



Discourse Analysis of Digital Hoaxes as a Critical Literacy Strategy in Indonesian Language Education

(Analisis Wacana Hoaks Digital sebagai Strategi Literasi Kritis dalam Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia)

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Abstract: A modern society's response to the hoax phenomena in the information age exposes challenges to confidence, information integrity, and significant public health consequences. This study intends to help increase literacy and community resistance to the spread of hoaxes, particularly emphasising the role of critical literacy and digital literacy. This study employed a thorough and systematic qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the hoax phenomenon. There are two primary stages to this method. First, literature analysis provides the foundation for comprehending the features and consequences of incorrect information. Second, a field approach was conducted using an online survey with ten questions. A survey of 108 respondents found that efforts to enhance media literacy, rigorous education, and empower individuals to become more informed consumers. The findings of this study reveal that several sorts of hoaxes are often encountered in the digital age, each with its unique set of features. One research focus is on political hoaxes, which are frequently used to influence public opinion or harm political opponents' reputations by spreading false claims about policies or utterances that are taken out of context. The poll results reveal that people's critical literacy must be strengthened, particularly in information verification and news interpretation.

Keywords Critical Discourse Analysis, Critical Literacy, Digital Hoaxes, Indonesian language education, Multimodal Texts

Abstrak: Tantangan masyarakat modern terhadap fenomena hoaks di era informasi, menyiratkan ancaman terhadap kepercayaan, integritas informasi, dan dampak serius terhadap kesehatan masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan kontribusi pada peningkatan literasi dan ketahanan masyarakat terhadap penyebaran hoaks, dengan fokus pada peran literasi kritis dan literasi digital. Dalam penelitian ini, pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif yang cermat dan terstruktur digunakan untuk menggali fenomena hoaks. Pendekatan ini terdiri dari dua tahap utama. Pertama, analisis literatur menjadi landasan untuk memahami karakteristik dan dampak yang terkandung dalam informasi palsu. Kedua, pendekatan lapangan dilakukan melalui survei dilakukan secara online dengan menggunakan kuesioner yang terdiri dari sepuluh pertanyaan. Hasil survei dari 108 responden menyatakan upaya perbaikan literasi media, edukasi intensif, dan pemberdayaan masyarakat untuk menjadi konsumen informasi yang lebih cerdas menjadi sangat mendesak. Hasil Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terdapat berbagai jenis hoaks yang umum ditemui dalam era digital, dan masing-masing memiliki karakteristiknya sendiri. Salah satu fokus penelitian adalah pada hoaks politik, yang sering digunakan untuk memengaruhi opini publik atau merusak reputasi lawan politik melalui penyebaran klaim palsu tentang kebijakan atau pernyataan yang diambil dari konteksnya. Temuan survei menunjukkan bahwa literasi kritis masyarakat perlu ditingkatkan, terutama dalam hal verifikasi informasi dan analisis berita.

Kata Kunci Analisis wacana krisis, Hoaks digital, Literasi kritis, Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia, Teks multimodal

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, where information circulates rapidly and widely, society faces increasingly complex challenges related to the hoax phenomenon. Hoaxes are now a pressing concern in both mass and social media, as they spread information whose truth cannot be verified (Sosiawan & Wibowo, 2020). A hoax is generally defined as a false or misleading message intentionally disguised to resemble factual information. Hoax news often mimics legitimate reporting but contains lies, accusations, or fabricated narratives without a consistent pattern (Rasywir & Purwarianti, 2015). These deceptive texts undermine public trust and compromise the integrity of information systems. As noted by Chan (2021), identifying and assessing hoax news is now critical, particularly as users struggle to authenticate the sources they engage with. This aligns with the findings in Pennycook & Rand (2019) which showed that misinformation spreads rapidly on social media due to limited verification behaviours. David et al., (2018) also emphasised the scientific imperative to understand and address the spread of fake news.

