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Political Discourse In Media Space: A Critical Discourse Perspective In Indonesia

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Abstract

This research aims to analyse political discourse in the media space in Indonesia using a critical discourse approach. The main objective of the research is to understand how political discourse is constructed, presented, and received in various types of media in Indonesia, as well as to reveal its impact on public opinion and the democratic process. Through critical discourse analysis, this research attempts to identify patterns, rhetorical strategies, and biases that may be contained in political narratives delivered by mass media. The research method involves collecting data from various media sources, such as newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms, which are then analysed using a critical discourse approach. The results reveal that the construction of political narratives in the Indonesian media is often influenced by certain political and economic interests, which reinforce framing in accordance with a particular agenda. In addition, various rhetorical strategies, such as the use of emotional appeals, analogies, and emphasis on authority, are also used in political reporting to influence public opinion. The findings also show that political discourse in the media tends to accentuate opinion polarisation, political personalisation and stereotyping, which directly affects political participation and decision-making processes.

Keywords: political discourse, mass media, critical discourse, public opinion, democratic process

INTRODUCTION

The formation of public opinion in Indonesia has been significantly influenced by the role of the mass media.(Bell et al., 2023). Mass media, which includes newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms, is not only the main source of information for the public, but also plays an important role in shaping their perceptions and views on political, social, and cultural issues.(Koch & Sullivan, 2010). As a democratic country with a large and diverse population, Indonesia has a complex and dynamic political terrain. In this context, the role of the media in facilitating political dialog, disseminating news, and shaping public opinion has a very significant impact.(Xie et al., 2023).

Mass media in Indonesia plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion.(Hiramoto & Lai, 2017). In the political context, the media acts as a link between the government, politicians, and the public.(Morea & Sabatini, 2023). They not only convey information, but also influence how people view and judge political issues.(Kraushaar-Friesen & Busch, 2020). For example, media coverage of government policies, political events and election campaigns has a major impact on shaping people's perceptions and attitudes towards political leaders and parties.(Trogisch, 2021).

In addition, the media also acts as a watchdog in monitoring the performance of the government and politicians.(Zvereva, 2020). They conduct investigations, expose corruption scandals, and give space to a wide range of political views and opinions.(Thomas et al., 2022). As such, the media becomes a guardian of public accountability and promotes transparency in government.

However, it is important to recognize that the media is not neutral.(Homan, 2023). They are influenced by political interests, ideologies and economic factors. The political leanings of media owners, editorial orientation, and pressure from certain parties can influence the narratives conveyed by the media.(Seyfi et al., 2023). Therefore, critical analysis of political discourse in the media is important to understand how public opinion is shaped and influenced. Although the media has great potential to convey balanced information and provide space for various views, the reality is often complex.(Trogisch, 2021). Political discourse presented by the media is often distorted or influenced by certain interests. The narratives that are built can contain bias, stereotypes, or even disinformation that can affect people's perceptions of political issues.(Tripathi, 2020).

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Therefore, analyzing political discourse in the media is crucial. Through the critical discourse approach, we can identify various aspects contained in political narratives, such as language construction, framing, and rhetorical strategies used. Thus, we can understand how language power is used to influence public opinion and strengthen certain political domination.(Tripathi, 2020). In addition, the analysis of political discourse can also help reveal the hidden agenda behind the news or opinions conveyed by the media. By understanding how political narratives are constructed, we can be more critical in interpreting the information received and develop a deeper understanding of existing political realities.

In the context of pluralistic Indonesia, where there are various political, religious, and cultural interests that collide with each other, critical discourse analysis becomes increasingly relevant.(Castillo Jara & Bruns, 2022). This is because the media has a very important role in reducing or strengthening conflicts and tensions in society. Thus, an in-depth understanding of political discourse in the media can help promote a more inclusive dialog and strengthen a healthy democracy in Indonesia. This research aims to uncover and analyze the political discourse that occurs in the media space in Indonesia from a critical discourse perspective. The main objective of this research is to understand how political discourse is constructed, presented, and received in various media in Indonesia. Through critical discourse analysis, this research will try to identify patterns, rhetorical strategies, and biases that may be contained in political narratives delivered by mass media. As such, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how the media influences the formation of public opinion and political dynamics in Indonesia.

The relevance of the importance of a critical discourse perspective in understanding political discourse in the Indonesian media is enormous. First, the critical discourse approach allows us to look beyond what is presented literally by the media. By analyzing the language structure, framing, and socio-political context surrounding a text, we can explore deeper meanings and understand how political messages are constructed and delivered to the public. Second, critical discourse analysis helps us to identify biases, stereotypes, and manipulations that may occur in political reporting. Thus, we can become more critical of the information we receive and develop the ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, between news and propaganda.

As such, this research has important relevance in the context of our understanding of the dynamics of politics and media in Indonesia. With a deeper understanding of political discourse in the media space, it is hoped that we can build a more critical society, more accurate information, and a stronger democracy.

