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JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAM-RELATED TERMINOLOGIES IN MASS MEDIA DISCOURSE ON TERRORISM

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ABSTRACT

The use of Islam-related terminologies in news coverage of Islam has become a contentious issue amongst scholars, researchers, and religious experts. Therefore, this study aims to explore the journalists' perceptions with regard to the use of Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four journalists from selected eastern and western mass media. Using purposive sampling, two journalists were chosen from the eastern and the western mass media respectively. The data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. The findings revealed that controversial Islam-related terminologies are used in negative contexts. The degree of negativity depends on the context of discourse, country, and media outlet" via which the topic is covered. The use of Islam-related terminologies in the media outlets could be influential in making the audience to perceive Islam as a religion of terrorism. It was envisaged that this study would advance our understanding regarding the use of Islam related terminologies in news coverage of Islam from journalists' perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The use of Islam-related terminologies in news coverage of Islam has become a contentious issue amongst scholars, researchers, and religious experts (Ali, Mohideen, & Mohideen, 2008; Reynolds, 2015; Hassan, Azmi, & Abubakar, 2017). The problem associated with the use of Islam-related terms in the media

arises when expressions are used without regard to their original connotations. In this situation, the terms lose their original meanings and begin to take on altered meanings created by the media. This is particularly critical and consequential in the mass media discourse and perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the audience mindsets (Reynolds, 2015).

Very few studies investigated the use of Islam-related terminologies in the mass media (e.g. Moore et al., 2008; Allen, 2012; Hassan et al., 2017). These studies found that Islam-related terms are mostly used in a negative context, which might create negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims. For example, Moore et al. (2008) found that the most common nouns used in relation to Muslims were terrorist, extremist, Islamist, suicide bomber and militant with very few positive nouns such as “scholar”. Indeed, the media make more references to radical Muslims than moderate Muslims (Allen, 2012). In any case, after the 9/11 attacks, words such as ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’ started to become prevalent in western mass media (Nurullah, 2010; Ridouani, 2011). Expressions such as “Islamic terrorism”, “Islamic fanaticism”, “Muslim extremists”, “Islamist and political Islam” have been pejoratively used in the media (Ali et al., 2008).

Reynolds (2015) found that negative words and phrases are significantly used in news coverage of Islam and Muslims. As a result of the distortion of words meaning, the media reinforce stereotypes and negative images of Islam. Journalists must be careful in their selection of words to describe Islam and Muslims. This is because negative use of terms has many implications especially in this digital age (Hassan, Azmi, & Abubakar, 2017). Hassan et al. (2017) found that the most commonly used Islam-related term in the chosen media is “Islamist militant”, followed by “radical Islam” and “Islamist attacks”. Moore et al. (2008) contended that the language used about Muslims reflects negative or problematic contexts. Through the use of terminologies, the media discourses about Muslims mostly associate Islam and Muslims with terrorism, violence, and threats. Hassan, et al. (2017) concluded that if journalists find it crucial to use Islam-related terms, they must endeavor to comprehend their accurate meanings and use them properly.

Previous studies established that the language used in news coverage of Islam is mostly distorted as a result of the media’s choice of words to describe Islam and Muslims. In addition, most of the previous studies on the use of Islam-related terms in the media were conducted in the western countries, particularly the US and the UK (Moore et al., 2008; Allen, 2012). Very few relevant studies focused on the media in Muslim-majority nations (Hassan et al., 2017). None of the previous studies used interview to explore the use of controversial Islam-related terms from the journalists’ perspective. Hence, the present study aims to investigate the journalists’ perceptions with regard to the use of controversial Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism.

News Coverage of Islam

There has been a considerable increase in scientific publications about news coverage of Islam. A number of studies have investigated the construction of Muslims’ identities in the media (Sultan, 2016; Samaie & Malmir, 2017; Bleich &

van der Veen, 2018; Bleich, Souffrant, Stabler, der Veen, & Maurits, 2018; Nickerson, 2019, Hassan & Azmi, 2019). Most of the studies illustrated that the media tend to associate Islam with terrorism, and the images and discourses relating to Islam and Muslims in the mass media tend to be negative (Powell, 2018; Nickerson, 2019). The negative representation, as reported in the previous studies, is sharply reflected in the media discourse. For example, using critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics, Samaie and Malmir (2017) investigated the pervasive representation of Islam and Muslims in an approximate 670,000-word corpus of US news media stories published between 2001 and 2015. The findings indicated that Islam and Muslims are associated with violence, extremism and religious radicalism.

