

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A.1 Background of the Research

Prabowo Subianto is widely regarded as one of Indonesia's most controversial political figures, making his portrayal in the media a compelling subject for critical analysis. Formerly a high-ranking military general, Prabowo was dishonorably discharged in 1998 following allegations of his involvement in human rights abuses, particularly the abduction of pro-democracy activists (Walsh, 2023). This controversy also resulted in a long-standing ban on his entry into the United States, which was only lifted after he was appointed Minister of Defense (Paddock, 2019). Despite these setbacks, he successfully transitioned into the political arena by founding the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya or Gerindra) in 2008, which effectively serves as his political vehicle (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019)

Since then, his political career has been marked by several bids for national leadership, including unsuccessful campaigns as a vice-presidential candidate in 2009 and as a presidential candidate in 2014 and 2019. His loss in the 2019 presidential election was particularly controversial. His refusal to accept the official results triggered violent protests in Jakarta, which further reinforced his image as a divisive figure in the Indonesian political landscape (Siahaan & Tampubolon, 2021). This event highlighted the deep polarization within the

society and the underlying tensions within the nation's democratic institutions (Pardede, 2020).

The 2024 Indonesian presidential election introduced a dynamic and controversial political narrative, with Prabowo Subianto again emerging as a key candidate. His candidacy stirred diverse reactions both domestically and internationally, particularly concerning his political past and human rights record. His partnership with Gibran Rakabuming Raka, the son of incumbent President Joko Widodo that sparked intense debates about the rise of political dynasties, a phenomenon that experts argue can hinder fair competition and undermine democratic principles (Hidayat, 2024; Kenawas, 2023). Gibran's candidacy was enabled by a controversial Constitutional Court ruling, which raised further concerns about judicial independence and the health of democratic values in Indonesia (Muhtadi & Muslim, 2023). This complexity makes the representation of the pair in global media a critical point of analysis for understanding how political narratives are constructed, framed, and contested on the world stage.

Media coverage of the 2024 presidential candidates reflects the interplay between political institutions, social dynamics, and public discourse. The media, as an influential institution, plays a vital role in shaping public perceptions of political figures. According to Surya et al., (2023), political figures featured in media reports wield significant influence over social change due to their power and knowledge. Similarly, Handayani et al., (2023) emphasize that the mass media

is a critical source of information, shaping societal behavior and global perspectives through its advanced capabilities.

Online media has revolutionized access to information, allowing people to stay informed about domestic and international affairs with ease and minimal costs. Online platforms enable the rapid dissemination of news, offering opportunities for real-time communication that transcends time and space. Journalism in the digital age has become a forum for publishing and discussing current events, with platforms like *The New York Times* serving as a significant influence on global opinion (Nuraeni, 2017).

The New York Times (NYT), as one of the most respected newspapers globally, plays a crucial role in shaping narratives about political figures and events. Established in 1851, the NYT is renowned for its comprehensive coverage of domestic and international issues. Its reputation for editorial excellence, demonstrated through numerous Pulitzer Prizes, underscores its influence on global media discourse. The NYT's coverage spans politics, business, technology, science, and more, with its digital presence extending its reach through real-time updates and multimedia content.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a valuable framework for examining how media constructs and communicates power, ideology, and social change. Fairclough (1995) argues that CDA explores how language reflects and shapes societal structures, often exposing hidden power dynamics. Similarly, van Dijk in Tannen et al. (2015) emphasizes that CDA seeks to uncover and challenge

social inequality embedded in text and discourse. By analyzing linguistic and contextual elements, CDA reveals how language is used to influence public perception, particularly in political contexts (Putra & Triyono, 2016).

Several studies have employed CDA to analyze political discourse, offering insights into the influence of language and media framing. For instance, (Huda et al., 2020) analyzed *Tempo.com*'s portrayal of government policies, revealing how diction and structural choices shape public opinion. Similarly, Surya R et al. (2023) utilized van Dijk's framework to examine presidential candidates in Indonesian media, focusing on macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. These studies demonstrate the power of media to construct political narratives and influence societal perceptions.

Internationally, Nurhaliza & Tanto (2019) analyzed *The New York Times*' portrayal of Indonesia's judiciary during the Ahok blasphemy case, highlighting predominantly negative representations. Yudhi & Tanto (2022) explored how linguistic strategies in the NYT reflect systemic biases in its depiction of the US Police Department. These studies emphasize the importance of examining international media to understand how ideologies and cultural perspectives shape discourse.

