

# Online Media and Politics: Critical Discourse Analysis About Hoax News

Noni Marlianingsih<sup>1\*</sup>, Yumna Rasyid<sup>2</sup>, Ninuk Lusyantie<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Language Education Jakarta State University Jakarta, Indonesia*

<sup>2</sup>*Faculty of Language Education Jakarta State University Jakarta, Indonesia*

<sup>3</sup>*Faculty of Language Education Jakarta State University Jakarta, Indonesia*

\*Corresponding author. Email: Marleeanee.nm@gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

This research is an analysis of critical discourse from Viral news about proof of hoax regarding the founding of seven containers of punched ballots at Tanjung Priok in 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election. The emergence of this hoax or fake news seem to have led the public that there is an attempt to win the election by the incumbent. This hoax suddenly became the hottest news on a national issue, but researchers only took the data from Kompas.com and Viva.co.id, because these two media have a large number of readers. The hoax discourse analysis that has been spread out was examined in Microstructural, Mesostructural and Macrostructural aspects. This research was carried out by using a qualitative research method with critical analysis developed by Norman Fairclough. This research focused on general principles that underlie the basic meaning of social symptoms in society. The result showed that Kompas.com and Viva.co.id used the selection of diction, the broad sentences showing the cause and effect, and direct quotations from the speakers to produce news discourse. The way of Kompas.com and Viva.co.id in producing the news is also considered to be consistent with its mission in producing multimedia products that is independent and free from all compulsion. The motivation that indicated in the production of the news is the readers were led to provide positive impression for Kompas.com and Viva.co.id as the active and popular media that always express the justice.

**Keywords:** *Online media, Politics, Critical discourse analysis, Hoax*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, people tend to read online media rather than printed media. They assume that information should be obtained easily. It can be proven that online media readers are citizens who do not need to buy print media or newspapers, but can read the news in a practical and economical manner only with using internet data. It is the reason why the number of online media readers have huge increase in the past four years aside of the factors that it always presents the news quickly, newly, and factually. Based on data.co.id, according to Nielsen Consumer & Media survey [1], the number of media readers online were 6 million, while printed media readers were 4.5 million in 2017. The dominance of online media readers is 80% with an age of 20-49 years, and 17% are readers with the age of 10-19 years.

Online media presents a wide variety of information, one of them is news about Politics [2]–[8] In the beginning of 2019, Indonesia enters a political year because it will

carry out simultaneously and democratically the legislative and presidential elections on April 17, 2019. Online media [9]–[18] nationally captured the public interest in welcoming the democratic parties by providing news columns dedicated to politics and elections. The information conveyed in the form of political facts that are happening in the community, even the recently hot news and disturbing publicity such as hoaxes [19], [20] about voting of seven containers of voted ballots in the North Jakarta. Regarding this news, a number of national figures tweeted on their respective twitter pages. All printed and online national media immediately find out the truth by checking directly to the officials or the General Election Commission and checking the place where the seven containers of voted ballots were found.

All online media competed in providing the best and honest information to net citizens or readers. They displayed interesting headlines such as headlines that encourage readers to take their time for a moment to continue reading the news they make. The discourse which presented by journalists and the emergence of various interpretations from the news readers become the main

reason for the author to conduct research on critical discourse about the hoax of seven containers of the voted ballots. The author refers to several related articles about fake news and politics.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an analysis of the elements of dominance and power which contained in a discourse. This analysis aims to uncover certain intentions and meanings of a discourse that is assumed to carry a certain ideological content. It can be political ideology, race, gender, group of people, or religion [21]–[25] CDA reveals ideas that highlight forms of dominance or hegemony of power, ideology, community class, gender, race, discrimination, interest, reproduction, institutions, social structures, and social role. CDA sees the use of language as a form of social practice, namely how language is used to see the power imbalances that occur in society. Language cannot be understood as a neutral thing which lies outside the speaker. Language in a critical view can be understood as a representation that plays a role in forming a particular subject, certain discourse themes, and strategies. Therefore, discourse analysis is used to dismantle the power that is present in each language process, such as boundaries that are permitted to become discourses, perspectives that must be used, and topics discussed. With this view, discourse always sees language as involved in power relations, especially in the formation of subjects, and various acts of representation that formed in society. Based on some facts that have been submitted before, the author was motivated to conduct research with the title of Online Media and Politics: Critical Discourse Analysis on the Hoax News of Seven Containers of Voted Ballots. This topic is based on the viral reports in various national printed and electronic media in the beginning of 2019. It is also accompanied by the approaching democratic legislative and presidential election which will be held simultaneously on April 17, 2019.