In education, particularly language education, hoaxes are not merely information anomalies but texts that require deeper literacy awareness. Their linguistic forms, rhetorical structures, and persuasive strategies can be analysed to develop students' interpretive and evaluative skills. Linguistics, therefore, plays a key role in exposing how language is used manipulatively to construct hoax narratives, influence public opinion, and circulate disinformation. Through such a lens, hoaxes become rich sources for cultivating deeper language awareness and critical literacy among learners. As discussed by Zulfadhli et al., (2021) hoaxes offer a fertile ground for applying linguistic and discourse analysis frameworks in identifying manipulative language use in public communication. These forms of textual deception mirror are classified by Tandoc et al., (2018) as a typology of fake news, blurring the boundaries between journalism, parody, and propaganda.

Discourse analysis is vital for unpacking how hoaxes function beyond content and examining how language conveys ideology, power, and manipulation. Historical and academic examples such as the Pilttdown hoax and the Sokal affair reveal how hoaxes critique dominant knowledge systems and expose vulnerabilities in scientific and societal structures. In the Indonesian context, the rapid spread of fake news and hate speech reflects a significant gap in public literacy (Hasanudin et al., 2024), indicating the urgent need to strengthen critical reading competencies, primarily through national language education. This is reinforced by Phippen, et al., (2021) who stress that discourse-centered strategies are crucial to combat the epistemic harm caused by online disinformation. McDougall (2019) also asserts that fostering critical thinking and resilience through media literacy is essential for civic engagement in the face of disinformation.

This lack of critical literacy represents a substantial challenge for Indonesian language education. Teachers and curricula must now address hoaxes as misinformation and texts embedded with ideological and persuasive intentions. Integrating discourse-based literacy strategies can equip students with tools to interrogate and deconstruct such texts (Hasanudin et al., 2024). Moreover, the impact of hoaxes extends far beyond misinformation; it can affect public health, politics, and intergroup relations, as shown by vaccine disinformation during the COVID-19 pandemic. These consequences reinforce the need for educational responses beyond technical detection and promote critical engagement with language and meaning. As Delaney et al., 2022 emphasis, classroom engagement with real-life disinformation fosters transformational learning and socio-political awareness.

However, educational intervention through discourse-based literacy practices is needed beyond technical detection to train learners to become critical readers and informed citizens. Initiatives such as those developed by Popat et al., (2016) and Kumar et al., (2016) have made advances in hoax

detection techniques, while insights from [Chey \(2017\)](#) explore the social and methodological impact of hoaxes. This effort is essential to ensure the public can distinguish between credible and non-credible information and support an open information environment. Previous studies have shown that literacy-based gamification strategies can significantly improve public engagement in information processing and critical evaluation ([Dinihari et al., 2024](#)). A gap remains between technological responses and pedagogical strategies in formal language education. This research seeks to bridge that gap by positioning hoaxes as discursive artefacts through which students develop critical awareness, media literacy, and sociolinguistic competence ([Neuman et al., 2019](#)). [Cherner & Curry \(2019\)](#) also underscore the urgency of preparing future teachers to teach media and discourse literacy as a response to 'fake news'. This is also reflected in [Orhan \(2023\)](#) who found a significant link between new media literacy, critical thinking dispositions, and the ability to detect fake news.

As social and communication phenomena, hoaxes play a diverse and often paradoxical role in the context of literacy. Christopher G. Rea suggests that hoaxes can be considered a theoretical paradigm that challenges categories such as creativity and value and the method itself, suggesting that hoaxes can be tools for critical thinking and analysis ([Cherner & Curry](#)). [Hynes et al. \(2012\)](#) added that hoaxes can draw our attention to the rules and norms of social scientific practice, thus reinforcing our commitment to them, highlighting the role of hoaxes in questioning and strengthening social and academic structures ([Hynes et al., 2012](#)). In the political context, [Utami \(2018\)](#) identifies that hoaxes can create a culture based on shared trust among communities and have the potential to be a means of political partisanship, showing how hoaxes can influence and manipulate public opinion. However, [Jennrich \(1979\)](#) criticised that while the literature on hoaxes can stimulate academic inquiry, its application in practical education is still limited, pointing to a gap between theory and practice in media literacy ([Mathew et al., 2012](#)). Additionally, it was discovered that the terms 'false expression' and 'exaggerated expression' are the most frequently used misleading elements, with both appearing equally throughout the advertisement ([Amalia & Suhandano, 2023](#); [Dinihari et al., 2024](#)).

