THE WORDS OF MAGIC USED DURING THE SOEHARTO’S INDONESIAN NEW ORDER MILITARY REGIME ERA 1980-1997

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the magic words used in the Indonesian New Order Military regime during the Soeharto Presidency in 1980-1997. It talks about the socialization of how and why certain words imposed upon the social and political context of the society. The approach applied here is discourse analysis and its interpretation of history. A source of data was archives of the President’s speeches of 1980-1997 and other references. The aim of writing this article is to gain a new perspective on studying the phenomenon of a military regime of the Suharto’s New Order that linked the power of the government to the people into an oppressive manner.

Keywords: The magic words, New Order, military regime, and political context.

BACKGROUND

Words are important element of policies composed in light of some political decision issued in response to certain situation and condition. The words used in forming the policies may encourage participation, denote on some things, negate, and confirm the well-intended policies for all segments. A policy may be released in the form of a president’s decision or a statement in various formal state addresses.

The message is conveyed through some medium and sometimes it is delivered in a forceful way. During the New Order of the Suharto’s military regime, the media was used to distributing, announcing, emphasizing, as well as preserving the Presidential policies quoted from his speeches that are related to the social and political context of the society. As the New Order government has organized itself militaristically, consequently, regimentation is necessary to form disciplined members of the society that will obey the ruler by following one-way information.

In the New Order era, there were statements related to various social, economic, and political policies that developed to be so powerful and worked like magic. This article will analyze some statements, of which in the beginning, had an ideal concept of political context, but later they developed to be the “magic words” of the Indonesian people in 1980-1997. This article will explain how and why those words emerged and used in the period of the New Order. The source of the data selected randomly from the archives of the Presidential state address during 1980-1997 and other references. The analysis the meaning of those words uses historical discourse analysis.

Historiography of the Post New Order

Since its beginning, the New Order period has attracted the attention of foreign scholars, especially those who specialized on Indonesian Studies. There have been some researches talking about the New Order in terms of its difference from the Soekarno Old Order. They observed the New Order from various perspectives in a critical way, especially those related to violence and centralistic way of the military regime to dominate in almost all aspects of
The Indonesian academics, especially in the area of the social sciences, including history, were restricted to voice their thought. There was restriction not to talk about the cases of the unconstructive impact of the New Order.

On the aftermath of the New Order, there was some alternative historiography written by the Indonesian scholars attempting to change the writing of history in the New Order era. They tended to be more open in dealing with the issue that was taboo to talk about, for example about the personality of Soeharto, the role of the military, and some of the harmful practices of the New Order military regime. They analyzed the speeches of President Soeharto through the choice of words, sentences, rhetoric, and the style of the language used in giving an implication of some political occurrences and it also mentions that the military regime of the New Order had several key words, which became weapon to convey policies (Eriyanto 2000).

Besides that, there has been a book that talks about the strategy and mechanism of propaganda of the New Order government. It says that they were systematically used in several ways to make them suitable for written and electronic media. Eventually, this attempt shows how the regime has controlled the mass media (Adityawan 2008).

The formal words selected by the President later developed to be “magic words,” either they were used by the government to distribute some messages or by the public as receivers. Some of the tone that the words implicated would inform, encourage participation of the people, press on the people to do some things, remind them of certain things, and even threat the people. The purpose of writing this article may become another source about the New Order and the policies created by President Soeharto during his presidency.

The Period of the New Order Military Regime in 1966-1998

Historically, the New Order started to reign after the March 11, 1966 Letter of Order, the Super Semar, was issued and it lasted in the resignation of President Soeharto on May 21, 1998. On one hand, as it was named, the New Order regime was known as reformer. But on the other hand, in later development, it became authoritarian and militaristic which controlled in centralistic way the elements of the society, such as the media, political parties, organizations, labors, government employees, and other activities in the public sphere.