Similarly, Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery (2013) used corpus linguistics and critical discourse analysis to examine patterns of representation around the word Muslim in a 143-million-word corpus of British newspaper articles published between 1998 and 2009. The analysis of noun collocates of Muslim showed that ethnic/national identity, characterizing/differentiating attributes, conflict, culture, religion, and group/organizations were referenced. The 'conflict' category was found to be lexically rich, containing many word types. The media portray Muslims as sympathetic to terrorists, economically backward and conservative (Ewart, Cherney, & Murphy, 2017). Using computer-assisted, lexicon-based analysis, Bleich and Van der Veen (2018) found that the average tone of articles about Muslims is considerably more negative compared to the other groups.

Nurullah (2010) argued that the US media depict the negative image of Islam and Muslims by associating them with terrorism for a few accounts of individuals who commit suicide bombings in the name of Islam. According to Shadid and van Koningsveld (2002), the western media contribute to the negative image of Islam and Muslims through the choice of content and news construction in their articles. The unique position of the mass media in interpreting events and constructing reality results in a massive amount of influence (Ahlin & Carler (2011). Saeed (2007) argued that British Muslims are portrayed as an 'alien other' in the media. This misrepresentation can be associated with the development of Islam phobia that has its roots in cultural representations of the 'other'. Allen (2012) further argued that the media reinforce the notion that Islam is profoundly different from and a serious threat to the western society.

Furthermore, Sultan (2016) noted that the media construct reality by presenting a mass-mediated view through representation. Such representation is apparently linked with negative signifiers when it comes to Islam and Muslims presentation in the media. Using content analysis of 50 programs, Hayat and Wahab (2016) found that Muslims were framed as politically fanatics. Sian, Law, and Sayyid (2012) noted that the negative media discourses surrounding Muslims have not weakened but remain hegemonic. A study conducted by Powell (2018) noted that the pattern of media framing associates Islam with terrorism, and hence creating a fear of the "other". Jahedi, Abdullah, and Mukundan (2014) also noted that the dominant mass media tend to marginalize the 'Other' and misrepresent the events regarding Islam and Muslims.

Nickerson (2019) found that news media framing utilizes biased, negative imagery, portraying the events in these countries in a way that reinforces current prejudices against Muslims, even when Muslims are themselves the victims. This unequal reporting increases viewership while, simultaneously allowing current perceptions about terrorism and Muslims to continue. The ideological representations of Islam and Muslims are presented through multiple discursive strategies in the media. Such negative representations can result in intolerance and bias towards Muslims in society (Sultan, 2016). In fact, the media are blamed for being shamelessly biased towards Muslims and portraying Muslims as primitive, backward, and terrorist (Ameli, Marandi, Ahmed, Kara, & Merali, 2007).

Previous studies highlight a number of consistent themes, showing that the news media reporting has reinforced stereotypical representations of Islam and Muslims. Very few studies have examined Muslims' reactions to the negative representation of Islam in the mass media. For instance, Ewart, Cherney, and Murphy (2017) investigated the attitudes of Muslims to news media coverage of Islam and Muslims by drawing on data from focus group discussions conducted with Australian Muslims. The findings revealed that Australian Muslims are highly critical of news media coverage of Islam and Muslims and express concern about the divisiveness that such portrayal can have for the society. Studies focusing directly on Muslims' responses to news stories about Muslims and Islam have identified that attitudes toward news coverage of Islam tend to be negative (Ewart et al., 2017).