To counter hoaxes effectively, digital and media literacy must be strengthened. Studies by [Tsaniyah et al., \(2019\)](#) and [Putri et al., \(2020\)](#) highlight how digital literacy initiatives help individuals discern credible sources, primarily through accessible formats like YouTube or online articles. [Fleming & O'Carroll \(2010\)](#) assert that hoax producers often manipulate text genres; hence, students must also become sophisticated genre analysts. Discourse analysis, which focuses on genre, stance, and intertextuality, aligns perfectly with these literacy needs and should be integrated into Indonesian language curricula ([Putri et al., 2020](#); [Rasywir & Purwarianti, 2015](#)). This is consistent with findings by [Jones-Jang et al.,a \(2021\)](#), who affirm that information literacy is critical in equipping individuals to recognise and reject fake news. Supporting this, [Shu et al., \(2017\)](#) provides a data mining perspective on how fake news can be algorithmically detected, yet still requires human literacy to interpret its discourse strategies.

These insights align with the principles of discourse analysis, where genre, intertextuality, and rhetorical stance are key elements to be critically examined in the classroom. [León et al. \(2022\)](#) proposed that the findings of hoax research can increase media literacy in dealing with disinformation and contribute to the development of an automatic hoax detection system in the future, underlining the relevance of research in informing literacy practice. Also, [Kumar et al., \(2016\)](#) discovered that while most hoaxes on Wikipedia are identified quickly and have little impact, some are long-lasting and widely cited, highlighting the difficulty in recognizing and correcting more complex hoaxes. Overall, information and media literacy are needed to identify and counteract hoaxes ([Robinson & Bell, 2013](#); [Sellnow et al., 2012](#)). Information literacy significantly increases the likelihood of identifying fake news stories, underscoring the importance of critical literacy in an increasingly connected and disinformation-prone society ([Jones-Jang et al., 2021](#)).

Thus, incorporating hoax analysis in Indonesian language education is timely and pedagogically significant to foster students' media, information, and critical literacy competencies. Critical literacy plays a vital part in societal understanding of information. It is based on research and themes of social construction and politics. Critical information literacy allows for a thorough

examination of the social and political elements of libraries and information, empowering students to think critically about information production and use. This stresses the significance of knowing the context underlying the information received as highlighted by [Tewell \(2018\)](#) in his studies. This study positions hoax discourse as an authentic and strategic material in Indonesian language education to cultivate such critical information awareness.

Critical literacy enables students to decode texts and question the sociopolitical structures that shape them. It emphasizes context, ideology, and power, which are key study themes ([Tewell, 2018](#); [Beilin, 2013](#); [Wickline, 2017](#)) and how critical literacy connects to real-world issues such as gender roles and social equity ([Neuman et al., 2019](#); [Porterfield, 2018](#); [Dinihari et al., 2025](#)). By incorporating hoax discourse, Indonesian language classrooms can support linguistic development, civic awareness, and ethical reasoning. This aligns with the work of [Muhammadiyah et al., \(2023\)](#) who argue that CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) is a necessary response to technological disinformation in educational settings. When supported by media literacy instruction, critical thinking skills enhance students' ability to distinguish between accurate and deceptive content ([Machete & Turpin, 2020](#)).

Critical literacy reflects the need to engage varied social and cultural views by encouraging people to examine information from several points of view. It also enables knowledgeable and in-depth evaluations of the value of information from varied social and cultural contexts ([Neuman et al., 2019](#)). In the context of social change and gender roles, critical information literacy uses critical techniques in education and primary source analysis to effect social change and address gender roles in communication ([Porterfield, 2018](#)). This study positions hoax discourse as an authentic and strategic material in Indonesian language education to cultivate such critical information awareness.

Ultimately, critical literacy teaches learners to understand and critique the relationship between language and power ([Janks, 2000](#)). Through discourse analysis of hoaxes, language classrooms can function as platforms for empowering students to resist manipulation, evaluate information ethically, and engage responsibly in public discourse. As hoaxes continue to shape opinion and policy, especially in contexts with low literacy resilience, this study proposes a discourse-based framework for integrating hoax analysis into Indonesian language education as a timely and strategic intervention. [Neuman et al.](#) suggest that such frameworks are essential for producing critically literate citizens capable of ethical judgment in complex information ecologies ([Neuman et al., 2019](#)).

