POLITICAL POLARIZATION DISCOURSE IN SHAPING DISCRIMINATION IN X COMMENT A HEAD OF 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This research analyzed the level of political polarization in social media comments using the CDA approach and Van Dijk's ideological square model to identify discourse topics and discourse strategies presented by supporters of the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidates using the big data collection method. The research method was descriptive-qualitative. This method was used to analyze the formation of discrimination issues based on comments on social media X. The data for the first research problem were comments that used discourse topics, while the data for the second research problem were discriminatory discourse strategies. The analysis incorporated Van Dijk's ideological square: emphasizing positive things about us, emphasizing negative things about them, de-emphasizing positive things about us, emphasizing negative things about them. The research findings revealed that there were 6 discourse topics and 12 discourse strategies in shaping the issue of discrimination by portraying the individual or group negatively.

Key words: *Political Polarization, Discrimination, X, Comments*

A. INTRODUCTION

Political polarization was a phenomenon in which differences and tensions between groups or individuals in the political sphere increased, often creating two or more groups with opposing views. Political polarization occurred when ideologies split in the context of political secularization. In the political context, polarization could occur at the level of political parties, community groups, or even between individuals.

The political polarization that occurred on Twitter made like-minded people very closed to the views of the opposite party. Polarization was an expression of hostile attitudes towards political rivals (Iyengar et.al., 2012). Polarization was defined as different types of attitudes (e.g., towards issues, in-

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groups, and out-groups) and beliefs, such as about the nature of contested issues. These attitudes and beliefs could be demonstrated in different types of behavior, such as speech, interaction patterns, and political choices.

Discrimination was the act of excluding, disadvantaging, or distinguishing individuals based on perceived characteristics (Cicilia & Irawan, 2022). Discrimination described the condition when individuals were treated differently within a particular group. Discrimination could not be justified as it could be traumatizing for the person receiving it. Discrimination could occur in various aspects of life, such as race, gender, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, and other factors. It was a serious problem related to human rights, equality, and justice in society.

Political polarization and discrimination could be interconnected, especially when political divisions and tensions created an environment where discrimination could flourish. Social media, particularly Twitter, became an important tool in political communication, serving as a platform to influence public opinion and spread negative information (Hendricks & Kaid, 2014). Twitter was a suitable platform for presidential candidates to connect with their followers through social media, facilitate presidential candidates through the help of retweets and reactions to questions and comments, and provide a positive impression that politicians could understand (Grant, et, al., 2010). A critical discourse analysis of political commentary on Twitter could aid a deeper understanding of how language was used to reinforce polarization and create discrimination.

Critical Discourse Analysis was an interdisciplinary approach in language and communication studies known as critical discourse analysis which was based on the analysis and critique of the relationship between discourse, power, ideology, and social structure. CDA focused on inequalities and power relations in language and aimed to explore the ideologies implicit in discourse, thus exposing injustice, discrimination, and prejudice in the discourse (Wang, 2021). This approach often sought to challenge dominant talk and promote social change.

Research on discrimination had been studied in social movies series, news, social media, speeches, and short stories. In movie series, discrimination was investigated through the representation of women in the context of patriarchal culture or the resistance experienced by female characters in the Peaky Blinders series. A study conducted by Ayustin & Christin (2022) on gender issues, especially discrimination against women in movies.

In news, Peng (2021) conducted research on the reinforcement of regional discrimination against people from Henan Province on Chinese news portals, specifically Tencent and NetEase. The study analyzed user comments on news reports covering incidents of regional discrimination against Henan people. It also explored the interaction between internet users' discursive practices and the technological architecture of interactive digital platforms in the context of regional discrimination. The findings explained how the function of local IP addresses in NetEase's comments section specifically reinforced internet users' discriminatory practices.

Salsabila & Adi (2022) examined discrimination on social media, specifically focusing their research on the role of citizen journalism in the context of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement on Twitter. This research explored how citizen journalism served as a tool for protesters to resist the mainstream news media, particularly in the discourse of American journalism on Twitter. This study aimed to analyze Twitter users' tweets related to the BLM movement, racism, and criticism of American journalism to understand the impact of citizen journalism in shaping the discourse of American journalism on Twitter. This research used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to reveal the power relations and social and political context embedded in the analyzed tweets, focusing on racial inequality and the representation of marginalized groups in journalism. The research also explored the positive and negative aspects of citizen journalism in the context of the BLM movement, highlighting its influence on news institutions and the response of protesters.