Similarly, very few studies reported positive coverage of Islam in the media. For example, Hassan and Sabli (2018) focused on how Islamic teachings are portrayed in non-Islamic films using content analysis. The study found that the representation of Islamic teachings in films has been explained through the depiction of performing prayers, reading Quran, covering *Aurah* and kindness towards parents. The study showed that non-Islamic films play a role of highlighting positive images and teachings of Islam for the benefit of the society. Another study used computer-assisted methods of lexical sentiment analysis and collocation analysis to assess more than 800,000 articles between 1996 and 2016 in a range of British, American, Canadian, and Australian newspapers (Bleich, Souffrant, Stabler, der Veen, & Maurits, 2018). The approaches employed in the study were coupled with human coding of 100 randomly selected articles to investigate the tone of devotion-related themes when linked to Islam and Muslims. The findings showed articles touching upon devotion are not as negative as articles about other aspects of Islam. According to Bleich et al. (2018), newspapers strive to provide a more balanced portrayal of Muslims and Islam and may seek opportunities to include more frequent mentions of Muslim devotion.

In sum, previous research on the news coverage of Islam has generally found evidence for negative bias. Generalizations and stereotypes were the commonly identified problems with news coverage of Islam, which result in the association of Islam and Muslims with terrorism coupled with repeated negative labelling of Muslims. A meta-analysis conducted by Ahmed and Matthes (2017) found that a large majority of studies on media discourse on Islam covered western countries and there is a lack of comparative research in this research area. Therefore, this

study investigates the perceptions of controversial Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism amongst the journalists themselves.

Theoretical Approach

This study adopts Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) theory. SFL "studies the functional and situational organization of language in the social context" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 11). Thus, the theory presumes that language is inseparable from texts while cultural and social contexts of discourse affect the linguistic interpretations. SFL enables researchers and linguists to analyze written or spoken discourses. In SFL, the core element of interpretation is meaning rather than the structure and every act of language is an act of meaning (Halliday, 2013). Halliday's SFL theory has been used to interpret various texts in relation to social and political contexts (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015). Some studies used this theory to investigate the media portrayal of Islam in general (Jahedi et al., 2014; Farhat, 2016) while studies focusing on Islam-related terms employed news framing analysis (Hassan et al., 2017). This study considered SFL because Islam-related terminologies could be best understood in context since words and context are inseparable.

The functional aspect of language cannot be neglected as it is an essential element for understanding language and its implications. Function is interpreted not just in relation "the use of language but as a fundamental property of the language itself, something that is basic to the evolution of semantic system" (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p. 17). Language in SLF is "a semiotic system" (p. 12) specified to humans. System and function are fundamental elements of language in SFL theory. The system entailed two distinctive properties: 1) syntactic relations of word combinations and their order; and 2) paradigmatic relations that focus on word choice. The multi-options of words are chosen to produce a well-organized and meaningful discourse that serves purposively the required goals. These words, phrases, and clauses generate sentences, paragraphs, and texts which convey messages and ideas.

SFL theory presumes that meanings imply choice, the components of language make meanings and that various settings and contexts influence meanings and may reshape people's thoughts and their final judgments of a certain topic. In media discourse on terrorism, phrases such as "Islamic extremist" or "Islamic violence" are understood differently (Hassan et al, 2017). SFL theory views languages as establishing "social semiotic" frameworks affected by the social, physical, cognitive, interpersonal, situational and cultural context (Haratyan, 2011, p. 260). These functions are categorized under three meta-functions: ideational semantic, relational semantic and textual semantic:

1. The ideational meaning is concerned with establishing grammatical resources to construe and interpret the inner and outer experience of the world. A clause is the representative part of this experience that helps to draw a mental image of reality under six processes (Halliday, 2004): material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential.

2. Relational meaning is associated with the relationship between the speaker(s) and the addressee(s). It is used to establish the speaker's role and attitude in the speech situation and the relationship with others under the mood and modality systems (Almurashi, 2016, p. 73).

3. The textual meaning is concerned with the creation of text with the existence of both ideational and relational meanings to describe its theme structure in written and spoken discourses.

Based on these central theoretical assumptions and the review of written literature in the current study, this study aims to investigate the journalists' perceptions regarding the use of Islam-related terminologies linguistically in mass media discourse on terrorism.

