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Research Article

## Humor Discourse Structure: A Political Communication Strategy

Eris Risnawati<sup>1\*</sup>, Wawan Gunawan<sup>2</sup>, Dede Fatinova<sup>3</sup>, Yasir Mubarok<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia

<sup>1,3,4</sup> Universitas Pamulang, Tangerang, Indonesia

### KEYWORDS

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA);  
 Political Communication;  
 Humor.

### A B S T R A C T

Language phenomena during political years are always extraordinary. Drama is a constant presence, both online and offline, manifesting in various forms such as social media or real-life situations. Despite the inevitability of this problem due to the unavoidable nature of the election season, some deputy candidates are diligently creating political communication strategies to gain acceptance from the broader society. It is essential to comprehend these strategies collectively to ensure that the selected representatives do not consistently project an unfavorable image. Prior research has indeed been conducted on political communication and humor, but as distinct areas of study. This research combines the concept of humor with transitivity theory to thoroughly and precisely investigate the data. The approach employed is qualitative, underpinned by Halliday's transitivity theory and van Dijk's critical discourse analysis. The data source is the legislative interview (*wawancateg*) on the channel @Abdel.Achrian. The data were collected using the observation method, which involved the basic technique of listening and the advanced technique of taking notes. The analysis reveals that the predominant structure of political communication discussion in the legislative interview program, hosted by Abdel Achrian, is characterized by material and mental processes. The material and mental processes achieve equilibrium between the physical and the mental, creating a demeanor that is both calm and earnest. The reader can infer that this pattern is applicable to speech patterns characterized by a relaxed or non-stiff expression, but nevertheless conveying a serious impression.

### CORRESPONDING AUTHOR(S):

E-mail: erisrisnawati@upi.edu;  
 dosen02549@unpam.ac.id\*

## INTRODUCTION

Humor can be defined as a stimuli that elicits laughter or a smile indicating happiness. Three components must be taken into account: verbal or nonverbal behaviors that serve as stimuli for cognitive and intellectual activity, enabling the perception and evaluation of stimuli and responses (such as smiling and laughing) (Utami, 2018).

According to Danandjaja, (1989, cited in Bunga & Dawud, 2021), humor is considered a nonverbal necessity for humans. Humor is associated with everything that elicits amusement and causes people to laugh (Ramanadji, 2009, cited in Wibisono & Wirawati, 2020). The primary objective of comedy is to amuse or alleviate the audience's stress (Wibisono & Wirawati, 2020). Humor is a multidisciplinary phenomenon that has been examined for millennia from a wide range of angles (Linares Bernabéu,

2019). Russell (2002, in Linares Bernabéu, 2019) states “humorists may use to create an alternative perspective and even alter power normative structures”.

Humor is a phenomenon that arises through verbal or nonverbal means, whether intentionally or inadvertently, and has the capacity to evoke emotions such as happiness, sadness, amusement, laughter, and even tears (Wibisono & Wirawati, 2020). Wibisono & Wirawati (2020) also says that humor serves to lighten the atmosphere.

Humor serves as a tool for empowering oneself on stage and challenging against the status quo (Linares Bernabéu, 2019). Using comedy as a communication tool is a useful way to express different opinions without coming across as hostile or restricted (Nugraha, 2020, in Nugraha, 2023). The significance of humor arises from its recognition as the most ubiquitous component of public culture and the fundamental aspect of daily existence and social engagement (Pickering & Lockyer, 2005, in Rahardi & Amalia, 2019). Nevertheless, Knobel and Lankshear (2006, as cited in Rahardi & Amalia, 2019) argue that the role of humor content extends beyond mere pleasure to include social objectives, particularly in terms of capturing public attention and increasing awareness of social practices or events.

The humor style employed is that of satire, specifically characterized by the use of mockery, ridicule, and derision to convey laughter. Stand-up comedy is an evolving type of humor communication in society (Bunga & Dawud, 2021). Humor serves not only as a source of enjoyment for the community, but also as a medium for expressing, criticizing, and even purging emotions felt by individuals in society.

Humor is primarily a stimulation that elicits laughter or a smile of joy (Utami, 2018). Humor has multiple purposes, such as highlighting issues, exerting control, establishing power boundaries, and teasing, as stated by Astuti (2020). Humor has the potential to impact the cohesion and resilience of a group, since it can affect two primary aspects of an individual's perception: enjoyment and ambiance (Astuti, 2020).

