



Analysis of Lecturers' Abilities in Preparing Pai Cluster Rps: A Critical Discourse Analysis (Cda) Study

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Abstract: The implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in higher education requires reform in the governance of learning tools, especially Semester Learning Plans (RPS). This document is not merely an administrative file but a discursive representation of lecturers' pedagogical ideology. This study aims to analyze lecturers' abilities in formulating Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), Course Learning Outcomes (CPMK), Sub-CPMK, the depth of study materials, learning methods, evaluation indicators, and the alignment of weekly plan tables in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) course group. The method used is Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model that integrates lexicogrammatical text analysis, discursive practices (document production and consumption), and socio-cultural practices within academic institutions. Data sourced from the RPS documents of the PAI Learning Strategy, PAI Learning Evaluation, and Al-Qur'an courses in the PAI Study Program, reinforced by in-depth interviews with the lecturers. The analysis results show the dominance of technocratic-procedural vocabulary (procedural knowledge) compared to reflective-transformative vocabulary (metacognitive knowledge). Most of the formulation of achievement and evaluation instruments are still trapped in the lower cognitive realm (C2-C3) and are normative-formalistic in nature to fulfill accreditation regulations and campus bureaucracy. Institutional power relations are proven to limit the space for lecturer creativity due to the standardization of rigid templates. This research provides a novel contribution in the form of deconstruction of the academic language of the RPS document, exposing the discursive tension between the maintenance of traditional moral-religious orthodoxy and the demands of critical and transformative 21st-century competencies.

Keywords: Semester Learning Plan; Islamic Religious Education; Critical Discourse Analysis; Outcome-Based Education; Curriculum Policy.

I. Introduction

The changing paradigm of contemporary higher education demands that universities shift their academic orientation from merely a knowledge transfer process (teacher-centered learning) to a concrete and accountable measurement of graduate competency achievement. The implementation of the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) paradigm places learning outcomes as the primary determinant in designing the entire curriculum architecture (Cahapay, 2021). In this ecosystem, lecturers play a role not only as facilitators in the classroom but also as reliable instructional designers through the development of Semester Learning Plans (RPS). The RPS document serves as an academic blueprint containing direction, content depth, pedagogical strategies, and an evaluation map that ensures student intellectual accountability (Kushari & Septiadi, 2022). Therefore, the quality of the formulation and alignment of components within the RPS are key indicators of the level of professionalism and pedagogical maturity of lecturers in higher education.

In the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) course cluster at Islamic Religious Colleges (PTKI), developing a Lesson Plan (RPS) faces unique multidimensional challenges. Courses such as PAI Learning Strategies, PAI Learning Evaluation, and the Qur'an carry a dual burden. On the one hand, these courses must maintain the transmission of sacred religious values and the formation of students' moral character (akhlaq al-karimah). On the other hand, as part of the LPTK (Education Personnel Education Institute), these courses are required to equip prospective teachers with 21st-century competencies that include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills (Nasution et al., 2022). The Islamic scientific content in the RPS should not be simply memorized mechanically but must be integrated with a modern pedagogical approach based on higher-order thinking skills (HOTS). Therefore, the accuracy of lecturers in compiling CPL, reducing it to CPMK, detailing it into Sub-CPMK, aligning study materials, and designing evaluation instruments in the weekly plan structure is an absolute determinant for the character of the PAI graduates produced.

However, empirical reality in the field shows a wide gap between the demands of an outcomes-based curriculum and the actual competency of lecturers in developing teaching materials. Many lecturers are able to fill out the components of the RPS formally and structurally to meet bureaucratic administrative deadlines, but fail to establish a coherent common thread between these components (Zakiah et al., 2025). Many still find ambiguous, normative, difficult-to-measure formulations of learning outcomes, as well as chronic misalignment between the chosen learning methods and the established evaluation instruments. The language used in the RPS often reproduces patterns of low-level memorization.