Grzyb et al. (2023) conducted research on discrimination in speech. This research focused on investigating hate speech in social media posts in Germany and Poland. The research aimed to analyze linguistic data that included hate speech motivated by the alleged or actual ethnic or national identity of the recipient. The researchers used a representative corpus and employed critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistic tools to examine the discursive practices employed in the posts and the meanings they communicated. The article also included a comparative analysis of the frequency of these discursive practices in a comparable corpus. The findings of this study suggested that hate speech was linguistically conditioned by its socio-cultural context.

In short stories, Ma'yuuf & So'ad (2020) conducted research to investigate the ideologies of discrimination embedded in English-language children's short stories through linguistic choices and social context, using the frameworks of critical stylistics and critical discourse analysis. This research aimed to contribute to the understanding of how discrimination was perpetuated through language and literature, and to provide insights for educators and policymakers to promote diversity and inclusivity in children's literature.

From the history of the research in the area of study, several researchers had conducted research related to discrimination in social media, movie series, and news using various approaches. The issue of discrimination was a major concern during the 2024 presidential campaign. Thus, a gap was found in the research study, namely political polarization in Twitter comments during the 2024 presidential campaign in shaping discrimination. This research focused on analyzing the level of political polarization in X comments related to the 2024 presidential election campaign in Indonesia, with the aim of identifying factors that influenced such polarization. This research used the CDA approach and Van Dijk's ideological square model to analyze the comments of supporters of the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidates. The researcher analyzed the discourse topics and discourse strategies in the comments on X used big data methods.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in postpositivism to explore the natural conditions of social media discourse among supporters of Indonesia's 2024 Presidential Candidates. This research specifically focused on comments from supporters of the three presidential candidates on X, which were collected over three months from December 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024. Data collection was conducted every two weeks using Tweet Harvest software, to ensure systematic and comprehensive collection of relevant social media interactions.

To systematically analyze the collected data, content analysis was used as the main research instrument. Content analysis, as defined by Krippendorff (2018), was a technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data according to its context. This method allowed the researcher to delve deeply into the nuances of the comments, ensuring that the findings were reliable and meaningful. The use of content analysis was particularly appropriate for this study, given its power in interpreting complex social media discourse.

The data analysis process was carefully structured to ensure clarity and relevance. At first, all comments were translated into English to facilitate comprehensive analysis. Core words that indicated the main topic of discussion were then identified. After that, the topic of each statement was determined, which allowed the researcher to categorize the data effectively. This step-by-step approach ensured that the analysis remained focused and organized, providing a clear path from raw data to meaningful insights.

The researcher elaborated on the topics and strategies that had been identified based on interviewee comments and personal insights, drawing on a systematic process as outlined by Sugiyono (2010). This process involved organizing data into categories, synthesizing information, and drawing conclusions that were easy to understand and relevant to the research objectives. By following this rigorous methodology, this research aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the discourse topics and discourse strategies among supporters of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential candidates on X during the campaign period.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

1.1 Types of Dicsourse Topic

In this chapter, based on the results of the analysis, the researcher presented the findings to answer the problem. Statements regarding discourse topics used by supporters of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential candidates on social media X were analyzed based on CDA theory using Van Dijk's Ideological Square approach (2007). There were 6 types of discourse topics, namely hatred, suspicion, demeaning, insult, elite majority, and majority-minority.