The regime implemented its power in an integral and paternalistic way. It united elements of the society, as it was easier to manage. They were the FBSI, Federasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia and SOKSI, Sekretariat Organisasi Keburukan Seluruh Indonesia, the labor organization, KNPI, Komite Nasional Pemuda Indonesia and AMPI, Angkatan Muda Persatuan Indonesia, the association of youth; PWI, Persatuan Wartawan Indonesia and SPSI, Serikat Pers Seluruh Indonesia, the association of journalists, HKTI, Himpunan Koperasi Tani Indonesia, association of farmers and fishermen, KADIN, Kamar Dagang Indonesia, association of businessmen, KORPRI, Korps Pegawai Negeri Indonesia, association of civil servants; PGRI, Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia, association of school teachers. Besides, many other organizations existed only by the government’s acknowledgment. Furthermore, the concept of incorporation of all elements of the society was translated into the proscription of pluralism under the umbrella of the Pancasila conception. At the same time, the regime was a corporate based on family relations to avoid conflicts as much as it could.

The regime brought together the society to eradicate an individual or a group considered a latent danger. Those who fell under this category, such as the communists, right-winged extremists, and rebellious group or hardliners, were disturbance of the stability of the national
security. Therefore, the government and the armed forces, ABRI, *Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, which seem to support the people, were in fact, constrained the people and assumed that this tie between the government and armed forces, were operating responsibly.

While the New Order was in power, there have been methods to defend its authority by sterilizing and subduing the public sphere. It is because the political principles of the New Order aimed to form a strong government, which displayed its various strong points. This expressed through various ways and means, including in the form of parade (Alkatiri 2010, p.44-53). Besides that, other forms of legitimacy executed through various systematic political catchphrases, distributed in the media. Henceforth, the government supervised and limited the flow of information in the television stations, as it produced government news. They were to establish a political stability, control the people and integrate them to live the symbolic idea of national unity (Sen & David 2001).

However, in reality, the government never accomplished a political stability. As there had been some unaddressed social problems, the government seemed to “keep” the troubles in order that it remained in power. The New Order era had some social and political issues, one of such was the concept of democracy expressed in the ideology of Pancasila, the principal thought of the state. Others were the Islamic political party, centralization, the duo-function of ABRI, *Angkatan Bersenjata of the Republic of Indonesia*, the Indonesian Armed Forces, economic crisis, non-*pribumi*, or the Chinese Indonesian. Another was the struggle for better social welfare as there has been gap between the rich and the massed poor (Elson 2005). This situation was eventually impacted the society even after the regime was no longer in power.

The model construction of the New Order regime built a category of reverse opposition of which the ruler was good and right. “The other” was a group of rebels who were always on the wrong side and dangerous. They were rebels, instigators, *anti-Pancasila*, left or right extremists, latent danger, lawless, unformed organizations, and segment of the society who hindered the national security and national progress.

Basically, the New Order government has implicated policies implemented by either a ‘clean’ or ‘dirty’ principle of which the general society should ‘behave’ by holding fast to the magic words of the regime (Douglas, 1987). This practice has made sacred as a clean doctrine and legitimate. Moreover, this ‘whitening process’, or *Litsus* implemented by the military and the police to make people more adhere to the principles of *Pancasila*, so they became ‘magic words.’ Thus, it was a powerful ideology to signify the existence of the authoritarian and militaristic regime.

**Analysis of the Magic Words Used in the New Order Military Regime Period**

The phrases used in the writing of policies became the magical words both for the government and the people. The words meant a power that was able to make the policies legitimate, right to maintain the status quo of the regime.

Earlier in the Old Order period, Indonesian people also know a few magic words uttered by President Soekarno, like, Nasakom (Nationalism, Communists, and Islam), *Berdikari* (Self-Reliance), Nekolim (Neo Colonialism and Imperialism), Socialism a la Indonesia, Guided Democracy, Guided Economy, and Personality Indonesia, Manifesto (Political Manifest), *Vivere Pericoloso* or *Living Dangerously*, Kontrev (Counter-revolution), Kabir (Bureaucrat Capitalism), and including *Go to hell with your aid* (Elien 2006: 179, 190-191 and Sutarto 2009). The emergence of the magical words that are also driven by the conditions prevailing
in the country and conditions that occur overseas. In other words, all of it is concerned with social and political context of his time.

Even a former political prisoner named Hersri Setiawan gathers the words that are spoken by President Soekarno and President Soeharto along with its agents in a dictionary, a dictionary titled *Gestok* (Galang Press, 2003). In the dictionary had collected nearly 150 entries of which are also said to be the magic words.

