

Critical discourse analysis of North Korea's foreign policy in Kim Jong Un's speech in 2022



Fransiska Maristella Junianse^a   | Sidik Jatmika^a

^aMaster of International Relations, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Abstract The purpose of this article is to explore the discourse on the direction of North Korea's foreign policy under the leadership of Kim Jong Un. This article uses the concept of critical discourse analysis to analyze North Korea's foreign policy through Kim Jong Un's speech in 2022. For data collection, validation and linguistic investigation using the NVivo 12 Plus application. The data sources used are literature reviews through e-books, news, journals and Google Scholar. The results of the data processing show interesting findings, where in his speech in 2022, Kim Jong Un renewed his Law to threaten military action by South Korea and the United States. In addition, make North Korea's nuclear arsenal the most powerful and absolute and the "most powerful strategic weapon in the world". By developing the National Security discourse presented in 2022, the North Korean government can protect the country, people and sovereignty from enemy influence and make North Korea a country with world-recognized military defense. This National Security Discourse then becomes the main focus of Kim's foreign policy instrument in 2022.

Keywords: Kim Jong Un, critical discourse analysis, foreign policy, North Korea, speech

1. Introduction

North Korea is an independent and sovereign country; of course, it has a political and government system in place. The international community has known that North Korea is currently a country with a communist ideology and strictly adheres to the principles of communism. The party government is a characteristic found in most social states of the past. The ruling party with ideology occupies first place in the national power structure, effectively controlling all legislative, administrative and judicial powers. The party not only controls these three institutions but also regulates social organizations and community life. North Korea can be considered a party-ruled country. Even if there is more than one party, they are not opponents but rather partners of the ruling party. The ruling party in North Korea is the Korean Workers' Party (World, 2020).

North Korea has a large ideology that is firmly held by the North Korean leader known as Juche. Juche is a North Korean way of life that states that one must be able to *control* the world and, by fate, possess *chajusong* or creativity and consciousness. This Juche ideology created the idea in the minds of North Korea that someone had to rule and reshape the world. There is a doctrine put forward by Kim Il Sung that is able to direct its citizens to fight, which is called the "Four Military Lines", namely, (1) Arming all citizens, (2). Consolidating every part of the state, (3) training entire groups into military cadres, and (4) taking the juche as a basis for updating weapons, doctrine, and tactics to defend the state.

The existence of the concept of the *janggunnim sikso* or our shogun's family forms the basic idea in the minds of North Korean people who their leaders are the heart of the revolution and make it easier for every citizen to become part of the sovereignty of the country, head of state and division. economic life led by a head of state (Kwon & Chung, 2012). With a basic concept such as this, the decision-making process runs smoothly without many objections. North Koreans believe that their leader is a father who will lead them to good things and victory. North Korea is ruled by one of the world's longest-running dynastic dictatorships. Three generations of the Kim family ruled with absolute power and a patronage system that guaranteed support from elites and the military.

The new supreme leader, Kim Jong-un, appears to have handled his first years at the top very well by overhauling party and military structures and accelerating the build-up of nuclear capabilities. As North Korea seeks to develop its economy and open up to the outside world, experts say that Kim's relationship with the elite could be tested and will be crucial to the regime's survival. (Eleanor Albert, 2020). Kim Jong-un's ascent to the leadership of North Korea marked the emergence of a single political entity: The communist-led regime was, in essence, a hereditary monarchy. With the transition from Kim Il Sung to Kim Jong Il in 1994 and from Kim Jong Il to Kim Jong-un in 2011, North Korea's political philosophy has evolved in response to decisive leadership and the resulting challenges to the country's power. This is reflected in Kim Il Sung adopting Juche, Songgum being adopted by Kim Jong Il, and Byungjin being adopted by Kim Jong Un (Tan & Chung Yoo, 2021).



During his early years in power, Kim Jong-un developed a policy of *byungjin*, or "parallel development", of the country's nuclear and economic capabilities. To do this, Kim initiated policy changes, moving from a centrally planned economy to one that was more incentive-based and allowing more autonomy at the district and provincial levels. Industries such as shellfish and generic drugs are still strictly regulated, but some are open, such as agriculture. However, the North Korean elite, estimated by experts in approximately fifty families and up to two thousand people, has a significant influence on the functioning of the country's economy. They are believed to play important roles in facilitating or implementing policies, as well as controlling activities, resources, or information about hard currency (Eleanor Albert, 2020).

