

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I provides introduction that contains an overview of the research. The researcher presents the research background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

The landscape of media and communication has witnessed transformative changes, significantly driven by the rise of digital platforms and social media. A notable example is the widespread discussion and influence of editorial pieces during presidential elections. Media outlets, including newspapers, play a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and political discourse. The Jakarta Post, one of Indonesia's leading English-language newspapers, has been actively covering the 2024 presidential election, using its editorial pages to comment on crucial socio-political issues.

The 2024 Indonesian presidential election features key candidates such as Prabowo Subianto from the Great Indonesia Movement (Gerindra), Ganjar Pranowo from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P), and Anies Baswedan from the Coalition of Change for Unity (NasDem, PKS, Democratic Party). Major issues central to the election include economic development, social welfare, anti-corruption efforts, national security, and environmental and maritime development (The Jakarta Post, 2024b).

Editorials in *The Jakarta Post* have discussed themes like the influence of incumbency, the neutrality of current President Joko Widodo, and concerns about the electoral process. Specific editorials such as "The Benefit of Incumbency" and "Can Jokowi be Neutral?" (*The Jakarta Post*, 2023a, 2023b, 2023e) highlight these issues. *The Jakarta Post* tends to advocate for transparency, fairness, and integrity in the electoral process, often critiquing any perceived partiality or misconduct by political figures and institutions.

Studies have shown that media coverage, particularly editorials, significantly influences public opinion during elections. For instance, DellaVigna & Kaplan (2007) found that the introduction of Fox News in cable markets led to a significant increase in Republican vote shares in the 2000 U.S. presidential election. Similarly, Lecheler, de Vreese, and Kern (2011) found that media coverage played a crucial role in shaping voters' attitudes and perceptions of candidates during the 2007 French presidential election.

The media, as a powerful agent of public opinion, holds the potential to influence societal perceptions and attitudes because media is a communication outlet or tool used to deliver information to its intended audience, impacting people differently (Kapoor et al., 2018). Editorials, in particular, serve as a platform for expressing viewpoints, shaping narratives, and influencing public discourse. Editorial can be impactful to the readers because an editorial is a writing style used to express an opinion or reaction to timely news, events, or issues, and can influence readers to think or act the same way (Joshi, 2016).

This research critically analyzes the discourse in popular editorials of *The Jakarta Post*, utilizing the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to uncover underlying power relations and ideologies. This research selects editorials

as the subject of study due to its high relevance in the context of mass media influence, particularly through The Jakarta Post newspaper.

Editorials serve as a crucial space where facts and opinions converge, creating layers of complex information that significantly influence public discourse. By applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to these editorials, this study aims to provide profound insights into how mass media shapes the thoughts and attitudes of its readers. It is essential to understand how the perspectives and attitudes of media institutions like The Jakarta Post reflect and shape public opinion. Editorial, also known as '*tajuk rencana*', is an article in a newspaper or magazine that expresses the stance of the editorial board or leadership on key issues (*Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI)*, 2024). Editorials are crafted to be concise, logical, and engaging, designed to influence reader's perspectives on prominent news and prompt them to recognize the significance of the information presented (Spencer, 1989). Moreover, editorials frequently address socio-political issues, making them a rich source for analyzing how media frames and communicates complex societal and political narratives. This focus can further emphasize the role of editorials in shaping public understanding and debate on critical issues, thereby highlighting their importance in the broader context of media influence and public discourse.

The understanding of editorial text or opinion articles is the official opinion or stance of a media institution as a publisher regarding current, phenomenal, or controversial topics that capture public attention (Yunus, 2010). The title or editorial can also serve as a symbol of the vision and character of the media institution conveying that particular title or editorial. Often regarded as the "crown" of a newspaper or magazine, the editorial section holds a place of prominence and

significance within the publication, reflecting the publication's voice and stance on important issues (Assegaf, 1983). This metaphor underscores the editorial's role in shaping public discourse and presenting the media institution's perspective on key matters.

The choice of The Jakarta Post for this research is driven by its significant position in Indonesian media, serving as a representative source of the country's discourse. Being a widely read English-language newspaper with a diverse readership, it provides a nuanced perspective on various issues. The diverse range of topics covered in the editorials provides an opportunity to analyze different perspectives and discourses.