Magic words known in the old Order period, such as the *Ampera* (Address Suffering People), this was originally said by Soekarno, but later used as a magic word for the Soeharto government (page 10). *Tritura* (three demands of the people) who echoed by the students demonstration about the year 1966. Earlier in the Old Order there is also commensurate with that word, namely *Trikora* (three command of the people), which aimed to liberate West Irian and *Dwikora* (Dwi Command of the People), spoken by President Soekarno, as a movement command action to thwart the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia (page 74). In addition, there is a magic word *Nefos* (New Emerging Forces), which is a word which states that there is a new force emerged and grew in Asia (page 192-193).

While the magic words that are recorded by it became known in the New Order is, *G30S* (September 30th Movement), which is often uttered by the Soeharto regime in representing the movement or a coup plot against the legitimate government. Therefore this word is always associated with related events, the PKI (Communist Party of Indonesia), so the word is always coupled to G30S/PKI. Magic word is always associated with other magical words, the *Gestapu* (September Movement thirty) or *Gestok* (Movement One in October), two different magic words uttered by those who are different. The first spoken by the New Order, while the latter is spoken by the Old Order (page 87-88).

Of these bloody events, then bring up another magic word that is spoken by the New Order regime, such as *Litsus* (Special Research) addressed to the Ex-Prisoners (former political prisoner PKI). And Clean Environment or clean themselves, this magic word refers to the party or someone who has been considered free from the dangers latent communist (Page 31). Along with the incident, in other words the magic is the *Super Semar* (Warrant of March) is given a letter from President Soekarno to Soeharto (as commander of the Army) to secure the situation and conditions are not conducive. It is well-known one is dissolved PKI (Indonesian Communist Party), which is considered a latent danger to national development.

Some magic words of the New Order regime, once rose by Eriyanto (2000, pp.163-168). In his book on the study of some words used in speech always President Soeharto. The word says it describes as similar keywords and then into the magic words, such as Development, *Pancasila*, Unity and Unity, New Order, Muslim Separatism, SARA (race, religion, ethnicity and religion) of the National Stability, Repelita (Five-year Development Plan), Debt Foreign Affairs, Economic Growth, Shelf Lives, and Prosperous Justice.

Following are some of the magic words applied in writing the national policies in the New Order period:

1. *Persatuan dan Kesatuan Bangsa*, The Unity and Homogeneity of the Nation

The magic words, *Persatuan dan Kesatuan Bangsa*, show the direction of the government to uphold NKRI, *Negara Kesatuan Republik Indonesia*, or the unified republic of Indonesia. The President defined the ideology in the state addresses at the the Consultative Assembly as well as in the People’s Representative Assembly, or MPR/DPR RI in the years of 1980, 1990 and 1997, of which the press has cited.
The application of the phrases in the rhetoric, first in 1980, and then in 1990, and at last in 1997 shows that issues on unity and homogeneity were the state’s crucial problems. As a case in point, when the New Order started its government in 1968-1970, the Indonesian people had just come out of the internal ideological conflict that is the 30 September movement of 1965. Here the rhetoric was to unify the state under the leadership of one authority. The New Order’s policy perpetuated the Old Order’s saving phrases for national unification, and even more when there were attempts of the elements of the regional administrations to break down the unity.

It is therefore during the New Order, the issue of preserving national unity became a challenge. As the regional situation and condition tended to disintegrate and developed in a way to be deviant against the central government. The New Order government bounded the regional elements of power into an integral structure directed toward the central, as it was under a commanding military composition. Therefore, the government regulated the political parties and the role of the civil servants throughout the country, as well as the youth. This policy was referred to in various state occasions, the magic words of Bhineka Tunggal Ika, which means unity in diversity. As a result, in every social conflict, officers would mention and reiterate these words of magic. The phrase, consequently, was communicated in popular use, such as that it became a closing word of the national television when the cast ended.