The humorous genre is prevalent in nearly all forms of entertainment, not limited to podcasts, films, and dramas; it appeals to a large audience. This humor genre is more prevalent due to the fact that it is typically more laid-back, offers a more enjoyable ambiance, and is also highly relevant to real-life situations (Wibisono & Wirawati, 2020).

Multiple research studies have been undertaken on humor, examining various case. The following is an example of research that examines humor. First, research from Phroshak et al. (Phroshak et al., 2021). The study investigated “*Karakteristik Analisis Wacana Kritis*

*Tindakan dalam Cerpen Dolop Karya Akhmad Sekhu.*”

The researchers discovered that the short story *Dolop* contained a total of sixty-six instances of nonverbal actions and forty-four instances of verbal actions. More precisely, the nonverbal representation of life as a dolop encompasses fifteen distinct actions, whereas the verbal representation includes nineteen distinct actions. Second, research was conducted by Setiawan & Halum (Setiawan & Halum, 2016). The study researched the phenomenon of written language on motorbike stickers using a critical discourse analysis study. The findings indicate that micro CDA revealed a language pattern characterized by the employment of a familiar/non-standard variety, consisting of short sentences with incomplete sentence structures, while creating motorbike stickers. In addition, there is the utilization of slang, which pertains to the sociolectic features that are distinctive to young individuals who utilize language. Three distinct patterns of robust associations were identified in meso CDA among persons engaged in the creation and utilization of stickers. The CDA macro includes a description of socioeconomic class using sticker language, socio-political policies about gender in Indonesia, and the impact of slang on the proper usage of Indonesian.

Third, research was conducted by Khairunnisa et al. (Khairunnisa et al., 2020). The research focuses on humorous discourse in Memes. As determined by the research findings, the genesis of a comedic meme was inextricably linked to its interaction with other 'texts' netizen comments, other memes bearing similar connotations, and the social phenomena that precipitated the meme's emergence. The fourth research was undertaken by Ismail et al. (Ismail et al., 2023). The study examined the humorous discourse on the *Komikkita* Facebook account. The study found that the *Komikkita.com* meme contributes to the formation of a negative discourse and image concerning Indonesian politicians who are careless in their handling of KPK investigations, as well as individuals implicated in corruption and human rights violations.

Furthermore, several previous studies examining humor analysis across different media platforms have been investigated, including newspapers (Jupriono, 2023; Vidiadari, 2017), Instagram (Sinungharjo, 2019; Susanti & Rahmawati, 2021), Twitter (Pangesti et al., 2022; Widiyastuti, 2021), Facebook (Kusmanto et al., 2020; Taufiq & Suhardiman, 2021) and Television (Andini, 2014; Mitang, 2020). A gap was identified in prior study. This study employed Halliday's transitivity theory approach and van Dijk's critical discourse analysis to extensively explore the data by combining the concept of comedy on YouTube.

### *Discourse Analysis*

Discourse refers to a sequence of interconnected statements that together convey a coherent and meaningful message (Silaswati, 2019). Syamsuddin (2011, in Silaswati, 2019) defines discourse as a structured and cohesive collection of words or speech acts that consistently and systematically convey a specific subject. It is composed of both segmental and non-segmental parts of language. Alwi et al. (2003, in Masitoh, 2020) define discourse as sentences that are interconnected in a way that creates a unified meaning. According to Maingueneau (Masitoh, 2020), discourse might be composed of a single word, a single sentence, or multiple sentences.

Discourse can be categorized into two distinct forms: oral discourse and written discourse. Oral discourse refers to the act of communicating verbally, where individuals engage in conversation as speakers and listeners. On the other hand, written discourse refers to communication through written language, where individuals communicate as writers and readers. The speaker's activity is characterized by productivity, expressiveness, and creativity, while the listener's activity is characterized by receptiveness (Sudaryat in Payuyasa, 2017). The speaker can package discourse with different goals towards the interlocutor. Speakers, whether speaking or writing, possess the liberty to express diverse sorts of viewpoints, beliefs, or ideas through communication. Discourse games are frequently designed to be consumed by a large audience (Payuyasa, 2017).