From a critical perspective, the language in academic documents such as the RPS is never neutral or value-free. Word choice, sentence structure, use of operational verbs (KKO), and the organization of weekly plan tables represent mental models, educational ideologies, and power relations surrounding lecturers (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2021). The repeated use of terms like "explain" or "memorize" reflects a positivist-transmissive educational ideology. Conversely, vocabulary like "deconstruct," "reflect," or "construct" indicates the adoption of a critical-transformative pedagogical paradigm. Therefore, RPS documents need to be examined beyond formal administrative analysis by using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach (Fairclough, 2022). CDA allows researchers to uncover how lecturers' abilities and understandings are constructed, and how macro curriculum policies interact with lecturers' micro-awareness as reflected in the textual language of the RPS.

Previous studies on the evaluation of learning tools in higher education have generally been dominated by descriptive quantitative approaches, CIPP model program evaluations, or technical curriculum suitability analyses that position the RPS document solely as a static administrative object (Sutrisno & Siswanto, 2023; Suryani et al., 2023). Research that specifically deconstructs the RPS as an academic discourse text laden with ideological content and power relations through the lens of CDA is still very rare, especially in the Islamic education subject group (Hidayatullah & Nugroho, 2023). The novelty of this research lies in the integration of Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis to evaluate lecturers' substantive abilities in compiling the micro components of the RPS (CPL, CPMK, Sub-CPMK, depth of study material, learning methods, and evaluation indicators) across core courses in the Islamic Education group (Learning Strategy, Evaluation, and the Qur'an). Through this approach, the research goes beyond simply mapping technical writing errors to uncovering the root causes of these pedagogical inconsistencies, including tracing the influence of campus bureaucratic hegemony and clashing value orientations in modern Islamic

education. Based on these contexts and issues, this research aims to: Analyzing the ability of PAI lecturers in formulating and aligning CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK components in the RPS document, Evaluating the ability of lecturers in determining the depth of study materials, learning methods, and weekly plan table structures based on HOTS and OBE, Analyzing the ability of lecturers in determining valid and authentic learning indicators, weights, and evaluation instruments, and Uncovering the construction of academic language, discursive practices, and social practices in compiling RPS based on the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Key Theories: Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

This research is based on the theory of Critical Discourse Analysis developed by Norman Fairclough. Fairclough (2022) conceptualizes discourse as a dynamic social practice, where language not only reflects social reality but also actively shapes and constructs that reality, including power relations and social identities. Fairclough proposes a three-dimensional analytical framework that includes:

- a. Text Analysis (Linguistic/Micro Dimension): Examining the formal linguistic characteristics of the document, including vocabulary choice (diction), sentence structure (grammar), coherence, and the use of metaphors or specialized terms. In the context of the RPS, the analysis focuses on the choice of Operational Verbs (OJVs) and the theoretical articulation contained in the learning outcomes and task descriptions.
- b. Analysis of Discursive Practices (Meso Dimension): Examining the production, distribution, and consumption of a text. This dimension analyzes how lecturers produce RPS (whether based on their own understanding, discussions within a teaching team, or simply copying templates from previous years) and how these documents are consumed by students and accreditation assessors.
- c. Analysis of Social Practices (Macro Dimension): Analyzing the relationship between discourse and institutional context, academic culture, government regulations (such as SN-Dikti), job market demands, and global educational ideologies that influence the institutions where the discourse was born.

Furthermore, this analysis is reinforced by the Constructive Alignment concept from John Biggs and Catherine Tang (2022), which states that the effectiveness of achievement-based education (OBE) is determined by the absolute alignment between learning objectives (CPL/CPMK), learning activities (methods/study materials), and assessment tasks (evaluation). Bloom's Taxonomy, revised by Anderson and Krathwohl (2021), is also used to differentiate between the dimensions of knowledge (factual, conceptual, procedural, metacognitive) and the dimensions of cognitive processes (remembering to creating).