Based on the three important dimensions that cover critical discourse analysis, we can conclude that the use of language events is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions, they are:

1. Text (speech, visual imaging),
2. Practice of discourse involving production
3. Use of social practices.

Fairclough's three-dimensional model is an analytical framework used for empirical research related to communication and society. The analysis focuses on Linguistic characteristics of text, processes related to the production and the use of text (practice of discourse), the broad social practices that include communicative events, such as social practice, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Analysis of discourse practices involves attention to the process of text production, dissemination and use [26].

## 2. METHOD

This research was conducted using qualitative research methods with an emphasize in critical discourse analysis developed by Norman Fairclough. This qualitative approach focuses on general principles that underlie the

realization of a meaning of social symptoms in society [27]. This research is presented in the form of words; therefore, the descriptive qualitative research method is used. The meaning of descriptive method itself has the understanding that research is designed to collect, analyze, and present actual data information. This research can provide a clear picture of the object under study to draw conclusions from the object of research.

This study uses a critical paradigm that has a number of assumptions about how research should be carried out, and how the news text should be analyzed. The critical paradigm has its own view on the media. We can say that a news must be understood as a whole. In this view, not only the language was seen as a tool for understanding objective reality, but we need to see the intentions of certain discourses. The critical paradigm further examines about the social, historical, and cultural aspects of the discourse. Critical paradigm is expected to be able to form social awareness in order to improve and change the conditions of human life. Therefore, subjectivity cannot be avoided in this study because the reality we found in the text is the result of researcher's interpretation.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Textual Dimensions (Microstructural)

Based on various linguistic tools used by *kompas.com* in the news "KPU Ensures the News of 7 Containers Containing Voted Ballots that have been Hoaxed" there are three tools that mark the representation of themes and figures involved in the news mentioned above. Among them are diction, such as the use of causal sentences, and the selection of sources in direct quotations. The following is a quote taken from *Kompas.com*.

*"JAKARTA, KOMPAS.com - The General Election Commission (KPU) ensured that the news of seven containers containing the presidential election voted ballots was a hoax. The certainty was conveyed by the head of KPU, Arief Budiman after checking the files together with the Bawaslu, Customs and Excise office in the Tanjung Priok, North Jakarta. Arief also denied the reports that the KPU had seized a container containing the voted ballots."* Kompas uses the certainty phrase as a connecting phrase to explain the previous sentence, which shows that it is a fake news. In addition, they use passive sentences of *...conveyed by the head of the KPU...* in the second sentence. However, it is inversely proportional to the previous sentence writing in the beginning of the article with the use of *...the General Election Commission (KPU)...* or using active sentences. Kompas in the first paragraph quoted *...the news does not have truth...it is not true...* directly from the head of the KPU. The citation of the sentence further strengthens the first and second sentences, so that cohesion and coherence between sentences unite together and gave one meaning of interpretation. The beginning of the sentence after the subject of the KPU is followed by a verb *...ensuring...* and it is repeated, immediately quoted based on the interview with the head of the KPU. It can be concluded that the news revealed by the Kompas has been confirmed directly

by the speaker or competent figure in response to the hoax. The selection of diction *...denied...* which means disagreement refers to the wrong report which then continued with the use of *...ensuring...* which implies that the KPU has checked directly into the case and proved the real facts.

