In the view of Islamic teachings, Satan is an arrogant and rebellious creature of Allah who is certain to go to hell. Therefore, the ordination of the term Satan is to show the figure of an enemy who is arrogant but will surely lose with God’s help. In addition, this is also done to discredit the enemy on the one hand, and on the other hand strengthen the hearts of his supporters that they are on the right side, while their enemy is a group of Satan who are hostile to Allah.

### 2.2.2 Glittering Generality

Glittering Generality is a technique that ISIS uses quite often in ISIS coursebooks, including the following text:

الحمد لله معز الإسلام بنصره، ومذلّ الشّرك بقهره، ومصنّف الأمور بأمره، ومستدرج الكافرين بمكره، الذي قدر الأيام  
دولا بعدله، وجعل العاقبة للمتقين بفضله، والصّلاة والسّلام على من أعلى الله منار الإسلام بسيفه

All praise belongs to Allah, the One who glorifies Islam with His help, the One who humiliates shirk by His compulsion, the One who takes care of all matters by His command, The One who defeats the disbelievers with His deception, The One who determines the time for (upright) countries with His justice, the One who makes good results for the pious by His bounty; May peace and blessings be upon the person whom Allah has exalted above the tower of Islam with His sword (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 3).

In this text, ISIS tries to connect something that has a positive connotation, namely ‘Islam’ with something that has a negative connotation, that is a ‘sword’ or the way of violence. When in fact there are other words that can also be entered, but these words are deliberately hidden for a specific purpose. When reading the discourse, the reader is made to believe that violence is the only way to uphold the religion of Islam. This is very dangerous for ordinary readers who tend to be lazy and/or unable to access evidence that Islam does not only stand by the way of violence, on the contrary Islam tends to promote peace. Therefore, the discourse or propaganda can be refuted by looking for evidence of the arguments of the Qur’an and Hadith which show that Islam can be established by peaceful means as a form of counter-propaganda effort.

### 2.2.3 Transfer

Transfer propaganda technique, which is a technique of bringing authority, support, and prestige from something that is valued and lauded to something else so that something else is more acceptable (Noemi M. Rocca, 2017). In this case, ISIS is trying to make war stories from the role model of Muslims, the Prophet Muhammad as a propaganda tool so that Muslims can use them as examples today. There is nothing wrong with that. But war is not the only history that can be imitated from the figure of the Prophet Muhammad. He also gave many examples of other good things, such as social relations, negotiations, the economy, and education. However, this history is deliberately not put forward by ISIS, to achieve its goals in this discourse.

In this history book it is written as follows:

لم يكن المسجد على عهد الرسول مكاناً لأداء الصلاة فحسب، وإنما كان موضعاً تقام فيه الكثير من مهام الدولة ووظائفها، فقد كان المسجد موضعاً للتعليم، يتعلم فيه الصحابة القرآن الكريم وأمر دينهم من عند الرسول، وكان رسول الله يفصل بين المتخاصمين في المسجد، وكان المسجد مركزاً لقيادة الجيوش، منه تبعث الجيوش، وفيه تعقد الألوية للأمراء. فضلاً عن العديد من المهام التي كانت تتم في المسجد

The mosque at the time of the Prophet was not only a place of prayer, but also a place where many interests and tasks of the state were carried out. The mosque is a place of learning. In the mosque, the companions also studied the Qur'an and their religious matters from the Prophet. It was in the mosque that the Prophet settled disputes between the Companions. Even the mosque became a centre for preparing troops. From the mosque troops were sent. It is in the mosque that leaders are appointed. And many more things are settled in the mosque (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 36).

In the discourse above, ISIS uses a Transfer technique where ISIS uses the big name of the Prophet Muhammad to use mosques not only for worship purposes, but also for political purposes, so that Muslims believe that every mosque in the world is the center of the political unity of Muslims to prepare plans to fight the infidel. In addition to the transfer technique, ISIS also uses Glittering Generalities, where ISIS prioritizes the political goals of the mosque, and minimizes other mosque functions.