Table 1. Frequency Types of Discourse Topic

No	Types Of Discourse Topic	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Hatred	155	25,50%
2.	Suspicion	66	10,86%
3.	Demeaning	56	9,2%
4.	Insult	14	2,3%
5.	Elite Majority	77	12,66%
6.	Majority-Minority	240	39,48%
Total		608	100%

In the discourse topic analysis conducted, there were six main categories that reflected different types of conversations and thoughts. From the results above, a total of 608 comments were examined, the majority of which, at 39.48%, were related to the Majority-Minority theme, highlighting the dynamics of the relationship between majority and minority groups in a given context. Meanwhile, the Hate theme reached 25.50%, showing the level of tendency to discuss issues filled with hate or dislike. Other themes included suspicion, with 10.86%, and dehumanization, with 9.2%, which described distrust and attempts to demean others, respectively. In addition, the Majority Elites theme, with 12.66%, highlighted the dominant position held by certain groups in society. Meanwhile, the Insults theme, with 2.3%, showed the tendency to use abusive or demeaning words in conversations. This analysis provided a clear picture of the wide variety of topics and discourse patterns that emerged in the context under study.

1.2 Types of Discourse Strategies

Furthermore, for the second question about discourse strategies, 12 discriminatory discourse strategies were identified among the supporters of the Presidential candidates. These included the strategy of problematization, blaming the victims (scapegoating), metaphor, prejudice strategy, negative attribution, labeling mechanism, quoted utterances or quotations, normalization of prejudice as common language, social demarcation or distancing, devaluation or exception of the good characteristics of others, disclaimers, and extentivisation.

Table 2. Frequency Types of Discourse Strategies

No	Types of Discourse Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Strategy of Problematization	149	24,51%
2.	Blaming the Victims	53	8,72%
3.	Metaphor	20	3,28%
4.	Prejudice Strategy	47	7,73%
5.	Negative Attribution	250	41,11%
6.	Labelling Mechanism	29	4,77%
7.	Quoted Utterances or Quotation	5	0,82%
8.	Normalization of Prejudice as Commong language	3	0,50%
9.	Social Demarcation or Distancing	18	2,97%

10.	Devaluation or Exception of the Good Characteristics of Others	23	3,79%
11.	Disclaimers	10	1,64%
12.	Extensivitation	1	0,16%
Total		608	100%

The analysis of discourse strategies showed variations in the communicative approaches used in various conversational contexts. From the above results, a total of 608 examples were analyzed. The dominance of the negative attribution strategy, which reached 41.11%, highlighted the tendency to blame or minimize others, often in a detrimental way. The strategy of problematization, with 24.51%, reflected an attempt to debate or highlight problems in the topic at hand, allowing for the exploration of diverse viewpoints. However, there was also blaming the victims (scapegoating), which had a percentage of 8.72%, indicating a tendency to blame the victim in the conversation, obscuring the responsibility of the perpetrator or the underlying structure. The prejudice strategy, with 7.73%, described the use of prejudice or stereotypes in communication, which could reinforce existing biases or create injustice. The labeling mechanism, with 4.77%, also created the risk of classifying people unfairly or dehumanizing them. While the use of metaphors, which had a percentage of 3.28%, could provide emotionally powerful illustrations, the strategy of normalizing prejudice as common language, with a percentage of 0.50%, showed a tendency to treat prejudice as something natural. In addition, the solving strategy, which had a percentage of 1.64%, provided a way to limit the consequences of the argument, while quoted utterances or quotations, with a percentage of 0.82%, showed rejection of certain arguments or views. The social demarcation or separation strategy, with a percentage of 2.97%, showed an attempt to emphasize the difference or social distance between groups. Devaluation or exception of good characteristics of others, with a percentage of 3.79%, indicated a tendency to ignore or deny the positive aspects of certain individuals or groups. Finally, the extensivisation strategy was one of the discourse strategies that appeared with a very low frequency, only 0.16% of the total examples analyzed, indicating that this strategy was rarely used in conversation. This analysis provided an overview of the various ways in which conversations could be influenced and guided by diverse communicative strategies, reflecting the complexity of social and cultural relations.

2. Discussion

The findings of the analysis of the comments of supporters of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential candidates, which contain discriminatory words or sentences that distinguish individuals based on perceived characteristics, cannot be justified because it can open trauma for the person receiving it (Hausen & Richard, 2010).