2.2 Previous Research and Research Gaps

To position this research in the scientific map, a critical comparison was made with several previous relevant studies as presented in the following table:

Researcher & Year	Research Focus	Method	Key Findings	Comparison with This Research
Sutrisno & Siswanto (2023)	The quality of RPS on graduate competencies at PTN.	Quantitative Correlational	The quality of RPS documents is directly proportional to the absorption of graduates in the world of work.	Focuses on statistical correlation; does not touch on linguistic analysis and the lecturer's ideological barriers.
Ramadhani et al. (2023)	Obstacles for PTKIN lecturers in implementing the OBE curriculum.	Descriptive Qualitative	Pure religious lecturers experience linguistic difficulties in lowering the study program's CPL to Sub-CPMK.	Identifying technical barriers; not yet using critical discourse analysis to dismantle bureaucratic power relations.
Hidayatullah & Nugroho (2023)	Analysis of Islamic Education curriculum documents at secondary school level.	Critical Discourse Analysis	The Islamic Education Curriculum Document is dominated by normative-doctrinal narratives and has minimal space for critical pedagogy.	The object of research is the school macro curriculum; while this research focuses on the micro RPS of lecturers at PTKI.
This Research (2026)	RPS Lecturer of PAI Group (Strategy, Evaluation, and Al-Qur'an courses).	CDA 3 Dimensional Model Fairclough & Constructive Alignment	Finding the dominance of technocratic-procedural discourse, administrative formalism due to the hegemony of accreditation regulations, and	Integrating all internal components of the RPS (from CPL to weekly evaluation) across PAI lecturers with a critical language deconstruction approach.

Researcher & Year	Research Focus	Method	Key Findings	Comparison with This Research
			tension between religious orthodoxy values and HOTS.	

III. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with critical text analysis. Its primary methodological framework adapts Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis model, combined with Teun A. van Dijk's (2021) social cognition theory of discourse to explore lecturers' mental models behind the composition of academic texts. The object of this study is the Semester Learning Plan (RPS) documents for three core courses in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) group at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UINSU) Medan, namely:

1. RPS for Islamic Education Learning Strategy Course (taught by Dra. Arlina, M.Pd, Senior Lecturer, 30 years of teaching experience) (Sari, 2026).
2. RPS for PAI Learning Evaluation Course (taught by senior PAI lecturers) (Lubis, 2026).
3. RPS Al-Qur'an Course (taught by Dr. Zulkipli Nasution, MA).
4. Secondary data sources were obtained through transcripts of in-depth interviews with the three lecturers and the head of the study program to explore the dimensions of discursive and sociolect-institutional practices. Data were collected through three main techniques:
 - a. Documentation (Textual Study): Collecting digital files of RPS, sorting text analysis units in the form of clauses, sentences, KKO formulations in CPL, CPMK, Sub-CPMK, descriptions of study materials, details of activities in weekly tables, and evaluation assessment rubrics.
 - b. In-depth Interview: It was conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore aspects of lecturer cognition, understanding of the OBE curriculum, reasons for choosing vocabulary in the RPS, and institutional pressures faced during the preparation of teaching materials (Pitriani et al., 2024).
 - c. Methodological Reflexivity: Examining the researcher's position as a key instrument so that they are not biased and are able to act critically without getting caught up in normative subjective assessments (Pillow, 2023).

Data analysis was carried out in a circular manner following the interactive stages of Miles and Huberman (2019) which were integrated into Fairclough's three-dimensional framework:

- a. Text Description: Analyze the choice of operational verbs (Bloom's Taxonomy), the syntactic structure of the achievement clause, and the degree of clarity (ambiguity vs clarity) of the RPS text.

- b. Interpretation (Discursive Practice): Connecting texts with producers' mental models through analysis of interview transcripts, tracing intertextuality (the extent to which RPS texts copy statutory texts, KKNi documents, or other institutional documents).
- c. Explanation (Social Practice): Explaining why this discursive trend emerged by linking it to institutional macro policies, the culture of lecturers' administrative workload, and the ideological interests of the accreditation of the Higher Education Agency/LAMDIK (Andriani et al., 2023).