#### 2.2.4 Bandwagon

فإنه بفضل الله تعالى وحسن توفيقه تدخل الدولة الإسلامية اليوم عهداً جديداً وذلك من خلال وضعها للبيئة الأولى في صرح التعليم الإسلامي القائم على منهج الكتاب وعلى هدي النبي وبفهم السلف الصالح والرعي الأول لها وبرؤية صافية لا شرقية ولا غربية ولكن قرآنية نبوة بعيداً عن الأهواء والأباطيل وأصاليب دعاة الإشتراكية أو الرأسمالية أو سماسرة الأحزاب والمناهج المنحرفة في شتى أصقاع الأرض وبعد ما تركت هذه الوافدات الكفرية وتلك الانحرافات البديعية أثرها الواضح في أبناء الأمة الإسلامية نهضت دولة الخرفة بفوقيق الله تعالى بأعباء ردهم إلى جمادة التوحيد الزاكية ورحبة الإسلام الواسعة تحت راية الخلافة الرشيدة ودوحها الوافرة بعد اجتالهم الشياطين عنها إلى وهادات الجاهلية وشعابها المهلكة

By the grace and help of Allah, now the Islamic State is entering a new phase. This happened with the laying of the first stone of Islamic education which was clearly based on the *manhaj* (method) of the Qur'an, the Prophet's instructions, the understanding of *al-Salaf al-Salih* (the pious people of the past), and the early generations, with a clear view, neither the West nor the East, namely with the view of the Qur'an and (Sunnah) of the Prophet, who is free from the influence of lust, falsehood, and misguidance of the callers of socialism, capitalism, party mafia (brokers), and deviant methods in various parts of the world. After leaving the viruses of kufr and deviations that clearly affected generations of Muslims, the Caliphate state arose with the help of Allah to restore the firmness of pure monotheism and the wide field of Islam under the banner of the Caliphate which was straight and the shade of its trees after being distorted by the devil to return. to the abyss of ignorance and its hills of destruction (ISIS Author Team, *al-Tarikh*, 2016, p. 3).

The propaganda technique used by ISIS in this discourse is the Bandwagon. This technique is used in order to convince the target that all members of a group (of which the target is a member) accept the program, and therefore the target must follow and immediately join the group. In this regard, ISIS claims that their declared Islamic State is something that all Muslims have been waiting for, and calls on other Muslims to follow suit. In fact, only a handful of Muslims support the group, and many reject it. ISIS considers the Caliphate to be a solution for the capitalist and socialist governments that thrive on earth (El Damanhoury, 2020). Although, government based on Islamic law may be the best system of government compared to other systems. However, what ISIS shows is not an ideal picture of Islamic values that bring peace to all of nature (*rahmatan lil alamin*).

## 2.2. Propaganda Analysis

Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell in *Propaganda and Persuasion* have compiled ten steps of propaganda analysis, that are identification of ideology and goals, context identification, identification of propagandists, investigation of the organizational structure of propaganda, identification of target readers, understanding of media utilization techniques, analysis of specific techniques for maximizing the effects of propaganda, analysing reader reactions, identifying and analysing counterpropaganda (if any), and assessing/evaluating (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012). In this section the author will conduct an analysis to answer these ten questions.

### 2.1.1 Propaganda Purposes

After observing the propaganda techniques used by ISIS above, it is known that the purpose of ISIS propaganda in the coursebook is to influence the target (children) who are Muslim to adopt the Salafi-Jihadist belief or ideology that ISIS believes in, and apply it in their lives. daily. For example, actualizing this by conducting war exercises. It also aims for children to adopt ISIS attitudes such as hating non-Muslims and anti-government systems other than the Khilafah system (El Damanhoury, 2020). Furthermore, children will be arranged in patterns of support for ISIS, such as carrying out war training, and then participating in jihad when their age is deemed appropriate.

In this discourse, ISIS also seems to want its ideology to be widespread throughout the world. In accordance with the instructions given to his supporters wherever they are so that these books are taught in their respective homes. Apart from going to schools in ISIS-controlled areas, this book is also distributed through the internet, which anyone can download. Through the discourses in this coursebook, especially through Hadith and history books, ISIS seems to be trying to maintain the legitimacy of its organization (Al-Rawi & Groshek, 2018). Efforts to maintain this legitimacy are carried out by citing arguments from the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as strengthening them with history during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. This is, among other things, so that they are not blasphemed and blamed by Muslims, and so that other Muslims follow them.

### 2.1.2 Propaganda Context

The context when this propaganda took place was when a very complex civil war was taking place in Syria. This war began with the establishment of the Alawite government with Shia ideology in Syria. The government led by Bashar Assad is considered not to provide justice for some Sunni communities in Syria. Not only in Syria, at the same time, there is also a Shia government in Iraq, thus escalating the conflict. These conditions encourage the establishment of opposition rebel factions who want to overthrow the Assad's administration. Some of the opposition rebels are even supported by other state powers who also want the collapse of the Assad's administration (Popova, 2021). In short, these conditions have caused chaos in Iraq and Syria. At the same time, Al-Qaeda, which became a sizeable militant force in the Middle East, broke up. One of its leaders, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared the establishment of an Islamic State, by appointing himself as the Caliph. All militant groups around the world are asked to take *baiat* (allegiance) and join them. Since then, ISIS has become a major radical group in Iraq and Syria. This was also triggered by the large number of foreign fighters from other countries (including Indonesia) joining ISIS (Benigni 2020). Conditions in Syria and Iraq are increasingly chaotic. ISIS also controls several areas in Iraq and Syria.

