
Political Communication Strategy through Unique Posters: A Critical Discourse Analysis Study

Ririn Sulistyowati ¹

¹Corresponding author, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan Yogyakarta, Indonesia
sulistyowatiririn05@gmail.com

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Abstract

Political communication is an important part of a country. Through this kind of communication, a piece of information will be properly conveyed. Using unique sentences in posters' demonstrations is a political communication strategy to attract the government's attention. This study discussed the unique posters used by students when conducting demonstrations as a form of political communication. This study explained the discourse patterns used by students in demonstration posters through critical discourse analysis using Norman Fairclough's theory. In addition, this study also revealed how the posters' language was used as a form of social practice in political communication from the public to the government. Based on the analysis that the researcher had done, it can be concluded that the political communication strategy conducted by students through unique posters in demonstrations has three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Critical Discourse Analysis, Norman Fairclough's, Theory, Political, Posters

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1. Introduction

Political communication is a strategy to convey a message about power, administration, and government policies. Political communication is very important for a country because the information will be conveyed properly through this communication. Political communication



occurs from the government to the public or vice versa. According to Surbakti (2010: 152), political communication conveys information about politics from the government to the public and/or from the public to the government. This research focused on the public's political communication with the government. The sample used in this study was a community of students at the university level. The students are a community that often conducts demonstrations as a means of political communication to represent the public's aspirations.

Demonstrations are a way often chosen by students to convey public aspirations. It is chosen because the public's demands on the government are often granted. Demonstrations are considered a very effective way to express opinions. Various instruments are used in the demonstration, for example, posters. Posters are a very important tool in the demonstration. Various unique and intriguing sentences are often displayed on posters. The purpose of using these kinds of sentences is to attract the public's attention. Many kinds of sentences are usually used by the students, for example, "*Cuti nonton Drakor karna di DPR lebih banyak drama*" (Never watch Korean Drama again since Indonesia's House of Representatives has more drama) and "*Cukup cintaku yang kandas, KPK jangan!*" (It's enough that my love has run aground, KPK doesn't!). These are sentences that often appear in protests. This unique phrase is created to help students attract the government's attention so that their demands are heard. This is in line with Sudjana (2010: 51) states that the purpose of making a poster is to attract attention and make someone remember something written in the poster. Thus, posters have an important role in political communication through demonstrations conducted by students.

Political communication conducted by students using unique sentences in posters is a form of political humor to attract the government's attention. The use of political humor can build solidarity between communities. Humorous language can exert pressure on the government without resorting to violence. The use of political humor is a unique characteristic displayed by students in the millennial era. When compared to demonstrations in the 1900s, demonstrations in the millennial era have very different characteristics. Demonstrations in the 1900s have sharp and harsh characteristics, while demonstrations in the millennial era often use humorous language to suppress the government. This is because millennial-era demonstrators become aware of delivering aspirations without resorting to violence. The use of unique sentences in posters can be an early breakthrough in different values demonstration. The types of political humor that will be discussed in this study are related to sentences or phrases that contain satire, criticism, and taboo things. This is in line with Indrawanto (2008: 22) who states that the aspect of humor sense is something that contained satire, criticism, and things that were taboo.

The previous study discussing the use of discourse in demonstrations had been conducted by Hasibuan in 2020 titled “Hegemony of Millennial Language in Demonstration Slogan: A Critical Discourse Analysis”. This study analyzed the discourse on the demonstration slogan students use as a new phenomenon nowadays. Hasibuan’s research has an affinity for this study, but the focus of his study is hegemony, while the focus of this research is political communication strategy. Similar research discussing demonstration posters had also been conducted by Praditama in 2022 titled “Implicitization of Students’ Demonstrations Poster to Refuse the Criminal Code Draft Laws and KPK Laws Revision: A Discourse Analysis Study”. The research analyzed the meaning and implicature function in students’ demonstration posters for refusing the Criminal Code Draft Laws and KPK Laws Revision. Praditama’s research significantly differs from this research because the research focus and object are different. His research discussed the meaning and implicature function in students’ demonstration posters, then this research discussed the political communication strategy of students’ demonstration posters. In addition, the sample of Praditama’s research was students’ demonstration posters that refuse the Criminal Code Draft Laws and KPK Laws Revision, while this research discussed students’ demonstration posters that were found on online news sites between 2017 to 2022. Based on this, it can be known that Hasibuan’s research (2020) has an affinity for this research, but the research focus is used differently with this study. In addition, this research and Praditama’s research (2022) discuss the demonstration posters, but the research focus and object differ.