With regard to the social and political context of multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism, the phrase Bhineka Tunggal Ika remained to be rhetoric as differences in all sorts were not tolerated. In fact, pluralism in terms of ideology was able to be standardized. Moreover, under the New Order, multi-ethnicity was a continuous test of facing the problem of SARA, Suku Agama Ras, which means ethnicity, religion, and race. Based on this situation, there came words that addressed differences and meant for uniformity. The Indonesian society recognizes two kinds of people, pribumi, or locals who are the majority, and non-pribumi, or nonlocals meaning the Chinese, as minority. Nevertheless, somehow the minority received more favors or privileges in economy.

Either it was intentionally or unintentionally planned, the development model of the New Order gave a negative consequence, which divided the society. It discouraged union and harmony in the lives of the rich and those that were not touched by the national progress. Despite the privileges given to some non-pribumi, the President and the local officers repeatedly delivered the magic words to preserve unity and harmony, “Jangan mengutak-atik SARA” which means a command not to touch the area of ethnicity, race, and religion, or “Jangan bertentangan dengan SARA,” which is not to be in opposition to SARA, because issues on SARA, were not for public discourse. Despite the priority of the New Order government to maintain unity and harmony, however, it was not long after the Order was no longer exist, that the internal conflict of SARA developed in some regions. It just shows that unity and harmony were enforced magic words that were not sincerely adhered, and instead of being understood as a goal for everyone, they became cliché.

2. The New Order as the Development Order

The New Order was a period in the development of the Indonesian society. The administration of which was engulfed by the ideology of anti-communism. After the bloody 30th September Movement of 1965, followed by a transitional period for some three years (1965-1968), the New Order regime took over the government and was supported by the majority of the Indonesian people who wanted a new system. The first statement of the government was to build to develop Indonesia, and the cabinet named the REPELITA cabinet (Five-year Development Plan), which in fact continued the model of development of the Old
Order, only that now planned. Therefore, the New Order regime called the Development regime. The magic words here were consisting of *Pancasila* and the 1945 Basic Constitution, or the *UUD '45. Pembangunan Sebagai Konsep Orde Baru*, or the concept of development is identical with the New Order. These phrases were always said repeatedly and emphasized in every speech of the presidential address in the Consultative Assembly, and the House of Representatives and in formal speeches of the President in the palace to his ministers.

The President revealed a deep concern for developing the country. There was a phrase to express the idealism of an independent nation to create a wellbeing and prosperous state for the society, such as *gemah ripah loh jinawi*, which means prosperous. Most Indonesian government officers in all levels of hierarchy repeated this phrase and in the media. It was like the dream or hope for the future. These words became the philosophy of the New Order regime implementing a planned program for development. Moreover, for the sake of development, the regime would break harshly opponents of the government who tried to thwart it. In other words, the words became a sort of dream as well as a warning against those who were against the plan. The President said repeatedly in the assembly, as well as in the palace when the President greeted his visitors, and in state appearances in television.

Another important terminology was *semangat pembangunan* which means the spirit of development. In the state union addresses in the People’s Assembly, the President used this phrase promoting progress. He also mentioned that the national expansion was included in the philosophy of Pancasila to improve the quality of the Indonesian people totally. On the contrary, the international partners, especially those of the donor countries who lent their fund for loan, considered the Soeharto regime successful in launching a gradual step of growth. While he was exalted in the international arena, domestically, President Soeharto was “a motivator of progress,” and it was for this reason that he was named “father of progress” especially by his supporters in the President’s inner circle. In the midst of the booming era of Soeharto, there was another magic phrase came in the speeches. Another phrase came out in the public sphere was *Pembangunan Tinggal Landas*, of which it means “taking off for growth.” The word is derived from the economic concept Rostow stating that developing countries will further expand its growth will leave the country soon and other developing-nation bloc behind it. As these words escalated in the public in the middle and end of the New Order, the President and the government officers in state speeches convinced themselves that the development planning had really worked well.

3. *Pancasila*, the Basic Principal

Many political problems in the development period of the New Order were solved in a patronizing way by applying the principles of harmony, uniformity and unification of all elements of the society, while rejecting conflict and opposition. This manner was executed following the sole principle of *Pancasila*. As a result of this philosophy, in government and private institutions, such as government offices, political parties, civil organizations, including the universities. The Pancasila principle had to be the main policy direction according to the law of MPR No.II/MPR/1978. In addition to that, every employee of any institution, government as well as private, had to take indoctrination program of *Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila* (*Ekaprasetya* Pancakarsa or *P4*). The program was to refresh and remind the mindset of officials of all levels that Pancasila was a moral principle which should be applied in daily behavior as it was in parallel with the aim of the program stated in the Presidential speech of 1984, 1987, and 1992 (Moerdiono, 1992).