In various areas under its control, ISIS has established a system of government by appointing regional governors, and forcing the people to follow the system. Among the changed systems is the education system. ISIS changes all the curriculum that is run and replaces it with the curriculum run by ISIS. In the midst of the war and economic crisis

that occurred in Syria, the people under the auspices of ISIS have no choice but to follow what they want. For those who are not willing to follow his wishes, ISIS will not hesitate to give severe punishment in the form of beheading (de Zayas & Matusitz, 2021). In addition, children who experience psychological and social crises due to prolonged wars are easily influenced by the propaganda that ISIS includes in coursebooks (international.indonews.com, 2016).

On the other hand, the condition of the people of Syria and Iraq, which are already divided into Sunni and Shia groups, it easy for ISIS to brainwash children to identify their enemies, that are the Shia group and their accomplices. This curriculum book, maybe just a small thing that is used as propaganda to influence children. Greater propaganda is thought to have been given to the Iraqi and Syrian children as they interacted directly with the ISIS militants while studying (Mahood & Rane, 2017).

### 2.2.3. Identification of Propaganda Sources

The source of this propaganda comes from a terrorist organization: ISIS. Furthermore, the propaganda is disseminated to other organizations affiliated with ISIS, and massively uploaded to the internet to be taught by ISIS supporters around the world to their children. The advantage for ISIS by spreading this propaganda is an increase in the number of supporters from around the world, who have the potential to carry out jihad without command (Hatton & Nielsen, 2016). Through the lone wolf jihad strategy, ISIS can carry out acts of terror anywhere and anytime without command instructions from the Caliph. This will certainly make his enemies around the world worry even more.

### 2.2.4 Structure of Propaganda Organization

Based on their claims, ISIS is a global organization of Islamic State. The highest structure is held by the Caliph and the Advisory Board. Under the caliphate there are ministers. Starting from the Minister of War to the Minister of Propaganda (communication). Furthermore, in each of its territories, ISIS has a regional governor (Fernandez, 2015).

In addition to the governor, ISIS also has support groups which are war organizations called *Katibah*. One of these organizational groups is called *Katibah Nusantara*, which contains ISIS supporters from Southeast Asia. In addition, in every country where there are groups supporting ISIS from different organizations, they will form an alliance supporting ISIS, called *Anshar al-Daulah*. For instance, *Anshar al-Daulah* Indonesia (the Alliance for ISIS Supporters in Indonesia) and *Anshar al-Daulah* Brasil (the Alliance for ISIS Supporters in Brazil). Every ISIS supporter, whether in the land of hijra (Iraq, Syria and including Libya), *Katibah*, Province, or the *Anshar al-Daulah* region must obey every instruction given by the Caliph (delivered personally or through a spokesman). This is a consequence of the declaration of allegiance. One of these instructions is the delivery of the ISIS curriculum to their children (Gadai et al., 2022). Therefore, it is believed that this curriculum has also been taught by ISIS supporters in Indonesia to their children.

The recruitment that applies to ISIS is a system of allegiance, in which a person pronounces his pledge of allegiance to the caliphate in a conscious state accompanied by two witnesses. Therefore, this recruitment can happen anywhere and anytime (Johnston, 2022). ISIS supporters do not need to go to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS supporters. They can take allegiance in their respective countries. However, like a promise, the allegiance made by ISIS supporters is very binding. Those who break the promise are threatened with a very big curse from God. On the other hand, those who take the oath of allegiance will be rewarded with paradise.

### 2.2.5 Propaganda Target

In the discourse of ISIS coursebooks, their targets are elementary school students, especially children who are in ISIS territory, and generally against children who support ISIS around

the world. Children are targeted because their condition is unstable and easy to shape, so they can be influenced according to the wishes of the propagandist. In addition, children tend to be more receptive to one-way communication. These children are expected to be the regeneration of ISIS in the future who will continue the struggle for the establishment of the Islamic State and the Salafi-Jihadist ideology (Khoo & Brown, 2021).

For ISIS, if children respond positively to the propaganda it provides, it will have a big impact on the growth of the organization. Children who have been radicalized from an early age, their ideology will be stronger, and difficult to change back (Ozeren, Hekim, El-mas, & Canbegi, 2018). Therefore, in the future, it is hoped that these children will continue the terror operations carried out by ISIS in the future. So the existence of the organization will be longer.