METHODS

A. Research Approach

In this study, we adopt the critical discourse approach as the main conceptual framework.(Girvin et al., 2016). This approach allows us to investigate how language power is used in the formation of political discourse in the Indonesian media. Critical discourse emphasizes an in-depth analysis of the relationship between language, power, and ideology.(Takala et al., 2023). We will identify and explore the linguistic and rhetorical aspects that media texts may contain, as well as understand their political implications.

In conducting the analysis, we will employ a range of techniques commonly used in critical discourse analysis. These include framing analysis, identifying dominant concepts, text analysis to reveal particular stereotypes or biases, and tracing the use of language with specific rhetorical purposes. With this approach, we will be able to investigate the ways in which political discourses are reproduced, accepted and sustained through the media.

B. Data Collection

1. Data Sources Used

Data for this research will be obtained from a variety of sources, including news articles from newspapers and news websites, editorials, television broadcasts, and possibly social media.(Castillo Jara & Bruns, 2022). We will select different types of media to cover a broad spectrum of political narratives that exist in Indonesia. This will allow us to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how political discourses are represented and delivered to the public.

2. Data Collection Process and Data Selection Criteria

The data collection process will involve searching and collecting media texts relevant to our research topic.(Cetin, 2022). Data selection criteria will include relevance to contemporary political issues, representation from multiple media sources, and the diversity of political viewpoints represented. We will ensure that the data we collect reflects the broad spectrum of political discourse that exists in Indonesia, ranging from national to local issues.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Analysis of Political Discourse in Media Indonesia

1. Presentation of the main findings of the critical discourse analysis.

A critical discourse analysis of political discourse in the Indonesian media opens our eyes to the way politics is represented and interpreted in the media space. The main findings of this analysis reveal that

political narratives are often influenced by certain political and economic interests. Media owners, editors and political parties have a major role in shaping the political stories that are delivered to the public. In this process, political framing plays an important role, where political issues are presented with framing that emphasizes certain aspects in accordance with a political agenda or certain interests. In addition, rhetorical strategies are also used to influence people's understanding and response to political news. The use of emotional language, attention-grabbing titles, or the placement of authority figures can be used to strengthen certain arguments. However, behind all that, critical discourse analysis also reveals the dominance of certain ideologies in political reporting in the Indonesian media. Certain political ideologies or interests can influence the content of news and opinions conveyed, which can result in the delivery of news that is not neutral and reduces pluralism in the media space. Moreover, the analysis also reveals how political discourse in the Indonesian media can reinforce existing power inequalities in society. The emphasis on the views of certain political or economic elites, as well as the neglect of minority voices, can be clear examples of the reproduction of power inequalities through the media. With a deeper understanding of these findings, we can become more critical of the information we receive and contribute to efforts to strengthen a democracy that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of society.

2. Identify dominant patterns of political discourse in different types of media.

Identifying dominant patterns of political discourse in different types of media is an important step in understanding the dynamics of politics in Indonesia and its impact on public opinion and the democratic process. Through critical discourse analysis, we can uncover how different types of media, such as newspapers, television, radio, and online platforms, shape and disseminate political narratives to the public. Here are some of the dominant patterns of political discourse that may be identified in the analysis:

1. **Political Framing:** One of the dominant patterns in political discourse is political framing, where political issues are presented in a certain way to influence public perception. For example, issues such as corruption, conflict, or public policy can be framed positively or negatively according to certain political or ideological interests. The framing chosen by the media can influence how the public understands and responds to these political issues.
2. **Opinion Polarization:** Polarization of opinion is often the dominant pattern in political discourse across different types of media. The media tends to provide a platform for extreme or contradictory views, which can reinforce polarization in society. This can take many forms, from discussion panels on television featuring debates between two opposing views to opinion articles in newspapers highlighting sharp differences of opinion.
3. **Personalization of Politics:** Another dominant pattern is the personalization of politics, where media attention is focused more on political figures or leaders than on specific issues or policies. The personalization of politics can affect people's perception of politics and make politics more focused on certain figures than on platforms or policies.
4. **Stereotyping and Stigmatization:** Critical discourse analysis may also reveal the use of stereotypes and stigmatization in political discourse in the media. Political parties often use stereotypes or stigmatization of their political opponents to strengthen their position or divert attention from the real issues. Media that are not critical of these political narratives can reinforce and spread these stereotypes to the public.
5. **Emphasis on Sensation and Controversy:** The last pattern that is often dominant is the emphasis on sensation and controversy. The media often tends to highlight controversial or sensational news to attract the attention of readers or viewers. This can result in important political issues being ignored or reduced to mere entertainment.

By identifying dominant patterns of political discourse in different types of media, we can better understand how the media plays a role in shaping public opinion and political dynamics in Indonesia. In doing so, we can develop a more critical approach to the information we receive and strengthen a healthy and inclusive democracy.

B. Rhetorical Strategy and Public Opinion Construction

1. Rhetorical strategies and techniques used in political reporting.

Rhetorical strategies in political reporting play an important role in shaping public opinion. Through the use of persuasive language and appropriate rhetorical techniques, the media can influence people's views and attitudes towards political issues. In the Indonesian context, various rhetorical strategies and techniques have been used in political reporting to achieve various goals. Here are some of the dominant rhetorical strategies that are often used in the media:

- a. **Emotional Appeal:** One of the rhetorical strategies often used in political reporting is emotional appeal. Through the use of stories that evoke emotions, the media can influence people's feelings and

attitudes towards political issues. For example, reporting on tragedies or people's suffering can be used to draw sympathy and support for a particular political agenda.