In retrospect, applying the Pancasila principle or “law” benefitted practically the interest elite of the society. Another magic word used to camouflage was *Demokrasi Pancasila*, which
was a consensus to acknowledge the only best democratic system in the country to establish welfare for the people’s advantage and happiness. Therefore, it emphasized that the regime had to defend Pancasila democracy because it was a philosophy of democracy, which was based on the philosophy of the Indonesian people. The phrase, Demokrasi Pancasila was present as spoken and written text in every institution and in the media, including in the television coverage of Presidential speeches.

However, the philosophy of Demokrasi Pancasila was bias, and partial, even it overlooked the implementation, which was lacking in fairness. The implication of the phrase developed in a flexible way drawn to the directions that benefitted the interest of the New Order regime. The rhetoric materialized in labeling every project in the society. It applied the word Pancasila, like Pers Pancasila (the Pancasila Press), Masjid Pancasila (Pancasila Mosque), Universitas Pancasila (Pancasila University), Gedung Pancasila (Pancasila Building), Monumen Pancasila (Pancasila Monument), Hari Kesaktian Pancasila (The Pancasila Power Day), Yayasan Amal Bhakti Muslim Pancasila (The Foundation of Alms and Dedication of Pancasila Muslim), Waduk Pancasila (The Pancasila Dam), and labeling opponents of Pancasila principle, anti-Pancasila.

4. ABRI dan Rakyat

ABRI, Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia, or the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia and the People. The President and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia used the phrase, “ABRI dan Rakyat.” These two components of the society were like fish and water. It seemed that the armed forces could only exist when there were people to support their interest. Because of this, the ruler formulated another magic phrase that is the concept of Dwi Fungsi ABRI, or the double function of ABRI. It was about the military in its both power and socio-political realm. However, the armed forces were supporter and part of the New Order regime. Other magic phrase that came about was ABRI sebagai dinamisator dan stabilisator, or ABRI as a dynamic and stabilizer. Even these magic words became the reason of legitimating of violence committed by the military to instigate peace and stability.

ABRI itself now became a magic word because it terrorized the people’s security with threats and violence. It turned out that the regime recognized the ugly situation and because of this, the military created a better image by launching a program to aid people in villages. A new phrase was issued, “ABRI masuk Desa” or ABRI goes to villages to convey to the people that the military was to protect the people, and for this, another idiom was created, “ABRI Milik Rakyat” or ABRI owned by the people. On the contrary, the New Order has stationed many military officers to occupy civilian positions in many sectors of the society, such as in political parties, social organizations, government institutions, foundations, and even in businesses. The control was like in the structure of the military. Eventually, this condition was initiated by President Soeharto himself as chief of the army, who directly put in practice the principles of military command.

5. The Another’s Magic Words

A. National Stability/Security: This magical word most often uttered by the President on numerous occasions. The purpose of this word is to the state and nation to assert that Indonesia needs stable conditions in the field of security from a variety of disorders, economic stability and political stability in the country. The word has become a mainstay for the magic word for the President in his accountability speech in the Assembly siding every five years. It implies that Indonesia has come out of an unstable state after the events of 1965 and into the condition and stable atmosphere in the various fields, as above.
Relating to conditions of stability, it can be argued Sudomo statement, as Commander Kopkamtib, such as the following. “Now we have stability. Even if people say we do not have a democracy, it does not matter (because) we have stability. The most important and so are the development” (Sudomo in Jenkin, 2010, p.319).

Related to the situation Kamtibmas, the government is always rolling the magic words, such as preventive and repressive means to prevent and suppress latent dangers to be feared by the New Order regime, the Communist doctrine and religious radicals. Two words that became a reference for the military to disperse the crowd and suppress certain parties who are considered disloyal to the government or the Pancasila.