This research discussed the meaning contained in the unique posters used by students when conducting demonstrations as a form of political communication. This research revealed the meaning of interesting slogans used by students in demonstrations using the theory of critical discourse analysis proposed by Norman Fairclough. Through critical discourse analysis using Norman Fairclough’s theory, this research explained the discourse patterns used by students in demonstration posters and revealed how the use of discourse in the poster as a form of political communication from the public to the government.

2. Method

This research was qualitative descriptive research. The data collected in qualitative research are words, pictures, and not numbers (Moleong, 2007: 11). Thus, this research used the data in the form of discourse contained in student demonstration posters found in Indonesia’s online news sites from 2017 to 2022. Online news sites are chosen as the data source because a large information is spread through online news sites currently. Everyone uses their handphone every time and everywhere. It is very easy to get what they want from their hand, including news. When compared to newspapers, online news sites are more in demand by the public at this time, so the dissemination of information through online media is faster. The online news sites used in this study were Kompas, Tempo, Media Indonesia, and

Republika. The online news sites were chosen based on the information contained in www.kompas.com. www.kompas.com is the most famous online news site in Indonesia. Thus, the information contained in the online news sites above has a wider level of distribution when compared to other online news sites. The year 2017 to 2022 was chosen because it was the latest five years from the present, so it was expected that this study provided information that had a high level of renewal. After the data were collected, the researcher classified the data based on the type of discourse used in the poster, then the researcher conducted a critical discourse analysis using Norman Fairclough's theory. The data concluded conductively and become the final result of this study.

3. Findings and Discussion

Based on the data classification that had been conducted on 50 students' demonstration posters, there were four unique patterns in the poster discourse. The patterns were comparisons, statements, opposites, and commands. This pattern of productivity could be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Productivity of Poster Discourse Patterns

| No. | Poster Discourse Patterns | Total |
|-----|---------------------------|-------|
| 1. | Comparison | 20 |
| 2. | Statement | 16 |
| 3. | Opposite | 8 |
| 4. | Command | 6 |
| | | 50 |

The table above showed that comparison was the most pattern used by students in writing poster discourse in the demonstration. The example of comparison patterns such as "*Hatiku kosong, kaya otak DPR*" (My heart is empty, like Indonesia's House of Representative members' brains), "*Cuti nonton Drakor karna di DPR lebih banyak drama*" (Never watch Korean Drama again since Indonesia's House of Representatives has more drama) and "*Beli minyak apa open BO, kok mahal banget*" (Buy any oil or open booking online, how come it is really expensive) was very commonly found in the students' posters' discourse. Meanwhile, posters with a pattern of statements such as "*Aksi adalah jalan ninjaku*" (Action is my ninja way), "*Asap ini menghalangi ketampananku*" (This smoke hinders my good looks), and "*DPR udah paling bener tidur, malah disuruh kerja.*" (Indonesia's House of Representatives has been sleeping, don't ask them to work) occupied the second position after the comparison pattern. The third position was occupied by the opposite pattern with the example of phrases: "*Aku benci DPR! Aku cinta Anya.*" (I hate Indonesia's House of Representatives! I love Anya.), "*DPR pedot janji, patah hati tetap aksi*" (Indonesia's House of Representatives is pushing for promises, heartbreak remains action), and "*Hewan ternak, masuk rumah di denda. Tikus bobol anggaran negara, dibiarkan.*" (Farm animals who enter

the house will get fined. Then, rats do corruption to the state budget, and everyone will leave it). The last found pattern was the command pattern, for example, “*Jangan ada papa Setnov.*” (No papa Setnov), “*DPR jangan AFK*” (Indonesia’s House of Representatives don’t be AFK), and “*Turunkan Imam Mahdi!*” (Takedown Imam Mahdi!).