The author is interested in identifying the foreign policy instruments used by Kim Jong Un through the speech he delivered in 2022. The text of the speech will then be analyzed in three stages of discourse analysis, starting from description and interpretation to explanation and linking. aspects of Kim's ideology, especially those related to his power relations.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical discourse analysis, also known as critical discourse analysis (CDA), is a form of analysis that helps in understanding language in its use. Language is proven not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for doing something or a tool for carrying out power strategies. The discourse analysis approach begins with poststructuralist and poststructural philosophical statements so that the approach to reality is always constructed through language. By using language, authors can contribute to the construction of reality. Through critical discourse analysis, different discourses in a statement, story, or report can reveal the preferences, values, or ideology behind it. The key to analyzing this approach lies in the coherence of the social practices of discourse creators, which rely on linguistic data that can be found in the discourse sought (Haryatmoko, n.d.).

This study uses Fairclough's version of critical discourse analysis, which looks at the conflict between social reality and discourse. Critical discourse analysis focuses on three things. First, every text has a certain function. Second, discursive practices include how the writer, as the creator of the text, produces the text. Third, sociocultural practices can be analyzed economically, politically and culturally. In Kim Jong Un's various speeches, he often shows social conventions and speeches that he believes in. The expressions given by Kim in various ways show the ideology and social relations he adheres to, although they are often expressed implicitly. Therefore, by using critical discourse analysis, the author explores Kim Jong Un's efforts to protect North Korean national interests while increasing the legitimacy of his policies.

2.2. Method

This research will use qualitative research because it uses an inductive approach for the purpose of theory synthesis or for building hypotheses by revealing facts (Murdianto, 2020). Kim Jong Un's speech will be analyzed through critical discourse analysis, an analytical method that aims to investigate hidden and emerging relationships in discourse. Through this discourse analysis, the author sought to identify the foreign policy tools that Kim Jong Un most often uses in his speeches, as well as the purposes for which they are used. Furthermore, these political tools will then be interpreted and analyzed by linking aspects of Kim's ideology, especially in relation to his power relations.

The data were collected from speech samples and divided into four excerpts based on specific keywords related to different topics related to Kim Jong Un's foreign policy, which was the subject of broader analysis. The author used NVivo 12 Plus software to make data collection easier. This software is also used to guarantee the validity of the data for further analysis. The features that will be used for analysis are Treemap, WordCloud and Crosstab Analysis. To determine more about the direction of North Korean foreign policy under Kim Jong Un, the authors analyzed the votes on NVIVO 12 Plus using crosstab analysis.

3. Results and Discussions

Based on data processed on NVivo12 Plus using the word cloud feature, Kim Jong Un often used words in his speeches. The word cloud presents processed data that explain how often a particular word is used and said by Kim Jong Un.

The word cloud data in Figure 1 show that the words often used by Kim Jong Un in his speeches are "war", "victory", "Great", and "United States". This can be interpreted to mean that the main idea to be conveyed is that North Korea must develop and grow, supported by its party and society. Apart from using word clouds, in studying Kim Jong Un's speeches, the author identified four nodes and one case that are directly related to elements of North Korean foreign policy interests. Amid the complexity of global change, Kim Jong Un paid attention to domestic and international interests, focusing on security as his top priority. This was then reduced to four themes to see how far Kim Jong Un placed his foreign interests, namely:

1. Stability of domestic conditions (political priorities)
2. Economic growth (economic priorities)
3. National security (military priorities)
4. Regional cooperation (North Korea's global role)

Kim Jong Un has made military issues the main focus of North Korea's foreign interests. The words "war", "confrontation" and "nuclear weapons" are the main focuses of North Korean military policy. North Korea's confrontational policy is a nuclear program policy that Kim Jong Un adopted based on his will and focused on how North Korea must protect itself from external threats.