Through discourse analysis of hoaxes, Indonesian language education can serve as a platform to teach students how language is used to dominate, resist, and reconstruct meanings, aligning with the goals of critical literacy. Critical literacy contributes to the fight against hoaxes. The ability to critically absorb information, perceive context, and evaluate material is essential when dealing with fake news and misleading information. In today's digital age, digital literacy is essential to critical literacy. In both formal and informal settings, critical literacy education is critical for providing individuals with the skills needed to traverse complicated and often deceptive information landscapes.

The results of various studies reveal critical literacy in recognizing and opposing fake news. [Fitri & Fitriana \(2020\)](#) highlighted the contribution of libraries and literacy awareness movements in combating the spread of hoaxes, emphasizing effective strategies. The importance of developing digital literacy skills as a form of defense against hoaxes was emphasized by [Irhamdhika \(2022\)](#) showing that increasing digital literacy can strengthen critical skills in identifying fake news in an era of disruption. Hence, this research aims to analyze the discourse structure of hoaxes and propose a model for integrating critical literacy strategies into Indonesian language classrooms. These findings reinforce the urgency of designing instructional strategies that empower students to critically deconstruct hoax texts as part of national language and literacy learning.

Furthermore, [Tsaniyah & Juliana \(2019\)](#) emphasize the urgency of developing digital literacy skills to ward off hoaxes. Digital literacy facilitates understanding of context and supports deep criticism of content. [Asnaria et al., \(2022\)](#) and her colleagues added a dimension of unity character, where digital literacy helps students find valid information and reduce the spread of hoaxes. Moreover, [Wijayati et al., \(2021\)](#) research shows a moderate correlation between digital media literacy and perceptions of hoaxes, confirming the significance of this relationship. Critical literacy involves

processing information and understanding language and power as highlighted by Janks (2000). A mature understanding of language and power supports the ability to identify hoaxes, emphasizing that critical literacy education and its orientation are interdependent.

Through a discourse-analytic lens, this study will explore how hoaxes function as texts of power, ideology, and persuasion elements integral to Indonesian language education. As a result, we must recognise that hoaxes can have a wide range of repercussions, including influencing cultural discussions (Wardani & Sabardila, 2020) and public debate to undermine scientific integrity in education. A critical and reflective response to hoaxes is key to ensuring the truth of information and maintaining public trust. Therefore, when encountering news—regardless of its source—we must adopt a cautious and prudent attitude to preserve the integrity of information and foster a society grounded in truth. This research is very important to be carried out as a joint effort to increase people’s literacy and resilience to the negative impact of the spread of hoaxes. This article proposes a discourse-based pedagogical framework that integrates hoax analysis into Indonesian language teaching to cultivate critical literacy skills in students as a strategic response to the hoax phenomenon.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive research design, supported by fundamental quantitative analysis, to examine the discourse characteristics of hoaxes and their potential integration into language education to strengthen critical literacy. The research was conducted in two main stages. The first stage involved a literature-based discourse analysis, reviewing previous studies, theoretical frameworks, and documented cases of widely circulated hoaxes. This stage aimed to identify linguistic features, persuasive strategies, and ideological structures within hoax texts to position them as discourse-based learning materials in literacy education. The second stage employed a field method through an online survey of ten structured questions designed to assess public understanding of fake news, strategies for verifying information, and habits related to consuming and sharing content on social media.