METHODOLOGY

This study used semi-structured interview to explore the journalists' perspectives regarding the use of Islam-related terminologies of terrorism in the mass media. Interview is seen as one of the most flexible research instruments (Lester & Lester, 2005; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Interviews enable participants to delve into the broad meanings of concepts, express their emotions and feelings and show how they view different situations (Cohen et al., 2007). In interview, questions are used to explore the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of people about a particular topic (Stuckey, 2013). In this study, face-to-face interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed. The researchers set up a general structure and developed the interview questions in advance and allowed follow-up questions to be worked out during the interview. Semi-structured interview is considered to be more easily analyzed and compared than other forms of interview (Creswell, 2012) and has been used in various studies (Agussani, 2019; Azmi, Hassanb, Tajuddin, Engku Alic, Yah Aliase, Anasf, & Suhaimig, 2020).

Population

Two journalists were chosen from the eastern and the western mass media respectively. According to Creswell (2012), only a few individuals could be considered for interview to provide an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon. Bakers and Edwards (2012) further explained that the number of participants depends on some important factors such as "the purpose of the research, the type of questions to be asked and the methodology used. Using purposive sampling, the participants in this study were selected based on their knowledge about the research topic, their experience in the media industry, and their willingness to participate in the interview session. According to Zhang and Wildemuth (2009), interview samples are usually purposively selected to inform the research questions being investigated. All participants are educated professional with experience of more than 10 years in the media industry.

For the purpose of this study, the participants were coded as P1, P2, P3, and P4 throughout the interview process. The journalists were asked to give their opinions regarding their perception of Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism. The semi-structured interview consists of two sections. The first

section consists of participants' demographic information: age, gender, qualification, and work experience. The second section consists of questions related to the connotation of Islam-related terminologies in the mass media. All participants were asked the same questions and were allowed to express their views regarding the topic under investigation.

Coding and Analysis

The data were inductively coded by reading through the texts, identifying and interpreting the themes. The steps of qualitative data analysis propose by Cohen et al. (2007) were adopted: 1) generating natural units of meaning; 2) classifying, categorizing and ordering these units; 3) structuring narratives to describe the interview content; 4) interpreting the interview. The interview was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis to identify "common themes in the journalists' perceptions" (Williams, 2007, p. 69). Inductive analysis is a flexible method used to identify significant themes and patterns to address research questions (Marguire & Delahunt, 2017). The interview responses were interpreted in a way that does not compromise the original meaning expressed by the participants. For reliability, member checking was done by obtaining confirmatory feedbacks from the journalists themselves (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Findings

As mentioned earlier, all participants are educated professional with experience of more than 10 years in the media industry. One of the participants holds Bachelor's Degree while three of them hold Master's Degree. Their ages ranged between 33 and 55 years. RQ1 asks "what are the journalists' perceptions regarding the use of Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism?" In this regard, the main interview question asked "based on your experience as a journalist, how do the mass media use Islam-related terminologies in reporting terrorism?" Altogether, eight different themes emerged as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Journalists' views regarding the connotation of Islam-related terms

	Themes	Exemplary Quotes
1	Islam-related terminologies are used heavily in the media	...they are used heavily [P3]
2	Some words are more sensitive than others	...depends on which word [P3]
3	Not necessarily used to describe terrorism	...Islamism used to describe religious groups [P2]
4	Depends on the context, country, and media outlet	I think terrorism itself has bad connotations [P4] [used in] violent incident in New Zealand [P4] ...different degrees of negativity [P1] ... depends on the media outlets [P1] ...depends very strongly on which country [P3]
5	Islam-related terms are used negatively	...could be considered as a hot topic nowadays [P3] ...used in order to describe terrorist [P4] ...used negatively in fact [P1] ...It's not fair.... It's not fair [P3] ...it's quite sad [P1] ...it's mostly bad [P4] ...mostly bad because of the connotations they have [P4] ...as well as the use of, you know, sarcasm [P3] ...used to segregate between us and them [P1] ...to fuel political rhetoric [P2] ...segregating on the basis of religion [P2]
6	Words such as 'Allahu Akbar', Islamic group, Islamic group, and Islamic insurgent are perceived negatively	...people perceived "Allah Akbar" negatively [P3] ...when people hear 'Islamic group' they perceive it negatively [P4] [The word] Islamic insurgent is perceived negatively [P4] ...words such as Islamic group always carry a negative connotation [P1] Islamic group not necessarily terrorism [P1]
7	Perceived differently amongst the journalists	...a word which could be positive for an eastern journalist, could be negative for a western journalist [P1]
8	Some journalists are very careful	...we have been very careful about using the words like terrorism, jihadist, and Islamism [P4] ...you have to be careful about it [P3] We don't use them very often [P1] ...propagated by conservative media outlets [P3]