### *Critical Discourse Analysis*

Since the 1980s, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has been implemented (Rakhmannia, 2023). CDA possesses distinct features compared to "non-critical" discourse analysis, which primarily focuses on describing the discourse's structure. CDA delves deeper by examining the underlying factors that contribute to the structure of a conversation, ultimately leading to an analysis of the social relationships between the participants involved in the discourse (Lukmana, et al., 2006, in Humaira, 2018).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) aims to investigate the significance of discourse and the process by which this meaning is generated through discourse. CDA seeks to uncover the impact of ideology on discourse, as well as the reciprocal effect of discourse on ideology. It also explores how these two aspects originate from and contribute to social structure and power dynamics. Essentially, its objective is to uncover the correlation between language, ideology, and power (Liu & Guo, 2016). Habermas (as cited in Silaswati, 2019) stated his perspective on critical discourse analysis (CDA), stating that CDA seeks to facilitate the examination and comprehension of societal

issues within the context of the interplay between ideology and power. The objective of critical discourse analysis is to uncover the underlying ideological assumptions embedded within the language used in writings or spoken expressions across different manifestations of power. van Dijk (Maghrobi, 2021) defines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a form of discourse analysis that focuses on examining how texts and conversations in social and political settings contribute to the manifestation, perpetuation, and resistance of abuse, dominance, and social power imbalances.

The triangle model is formulated in terms of van Dijk's Social Cognitive Approach, which encompasses discourse, cognition, and society. Van Dijk also considers the relationship between discourse and its context to be a fundamental concern in CDA. The correlation between discourse and context is not one of predetermined nature; rather, it is characterized by a stratum of adjustment. Van Dijk believes that the social representation, which is embodied in the discourse by the cognitive mental model and incorporates knowledge, attitude, ideology, and so forth, is what functions so effectively as the adjusting layer (Liu & Guo, 2016).

CDA is inherently derived from discourse analysis. Discourse analysis study differs from other linguistic research endeavors by prioritizing the examination of content and macro structure within specific texts pertaining to particular topics. The current issues have included academic, political, media, and literary domains (Manar, 2022).

In contrast to CDA, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has recently prioritized experiential meaning or transitivity systems. The transitivity function, which serves as the fundamental resources of meaning-making, can be attributed to the preference of SFL studies for transitivity systems. This is achieved by utilizing specific types of processes, participants, and circumstances that are appropriate for the context. The transitivity system serves as a framework for linguistic research and other disciplines beyond the field of language, as it serves as a meaning 'maker'. This suggests that the transitivity system has the potential to serve as a cross-disciplinary instrument for addressing humanities-related issues (Manar, 2022).

This study applies CDA approaches and presents the analytical instruments derived from SFL, transitivity.

### *Transitivity*

Transitivity is a language structure that expresses ideational meaning. Transitivity, in essence, exposes the speaker's utilization of language and the conveyed meaning (Nurrahmah et al., 2020). According to Halliday (1994, in Assyuza & Miftahulkhairah, 2021), the transitivity system categorizes the linguistic experience of

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language users based on several types of processes. According to Wachidah (2010, in Nurrahmah et al., 2020), the process is composed of three components: the process itself, the participants involved in the process, and the scope of the situation (circumstance). Therefore, the transitivity structure comprises participants, processes, and circumstances.

Transitivity is a concept that focuses on the process. At the sentence level, the process affects the number and category of participants, as well as determines the 'circumstances' indirectly at the clause level (Adisaputra, 2008, in Oktaviani et al., 2017).

Transitivity encompasses various categories, such as material processes, mental processes, relational processes, behavioral processes, verbal processes, and existential processes. Saragih (2006, in Assyuza & Miftahulkhairah, 2021) argues that circumstance is the specific site where the procedure occurs. The concept of circumstantial is analogous to adverbs in classical standard grammar.

The novelty of this investigation is the analysis of the variety of utterances in language practice delivered by Abdel Achrian and Komeng on the channel @Abdel.Achrian, which is based on the transitivity and CDA analysis. Researchers are interested in analyzing Abdel and Komeng's speech because it is a topic that is presently popular discussed. Therefore, it addresses the following inquiry: how is humor discourse structure as a political communication strategy?

## METHOD

The research design employed in this paper is qualitative descriptive research. Descriptive research aims to gather information pertaining to the current state of a symptom, specifically the situation as it existed at the time the study was carried out (Arikunto, 2006). Consequently, the objective of descriptive research is to provide an accurate, factual, and methodical account of the attributes and qualities of a specific population or region. This research pertains to qualitative data, which is delivered through speech and expressed in the form of language qualities, rather than numerical values.