This research draws on two primary sources of data. First, a case study of a widely spread hoax text was analyzed to provide a concrete example of how discursive elements shape meaning and influence public perception. The text was examined using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, following Teun A. van Dijk’s model, which includes text structure analysis, cognitive processing, and socio-political context. Second, a quantitative survey involving 110 respondents was conducted via Google Forms. The responses were used to assess levels of public awareness and the ability to evaluate information, both essential components of critical literacy. Qualitative analysis was applied to interpret the discourse features of the hoax text, while descriptive statistical analysis was used to evaluate digital behavior and critical awareness among respondents. The integration of these two analytical approaches offers a comprehensive understanding of how hoaxes function as texts of power and ideology, and how their analysis can be pedagogically adapted to enhance students’ critical literacy skills in Indonesian language education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research shows that digital hoaxes have complex linguistic and ideological characteristics, which can be utilized in Indonesian language education to strengthen critical literacy. Through a critical discourse analysis approach, it was found that political, health, technological and disaster hoaxes contain narrative patterns that are persuasive and manipulative. The pattern includes using ideological metaphors, over-generalizations, and multimodal disinformation in the form of doctored images and videos. These findings support Van Dijk’s thinking regarding the relationship between text structure, social cognition, and sociopolitical context in discourse production.

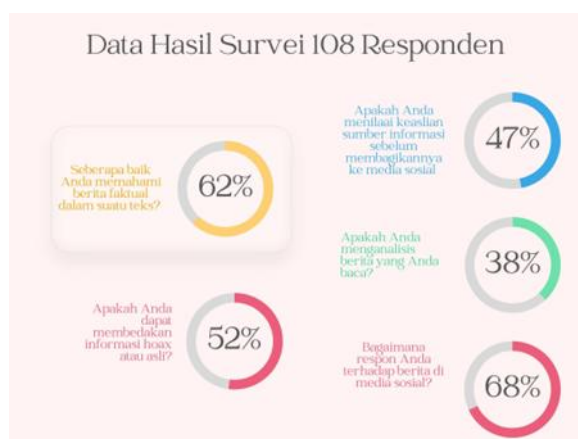
Research identifies hoaxes that commonly circulate within digital spaces, particularly in contexts characterized by low levels of media literacy. Political hoaxes are especially prevalent in environments where emotionally charged narratives override rational, evidence-based reasoning (Sosiawan & Wibowo, 2020). These hoaxes often include misleading policy statements, quotes taken

out of context, or entirely fabricated claims intended to discredit political actors. Similarly, health-related hoaxes such as misinformation about vaccines, fraudulent treatments, or pseudo-medical products pose significant risks to public health by influencing individual decision-making.

In line with aforementioned studies, there are several common hoaxes, each with unique characteristics. First, political hoaxes are a prevalent type of hoax as fake news is regularly used in political contexts to influence public opinion or undermine political opponents. The hoaxes may involve incorrect policy pronouncements, statements taken out of context, and fabricated disputes. Second, health hoaxes which are a type of prank that can cause injury. False health information, such as fraudulent medications, vaccine conspiracy theories, or questionable treatment practices, can significantly impact an individual's health choices. In addition, misinformation related to technology—such as fake computer virus warnings, software scams, or misleading product claims—is categorized as a technology hoax. This ruse can deceive users into installing malware or granting access to personal information. Also, disaster and emergency hoaxes could involve false information concerning natural disasters or emergencies, such as earthquakes, floods, or disease outbreaks. This hoax spreads swiftly on social media during a disaster, generating panic or confusion. Given the possibility of hoaxes, it is critical always to verify the information received, especially if it originates from unknown or untrustworthy sources. Using critical literacy skills and locating reputable sources of information is crucial for preventing the spread of hoaxes and preserving information integrity.

Media and information literacy interventions significantly increase students' ability to identify fake news and resist misinformation (Al Zou'bi, 2024). Results from an online survey of 110 participants revealed that the majority demonstrated a solid understanding of factual news, with 62% reporting confidence in their comprehension. However, media literacy related to information source verification is still low; only 47% of the respondents who verified the information. Then, as many as 52% of respondents were confident in distinguishing hoax news from the real news, indicating sufficient media literacy to recognize fake news. Despite this, only 38% of the respondents often analyzed the news they read, while the 68% of them responded to news based on the authenticity of the information.

These findings reflect a significant gap between awareness and the actual practice of critical literacy. While some respondents believe they can recognize hoaxes, they do not verify information and tend to overlook it, indicating a lack of deeper discourse understanding. This supports the findings of Jones-Jang et al., (2021) who noted that surface-level information literacy is insufficient without critical engagement strategies. Moreover, the results align with Al Zou'bi's (2024) who emphasizes on the need for structured educational interventions to strengthen resistance to misinformation. This study addresses that gap by integrating hoax discourse as pedagogical material.