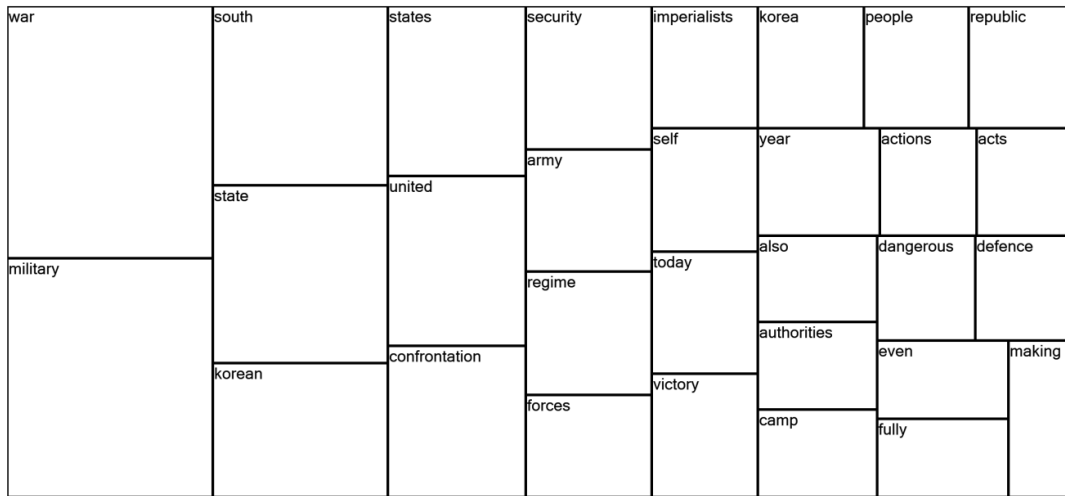


Figure 4 Word Frequencies of Kim Jong Un's Speech Based on Tree Map Data.
 Source: Tree Map using NVivo 12 Plus.

Figure 6 shows that the words that Kim Jong Un used in his speeches were "war", "military", "United States", "confrontation", "security", "army", and "forces". The main objective of North Korean foreign policy under the Kim Jong Un era was to reform North Korea by improving the country's government system, with a main focus on the military in national defense. Kim Jong Un emphasized this in his speech: "We defended the dignity, honor and sovereignty of our Republic, safeguarded the environment for the peaceful development of our state, checked the US ambition for world supremacy, and defended peace of mankind by preventing a new world war. Herein lies the great significance of the Fatherland Liberation War in the history of our nation and the world history of wars." (Un, 2022).