The study subject pertains to the focus of investigation conducted by individuals, entities, or institutions (Dartiningih, 2016). The subject of this research is the Abdel Achrian's podcast. The focus of this research is the humorous discourse contained in the political communication of legislative candidates entitled "Wawancaleg Alfiansyah Komeng - DPD RI West Java".

The types of data included in this study are primary data and secondary data. Primary data in question is oral data which is then transcribed into clauses, phrase clusters, words, and phrases. Researchers obtain primary data

directly from research data sources. Meanwhile, the secondary data or supporting data in this study, which is data analysis through written text or literature.

The data analysis in this research employs Miles and Huberman (2014, in Huda & Rokhman, 2021). Typically, the process of analyzing data using this paradigm consists of three main stages: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) verification or drawing conclusions.

The steps involved in the data analysis technique were as follows: (1) chose and identified Abdel and Komeng's speech as the data unit. (2) organized the data and identified the process type based on the approach of transitivity. (3) calculated the percentage of several process categories to determine the predominant pattern. (4) examined the type of transitivity process. (5) interpreted data in accordance with the transitivity process that was identified. (6) provided data explanations based on the type of transitivity and van Dijk's CDA. (7) derived conclusions. All of these stages are interconnected processes.

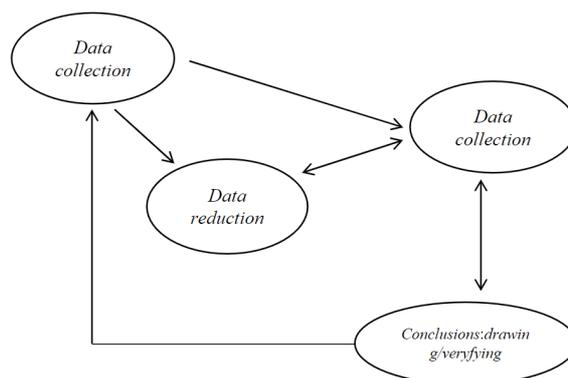


Figure 1. The steps involved in the data analysis technique

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research findings are categorized into three sections. The initial segment pertains to texts, the subsequent segment concerns social cognition, and the final segment relates to the social context. Below are the findings from the text analysis conducted using Halliday's transitivity theory. Below is the frequency distribution of process usage.

Table 1. The frequency distribution of process usage

No	Process type	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Material	63	58%
2	Verbal	10	9%
3	Mental	29	27%
4	Behavioral	3	3%
5	Relational	3	3%
6	Existential	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>			

Table 1 reveals that the percentage of process occurrences fluctuates. The dominant process in the data is the material

process, which appears 63 times and accounts for 58% of the total. It is followed by the mental process, which appears 29 times and accounts for 26% of the total. The verbal process ranks third in terms of occurrence frequency, with 10 instances in the data, accounting for 9.2% of the total. The relational process has 3 instances of data, accounting for 2.7% of the total occurrences. Similarly, the behavioral process also has 3 instances of data, representing 2.7% of the total occurrences. Finally, the data analysis did not reveal any evidence of existential process.

These results indicate that the dialogue that takes place in political communications carried out by comments tends to describe a lot of real action. A movement that can be seen by the senses so that it is easy for the wider community to understand. Dictions that appear relatively often in this material process include registering, sending, or completing. The participants who appeared to adapt the most to the results of the process type above were agents and sensors. Meanwhile, many of the circumstantial phenomena that appear are goal and phenomenon.

The emergence of material processes as the highest-ranking means that in the legislative candidate interview delivered by Alfiansyah Komeng, he wanted to emphasize that there must be more concrete action such as approaching society without making grandiose promises. So that people can trust him and support him. And it is reflected in the dialogue “*Gua gak bisa kasih kesejahteraan, gua mau kasih kebahagiaan [I can't give you prosperity, I want to give you happiness]*” said Komeng. On the other hand, Komeng's eccentric photo pose which has become an attraction, without a campaign the comedian was able to get a lot of votes.

#### *Social Cognition*

Social cognition refers to an individual's cognitive processes. This is triggered by the understanding and social interactions obtained by the speaker. The information presented is likely to be a representation of various experiences of the wider community. As a simple example, in the dialogue fragment obtained from the collected data.