The respondents believe that Islam-related terms are used negatively in mass media discourse on terrorism. According to their responses, the terms mostly have negative connotations. Some of the reasons provided by the journalists in this regard include the use of Islam-related terms “to describe terrorism” and segregate a particular group of people “on the basis of religion”. The terms, according to the themes, are used in the mass media to “fuel political rhetoric” especially against Islam and Muslims. The respondents’ views also suggest that Islam-related terms have been “heavily used” in the mass media since the 9/11 attacks in the United States of America. It should be noted that issues involving religion could be sensitive persistent. Perhaps, this might have influenced the journalists’ decision to believe that the use of Islam-related terms in the mass media “could be considered as a hot topic nowadays”.

The emerging themes also suggest that some terms are more sensitive than others, depending on the kind of expression and the context of discourse. For example, the term “Islamism” is used in the mass media to describe legitimately established religious groups, and “not necessarily used to describe terrorism”. Ridouani (2011) noted that terms such as “terrorist” and “fundamentalist” are over-generally used terminologies ascribed to Muslims. However, according to the journalists’ responses, the degree of sensitivity with regard to the use of Islam-related terms in the mass media “depends on the context, country, and media outlet” via which the topic is covered. In addition, differences exist in terms of the journalists’ perceptions about the terminologies. The terms are perceived differently amongst the journalists depending on their regions. For example, a term that could be positive for an eastern journalist could be negative for a western journalist.

In addition, expressions such as ‘Islamic group’ and ‘Islamic insurgent’ carry unnecessary adjectives that might be used to describe Islam as a violent religion. According to some of their responses, the terms are used in negative contexts by certain conservative media outlets. Some of the journalists stated that they are very careful in using such terms, which suggests that in some circumstances, the terms are used unintentionally. Some of them believe that connotations of Islam-related terminologies depend largely on the context, country, and media outlet. The responses also suggest that some media outlets use Islam-related terms more heavily than others.

Discussion of Findings

As presumed by Halliday’s Functional Systematic Linguistic theory, language serves as a social semiotic system and any act of communication involves choices (Halliday, 2003; Halliday, 2004; Feng, 2008). Based on this central theoretical principle, the present study investigated the journalists’ perceptions regarding Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism. This is because, as postulated by the theory, the choice of words and context as well as language construction in Islam-related news depend mainly on the decisions of journalists and editors. Because language is functional (Halliday, 2004, Dong, Liao, & Liang,

2016), making linguistic choices of words and expressions could play an important role in manipulating Islam-related news either intentionally or unintentionally.

The findings of this study show that the journalists themselves believe that Islam-related terminologies are used in negative context. This is consistent with the findings reported in the previous studies (Ali et al., 2008; Moore et al., 2008; Allen, 2012; Hassan et al., 2017). The present study found that the media use Islam-related terms “to describe terrorism” and segregate a particular group of people “on the basis of religion” and they have been “heavily used” in the mass media since the 9/11 attacks in the United States of America. Based on the assumptions of Systematic Functional Linguistics Theory, writers are responsible for the choice of words in their communication with the audience (Halliday, 2004). Therefore, this study has proven that journalists and editors could be held responsible for the negative use of Islam-related terms in news coverage of Islam.

According to Ali et al. (2008), expressions such as “Islamic terrorism”, “Islamic fanaticism”, “Muslim extremists”, “Islamist and political Islam” have been pejoratively used in the media. In some circumstances, nouns such as ‘murder’ and ‘violence’ are used alongside spatial prepositions such as ‘against’ and ‘across’ to indicate the location and direction of terrorism blamed on Islam. For example, the phrases “murder against the West” and “violence across Europe” used in news coverage of Islam could carry a negative connotation, portraying Islam as a threat to the West with intense threat. The linguistic use of ‘against’ and ‘across’ is to express the spatial relation between ‘murder’ and ‘west’ as well as ‘violence’ and ‘Europe’ (Almahameed, 2018). Consequently, the two prepositions are used to emphasize that Muslims constitute a threat to the West.