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Presentation of Textual Data of PAI Group RPS Documents

Based on the results of a textual analysis of three Islamic Education (PAI) RPS documents (PAI Learning Strategy, PAI Learning Evaluation, and the Qur'an), linguistic patterns were found that indicate the characteristics of lecturers' abilities in developing achievement-based lecture materials. In general, all three documents have followed the standard structure of the RPS format outlined by SN-Dikti and the institution. However, a closer examination of word choice (lexical choices) and sentence construction revealed variations and substantive problems.

In the PAI Learning Strategy RPS compiled by Dra. Arlina, M.Pd, the study program's CPL formulation is measured into 4 CPMK and continued into 16 Sub-CPMK spread across each meeting (Sari, 2026). Textually, there is a mixture between the use of low-level KKO (LOTS) and high-level (HOTS). In the early part of the meeting, the text is dominated by verbs such as "explain", "describe", and "identify". Only in the 9th to 15th meetings (related to the implementation of the Problem Based Learning, Project Based Learning, and Mini Research methods), the text switches to using operational verbs such as "analyze", "construct", and "reflect" (Sari, 2026).

In the Islamic Religious Education Learning Evaluation Plan (RPS) compiled by Maryam Lubis, the focus of observation was on evaluation indicators (Lubis, 2026). A linguistic disconnect was found between the competency clause and the assessment clause. For example, in the Sub-CPMK column it is written: "Students are able to design valid affective and psycho motor assessment instruments in Islamic Religious Education learning" (Lubis, 2026). However, when examined in the evaluation form and instrument column in the same weekly lecture row, the assessment text is written: "Article summary assignment and multiple-choice objective test" (Lubis, 2026). There is a repetition of the vocabulary "written test" and "quiz" which dominate the assessment column from the first meeting until the lecture leading up to the Final Semester Exam (UAS). The bibliography included in this RPS also shows a retention of classical literature with publication years ranging from 2013 to 2021, and very minimal citations of recent scientific journal articles from less than five years ago (Lubis, 2026).

Meanwhile, in the RPS for the Al-Qur'an Course taught by Dr. Zulkipli Nasution, MA, the analysis focused on three main indicators: depth of study material, learning methods, and the structure of the weekly plan table. In terms of depth of study material, the RPS text presents a list of interpretation materials for tarbawi verses in a linear-textual manner (such as verses on educational methods, educational materials, and educational environments). The formulation of KKO in the Sub-CPMK is mostly at the C2 (understanding) and C3 (applying) levels, for example, the sentence clause: "Students are able to recite, memorize, and translate the verses of the Al-Qur'an on education

correctly." In the learning method component, the RPS column contains modern academic terms: "Contextual Teaching and Learning" and "Small Group Discussion". However, the description of the lecture steps in the weekly plan structure table depicts conventional activities, namely: "The lecturer provides an explanation, students present group papers, followed by a simplified discussion and question and answer session at each lecture meeting.

4.2 In-depth Analysis of CDA Perspective (Norman Fairclough Model)

Text Analysis (Clauses and Language Structure of Academic Greatness)

A micro-level linguistic analysis of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lesson plan documents reveals a dominance of technocratic-procedural discourse (procedural knowledge) over reflective metacognitive discourse (metacognitive knowledge). This is clearly evident in the inconsistent choice of operational verbs (OJK) in Bloom's Taxonomy (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2021). Many of the lecture outcome sentences begin with high-cognitive verbs, but are immediately reduced by complementary clauses focused solely on mastering technical material.

For example, an analysis of the sentence in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategy RPS (RPS) states: "Students are able to analyze the steps for implementing the Problem Based Learning strategy in Islamic Religious Education learning" (Sari, 2026). Syntactically, the transitive verb used is "analyze" (C4/HOTS). However, the direct object of the analysis is "implementation steps," which is a basic level of procedural knowledge (Sari, 2026). Students are positioned as subjects who merely memorize and sequence the operational stages of a teaching method, rather than as critical subjects encouraged to "evaluate" the effectiveness, validity, or make contextual modifications to the strategy in order to respond to the dynamics of contemporary Islamic Religious Education classes. This language pattern indicates what Henry Giroux (2020) calls technocratic rationality in educational instructional documents: the learning process is eliminated from the dimension of critical reflection and is driven into a series of mechanical-instrumental instructions.