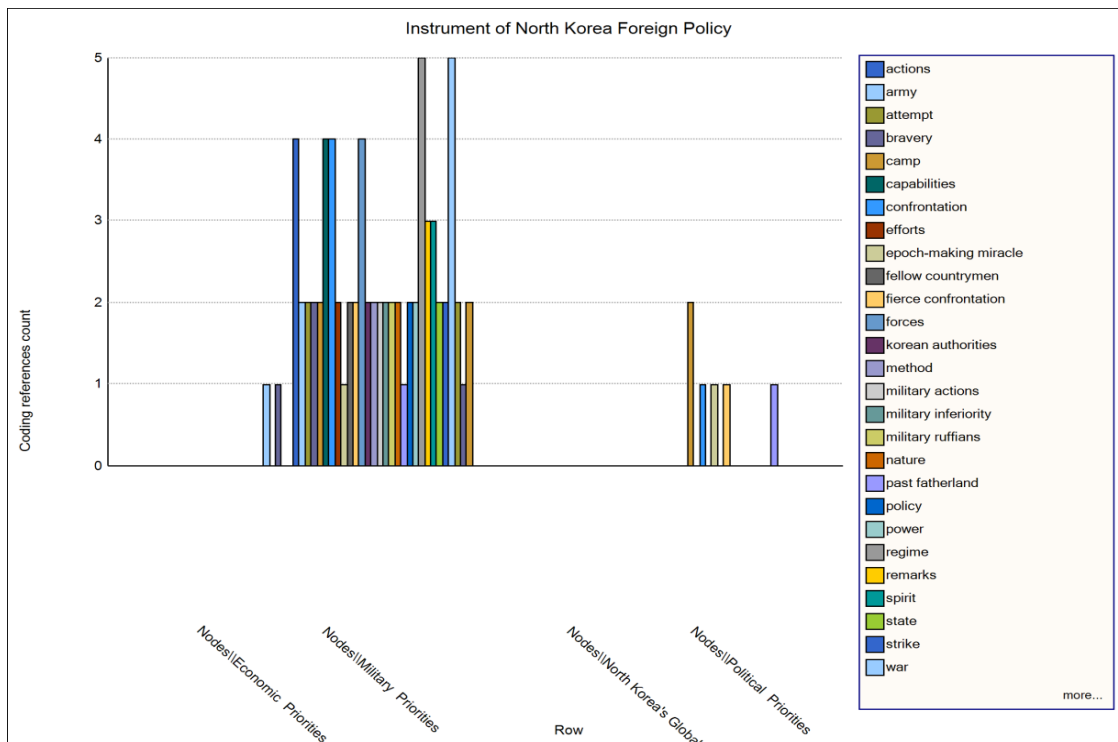


Figure 5 North Korea's Foreign Policy Instruments in 2022.
 Source: Coding References using NVivo 12 Plus.



The image is a distribution of instruments from Military Nodes. The words 'Army' and 'Actions' were the words that Kim Jong Un mentioned most often in his speeches. The words 'army' and 'actions' have become instruments for laying out North Korean foreign policy in the military field. There were a total of 5 data points for the use of the word 'army' and 5 data points for the use of the word 'actions'. Kim Jong Un also emphasized this in his speech: "The government of our Republic will protect the people and sovereignty of our country by continuing to develop the military, will protect our country, people and sovereignty with a military capability that continues to grow and develop" (Un, 2022).

As the main discourse in Kim Jong Un's Speech in 2022, North Korea announced the most significant update to its nuclear weapons laws in nearly a decade, clarifying its nuclear weapons laws. The law explains how Pyongyang plans to ensure deterrence if its top leaders are killed in a hostile attack. The text is worded so carefully that it cannot identify Kim's successor or implies that anyone other than Kim was authorized to issue nuclear orders even after his death. The new law is clear on this, making it clear that Kim has "monolithic command" over the country's nuclear forces (Megan Dubois, 2022). In 2022, Kim Jong-un announced that North Korea had become a nuclear weapon state and that its weapons would remain. In 2022, North Korea made significant progress in its weapons. It started the year with a test of a short-range missile designed to hit South Korea, followed by a medium-range missile that could target Japan. Kim also lowered the threshold for using nuclear weapons.

After declaring in September that North Korea had become an irreversible nuclear weapon state, Kim Jong Un revealed that these weapons were no longer designed to prevent war but could be used both deterrently and offensively to win the role of war (Mackenzie, n.d.). Kim Jong Un emphasized this in his speech: "We can no longer sit around seeing Yoon Suk Yeol and his military gangsters' misdemeanours and blind bravery. If they continue to commit the acts of today like aggravating military tension by carrying on picking a quarrel with our exercising of the right to self-defense and threatening our security by invoking the robber's logic, they will pay dearly for it". (Un, 2022) As a foreign policy, the possession of nuclear missiles in the Kim Jong Un regime in 2022 has three main objectives. The first is to increase North Korea's international reputation and prestige in the eyes of the world. Second, North Korea's security could be strengthened by threatening military action between South Korea and the United States. Kim Jong Un also emphasized this in his speech: "If the United States and South Korea are to get rid of the stigmas as a president on a chopping board and a regime exposed to the gravest peril, they should be more prudent and use their brains more than their mouths. In addition, they are well advised to refrain from finding fault with us now and then; or not to deal with us at all may be a better way for them". (Un, 2022)

The third is to strengthen Pyongyang's ability to win political and economic concessions from South Korea, the United States, and Japan. The Korea Institute for Defense Analyzes estimates that in 2022, North Korea will have spent \$1.6 billion on nuclear weapons. The money used for nuclear purposes could have been invested by the government in economic development or increasing agricultural efficiency, as most of the North Korean population is malnourished and at risk of starvation (Roy, 2022). In 2022, North Korea also exported tensions through increased missile tests and threats against South Korea. North Korea has achieved a record number of approximately 90 missile tests of various types and ranges, including nine intermediate or intercontinental launches. The number of tests grew exponentially in 2022 compared to that in previous years, and the objectives and strategies behind the tests involved a methodical review of the Military Force's development objectives. In addition to increasing tensions with the United States, North Korea was able to conduct missile tests with relative impunity as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and increasing rivalry between the United States and China, which paralyzed the UN Security Council.