The Jakarta Post is owned by PT Bina Media Tenggara, with its head office in Jakarta (Jakarta Post, 2001). Founded on April 25th, 1983, The Jakarta Post was established at the initiative of then-Minister of Information, Ali Moertopo, with the aim of enhancing Indonesia's international image through an English-language newspaper. The founding involved collaboration from four national newspapers: Suara Karya, Kompas, Sinar Harapan, and Tempo (Tarrant, 2008).

The newspaper has a circulation of 41,049 and is one of the few English-language newspapers in Indonesia after the 1997 Asian financial crisis (Gelling, 2009). The Jakarta Post has a reputation for publishing articles and editorials that support democratic values, human rights, transparency, and clean governance. For instance, its editorial support for Joko Widodo in the 2014 presidential election demonstrated its tendency to endorse reformist and pro-democracy candidates.

Embracing digital trends, the newspaper launched an online edition and introduced subscription-based access for premium content in 2017. Its editorial policies emphasize independence and critical analysis, setting it apart from other Indonesian newspapers. The editorials of The Jakarta Post have significantly influenced public discourse on democratic values and political transparency (Tarrant, 2008, pp. 107–109, 120). The availability of online editorial archives makes data collection convenient. The newspaper's reputation for in-depth analysis, particularly in its editorials, makes it a valuable source for critical discourse analysis.

This research draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a methodological framework, aiming to unveil the underlying power relations and ideologies embedded in the language of editorials. CDA is a type of discourse analytic research that primarily studies how the abuse of social power, domination and inequality is enforced, reproduced, and rejected by texts and speech in social and political contexts. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take an explicit position, and thus wish to understand, expose, and ultimately reject social inequalities (Dijk, 1998).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) involves the study and analysis of various forms of discourse, including written texts, speech, gestures, symbols, signs, posters, and advertisements, both electronic and printed. This approach systematically examines how different types of communication interact with us and helps uncover hidden societal issues (Norman Fairclough, 2001). CDA functions as an ideology detector, with practitioners using various theoretical approaches to uncover hidden ideologies and asymmetries within texts. The common goal of CDA is to critique hegemonic discourses and genres that

perpetuate inequities, injustices, and oppression in contemporary society (van Leeuwen, 2008)

The utilization of CDA as the methodological framework for this research is motivated by its efficacy in uncovering power dynamics and ideologies inherent in language. Editorials, being influential in molding public opinion, require a method capable of scrutinizing how language reinforces, challenges, or reproduces social power. CDA aligns seamlessly with the contextual complexities of editorials within broader social and political contexts, offering a comprehensive approach to examining various aspects of communication.

In essence, CDA's emphasis on the 'how' of language usage and its critical reflection on power relations make it an ideal approach for unraveling the nuances of language in influential media discourse. Discourse analysis of media texts is essential to understand both the content and the messages conveyed (Sobur, 2001). Unlike quantitative analysis, which emphasizes the question "what," discourse analysis focuses on the "how" of communication messages or texts. This distinction underscores the importance of CDA in examining the underlying ideologies and power structures within media discourse.

Understanding the communicative impact of The Jakarta Post's editorials on the 2024 presidential election through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) requires building on existing research within this field. Previous studies have provided a solid foundation by exploring how media language constructs and conveys ideological messages. These studies have examined various facets of language in media, including the representation of power dynamics and the ways in which editorial content can reflect and shape public opinion. By analyzing The Jakarta Post's popular editorials during the 2024 presidential election, this thesis

aims to contribute to this body of work, offering insights into the specific ways in which discourse in prominent Indonesian media influences and reflects social and political issues.

The prior research entitled "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Language in Ghanaian Newspaper Editorials" by Bakuuro & Diedong (2021) uses Systemic Functional Linguistics and Van-Dijk's theory of Media Discourse to analyze the language in 25 editorials from eight Ghanaian newspapers. The results reveal that these devices are used to express opinions, make predictions, and influence readers' attitudes, thereby shaping or reshaping attitudes and promoting critical thinking. The study highlights the persuasive, informative, and impactful role of language in media.

The second previous research is Maylana's (2021) study, "Critical Discourse Analysis of COVID-19 Vaccine News Articles in Jakarta Post" that investigates language intricacies in COVID-19 vaccine news from The Jakarta Post. The research, grounded in Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, focuses on thematic, superstructure, and microstructure elements. Headlines use easy and positive language, while opening paragraphs present direct meanings. The superstructure ensures information clarity, and the microstructure analyzes semantics, syntax, and rhetoric, showing direct and indirect language use.