Besides the use of interesting vocabulary, the discourse patterns above are a form of unique communication from posters used by students as a means of political communication with the government to the public’s aspirations. Through the use of unique vocabulary with interesting patterns, posters can attract the reader’s attention more quickly, so the posters’ meaning will also be easier delivered. This is important to do because the main purpose of making posters during demonstrations is to pressure the government in granting the demonstrators’ demands. According to Sumartono (2018: 9), posters aim to direct communicants in conducting an act based on what the communicator wants. The purpose of using the unique posters in the students’ demonstration is to direct the government in agreeing to their demands.

Efforts to meet the demands by using posters in demonstrations can be classified as a political communication strategy. The anagram written on the poster is a tool used to convey aspirations. According to Syarbaini (2021: 45), an anagram is one of the characteristics of political communication. Thus, it can be seen the student demonstration posters as a discourse not only have a form of interest but also have a political mission in it. This is in line with Fairclough’s opinion (1998: 131-132) which states that language carries a certain ideological value. Fairclough connects language with sociopolitical thought in a discourse.

Fairclough divides discourse analysis into three dimensions, namely text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice (Eriyanto, 2011: 286). The text is a linguistic analysis dimension related to vocabulary, semantics, and grammar. Meanwhile, discourse practice is a dimension related to the production and consumption of text. The sociocultural practice is a dimension related to contexts that are outside of the text. This study described the three dimensions in detail as a result of data analysis.

3.1. Text

Text not only displays how an object is depicted but also how the relationships between objects are defined. In Fairclough’s theory, the text needs to be analyzed using a linguistic approach that included formal forms such as vocabulary, grammar, and textual structure (Munfarida, 2014: 9). Each of these formal forms must be further analyzed by drawing on the values contained in them.

Viewed from the language formal form, the poster discourse used by students in demonstrations has four unique patterns. The patterns are comparisons, statements,

opposites, and commands. Each of these patterns has a different productivity as previously described.

The most common comparison pattern used by students was the use of “enough” or “just” and “don’t” or “doesn’t” words in the same sentence. For example: “*Cukup cintaku yang kandas, KPK jangan!*” (It’s enough that my love has run aground, KPK doesn’t!), “*Cukup tolak KUHP saja, jangan tolak cinta saya*” (Just refuse the Criminal Code Law, don’t refuse my love), and “*Cukup skincare aja yang mahal. BBM jangan.*” (Just skincare is expensive. BBM doesn’t!). The pattern of combining “enough” or “just” and “don’t” or “doesn’t” words in the same sentence is a humorous pattern that was favored by the Indonesian public. This pattern was popularized by Dilan, the character in “Dilan 1990” film shown in 2018. The film had a huge appeal, so every sentence that appeared in the film had its position in the public hearts. This is the reason why this pattern was widely used in student demonstration posters. The goal is to attract attention easier.

Meanwhile, when viewed based on the statements pattern, the students used popular phrases, for example: “*Aksi adalah jalan ninjaku*” (Action is my ninja way), “*Gaji kecil ga bakal cukup beli skincare*” (A small salary will not be enough to buy skincare), and “*Cuti nikah ditiadakan, gimana mau mantap-mantapan.*” (Marriage leave is abolished, how do you want to be steady). These phrases such as *jalan ninja*, *skincare*, *mantap-mantapan* (ninja way, skincare, steady) are linguistic forms that are very popular at the moment. These vocabularies are widely used by the Indonesian public for various purposes, including attracting attention by using them in demonstration posters.

The next pattern is the opposite. The opposite pattern used by students in demonstration posters was dominated by the use of sentences with opposing conjunctions, for example: “*Tetap turun ke jalan walau diputusin pacar*” (Still return to the streets even if I am broken up with my girlfriend/boyfriend) and “*Negara tidak memfasilitasi rindu, tetapi mencampuri urusan saat kita bertemu.*” (The state does not facilitate longing, but interferes in affairs when we meet). The use of contradictory conjunctions such as “even” and “but” in a demonstration poster sentence has the function of an affirmation. By giving affirmation to certain topics, attention will be focused on those topics.