Abdel Achrian: *Akan dipilih Berapa banyak? [How many will be selected?]*

Komeng: *4 orang dari beberapa. Jabar sekarang tuh 54. 54 nanti akan berkurang masih DCS kan dari 56. Kalau nggak salah. Ada verifikasi faktual nggak lolos. [people from several. West Java is now 54. 54 will be reduced later, still DCS from 56. If I'm not mistaken. There was a factual verification that didn't pass].*

In this data, the speaker talks about his experience when seeking his candidacy. The process is not simple, even if you compare the number of first registrants with the 152 Eris Risnawati, Wawan Gunawan, et.al

number who passed until the selection was completed, there is quite a contrast. This sentence is said so that listeners understand and can respond well to election activities which of course require maximum effort.

Furthermore, the speaker also informed the detailed section where verification evidence cannot simply be sent. There is a series of processes that must be followed if you still want to pass until the end of the nomination. The speaker stated that the delivery process is not only online but also offline. When the closing seconds are over, the system suddenly errors. That makes things difficult for all applicants. Apart from that, he told how difficult it was to register and verify evidence. This indicates that Komeng wants his listeners to know that he pays a lot of attention to the environment around him. Apart from that, the issues raised by Komeng are also quite light issues so they don't become heavy conversations. Komeng hopes that his audience will not only be parents who are used to talking about heavy matters but also young people who tend to be still trying to understand the realm of politics.

#### *Social Context*

Social context refers to the interpretation of the speaker who tells the dialogue. This influences how a story is told. Social context relates to aspects of the social environment, norms, values, culture, and relationships between individuals that influence one another.

Komeng has a background as a comedian or someone who provides entertainment by means of comedy. Normatively, comedy is not really considered in the world of politics. Not to exclude, but both have different domains and concepts of movement. Comedy tends to only entertain and make other people laugh or be entertained, which is different from politics. Politics demands serious things and cannot be laughed at because it is related to the wishes of many people. Interestingly, Komeng dared to take a path to unite the two. He enters serious territory through an entertaining path.

Even though the path taken is an unusual path, namely through the concept of humor, this does not necessarily eliminate the substantial things in conveying the message. The communication is fun but does not look playful and is proven by the use of material processes that dominate other types of processes. Then, the alternative process used after material is mental, where the two types of processes show a balance between physical and mental or emotional movements. Communication with a feeling of being able to provide closeness and a relaxed impression from the speaker, coupled with material processes that indicate seriousness when you become a leader. This is in accordance with the opinion of Linares Bernabéu (2019) who revealed that Humor serves as a tool for empowering oneself on stage and challenging against the status quo.

Using comedy as a communication tool is a useful way to express different opinions without coming across as hostile or restricted (Nugraha, 2020, in Nugraha, 2023). This argument is strengthened by Knobel and Lankshear (2006, as cited in Rahardi & Amalia, 2019) who stated that the role of humor content extends beyond mere pleasure to include social objectives, particularly in terms of capturing public attention and increasing awareness of social practices or events.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings, it can be concluded that the dominant process in the data is the material process, which appears 63 times and accounts for 58% of the total. It is followed by the mental process, which appears 29 times and accounts for 26% of the total. The verbal process ranks third in terms of occurrence frequency, with 10 instances in the data, accounting for 9.2% of the total. The relational process has 3 instances of data, accounting for 2.7% of the total occurrences. Similarly, the behavioral process also has 3 instances of data, representing 2.7% of the total occurrences. Finally, the data analysis did not reveal any evidence of existential process. This fact is described in the legislative interview as telling an event. This event is described by explaining the action or actions that occur in it. Komeng, a candidate for the West Java DPD, articulates his objectives, responsibilities, and aspirations through the verbs he employs. In addition, the complete sentences, he speaks can convey a more lucid and straightforward message, along with humor, to his audience, specifically the general public. The dialogue structure that balances material and mental is an alternative for flexing the stiffness of communication. Apart from that, simple issues also make the conversation light and easy to grasp the ideas or information deliberately conveyed by the speaker. Without eliminating the substantial messages that people also need to be happy and prosperous with what they are. Moreover, the current investigation has certain limitations. The constraints of this study were identified in the chosen method of analysis. The scope of this study was restricted to the use of SFL transitivity analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA). Therefore, it is recommended that future research explore this topic within the context of appraisal, multimodality, and other studies on speech acts.

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