North Korea's efforts to exploit geopolitical loopholes and ramp up missile testing in 2022 have overshadowed North Korea's economic and public health challenges. (Snyder, 2022). North Korea also uses tactical nuclear weapons as an asymmetric capability to shift the balance of power on the Korean Peninsula, allowing Pyongyang to dictate the terms of interaction with South Korea in the economic, security, and political spheres. (Hamre, 2022). Kim Jong Un also emphasized this in his speech: "Our armed forces are now fully prepared to cope with any sort of crisis, and our state's nuclear war deterrent is also fully ready to demonstrate its absolute power accurately and promptly true to its mission" (Un, 2022).

North Korea says that its nuclear weapons are intended to deter a US attack. Some analysts fear that North Korea could become emboldened to launch attacks if it is thought to have developed a strong enough deterrent or used nuclear weapons to pursue other policies. In its 2023 Global Threat Assessment, the US intelligence community said that Kim views nuclear weapons and ICBMs as "the ultimate guarantor of autocracy". In 2022, North Korea passed a new law that expanded the conditions under which North Korea would use nuclear weapons to include nonnuclear attacks and situations that threaten regime survival.

North Korea's resumption of ICBM testing in 2022 is an effort to increase its ability to attack the United States (Manyin, 2023). Kim Jong Un solemnly stated that if the enemy continues to threaten, the North Korean party and government will resolutely respond with nuclear weapons and face the US and its allies with all-out confrontation. The Hwasong-17 missile was launched in 2022 with the aim of achieving the "most powerful and absolute nuclear deterrent" and described it as "the world's most powerful strategic weapon". North Korea has long defended its ballistic missile launches as a legitimate defense against what it calls a decades-long threat from US military forces and its allies in South Korea. Kim Jong

Un also emphasized this in his speech: "Our People's Army will keep channelling its main efforts into fully displaying its political and ideological superiority, the source of its mightiness and invincibility. By doing so, it will grow into the world's strongest army that demonstrates its formidable striking power with a steadfast revolutionary spirit, unparalleled bravery and indefatigable fighting spirit". (Un, 2022)

North Korea's greatest ability to withstand nuclear threats and warning to US President Joe Biden's administration and allies that any military provocation would trigger "self-destruction" for the US. The United States condemns these actions and urges North Korea to refrain from further illegal and destabilizing actions. Although the United States assumes that these events do not pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel, territory, or allies, it continues to monitor the situation. America's commitment to defending South Korea and Japan remains strong. However, Kim Jong-un continues to show the strongest desire to retaliate against enemy aggression (Aljazeera, 2022).

5. Final considerations

Kim Jong Un used the National Security Discourse rather than economic issues and North Korea's global cooperation as his main focus in his speech. The results of the discourse analysis processed through NVIVO 12 Plus show that the issue of National Security (military priorities) is a discourse that is often raised by Kim Jong Un in international forums. The stages of discourse analysis are divided into three stages. The first stage is description, which shows the study of the formal properties of the text. In his various speeches, often uses first-person plural pronouns that are used to create national collectivities, build legitimacy, and form alliances in changing sociopolitical contexts. In addition, vocabulary containing expressive and metaphorical value is used to emphasize that the nuclear weapons launched in 2022 aim to achieve "the most powerful and absolute nuclear deterrence" and describe the missile as "the strongest strategic weapon in the world". In the second stage, an interpretation of the discourse shows that Kim Jong Un often uses the term war to indicate that North Korea is a strong nuclear country.

Then, to achieve this goal, Kim Jong Un solemnly stated that if the enemy continues to pose threats, the North Korean party and government will firmly react to nuclear weapons and total confrontation with all-out confrontation with America and its allies. In 2022, the discourse of cooperation was not mentioned at all by Kim in his foreign policy through the speeches he delivered; this can be seen in the Matrix Coding for North Korea's Global Role Data with Presentation 0. In the final stage, there is an explanation that explores the power relations that influence the discourse. Kim Jong Un believes that by developing the National Security discourse, the North Korean Government will be able to protect the people and sovereignty of the country by continuing to develop military capabilities, with the aim of protecting the country, people and sovereignty from enemy influence and making North Korea a country that has strong military defense. recognized by the world. This role then became the main focus of Kim Jong Un's foreign policy instruments by reforming his nuclear law in 2022.

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Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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