Despite these contributions, limited research focuses specifically on how NYT represents Indonesian political figures, particularly Prabowo Subianto, in its coverage. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the representation of Prabowo Subianto in the context of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. The

NYT's role as a global media leader, often regarded as a newspaper of record, makes it a critical source for understanding how Western media portrays non-Western political figures.

Through van Dijk's CDA framework, this research investigates the linguistic and structural strategies employed by NYT to construct narratives about Prabowo Subianto. By focusing on his candidacy, the study seeks to uncover whether the NYT's coverage reflects neutrality or reveals underlying ideological stances, contributing to broader discussions about media bias and representation in international discourse.

A.2 Problems of the Research

Based on the explanation above, this research focuses on answering the following questions:

1. What structural elements (macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure) are used by *The New York Times* to represent Prabowo Subianto during his presidential candidacy?
2. How is the figure of Prabowo Subianto represented by writers in *The New York Times*?

A.3 Objectives of the Research

Based on the problem formulation above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To investigate the structural elements (macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure) used by The New York Times in portraying the presidential candidacy of Prabowo Subianto.
2. How Prabowo Subianto represented by macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure in its coverage of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election.

A.4 Significance of Research

Critical discourse analysis can raise language user's consciousness, help people understand the deep meaning of texts and improve their sensitiveness to the language. In the current study, the analysis focusing on the news text in NYT represent political figures candidacies of Prabowo Subianto in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. This research focus on international media representation of Indonesian politics, while many previous studies have explored domestic media coverage of political figures in Indonesia, this research uniquely examines how international media, specifically NYT, represents Indonesian political figures neutrally or not. Analyzing how a globally influential news media portrays non-Western political dynamics brings fresh insights into cross-cultural discourse and global perceptions of Indonesian politics. It is also beneficial for language learners in terms of their reading and critical thinking skills.

A.5 Limitation of the Research

This research analyzes the representation of Prabowo Subianto in NYT coverage of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election using van Dijk's CDA

framework. The study focuses specifically on the structural elements, including macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure, within selected news articles. The data of the analysis is limited to articles published NYT between January and February 2024 that directly discuss the candidacy of Prabowo. The study's reliance on a single news outlet, The New York Times, may limit the scope of representation, as it reflects only one perspective in the international media landscape. In The New York Times, researchers only found news articles that discussed one political figure with the topic of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, namely Prabowo Subianto. So, the researcher only focusses on the topic about one figure.

A.6 Definition of Key Terms

A.6.1 Discourse

Discourse refers to a linguistic unit larger than a sentence, encompassing both written and spoken communication. It includes conversations, stories, reports, and other forms of communication that are influenced by the social context and cognitive processes of the speaker or writer. Crystal (1992) argued discourse is a continuous stretch of language larger than a sentence, often constituting a coherent unit.

A.6.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social-power abuse and inequality are enacted, reproduced, legitimated, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political

context. CDA is a multidisciplinary field that examines how language is used to construct and communicate power, ideology, and social change (Fairclough, 1995).

A.6.3 News Text

According to Maretha (2019), news text is derived from mass media sources such as magazines, newspapers, and the internet. It delivers information or reports on current events or happenings that are considered newsworthy and shared with the public.

A.6.4 Prabowo Subianto

Prabowo Subianto, a former special forces commander, emerged as the winner of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, securing a decisive victory with nearly 60% of the vote. This marked his third bid for the presidency, following previous losses to Joko Widodo in 2014 and 2019. His running mate, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, the son of outgoing President Joko Widodo, received Golkar's endorsement and was officially announced as Subianto's vice-presidential candidate. The campaign focused on continuing Jokowi's policies and leveraging social media to appeal to young voters. Despite allegations of human rights abuses and controversies surrounding his campaign, including a disputed advertisement featuring children and accusations of patronage politics, Subianto's wide margin of victory has been confirmed by the General Elections Commission. His win has sparked concerns about dynastic politics and nepotism, as well as allegations of

fraud and irregularities from his opponents, Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo, who have vowed to file a legal complaint over the election results

A.7 Organization of the Research Report

In this study, researcher organized the sections into five chapters:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background of the research, problem of the research, objective of the research, significance of the research, limitations of the research, definition of key terms, organization of the research report.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It deals with literature review. It covers the theoretical framework and a review of related studies

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter describes the research method, which includes the type of the research, data, and source of the data, method of collecting the data, the technique of collecting data, and method of analyzing data

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

It comprises the data analysis, containing data description, data analysis, and discussion.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion and suggestions, they contain the conclusion and the suggestions from this research.