The negative use of Islam-related terminologies is related to word choice based on the journalists’ personal judgment or prejudices which could be influential in the process of news writing and construction. In this regard, Ahlin and Carler (2011) argued that the unique position of the mass media in interpreting events and constructing reality results in a massive amount of influence. Careful analysis of the journalists’ perceptions regarding the use of Islam-related terms reveals that, quite often, the terms are used negatively in the media. The negative use of Islam-related terminologies makes Muslims appear as a sign of danger and terrorism worldwide. Portraying all Muslims as fundamentalists in the media might lead to an image that could generally be recognized and accepted by the audience (Ahlin & Carler, 2011).

In addition, terms such as ‘Islamic group’ hold a negative connotation in the West, which might not necessarily be the case in the eastern countries. This is because, in the media, the term is mostly used in referring to terrorist organizations and acts of violence and terrorism (Samaie & Malmir, 2017; Powell, 2018; Bleich & van der Veen, 2018; Nickerson, 2019). At the denotation meaning, Islamic group means any gathering of people under the umbrella of Islam which is positive. However, during the interviews, a journalist believes that, in the media, this term represents terrorists, extremists, and insurgents “Guerrilla used for Islamic group ... insurgent is usually used for that”. This indicates the role of context in reconstructing the meaning of terminologies, as postulated by Halliday’s Theory of linguistics (Halliday, 1978).

According to the journalists' responses in this study, the use of Islam-related terminologies in the mass media is a hot and sensitive topic. This is because the importance of vocabulary in the mass media can never be underestimated as words can obscure and express meaning (Nardin, 2012; Pikulski & Templeton, 2016). In fact, the entire tone of news depends mainly on language construction. Streusand and Tunnell (2006) noted that the choice of terminologies news coverage of Islam needs to be done with much care. The language construction is also extremely important and influential in peoples' formation of their beliefs and perception of the issue being covered (Yair, 2010). Systematic Functional Linguistics theory presumes that language does not only encompass words and sentences but also consists of interactional discourse (Halliday, 1978). In this regard, language and religion form the three domains of any society as they are concerned with the context and aims of human existence (Pratt, 2006). These inseparable domains are stretched together to establish a system of life for nations. The righteous expressive language is used to convince people of religious teachings and political limits (Mehta, 2011; (Ahmed & Matthes, 2016).

It should be noted the use of terminologies may not be the only factor contributing the negative portrayal of Islam. Several other factors are critical in making the audience to perceive Islam as a religion of violence (Bleich & Van der Veen, 2018). The events of 9/11 had an effect on the Western world's perception about Muslims and Islam. Post 9/11, the international media focused intensively on Muslims and Islam and the Middle East in particular, including the bombings in Madrid (2004), London (2005), Toronto (2006), Mumbai (2006), Glasgow (2007), and Paris (2015). The media content may influence individual and societal opinions and attitudes, and there is agreement on the anti-Muslim rhetoric in the media across most countries. Negative references to Muslims are prevalent in articles concerning terrorist attacks. This consistent negative coverage has the power to create biased associations for Muslims, promoting the public's negative perceptions of Islam.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the journalists' perceptions of controversial Islam-related terminologies in mass media discourse on terrorism. It was found that controversial Islam-related terminologies are used in negative contexts. The degree of negativity depends on the context of discourse, country, and media outlet" via which the topic is covered. Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistics theory, which guided this study, offers an opportunity to study this phenomenon based on the assumptions that any act of communication involves choices, text is inseparable from context, and language does not only encompass words and sentences but also consists of interactional discourse (Halliday, 2004). This study advances our understanding regarding the use of Islam related terminologies in news coverage of Islam from journalists' perspective.

Journalists and editors bear great responsibility in the negative use of terminologies. Nevertheless, this negative use of Islam-related terms could be minimized through training of journalists on the coverage of religious news, provision of proper guidelines on covering issues involving religion and ensuring that the guidelines are strictly followed. Institutions concerned with journalism education should also

give consideration to how they can develop a comprehensive curriculum on religious literacy in their programs. In fact, if the mass media are properly regulated in matters concerning religion, peace and harmony are likely to be promoted. This study is expected to help the media outlets, governments, and other responsible bodies in the decision-making process, particularly news gathering, production, and dissemination.

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