Picture 1. Results of the Online Survey on the Level of Critical Literacy of the Community

The analysis of the poll results reveals several pressing issues that must be resolved. First, the finding of 47% of respondents, who routinely verified the legitimacy of material, emphasizes the urgent need to strengthen social media users' ability to understand new information and assess its

accuracy. As this issue must be addressed, an extensive education campaign was launched to strengthen verification technique.

Secondly, regarding news analysis skills, it was found that only 38% of the respondents actively assessed news content, reflecting a lack of media literacy. To address this, a more proactive effort is needed to enhance individuals' ability to interpret and understand information within its proper context, since it is vital to be able to spot fraud on social media (Dewi, 2022; Ismayanti & Setiawan, 2021; Jamaludin & Setiawan, 2022; Januantoro & Romadhan, 2019; Mundhir & Djurban, 2021; Utami & Sari, 2018). This study addresses the gap by incorporating hoax-related discourse into Indonesian language instruction as a learning resource.

Thirdly, while most respondents believed they could detect hoaxes, nearly half were unsure, at 51%. The lack of analytical practice is consistent with the theoretical framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), especially Van Dijk's model, which emphasizes textual structure, cognitive processing, and socio-political context. The hoax texts examined in this study, particularly those targeting political figures or minority groups, demonstrate how ideological narratives are constructed through evaluative language, metaphors, and framing strategies. The approach is to provide further education on detecting and preventing the spread of hoaxes, emphasizing developing key abilities. For example, many units in Indonesia, particularly in Jakarta, provide counselling on information literacy, which is necessary for a contemporary society as the capital city.

Fourth, 68% of respondents reported reacting to the news they encountered, indicating a strong influence on public opinion and behavior. This highlights the need for solutions that integrate media literacy. The analysis further shows that hoax narratives frequently employ multimodal elements—such as images, videos, and emotionally charged captions—to strengthen their persuasive power. A case study of a manipulated TikTok video illustrates how older footage was taken out of context and restructured to support a specific political agenda. These findings underscore the importance of equipping students with the skills to critically interpret written, visual, and audiovisual texts—skills that are fundamental to critical media literacy (Dinihari et al., 2023).

These findings aforementioned need to be addressed immediately. Responding to these challenges requires cross-sectoral efforts, involving governments, educational institutions, and social media platforms. Comprehensive solutions, such as ongoing education campaigns, the establishment of media literacy policies, and the development of easily accessible information verification tools, should be the focus to ensure that people can understand and respond critically to information in this digital era. As an urgent example, let us consider the following case that has attracted media attention recently, where the information disseminated has caused confusion and concern among the public.

This research will then analyze hoax discourse and propose its integration into Indonesian language learning. The results confirm that hoaxes are social issues and pedagogical opportunities. Through discourse analysis, hoaxes can be used to develop students' critical awareness of how language is used to construct, manipulate, or challenge social ideologies. Compared to previous studies, such as Cherner & Curry (2019), which focus on teacher preparation in media literacy, this research offers an innovative contribution by proposing authentic hoax texts as teaching material in formal language education. This approach bridges the gap between theory and classroom application, particularly in national language curricula that aim to cultivate critical and reflective citizens.

This shows how important media literacy is in today's information era, where the following hoax news is a prominent case. The analysis of hoax images in the context of cases is becoming increasingly relevant because the images included in fake news can play a key role in influencing public perception. Therefore, efforts to understand and critically analyze the images in the news are essential to respond to the challenge of disinformation and ensure that the public can distinguish between facts and hoaxes, like one of the examples in Picture 2 below.



Picture 2. News Spreads in the Community

TikTok user @535simberz posted a 1-minute and 28-second video suggesting that the government was informing people with mental illnesses about their voting rights. The video fueled a widespread belief that the 2024 election commission (KPU) was tracking individuals with mental disorders merely to create content. This notion was likened to how social assistance programs are often accused of favoring relatives of those in power. The message implied that authorities might claim these individuals are on the voter list to justify aid distribution—though in reality, the aid would go to the families of decision-makers.