The last is the command pattern. The most widely used were “don’t”, “doesn’t”, or “no” words, for example: “*DPR jangan minta dicubit.*” (Indonesia’s House of Representatives doesn’t ask to be pinched), “*Jangan ada papa Setnov.*” (No papa Setnov), and “*DPR jangan AFK*” (Indonesia’s House of Representatives don’t be AFK). The commands sentence pattern using the words “don’t”, “doesn’t”, or “no” is a sentence pattern that was very commonly found in Indonesian. Because it is too common, the interesting thing about it is the accompanying word after “don’t”, “doesn’t”, or “no”, for example, *pinched*, *papa Setnov*, and *AFK*. It can attract attention because it has uniqueness.

After analyzing the language's formal form, it is necessary to conduct a value analysis. Fairclough (2001: 94-109) distinguishes four values found in a language formal form. The four values are experiential value, relational value, expressive value, and connective value. Experiential value is realized through vocabulary used to gain public acceptance and win ideological battles. Relational values focus on how word choice in the text plays a role and contributed to the creation of social relations among the participants. Expressive values are related to the subject and social identity. Connective values are values that connect parts of the text.

The experiential value used by students in demonstration posters can be seen from the type of sentence used, especially in the four patterns previously described. It is used as a tool to achieve the goal of granting the demonstrators guidance. Meanwhile, the relational value used by students in demonstration posters can be seen based on how populous vocabulary selection attracts the poster readers' attention, thus creating a social relationship. The use of declarative and imperative sentences also supports the creation of this value. The next is an expressive value. In posters used by students, this value can be traced through the expressive modalities used. The last is the connective value. Within the scope of demonstration posters, the connective values can be seen from the use of conjunctions, references, and sentence cohesion.

The important concept of Fairclough's theory is intertextuality. In simple terms, intertextuality can be interpreted as the relationship between one text and the next text (Abdurrachman, 2022: 2). The intertextuality in student demonstrations posters can be seen in the sentence patterns used and the popular diction selection as a means of attracting attention. These popular sentence patterns and dictions are obtained from various sources, for example, in *Dilan 1990* film, demonstrators took the phrase a "just" and "don't" or "doesn't" pattern as in the sentence "*Cukup cintaku yang kandas, KPK jangan!*" (It's enough that my love has run aground, KPK doesn't!), from *Naruto* (anime film), demonstrators took the phrase "*jalan ninja*" (ninja way) as in the sentence "*Aksi adalah jalan ninjaku.*" (Action is my ninja way), demonstrators also took the phrase "pushing for promises" or "*pedhot janji*" from the song titled *Pedhot Janji* popularized by Damara De as in the sentence "*DPR pedot janji, patah hati tetap aksi.*" (Indonesia's House of Representatives is pushing for promises, heartbreak remains action.). In addition, the demonstrators also took the phrase "has died" which was often used in obituaries as a means of attracting attention as in the sentence "*Telah meninggal akal sehat wakil rakyat.*" (Has died the common sense of the public's representative).

3.2. Discourse Practice

Discourse practice analysis focuses on how the production and consumption of a text. The text is formed through a discourse practice that determined how the text is produced. In a

demonstration situation, a text (slogan) written on a poster is a discourse produced from a political process that has occurred before. Various government policies that are not following the public interests become the main causes of demonstrations creation. The public represented by students attempts to create political communication with the government through a strategy in the use of posters in demonstrations.