The analysis of discourse topics and strategies used by supporters of the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidates on social media platform X reveals significant insights into political polarization and its role in shaping

discriminatory discourse. The findings indicate that discourse topics such as hatred, suspicion, demeaning, and the majority-minority dynamics are prevalent in the comments analyzed. This aligns with previous research by Irawan (2019), who identified similar themes in political discourse, highlighting the use of these topics to undermine opponents and reinforce group identity. The discourse strategies employed by the supporters further illustrate the mechanisms of political polarization. Strategies such as negative attribution, problematization, and scapegoating are dominant, reflecting a tendency to blame and delegitimize opposing groups. These findings resonate with the work of Cicilia (2020), who also found that negative attribution and metaphor are commonly used in political discourse to create and reinforce stereotypes and biases.

Previous research by Van Dijk (2006) has examined how discourse topics and strategies are used to construct social and political realities. Van Dijk found that discourse topics often revolve around themes of in-group favoritism and out-group derogation, similar to the majority-minority and demeaning topics identified in this study. Additionally, the use of metaphors and labels to create vivid, emotional appeals and social demarcation strategies to emphasize differences between groups are consistent with Van Dijk's findings on discourse strategies.

Furthermore, the discourse strategies identified in this research reflect broader patterns of political polarization. Iyengar et al. (2012) discussed how polarization leads to hostile attitudes towards political rivals, which is evident in the frequent use of hatred and suspicion topics. This hostility not only deepens divisions but also fosters an environment where discriminatory language and negative stereotypes flourish. This is corroborated by Wodak (2015), who analyzed the use of prejudicial discourse strategies in political rhetoric and found that such strategies are instrumental in exacerbating social and political divides.

In analyzing the discourse of political polarization in shaping discrimination on social media, the findings demonstrate that supporters of presidential candidates utilize polarization to reinforce negative stereotypes and prejudices. This mirrors the work of Bodrunova et al. (2019), who found that real-world political polarization is often reflected in online discussions. The deliberate use of negative attribution and other discriminatory strategies suggests that supporters are actively working to degrade the public image of their opponents while bolstering their own group's standing.

In conclusion, the research highlights the critical role of political polarization in shaping the discourse strategies of supporters of the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidates. The prevalence of negative attribution and scapegoating strategies indicates a concerted effort to influence public perception through discriminatory and divisive rhetoric. These findings underscore the need for addressing political polarization to mitigate its impact on public discourse and social cohesion. By integrating previous studies on discourse topics and strategies, this research adds to the understanding of how political discussions are framed and the implications for social interactions in polarized environments.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This research examined the level of political polarization in comments on social media X related to the 2024 presidential election campaign in Indonesia. The primary aim was to identify discourse topics and strategies in comments made by supporters of the Indonesian presidential candidates. Utilizing the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach and Van Dijk's ideological square model, the study analyzed the comments using big data methods. The research gathered 608 comments, revealing six key discourse topics: hatred, suspicion, degrading, insulting, elite majority, and majority-minority, all of which contributed to creating negative stigmas and reinforcing negative views of opposing groups. Additionally, twelve discourse strategies were identified, including problematization, scapegoating, metaphor, prejudice, negative attribution, labeling, quoting, normalization of prejudice, social demarcation, devaluation of positive traits, disclaimers, and extensivisation. These strategies illustrated how supporters mocked, ridiculed, and humiliated others by portraying them negatively.

The analysis concluded that political polarization during the presidential election significantly impacted the creation of discrimination on social media. Many comments directed at presidential candidates Anies and Prabowo contained negative remarks leading to issues of discrimination. This highlighted the need for promoting inclusive dialogue, respecting diversity, and upholding democratic principles in political discourse. The findings underscored the detrimental effects of polarized political discourse, emphasizing the role of social media in exacerbating these divisions.

This paper utilized Van Dijk's ideological square approach to analyze discriminatory statements by supporters of the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidates. While the study provided valuable insights into the discourse topics and strategies employed by these supporters, it was not exhaustive. Future research should explore discriminatory statements on social media using alternative theories to broaden our understanding of discrimination efforts. Additionally, supporters of presidential candidates and social media users, especially on platform X, were advised to refrain from engaging in identity-based discrimination to mitigate political polarization in Indonesia.

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