Further, the statement in Picture 3 sparked numerous reactions across various social media platforms and was widely shared beyond TikTok. It triggered a wave of speculation among users who are easily swayed by unverified or misleading information. On Facebook, for instance, the issue resurfaced in connection with a 2018 post carrying the narrative “CRAZY PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION.”



Picture 3. Television ads: “Crazy people” participate in the election

There were 477 comments on the TVOneNews post, along with 1,300 shares by social media users to other accounts. Many of the comments targeted and demonized the candidate pair, Jokowi and Ma’ruf Amin. One comment by a user named Gus Agus stated: *“Why are crazy people voting... Because sane people no longer want to vote for Jokowi 👍 Crazy people who beat scholars cannot be prosecuted because they are crazy 🤪 Crazy people are legally voting for Jokowi because he is equally crazy 🤪 That is why the honorable Jokowi, if he is already at the top, should not be arrogant or deceive the common people. Especially if he attacks or criminalizes religious scholars—beware, in 2019, if Mr. Jokowi doesn’t win, he will be slaughtered by the honorable Buk Mega Yang.”* Another hostile narrative also emerged, labeling the Jokowi–Amin pair with derogatory terms like *Cebong* and *Raja Cebong*.

This fake news, or hoax, appears and spreads for various reasons. For political purposes in 2024, hoaxes are used to influence public opinion or sway election results by circulating false

information or damaging the reputations of political rivals. Such actions may involve black campaigns, political propaganda, and deliberate attempts to manipulate voters. In terms of sensationalism and financial gain, fake news and misleading content often spread through social media and unverified news sites, generating income through ad clicks and views. Some individuals create and distribute false information purely for profit, ignoring both the truth and its potential consequences.

Controversial or fear-inducing hoaxes tend to attract more engagement on social media. In some cases, individuals may intentionally spread misinformation to cause unrest or gain attention. Others, driven by specific political or ideological agendas, may use fake news to push or defend their beliefs regardless of factual accuracy. In a climate of intense political polarization, individuals or groups may continue to share fake news—even when aware of its falsehood—to reinforce their identity within their political party or faction.

Fake news is a serious threat because it can erode democracy, create confusion, and impact critical social decisions. In this digital age, it is essential to stay informed and think critically when consuming information. Strengthening media literacy and promoting accountability are necessary steps. This includes media literacy education, verifying information, practicing critical thinking, using fact-checkers, avoiding echo chambers, reporting misinformation, and engaging with content ethically. In the case discussed, the author conducted a fact-check of the video content. Tempo's verification showed that the TikTok video used footage from a CNN TV news report originally aired on Tuesday, March 19, 2019. However, that news had nothing to do with election data collection. It reported on the socialization of voting procedures for individuals with mental disabilities or mental disorders (ODGJ) at a boarding school in Ngawi Regency, East Java, carried out by volunteers in preparation for the 2019 election.

It is crucial to clarify that “people with mental disabilities” (ODGJ) and “insane persons” are entirely different terms. Medically, the term “insane” is not recognized—doctors emphasize that there is no diagnosis of “insanity” in the clinical field. ODGJ refers to individuals with mental health conditions whose abilities vary and cannot be equated with being “crazy.” Moreover, their right to vote is protected under the 1945 Constitution, which ensures equal legal recognition, protection, and treatment before the law. Article 43 of Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights further guarantees citizens the right to participate in government. In the 2019 election, the Constitutional Court ruled that ODGJ individuals whose mental disorders or memory loss are not permanent still have the right to vote. Only those in moderate or severe conditions are exempt from this obligation.

In conclusion, the circulating narrative is misleading. The TikTok post claiming that the KPU recorded “crazy” individuals as voters for the 2024 Presidential Election is false. The footage used comes from a 2019 news report and has no relation to current election data collection. Moreover, the KPU never recorded “crazy” people in elections. There is a clear distinction between a person labeled as “crazy” and someone with a mental disorder (ODGJ).