This strategy is important because it is full of political strategies. This is in line with Mulyana's (2005: 57) opinion. He states that politics is a world of tactics and full of strategies. In politics, political communication has a very important position because it occupies the function of a bridge to convey a message. According to Syarbaini (2021: 9), political communication has several elements, namely: (1) delivered by political communicators, (2) the message has political weight concerning power and the state, and (3) integrated with the political system. These three elements have been fulfilled in demonstrations conducted by students. In the demonstrations, students play an active role as political communicators in representing the public's aspirations. The message conveyed has political weight because it concerns power and the state. In 2017, students held a demonstration to refuse the increment in basic electricity prices. In 2018, students held demonstrations demanding the government stabilize the nation's economy and save Indonesia's democracy. In 2019, students held a demonstration to evaluate the three-year performance of President Joko Widodo and Vice President Jusuf Kalla's leadership, and students also held a demonstration that conducted a rejection demonstration of the draft laws that weaken the Corruption Eradication Commission or KPK. In 2020, students held demonstrations against the Job Creation Law and demanded that the government might cancel the Omnibus Law. In 2021, students held a demonstration to convey several demands about the Job Creation Law. In 2022, students held demonstrations against the postponement of the 2024 elections and the rejection of the increase in staple food and BBM prices. A series of demonstrations conducted by these students have political weight and are integrated with the nature of the political system.

Students as communicators in the political communication process play a very important role as public opinion facilitators. As opinion leaders, students play a large social role in the public opinion process. Students play an active role as public representatives so the political messages conveyed by students are directed to achieve political goals that give benefit the public. These political messages are conveyed through slogans on posters that are produced very uniquely to attract the readers' attention. Students use anagrams in posters to facilitate political communication. The slogans written on the posters are depictions of the public packaged condition in humor politics. Here, it is seen that language is the main instrument in telling the social reality. The language is used as a conceptualization tool and a political narrative tool.

Public opinion through demonstration posters is the embodiment of the masses' power. When public opinions have been created and conveyed through demonstrations, the government must be quick to respond by providing feedback. If not, it will cause political controversy. The demands made by the demonstrators will be immediately responded to by the government in the form of approval to grant these demands. This causes the demonstrations conducted as a step of political communication to the government. Students use demonstrations as a means of distributing text. With this demand granted, it proves that language is not only used for communication in general but the language can also be used for communication with a specific purpose as a social practice. This is in line with Hamdan's opinion (2019: 23) which states that language as a form of social practice is more than the use of words by a person to express or reflect meaning to others. Thus, the use of language in political communication is fundamental. Language can be used as a means of political communication strategies.

Political communication strategies need to be structured flexibly, so the objectives of political communication can be achieved effectively. Political communicators must understand the properties of communication to determine the media type to be taken and the communication techniques to be established (Effendy, 2004: 33). Students as political communicators understand this thing, so political communication flexibility is realized through the use of posters with interesting slogans. Instead of using language with a sharp and harsh character like the demonstrators of the 1900s, millennial demonstrators prefer to use unique and intriguing slogans to put pressure on the government. This is because millennial-era demonstrators have become aware to deliver aspirations without resorting to violence.

Politics and strategy are two things that must be connected for achieving the goals. The strategy of political communication in student demonstrations has a central role in achieving the demands of the public interest. Here, the political communication strategy is interpreted as a large-scale plan with a future orientation to achieve certain goals.

3.3. Sociocultural Practice

The sociocultural practice is a dimension that deals with the outside context of the text. This sociocultural condition is divided into three parts, namely: situational, institutional, and social (Fauzan, 2013: 215). The situational condition is a unique situation when a text is created. The institutional condition influences the organization institution on the resulting text. The social conditions are macro things in society, such as the political system, economic system, or culture of society.

Viewed from a situational dimension, the poster discourse created by students has a background situation related to government policies that are considered detrimental to

society. The situation that led to the emergence of demonstrations in 2017 was the increase rate of Non-Tax State Revenue or PNBPN and the increase in the basic electricity price of the 900 VA group. Meanwhile, the situation that led to the emergence of demonstrations in 2018 was student dissatisfaction with the government regarding economic and democratic instability. 2019 was a year full of demonstrations because that year many demonstrations were conducted by students with various situations behind them, including a series of draft laws that were considered to be afflicting the public and the existence of draft laws that weaken the Corruption Eradication Commission or KPK. Another situation that caused the demonstrations is the ratification of the RKUHP and the KPK Law, which was considered a form of weakening the KPK. In addition, the existence of problematic articles in the Manpower Law and the Land Law also caused the demonstrations in 2019. The insistence on immediately passing Laws on the Elimination of Sexual Violence, and stopping the arrest of activists was also the cause of the demonstrations. In 2020, the demonstrations conducted by students were motivated by the ratification of the Job Creation Law and the Omnibus Law which were considered detrimental to the public. Even in 2021, the Job Creation Law was still the cause of the student registration demo. Meanwhile, in 2022 the situation that caused the demonstrations was the planned postponement of the 2024 elections, as well as the increase in the price of staple food and BBM.