#### 2.2.6 Propaganda Media

In spreading this propaganda, ISIS uses elementary school coursebooks as propaganda media. Its spread is used with several techniques. First, to disseminate information to schools under the control of ISIS in Iraq and Syria, to be taught in all schools, and to replace the previously applicable curriculum. Second, spreading and ordering the people of Syria and Iraq to be taught at home. Third, it is converted into a digital format and then uploaded to the internet so that it can be downloaded by ISIS supporters around the world, so that they can be taught to their children. ISIS has a *syurtoh* (police) in charge of monitoring the implementation of Islamic law in society, but specifically the purpose of the *syurtoh* is to find out how far the instructions from the Caliph are obeyed and carried out by the community. Including the implementation of this curriculum will be monitored by the *syurtoh* to optimize the propaganda they want (Greene, 2015).

#### 2.2.7 Special Technique to Enhance the Effect of Propaganda

A propaganda usually has to be evaluated on the basis of its effects. For example, if what the propagandist wants is a behaviour, such as 'donate,' 'join,' and 'kill,' but the resulting effect may only be an attitude, such as 'support' or 'resist.' Therefore, the propagandist needs to adding special techniques so that propaganda can be achieved, for example by adding other propaganda techniques (Mazza, Monaci, & Taddeo, 2018). Among the specific techniques used by ISIS to optimize this propaganda are the following:

##### 2.2.7.1 Paying Attention to Target Trends

Propaganda messages have a greater impact when they align with existing opinions and beliefs. Therefore, ISIS often uses *syar'i* (based on sharia) arguments to strengthen propaganda and force the propaganda to be accepted by Muslims. The Sunni-Shia sectarian conflicts that occurred in Syria and Iraq were also used to sharpen the results of propaganda. By positioning Shia as an ideology outside of Islam, ISIS is trying to ensure that the curriculum taught by the government in Syria and Iraq controlled by the Shia regime is against Islamic teachings (Mitts, 2019).

##### 2.2.7.2 Opinion Leader

Another propaganda technique that works more effectively is through people who have credibility in society (figures). Therefore, in this coursebook propaganda, ISIS often quotes the hadith of the Prophet so that the propaganda is more effective. In fact, ISIS has misused Islamic symbols in many cases, the most obvious example being the use of the Prophet's ring logo as their flag. This is done so that Muslims consider ISIS to be an organization that is in accordance with Islamic teachings (Welch, 2018).

##### 2.2.7.3 Reward and Punishment

Another way to gain public sympathy is through a system of rewards and punishments. ISIS often uses threats to make targets comply. The non-symbolic effort is presented to obtain a

symbolic effect on the target. For example, ISIS publicly publishes torture against people who violate *syar'i* so that other people who see it comply with what has been instructed in ISIS territory, that is the implementation of the ISIS curriculum (Auchter, 2018).

#### 2.2.7.4 Monopoly of Information Sources

One strategy for optimizing propaganda is monopoly on communication sources. In its territory, ISIS restricts information to the public. The public is not allowed to access government and Western television channels. Therefore, the public only gets access to information from ISIS which is distributed through Dabiq magazines, leaflets, pamphlets, and radio. With the control of the media that presents news about ISIS repeatedly, propaganda will be more optimal (Benni & Tānase, 2017).

#### 2.2.7.5 Use of Language

Based on the technical analysis carried out by the author in the previous section, it is known that ISIS also uses verbal symbolization which can also affect the target. For example, by using negative language: 'satan' and 'the virus of disbelief.' The use of this language is also a special technique for ISIS to optimize its propaganda (Qi, 2020).

#### 2.2.7.6 Effectivity of Propaganda

Based on a poll from the Pew Research Center (PRC) in 2015, the number of ISIS supporters in 11 countries (Lebanon, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, Indonesia, Turkey, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Malaysia, Senegal, Pakistan) found that 14% of the population have a favorable opinion of ISIS, and more than 62% "don't know." In Pakistan, for example, only 28% of the public think ISIS is not good, the rest do not know and support ISIS secretly. Based on this PRC poll, it is indicated that there are at least 63 million ISIS supporters in these 11 countries, and this has the potential to increase to 287 million if in doubt it is included in the calculation. Therefore, at least there are hundreds of millions of ISIS supporters around the world (Pashentsev & Bazarkina, 2021).

Based on the results of the poll above, it can be seen that ISIS propaganda, whether carried out using soft or hard propaganda methods, has resulted in a significant growth in ISIS supporters. The real support of ISIS supporters, which is shown by allegiance, is difficult to trace. However, through this opinion poll, it can be seen that ISIS propaganda is very effective, and counter-propaganda efforts that may be carried out by certain parties have not worked optimally.