*"It is also the wrong news that there was an Indonesian Navy found it, and it is not true that the KPU was said they have seized the voted one of these containers," he continued. Arief said, the news about seven containers containing the voted ballots circulated starting on Tuesday afternoon (01/02/2019). According to information, the seven containers came from China. The information stated that each container contained 10 million voted ballot papers and one container had been opened. The news also stated that the ballot had been punched in the picture of candidate number 01. Arief stressed, all the news was a wrong or hoax. 'So, all the news is a lie,' he said. By checking together with the Tanjung Priok Customs Officers, Arief was accompanied by the KPU commissioners, they are Ilham Saputra, Hasyim Asyari, Viryan Azis, and Pramono Ubaid Tanthowi".* The second paragraph is also rewritten *...wrong...* and *...not true...* It strengthens the information in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, the connecting phrase *...according to information...* becomes the cause and effect which has relation with the previous sentence. In the fourth sentence, the phrase *...the news...* was repeated again which connects to the next sentence that further clarifies it with the use of *...wrong news or hoax...* The direct sentence inscribed at the beginning of the sentence is an excerpt of a direct interview with the head of the KPU. He felt angry with the wrong news that is delivered by irresponsible people. This problem can be seen when Kompas chooses Arief's diction *...stressed...* which indicates the urgency and that the reader must believe the statement from the head of KPU.

*"The news about the voted ballots in the container that had been broken which was briefly delivered by Deputy Secretary General (Wasekjen) of Democratic Party, Andi Arief. Through his personal Twitter account, @AndiArief. He tweeted, 'Please check the reported of 7 containers of voted ballots in Tanjung Priok. In order not to be a slander, please check the truth because this news has circulated'. Based on Kompas.Com observation, Andi's tweet was uploaded at 8:05 p.m., Wednesday (2/1/2019). However, at this time the tweet was deleted. The KPU has not produced the ballot papers yet. The new ballots plan will be produced in mid-January 2019".* In the third paragraph, at the beginning, there is a repetition of the word which refers to the final sentence in the second paragraph. Then through the connecting phrase, such as *...however...*, Kompas uses the phrase to bring together two conflicting information or ideas, namely *7 containers of voted ballots, but so far KPU has not produced ballot papers yet. The new ballot plan will be produced in mid-January 2019.* Kompas closes the article with these two sentences, so that the readers can think and assess the difference between fake news and facts. Regarding of the information, it can be seen clearly that the phrase is *...based on the observation of Kompas.com...* a proof that Kompas is not only presenting the news, but also

investigating the news that became a hot issue in the beginning of the 2019.

*"VIVA - The General Election Commission [28] and Election Supervisory Board [29] stress that the issue of seven containers of voted ballots in Tanjung Priok is a hoax. The KPU and Bawaslu immediately checked the information in the late of night to the main service officers of the Tanjung Priok Directorate General of Customs and Excise".* Viva uses active sentences twice for mentioning the same subject, namely the *...General Election Commission (KPU)...* in the first sentence and *...KPU together with Bawaslu...* Viva's writing style also does not use conjunctions, it tends to directly describe the chronological events. But the phrase *...immediately checked the information in...* is used to maintain cohesion and coherence between one sentence and the second. Here, Viva is using a slightly different approach from Kompas. The first sentence after the subject is continued with the verb *...stress...* When reading the full sentence, the verb *stress* has the urgent implication that the KPU said that the hoax is not in accordance with the facts.

*"Arief stressed that the police would not stop legal proceedings against those suspected of disrupting the election process. He stressed that all parties related to the spread the issue of voted ballots will be processed by law".* Viva repeats the word *...stressed...* twice and successively in the first and second sentence, then continued with *...the police will not stop the legal process against those who allegedly disrupt the election process....* This matter shows that the head of the KPU is harmed by this wrong news. This implication can be seen from the direct quotation taken from the excerpt of the interview found in the next sentence, stated that *"The legal process continues to operate according to the mechanism, all those who want to disrupt the election will definitely follow up," added Arief".* Here, Viva took a different approach from Kompas which directly singled out one person, an Indonesian Navy, who helped to spread the hoax. Viva seemed intent to hide the person by using *...all parties...*, referring to *...all parties who want to mess up the situation....*

*"He also said KPU asked the Police to track who is the initial person who spread the news included voice recordings and screenshots of the news".* This long sentence was written without using comma, so the readers must divide the sentence himself if he wants to pause for a moment. The interesting thing is the use of *...the police to track who is the initial person...* indicates that the police are investigating the person who spread the hoax through recording and screenshots. The difference is striking with how Kompas wrote their article which carried out its own investigation into the fake news and directly mentioned Twitter and Andi's Twitter Account.