The different situations above have led to the emergence of different poster discourses. For example, the sentence "*Cukup cintaku yang kandas, KPK jangan!*" (It's enough that my love has run aground, KPK doesn't!) appeared at the 2019 demonstrations because at that time the situation behind the demonstrations was the existence of a Law that was considered to weaken the KPK. Meanwhile, the sentence "*Gaji kecil ga bakal cukup beli skincare.*" (A small salary will not be enough to buy skincare) appeared in 2020 because the situation behind the demonstrations was the existence of the Job Creation Law which was considered to be able to harm the public. This is in line with Eriyanto's opinion (2011: 322) which states that a text is produced in a distinctive and unique condition or atmosphere so one text can be different from another.

Viewed from an institutional dimension, the practice of producing poster discourse created by students can be influenced by the institution or organization where the students are based. This institution can be related to internal or outside campus organizations. The conjecture that often arises related to this institutional dimension is the existence of political elites participating in student demonstrations. It was stated at www.tempo.co "Minister of Law and Human Rights (Menkumham) Yasonna Laoly estimated that certain parties rode student demonstrations against the Criminal Code Laws in several areas for political purposes.". However, based on Hamid's opinion (2019) published in www.tirto.id, accusations related to political elites riding on students were seen as a form of the moral defeat of the government. Although allegations related to the involvement of political elites riding on

student demonstrations often arise, there is no concrete evidence related to this until now, so it is necessary to conduct a more focused and in-depth study related to the political elite's influence on demonstrations conducted by students. Thus, the public will know whether the students who conducted the demonstrations purely voiced public unrest or just acted as political vehicles only.

The last is the social dimension. In this dimension, social factors greatly influence the emergence of a discourse. The social dimension has similarities with the situational dimension. The difference is the situational dimension leads to the micro aspect of time or atmosphere but the social dimension leads to the macro aspect of a discourse creation, for example, a political system, economic system, or cultural society system. This system deals with who have power, what values are dominant in society, and how the ruling party can influence the other party. Viewed from this dimension, the ruling party in the creation of the demonstration poster discourse is the students. Students use discourse as a means to pressure the government for granting their demands. One successful example of discourse used as a means to suppress the government can be seen in the granting of delays in the passage of the Criminal Code Laws in 2019. This proved that discourse has high effectiveness as a political communication strategy from the public to the government. The frequent granting of public demands conducted through demonstrations is clear evidence that political communication strategies are indispensable in political communication.

From the preceding points, it can be concluded that it is crucial to emphasize an English textbook must comply with the criteria for an appropriate English textbook. The most important aspect of an English textbook is that it meets the needs of students, supports the aims of national education or the existing curriculum, and is suitable for each country's context or environment. Furthermore, the EFL textbook used in this study has good quality and meets the criteria, particularly the BSNP criterion and William's (1983) theory.

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysis conducted in this research, it can be concluded that the political communication strategy conducted by students through unique sentences in demonstration posters has three layers of dimensions: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Viewed from the text dimensions related to the formal language form, the poster discourse students use in demonstrations has four unique patterns. The patterns are comparisons, statements, opposites, and commands. In addition, there are four important values in this dimension, namely experiential value, relational value, expressive value, and connective value. Viewed from discourse practice dimensions that focus on how the production and consumption of a text, three elements of communication strategy politics have been fulfilled, namely (1) delivered by political communicators, (2) the message has a political weight that concerns power and the state, and (3) integrated with the political system. Viewed from

sociocultural practice dimensions, three aspects have been studied: situational, institutional, and social. Unique posters created by students in situational demonstrations have different backgrounds of creation situations. Internal campus organizations or other outside campus organizations can influence posters. The macro aspects of poster discourse creation influence the presence of this poster discourse.

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