Currently in the middle of 2016, ISIS has experienced a setback in terms of military strength in Iraq and Syria due to incessant air strikes from the United States and Russian coalition forces, which killed their leaders. However, these attacks have not reduced the number of ISIS supporters in various countries. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out counter-propaganda efforts that are more aggressively balanced with military attacks against these groups (cnnindonesia.com, 2016).

#### 2.2.7.7 Counter-Propaganda

It is difficult to trace whether there are counter-propaganda efforts carried out by the Syrian and Iraqi governments in an effort to minimize the impact of propaganda carried out by ISIS. So far, the real efforts made by the two countries and their coalitions are through a military approach. Meanwhile in Indonesia, the efforts made include testimony propaganda techniques through respected moderate scholars; making memes, comic strips, and videos as propaganda tools in the mass media; socialization of Islam Nusantara as a way of practicing Islam that is a mercy to the worlds (*rahmatan lil alamin*), and many more.

#### 2.2.7.8 Effect and Propaganda Evaluation

Since ISIS declared itself an Islamic State in June 2014, according to a count carried out by CNN news agency, there have been more than 70 terrorist attacks in 20 countries, excluding



Syria and Iraq. The attacks have left at least 1,200 dead, and more than 1,700 injured (Ray, 2016).

With supporters reaching hundreds of millions of people around the world, based on the survey claims above, and a very significant number of attacks abroad, ISIS' propaganda goals have been fulfilled, although not entirely. In particular, the aims of ISIS propaganda in the discourse of the book's curriculum have not yet seen the results, except for several operations involving several ISIS children. Among them were the executions carried out by 5 ISIS children of prisoners (kompas.com, 2016); ISIS boy execution of 25 Syrian soldiers became a spectacle for citizens (merdeka.com, 2015); and other actions. ISIS is thought to prefer long-term and longer-lasting impacts on these children.

The success of ISIS propaganda cannot be separated from the techniques used, especially the Glittering Generality technique which is actually a crime against Islam. Through this technique, ISIS has committed fraud against Muslims, misused syar'i arguments for the benefit of their organization, and used fragmentary verses. In addition, ISIS also uses the Transfer technique by claiming prophetic figures and symbols in its propaganda. ISIS is also trying to be seen as an organization that conforms to Islamic teachings and brings peace through Plain Folks and Bandwagon techniques. To be more optimal and as an effort to attack its opponents, ISIS uses the Name Calling propaganda technique. The weakness of ISIS propaganda is the inconsistency between the techniques used. On the one hand ISIS tries to invite Muslims to join them through the Glittering Generality technique, but on the other hand ISIS displays sadistic violent video propaganda to scare their enemies. However, the video media that is propagated is not appropriate because it uploads it on YouTube media which can be accessed by everyone. As a result, Muslims who are not the target of propaganda see and lose sympathy for ISIS.

### **Conclusion**

As a group that rides on the concept of jihad to achieve its goals, ISIS sees education as an important part of supporting jihad efforts. This is because jihad, which they interpret as war, clearly requires maximum physical strength. That, according to the author, is the reason (global meaning) why this ISIS history coursebook is used as a propaganda tool that is quite effective in spreading their ideology.

This history coursebook written by ISIS seems to be a unified discourse to realize ISIS' big agenda in influencing the minds of its targets. History coursebooks are used as a justification that what ISIS is doing today are stages that the Prophet Muhammad had also gone through in the past. So for those who oppose what ISIS has done, they have indirectly opposed what the Prophet did in the past. This history book is also the basis for the legitimacy of the organization so that it can be accepted by all Muslims. By teaching this to elementary school students, ISIS wants to show that the obligation to fight has existed since childhood.

Although the discourse and propaganda conveyed by ISIS has spread widely in the midst of society. Even such propaganda can be easily found on websites and social media that can be accessed by anyone. However, it is never too late for the people in general, and the government in particular, to prevent this propaganda from influencing people's thinking.

Counter-propaganda efforts that can be done include: First, conveying counter-propaganda, for example related to the discourse on the obligation of war jihad using the Glittering Generality technique, then it can be countered by spreading counter-propaganda explaining that war is not the right way to uphold Islam. Perform the Testimony propaganda technique, by including ideas from scholars who are respected by the majority of Muslims, so that they can be accepted by the wider community. Second, the implementation and improvement of religious teaching with a moderate concept that puts forward a peaceful

Islam and a mercy to the worlds (*rahmatan lil alamin*).

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