*"Meanwhile, Bawaslu Commissioner, Mochammad Afifudin, said that Bawaslu invited all elements to fight the hoax against the general election in 2019".* Viva has not only quoted information from the head of KPU, but also the Bawaslu commissioner, M. Afifudin. In the sentence before, the use of *...asked the Police to track...* indicates that there is a use of leadership discourse, namely a subtle request. But looking at the quote from the direct interview in this sentence, the use of *...Bawaslu invited all elements...* implies a softer approach in fighting the hoax.

The implication of ...*invited*... was similar to the previous ...*asked*..., however, the leadership discourse in the form of request has been changed into a softer tone.

### **3.2. The Policy Dimension (Mesostructural)**

Fairclough argued that the analysis of discourse serves to determine the process of production, distribution, and use of text. Thus, the three stages must be done in analyzing the dimensions of discourse. Based on the results of observations on Kompas.com, the text production process starts from the writing of news written by Fitria Chusna Farisa, while at the same time concurrently with a reporter covering the news directly from the sources and coming to places related to the news. After this news was written, it must be selected and edited by an editor named Krisiandi who is in charge of assessing weaknesses in writing and excessive information so that it needs to be reconsidered regarding the feasibility of publishing from the news.

Production of the news text from Viva.co.id, only stated that the article was produced by Team Viva, without mentioning the name of the author and editor of the news. Distribution of text in Kompas.com and Viva.co.id uses electronic media or online. Both of these media are supported by a picture that is almost exactly the same, namely the head of the KPU and the Commissioner of Bawaslu, there is little time difference in capturing the events that occurred on Thursday morning, January 3, 2019 and reporting directly to the Tanjung Priok Customs Office. This aims to strengthen the news and to convince the readers. Another interesting bit is that, in Viva, the name Fikri Halim is written as the photographer, while in Kompas the photo is written under the name of the news writer.

Then caption under the photo in Kompas.com has the sentence "KPU and Bawaslu commissioners at the Tanjung Priok Customs Office, North Jakarta" while the caption in Viva.co.id listed "KPU and Bawaslu when conducting inspection at the Customs Office of Tanjung Priok". Both texts have different meaning. Kompas.com with the use of diction ...at the office... has an implication that the planned arrival of the head of KPU and Bawaslu is already known by the Customs, while the use of ...inspection... by Viva.co.id implies that the arrival of the KPU and Bawaslu is unknown by the Customs.

Based on the consumption of text or the parties that are the target audience from both media, Kompas.com and Viva.co.id have net citizens or readers who always use the internet to make things easier, and even spoil them in accessing news information, using only their fingers by selecting the news menu that is served on their respective pages. Based on the Nielsen survey mentioned earlier, the number of online media readers is currently more than 6 million, ranging in age from 20-49 years.

### **3.3. Practical Dimensions of Socio-Culture (Macrostructural)**

The discussion of social cultural practices includes three levels. First is the situational level, related to the

production and context of the situation. Second is institutional level, related to the influence of institutions both internally and externally. The third level is the social level, related to a more macro situation, such as the political system, economic system, and cultural systems of society. The hoax news about seven containers that were found in Tanjung Priok, with the regard to the emergence of hoax news, has become a series of black campaigns in 2019. In fact, 2019 is a political year following the election that will be held on April 2019. It seems as if the news is getting hotter, and increasingly separating the two Presidential candidates from their potential supporters. Although the two Presidential candidates were seen as hostile to each other previously, the emergence of hoaxes made the situation more disadvantageous for the two Presidential candidate camps, especially the camps of Jokowi and Ma'ruf Amin as the incumbent. This matter arose in another discourse which was claimed by several individuals who stated that the photo of the voted ballots shows the ballot favoring Jokowi and Ma'ruf Amin. Meanwhile, the Prabowo camps also claimed that they were also a victim of the hoax news. In social media, net citizens initially considered the news as facts which raises a variety of opinions, one of them is the hashtag #KPUwasitrasatimses which accused KPU as playing favorite. Responding to the hoax that could damage the credibility of the Election administrators, the KPU and Bawaslu acted quickly in seeking facts and truth, such as reviewing directly at the Customs Office in Tanjung Priok on Thursday Morning on January 3, 2019. It was later confirmed that the news was a hoax. KPU and Bawaslu then explained this hoax problem so that it can be dealt with by the police and the perpetrators who spread the hoax can be arrested as soon as possible.