B. Democratic Party: These magical words related to the elections held a few times in the New Order period. Elections are held every five years is considered as a party that is democratic because there are those who selected and there are those who choose. Although in actual fact, elections were not a hundred percent democratic, because a lot of inequality, fraud, and abuse in the form of coercion to the voters, particularly civil servants and union groups or incorporated in a large party, Golkar. Not to mention every Presidential election conducted by the People's Consultative Assembly. Presidential elections are not conducted with the model designation of the direct election by the people, so far its from being democratic.

C. National Culture: A term that becomes a magical New Order government in shaping the national culture of various ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as taking positive ask of foreign cultures. National culture is an objective of national development version of New Order (Sen 2001: xiii).

D. Simple Lifestyle: these magical words are often uttered by the President on numerous occasions. The purpose of this word is that the officials and people living in simplicity, especially in organizing the celebration of merriment, such as weddings and birthdays. However, this word is just an empty slogan, because it is not able to change people's attitudes and officials of competing in a family wedding celebration.

E. Constitutionally: These magical words related to the field of practical politics. The word is intended that all political action must be based on constitutional principles, which under the law that has been agreed from the very highest level to the lowest level. Beyond the action was considered against the rule or not constitutional and will be severely penalized.

F. Rice Self-Sufficiency: Magical words related to the success of Indonesia in agriculture, especially rice. In the middle of the New Order period, the government has been able to do self-sufficiency in rice, which means being able to commercialize the product improvement of rice to meet domestic demand without the need to import from outside. Words and this shows the success of the New Order government that is able to feed and welfare of its people. In 1985, on the rice self-sufficiency, Soeharto received an award from the FAO in Rome.

And here are some other magic words that is often used by President Soeharto on various occasions, likes Equity, is a magical word that reflects that the government has been able to do the distribution of welfare and prosperity for their people. Assimilation, magical words intended to show that Indonesia also received some form of assimilation in all its different aspects, including the religious differences, cultural, and social. Sustainability, these magical words often uttered by the President to declare that the Five-Year Development is a continuous sustainable development. Inpres or The President and the Guidance, is concerned with the magic words Instruction Program (Presidential Instruction) is especially intended for program improvement in agriculture, education, and health. This program can take the form
of physical and counseling. *National Discipline*, a magic word that relates to the New Order government's efforts in educating the community as a whole in various areas of life, especially in driving and in public places. And *Subersiv*, is a magical word that connotes a negative because it relates to the parties violating the constitution is regarded as enemies of the state.

Other magic words are a *Cendana*, relating to the residence and the center of the Soeharto government. In the Old Order period (Soekarno), central government policy carried out from the palace. But in the New Order period, Suharto ruled from his home more often than from the state court (palace). His home is situated on the road Cendana Jakarta, made as if to imitate the image of London's Downing Street, the residence of British Prime Minister. In those days, if someone called to Cendana, its meaning there are two possibilities, he (she) will get good news or otherwise.

**CONCLUSION**

The magic words of the New Order have become national issues, distributed as a medium to explain, emphasize, and preserve national policies in almost thirty years. Although they may sound persuasive news and a reminder for the people, they, in fact, implied a threat. These normative clichés changed into the words of magic, which seemed to throw a sense of power or magic words of the government to deliver its messages. At the same time, the people felt the nuance of power delivered in the rhetoric and they sensed the threat that came along with the words. Moreover, during the reign of the regime, the government prohibited the people from repeating the words in public entertainment, such as in jokes or parody. The words have become a formal form of speeches for government and private officials to show that they supported the administration. The government did not allow critics of the rhetoric to express their thoughts. They were opponents of the government policies, which mean that they were enemy of the state.

Consequently, it shows that there had been reasons why the New Order of the Soeharto government produced the formal words, which later developed to become words of magic. They implied a political context, which addressed the issues of unity, uniformity, Pancasila ideology, progress, order, security, and the role of ABRI, which is systematic, and enforcement to the people. They were tools of the New Order military regime to influence and form public opinion, that the New Order government has run its administration with well intention and created constructive results for the society. In conclusion, the words of magic were the medium of power to become instrumental of the politics of language. They were to confirm the status quo of power by using repeatedly in the text of the policies. Currently, in the Reformation Era (1998-now) some of these words of magic have become part of the memory of the Indonesian people.
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