Picture 4. Declaring the News, a Hoax or Fake

Thus, after verification and in-depth research of the circulating content, we arrive at the inescapable conclusion that @535simberz's post via his TikTok account has no basis in truth and must be classified as a fake. This conclusion not only confirms the importance of media caution and literacy when consuming information in the digital age, but it also reminds us of all of our collective responsibility as academics to combat the spread of fake news, which can undermine the integrity of democratic processes such as elections, which we value and will take place in 2024. Visual multimodal texts often accompany fake news to enhance emotional persuasion, and their critical reading is crucial in disinformation contexts (Dinihari et al., 2023).

The findings of this study reveal that digital hoaxes possess intricate linguistic and ideological characteristics, which can be leveraged as pedagogical material in Indonesian language education to enhance students' critical literacy. Through CDA, this research identified four dominant types of hoaxes: political, health-related, technological, and disaster-related, each exhibiting distinct persuasive and manipulative discursive patterns. These patterns include ideological metaphors, exaggerated generalizations, and multimodal disinformation, often in the form of doctored images and emotionally charged videos. Such discursive features align with van Dijk's theoretical model, which underscores the interplay between textual structure, social cognition, and sociopolitical context in constructing discourse.

In addition to discourse characteristics, this study uncovered a critical gap between public awareness and the actual application of critical media literacy. While 52% of survey respondents reported confidence in distinguishing hoax news from real news, only 47% consistently verified sources, and merely 38% actively analyzed the content of the news they consumed. These results suggest a lack of deeper discursive engagement, reinforcing the argument presented by Jones-Jang et al., (2021) that superficial information literacy is inadequate without critical evaluation strategies. Furthermore, the analysis of a manipulated TikTok video exemplified how multimodal hoaxes could reinforce political narratives, underscoring the need for students to decode written texts and visual and audiovisual content.

Given these findings, this study proposes the integration of hoax discourse into the Indonesian language curriculum as a strategy to cultivate critical literacy. Several pedagogical strategies are recommended. First, authentic hoax texts should be used as reading materials to train students in identifying rhetorical structures, ideological bias, and manipulative language. Second, teachers should incorporate multimodal discourse analysis into lessons, allowing students to interpret images, captions, and videos in news texts. Third, CDA frameworks, particularly van Dijk's model, can be embedded into lesson plans on expository or argumentative texts to sharpen students' analytical and reflective thinking. Fourth, project-based learning activities—such as student-created blogs analyzing fake news, classroom debates, or digital literacy campaigns—can foster active engagement and real-world application of critical skills. Lastly, interdisciplinary collaboration between language, civics, and technology education can reinforce digital citizenship and responsible media use.

The study concludes that hoaxes are not merely social threats but pedagogical opportunities. By positioning hoax texts as complex discursive artifacts within Indonesian language education, educators can equip learners with linguistic and textual competencies as well as the ethical and cognitive tools necessary to navigate and challenge disinformation in the digital era. This approach aligns with national curriculum goals to cultivate critical, reflective, and socially responsible citizens.

CONCLUSION

When analyzed through a critical discourse lens, this study has demonstrated that digital hoaxes are not merely misleading texts but ideologically loaded discursive constructions that significantly impact public perception and behavior. By employing Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, the research identified how hoax narratives utilize specific rhetorical and multimodal strategies to manipulate meaning, particularly in politics, health, technology, and disasters. Survey data also revealed a significant gap between individuals' perceived ability to detect hoaxes and their actual information verification and analysis practices. These findings highlight the urgent need

for educational interventions beyond functional literacy, emphasizing the importance of critical engagement with language, context, and source credibility.

In response to this challenge, the study proposes the integration of hoax discourse as authentic material within Indonesian language education to strengthen students' critical literacy. Strategically incorporating hoaxes into classroom instruction—through discourse analysis exercises, multimodal interpretation tasks, and project-based learning—allows students to develop higher-order thinking skills, critical awareness, and ethical reflection. This pedagogical approach aligns with national curriculum objectives and prepares learners to become responsible and informed digital citizens. Ultimately, equipping students with the tools to evaluate language and media critically is a crucial step toward fostering resilience against disinformation in contemporary society.

DECLARATIONS

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