In the social aspect, this news has caused a national political situation to escalate and form a discourse that there are indications that the government or the Jokowi and Ma'ruf camps want to win the election in dishonest ways. This is confirmed by some of the comments conveyed by the opposing camps in several social media, seeming to further indoctrinate ideological understanding of swing voters who are still confused in choosing which presidential candidate to vote for since they want a clean and fair election. Comparing the reaction of both candidates of this hoax, there are some differences to be noted. The black campaign was immediately ignored by Jokowi and Ma'ruf camps following a firm statement from the KPU and Bawaslu that the news about the seven voted ballots was a real hoax. Later on, the police had succeeded in capturing the person who is responsible for spreading the hoax. In addition, according to Kompas.com monitoring, comments from several national figures regarding this hoax, especially from the opposing camps, were removed from their respective social media. It seems to the public as if these national figures are afraid to be held accountable for their comments by the authorities. They dare to criticize but the comments are written in a bad attitude which disturbed the community with the discourse they have spread.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In this section, the researcher presents conclusions from the results of the research that has been done. The conclusion aims to formulate the results of the research and discussion previously explained to answer the main problem which is the final result in this research based on the analysis that has been done. First, in terms of text analysis, the various Linguistic tools used by Kompas.com and Viva.co.id in highlighting the news of '7 Containers of Voted Ballots' in online media basically show the readers that there is an interesting case of hoax that is disseminated massively and systematically by some irresponsible people. There are three tools that are used to present the proof of the hoax, such as through the diction, the use of broad sentences of cause and effect, and the quoting statements directly from the authoritative figures. In discussing politics and hoax, online media tends to favor the governmental body, namely the KPU and Bawaslu. It can be seen from the use of dictation, disputing, and ensuring the news so that it has explicit meaning to describe the actual facts revealed by the authorities together with the KPU and Bawaslu in convincing the public about the news that appears on social media as a hoax that has been proven wrong in a clear manner. Overall, both online news chosen by the author have the same topic of discussion. In other words, online media want to discuss politics and hoax that has been spread to the public through online interaction. In this case, both Kompas.com and Viva.co.id use a lot of repetition of information in each paragraph, but it was packaged well with various language styles. If you look at the quality and quantity aspect, the report on hoax of seven containers of voted ballots is written in a short and concise manner so that it is easy to understand for readers or net citizens.

Second, in terms of practice of text production analysis, the author decided to display two news stories from online media to represent political discourse of hoax. The selection of the Kompas and Viva has gone through various considerations in the institutional space. First, Kompas.com and Viva.co.id. has done editorial activities before producing the text, and then the article went into sorting and selection process. The characteristics of the readers who are dominated by the productive age in using online media is also one of the considerations to construct a political case report about hoax.

Third, in terms of socio-cultural practices analysis, online media seems to be influenced by social problems in the form of increasing black campaigns in this political year situation and condition. The image of Indonesian politics is tarnished only because of the actions from individual or people who make and disseminate hoax on various social media. One of them is the wrong report that was deliberately made to make people panic and reduce the level of public trust to government. The statement from KPU and Bawaslu to express this case is a bright spot for the community, so that it is not easy to trust chain news taken from social media. Furthermore, the case related to hoaxes was handed over and handled by the police so that the perpetrators were arrested and obtained legal status. Therefore, we need to check the truth of the facts before sharing any chain news found in online and social media.

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