This linguistic disharmony is further crystallized in the analysis of the learning evaluation components in the RPS (Lubis, 2026). The clauses on student competency targets, which demand high levels of psychomotor and affective performance, clash diametrically with the evaluation instrument's static-positivistic vocabulary. The terms "objective written test," "quiz," and "summary assignment" appear hegemonic in the assessment table column (Lubis, 2026). The language of the curriculum text, in this case, fails to operational authentic assessment. The choice of assessment weights is also determined arbitrarily (e.g., attendance 10%, assignments 20%, mid-term exam 30%, final exam 40%) without any linguistic argumentation or mathematical calculations based on the level of difficulty of learning outcomes. Evaluation is ultimately constructed as an instrument of post-learning administrative judgment, rather than as an assessment for learning that periodically diagnoses the development of students' cognitive capacity (Biggs & Tang, 2022).

In the Al-Qur'an course lesson plan (RPS), the language patterns used reflect epistemological clashes. Modern-active vocabulary such as "Contextual Teaching," "Problem Solving," and "Student-Centered" are placed in the learning methods column as a complement to the document. However, in the weekly table description, the command sentences that reappear are traditional: "The lecturer explains the material...", "Students

present papers...", "Students listen...". This proves the presence of discursive hyperbole in which the lecturer uses popular contemporary curriculum diction so that the document is considered to meet external standards, even though the content of the weekly table substantively still reproduces conventional teaching practices from the past century.

4.3 Analysis of Discursive Practices (RPS Production, Distribution, and Consumption Processes)

The meso dimension in Fairclough's framework shifts the focus from text to the process by which it is produced and consumed by social actors. Interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lecturers revealed that the process of producing RPS documents is under pressure from the alienating cycle of campus bureaucracy. Lecturers produce RPS not from an independent, reflective-pedagogical awareness to design transformative learning, but rather as a form of compliance with institutional managerial instructions ahead of the start of a new semester to meet lecturer workload (BKD) and accreditation requirements (Zakiah et al., 2025).

"We compiled this RPS primarily following the standard format provided by the university's quality assurance department. Due to time constraints and the heavy teaching load, we often adapted the CPL and CPMK formulations from previous study program curriculum drafts to avoid errors during validation by the internal audit system." (Sari, 2026)

This statement reveals the phenomenon of rigid intertextuality, where the RPS text is produced by mechanically copying and pasting macro-level policy documents without undergoing a process of intellectual internalization (Fairclough, 2022). Consequently, understanding the essence of the OBE curriculum stops at the level of adopting symbolic labels. Lecturers include the terms CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK at the beginning of the RPS document because these are mandatory requirements for administrative approval. However, when reducing these terms to the detailed structure of weekly activities and evaluations, lecturers revert to a conventional, content-centered mental model (Van Dijk, 2021). This document is consumed by students simply as a formal course contract for the first week, and by accreditation assessors as physical evidence of the document's adequacy, without ever truly testing the validity of its implementation in a real classroom setting.

4.4 Analysis of Social Practices (Hegemony of Accreditation, Bureaucracy, and Orthodoxy of Islamic Education)

At the macro level, the practice of preparing lesson plans by Islamic Religious Education lecturers is influenced by the interweaving of institutional bureaucratic power and ideological tensions within the corridors of Islamic higher education in Indonesia. Modern university institutions have adopted a culture of corporatization and educational managerialism, where teaching quality is reduced to a quantitative matrix of accreditation standards (BAN-PT/LAMDIK) (Andriani et al., 2023). Macro state regulations (SN-Dikti) dominate the institutional consciousness, creating an asymmetrical power relationship in which lecturers are positioned as administrative workers obliged to comply with a uniform standardization template. Rigid standardization by quality assurance units eliminates academic freedom and lecturers' creativity in designing contextual syllabi that adapt to the unique characteristics of each course.