- b. **Use of Analogy and Metaphor:** The use of analogies and metaphors is also an effective rhetorical strategy in political reporting. By comparing political issues with other more familiar or emotional situations or events, the media can make these issues easier to understand or more appealing to the public. For example, a political policy can be compared to a heroic historical struggle to increase public support.
- c. **Use of Memorable Slogans and Phrases:** Slogans and memorable phrases are often used in political reporting to create a strong and memorable impression. Phrases such as "change," "struggle," or "unity" are often used to reinforce political messages and mobilize public support. The use of these phrases can influence people's perception of political issues and reinforce a group or party's political identity.
- d. **Emphasis on Authority and Expertise:** Another rhetorical strategy is the emphasis on authority and expertise. Through the use of authoritative figures or experts in political news, the media can strengthen certain arguments or opinions. News that quotes opinions from prominent figures or experts in their fields can give the impression that a political issue is supported by experts and has high legitimacy.
- e. **Use of Logic and Facts:** The last rhetorical strategy is the use of logic and facts. Although it sounds simple, the proper use of logic and facts in political reporting can give additional strength to the arguments or opinions presented. News that is based on solid evidence and rational arguments can influence the public to consider certain viewpoints more seriously.

By understanding the different rhetorical strategies used in political reporting, we can become more critical of the information we receive from the media. By considering the context and purpose behind the use of certain rhetorical strategies, we can develop a deeper understanding of political discourse and strengthen our ability to make more informed and evidence-based decisions.

2. Discussion on how the construction of political discourse affects public opinion and the democratic process.

The construction of political discourse has a significant impact on public opinion and the democratic process in a society. Political discourse encompasses the ways in which political issues are debated, interpreted and presented by political actors, the media and the general public. In a democratic context, political discourse construction plays an important role in shaping people's perceptions of political issues, mobilizing support or opposition to policies, and influencing the political decision-making process. Here are some of the ways in which political discourse construction influences public opinion and the democratic process:

- a. **Influence on Public Opinion:** The construction of political discourse can influence public opinion by influencing the way people understand and interpret political issues. Through the use of framing, stereotypes and political narratives, political actors and the media can shape people's perceptions of an issue or event. For example, framing that portrays a policy as a necessary solution to a social problem can influence people to support the policy, while framing that portrays the policy as a threat to individual freedom can trigger resistance.
- b. **Shaping Political Preferences:** The construction of political discourse can also shape individuals' political preferences and political identities. Through emphasis on certain values, ideologies or political identities, political actors and the media can mobilize support from certain groups and form strong political allegiances. For example, emphasis on religious or ethnic issues in political discourse can strengthen the political identity of certain groups and mobilize political support from these groups.
- c. **Influence on Political Participation:** The construction of political discourse can also influence the level of political participation in society. Through attention-grabbing or emotive framing and political narratives, the media and political actors can motivate people to engage in the political process, whether through elections, demonstrations or other political actions. However, the construction of polarizing or conflict-inducing political discourse can also reduce political participation by fueling apathy or frustration.
- d. **Influence on the Policy-Making Process:** The construction of political discourse can also influence the policymaking process at the political level. Through emphasis on certain issues, favourable or unfavourable framing, and mobilization of support or opposition, political actors and the media can influence the political agenda and policy decisions taken by policymakers. This can affect the resulting public policies and their impact on society.
- e. **Influence on the Quality of Democracy:** Finally, the construction of political discourse can also affect the quality of democracy in a country. An inclusive, diverse, and open political discourse can strengthen democracy by expanding space for political participation, respecting human rights, and

promoting public accountability. However, political discourse that is polarizing, intolerant, or co-opted by vested interests can threaten the health of democracy by limiting pluralism, creating social tensions, and weakening democratic institutions.

By understanding how the construction of political discourse affects public opinion and the democratic process, we can become more critical of the information we receive from the media, more aware of attempts at political manipulation, and more actively engaged in the political process to strengthen a healthy and inclusive democracy.

CONCLUSIONS

Through critical discourse analysis of political discourse in the Indonesian media, the main findings revealed include a significant influence on the formation of public opinion and the democratic process. The construction of political narratives in the media is often influenced by certain political and economic interests, reinforcing framing in accordance with a particular agenda. In addition, various rhetorical strategies are used in political reporting, such as the use of emotional appeals, the use of analogies and metaphors, and the emphasis on authority and expertise. Political discourse in the media also often features opinion polarization, political personalization, and stereotyping, which directly affects public opinion and the democratic process. The relevance of a critical discourse perspective in analyzing political discourse in the Indonesian media is clear, as it enables a deeper understanding of the information received, strengthens the ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, and enhances more conscious and informed political participation. With a more critical understanding of the construction of political discourse, society can strengthen efforts to promote a more inclusive, responsive and evidence-based democracy in Indonesia, and build a stronger foundation for a more democratic future.

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