There's also Mahmood's (2014) study, "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Figurative Language in Pakistani English Newspapers" conducted at King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia, that enhances the understanding of figurative language's implicit functions in popular Pakistani newspapers. The research, utilizing Richardson's model, identifies four key figures of speech—Metonymy, Metaphor, Simile, and Hyperbole. Metonymy introduces uncertainty by hiding agents, while

Metaphor and Simile play reciprocal roles in making ideas concrete or adding abstraction. Although Hyperbole is less used, it exaggerates ideas, bringing them closer to impossibility.

Building on these foundational studies, the current research distinguishes itself by focusing on the critical discourse analysis of popular editorials in The Jakarta Post, using Van Dijk's CDA framework. This study will explore how the editorials construct and convey ideological messages, examining elements such as thematic structures, argumentation patterns, and the use of specific linguistic devices. Unlike previous studies that concentrated on specific events such as COVID-19 vaccine news, this research adopts a broader perspective by analyzing a range of editorials to uncover how these elements influence public opinion and reflect socio-political issues in Indonesia. By doing so, this thesis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how The Jakarta Post's editorials shape and reflect socio-political discourse in Indonesia.

Employing Teun Van Dijk's comprehensive CDA approach, which encompasses text structure, social cognition, and social context, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis that bridges individual textual features with broader social influences. This novel perspective is anticipated to enrich our understanding of language dynamics in influential media discourse and its impact on societal discourse, offering unique insights that extend beyond the scope of previous research.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background that has been written, the researcher formulates the research questions as follows:

1. How are thematic and schematic structures used in The Jakarta Post editorials to frame the 2024 presidential election?
2. How do the representations of political actors and events in The Jakarta Post editorials related to the 2024 presidential election reflect certain power and ideology?
3. How do discourse strategies (such as rhetoric, lexical choices, semantics, syntax, and stylistic elements) in The Jakarta Post editorials influence the construction of political reality during the 2024 presidential election?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the formulated research questions, the objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To analyze the thematic and schematic structures in The Jakarta Post editorials.
2. To examine the representation of political actors and events in Jakarta Post editorials.
3. To investigate the discourse strategies used in the Jakarta Post editorials.

1.4 Research Significance

Theoretically, it advances our understanding of media discourse by applying Van Dijk's CDA framework to The Jakarta Post's editorials on the 2024 presidential election, exploring text structure, social cognition, and socio-political context to reveal how language conveys ideologies.

Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for journalists, editorial teams, and media consumers, enhancing awareness of language choices in editorials and their influence on public opinion and socio-political discourse during significant political events.

For future researchers, this study serves as a reference and guide for analyzing media discourse across different subjects, providing a foundation for future studies on various media genres. Consequently, this research paves the way for additional studies, contributing to a deeper understanding of how media discourse shapes and reflects socio-political ideologies and public opinion in Indonesia.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Definitions of key terms are presented with the aim of avoiding misunderstandings, misperceptions, and ambiguities in the terms used in this study.

1. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (van Dijk, 2001, p. 353).

2. Editorial

Editorial is a newspaper article that expresses the collective opinion of the newspaper. Published under the newspaper's name, rather than individual journalists, editorials reflect the institutional stance on various issues, making allegiances known and addressing public figures and organizations. Unlike other journalistic content, editorials explicitly represent the views of the newspaper as an entity (Firmstone, 2019).

3. Discourse

Any form of language use manifested as written text or spoken talk-in-interaction, encompassing a broad semiotic sense. This includes visual structures such as layout, letter type, or pictures for written or printed text, and gestures, facial expressions, and other semiotic signs for spoken interaction (van Dijk, 2008).

4. The Jakarta Post

The Jakarta Post is an independent English-language newspaper owned by Bina Media Tenggara Inc., headquartered in Jakarta, Indonesia. Established with a commitment to bold and independent journalism, it has a notable presence in Indonesian media, known for its critical stance on various political issues and its motto "Always Bold. Always Independent" (K. Sari & Pranoto, 2021).

5. 2024 Presidential Election

The upcoming election in Indonesia where key candidates such as Prabowo Subianto, Ganjar Pranowo, and Anies Baswedan are competing for the presidency (Mathai, 2024). This election is a significant political event that influences the content and themes of editorials in The Jakarta Post.