In the specific context of Islamic religious education, a unique discursive tension exists between maintaining traditional orthodoxy and adopting contemporary critical pedagogical modernity. Courses such as the Qur'an are historically and epistemological strongly influenced by the halaqah tradition, which emphasizes teacher authority, sacred transmission of memorized texts, and textual preservation. When this tradition is forced into the mold of a modern, ONE-based curriculum that demands performative outcomes, technocratic rationalization, and HOTS-based KKO (C4-C6), a clash of academic cultures occurs within the faculty. The faculty experience cognitive dissonance: they want to maintain the sanctity of the moral-spiritual goals of Qur'an learning, but the campus quality management system forces them to use a lecture table format that measures everything mechanistically in terms of worldly work skills. As a result, what emerges in the RPS document is a formal linguistic compromise: methods are filled with modern, contemporary terms to satisfy accreditation demands, while materials and evaluation systems remain conservative-traditional patterns to maintain the authenticity of religious orthodoxy.

4.5 Theoretical Comparison and Research Contribution (Novelty)

The findings of this study reaffirm Henry Giroux's (2020) critique of the commodification and mechanization of higher education through technocratic instructional language. When course planning documents are dominated by bureaucratic-managerial reasoning, the role of lecturers as transformation intellectuals is at risk of shifting to that of low-level curriculum technicians, tasked with simply carrying out instructions from above.

Nevertheless, this study found a side of discursive optimism. The presence of innovative tasks in the Islamic Religious Education Learning Strategy RPS such as Mini Research, Critical Journal Review (CJR), and mini field project work indicates academic resistance from lecturers who are trying to insert critical thinking spaces for students the constraints of administrative restrictions (Sari, 2026). This effort proves that the discourse of active, student-based pedagogy (Student-Centered Learning) is beginning to seep in and influence lecturers' mental models, although in the representation of written language texts there is still an inconsistency in structural alignment with the system for determining the weighting of evaluation assessment indicators.

The main scientific contribution of this research lies in its originality in deconstructing the internal quality instrument document of higher education institutions (RPS) using CDA analysis tools in the PTKI environment. This research successfully proves empirically that the inability of lecturers in compiling the ideal RPS components according to OBE standards is not merely a technical problem of low individual lecturer capacity, but is a direct result of work alienation caused by the burden of campus administrative bureaucracy and epistemological clashes within the womb of modern Islamic education that have not been completely harmonized.

V. Conclusion

Based on the entire critical analysis process that has been carried out, several basic conclusions can be drawn as answers to the objectives of this research:

1. The ability of Islamic Religious Education lecturers in formulating CPL, CPMK, and Sub-CPMK still shows substantive inconsistency (lack of constructive alignment). Linguistic confusion occurs where the use of high-level operational verbs (HOTS) is often reduced by procedural object clauses (LOTS), so that the direction of student competency becomes unclear and normative.
2. In developing the depth of study materials, learning methods, and weekly plan structure, lecturers tend to get caught up in administrative formalism. There are symptoms of discursive hyperbole, where the term 21st-century learning methods is included in the macro components of the RPS to meet visual standards of accreditation quality. However, in the description of the weekly action plan table structure, the actual activities that are redesigned reflect conventional, teacher-centered teaching patterns.
3. Lecturers' ability to develop evaluation indicators remains at the administrative-positivistic level. There is a chronic disconnect between psychomotor-affective achievement targets and assessment instruments dominated by objective written tests and memorization quizzes. The determination of grade weights is also arbitrary without measurable pedagogical argumentation, supported by a bibliography lacking up-to-date references from periodical scientific journals.
4. Norman Fairclough's CDA perspective successfully uncovered that the Islamic Education and Training Plan (RPS) documents are a discursive battleground. The RPS text is controlled by the hegemony of campus bureaucratic managerial power, which enforces rigid format standardization through a mechanical copy-paste production process. Furthermore, unresolved ideological tensions were found within lecturers between upholding the traditional moral-spiritual sanctity of Islamic education and the demands of industrializing the performance competency achievements of the modern OBE curriculum.

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