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Presidential Candidate Slogans in the 2024 Indonesian General Election; Strategic Communication with Multi-Generational Characteristics

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Abstract. This study focuses on the use of slogans of the three presidential and vice-presidential candidates who will compete in Indonesia's 2024 general election. This study maps how these slogans operate in the digital space of social media to capture the attention and votes of a cross-generational public in Indonesia. Discourse analysis is used in this study to discover the hidden meanings of texts, while taking into account the risk that these meanings may not be accurate. The researcher therefore limited the study to a specific time and space context, namely during the period leading up to the 2024 general election, and to an Indonesian case study only. The study found that slogans were chosen from popular diction, to make it easier to introduce the candidates' profiles to the public. These slogans are also a special formula to shape public knowledge about the candidates' vision and mission. This study holds the view that popularity and the massification process of promotional content still play an important role in the discourse distribution model in contemporary digital media. This connects the dialectic of discourse that occurs in a multi-generational society. In addition, this study also compares with the views of post-truth and post-factual politics with the assumption that the meaning generated from the use of slogans is not bound. Meaning is generated from highly subjective perceptions, so the role of promotion and massification of the chosen terminology still has an important role to influence audience perceptions and win votes from the active voting public.

Keywords. Strategic Communication, Slogan, Presidential Candidate, General Election, Multi-Generation

Introduction

The presence of digital media in contemporary communication models is a phenomenon that affects various aspects of social and cultural life. Digital media such as social media has become a meeting place for public discourse that is cross-geographical, cross-generational, and cross-cultural, among others. Social media has become like a public space that has been studied across disciplines such as political science, sociology, and communication science (Çela, 2015). Social connectedness enhances informal knowledge exchange and access to knowledge sources, helping individuals to combine and develop new knowledge that leads to the exploration of innovation (Joshi et al., 2010). This space becomes an arena for knowledge discourse filled with various new social facts derived from various opinions, comments and sentiments of the community. This situation gave rise to several terminologies that became

known as post truth, post factual era, including for example in the corridor of political discourse known as the concept of post factual politics.

This situation is a result of wider public engagement in increasingly dynamic and fluid socio-political spaces that occur due to the facilitation of various existing social media platforms. Popular social media platforms in Indonesia include Instagram, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, TikTok, and others. This broad public engagement also involves several generations that live in a certain political period, such as the Baby Boomers generation (1946-1964), generation X (1965-1980), generation Y or millennial generation (1981-1996), and including the latest generation, generation Z (1997-2012). Generation Alpha, which was born after 2013, will not be able to participate in Indonesia's 2024 general election.

In the contemporary digital space, all these generations have important voting power as they are active media users contributing to the formation of public discourse. However, Y Generation and Z Generation are the generations that are considered the most intensive in their use of digital media (Gawda & Korniluk, 2022). This is because Y Generation is the generation that created the social media products that we use today, and Z generation is the generation since the beginning of their birth has interacted directly with digital media including social media. This means that to win in the distribution of socio-political discourse in today's digital space, presidential and vice presidential candidates must be able to win the votes of Y and Z generations. Data from the Indonesian General Election Commission, states that there are 204.8 million active voters for the 2024 general election (Asyari, 2023). Their data shows that the combination of Y and Z generations reaches 113.6 million voters, while the remaining 91.2 million voters come from a combination of the Baby Boomers generation and X generations.

All of the previously mentioned generations are active communicators on social media. However, they can be divided into two categories: those who come from the digital era (digital natives), and those who adapt to the digital era (digital immigrants) (Naci Çoklar & Tatli, 2021). They can also be said to be political communicators who will determine how political discourse rolls in Indonesia. Political communicators can also be referred to as politicians, referring to Aristotle's understanding that every human being as a social being is also a political being (zoon politicon) (Lazuardini, 2013). This dismisses the common understanding, which interprets that the term politicians is only for those who are involved in politics as activists, officials or public policy makers. This means that the personal power of individuals as political communicators must be interpreted broadly, not limited to those who work in politics alone (Kustiawan et al., 2022). The term political communicator can also be applied to those who work in various professional backgrounds and their social roles in society.

Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar were born in 1969 and 1966 respectively. The not-so-distant age range makes them both representatives of X Generation. Prabowo Subianto, one of Indonesia's presidential candidates for the 2024 general election, was born in 1951 and belongs to the Baby Boomers generation. He invited 1981-born Gibran Rakabuming Raka as his vice presidential candidate, who represents Y Generation or the millennial generation. Gibran is the only candidate in the 2024 presidential and vice presidential elections who represents the millennial generation. The other presidential and vice presidential candidates are Ganjar Pranowo, who was born in 1968 (Generation X), and Mahfud MD, who was born in 1957 (Baby Boomers). This means that the 2024 general election contest in Indonesia will be filled with candidates representing three different generations: the Baby Boomers, X Generation, and Y Generation (millennials). They will not only have to win the votes of their own generation, but they will also have to win the votes of Z generation, who are now also active voters.

The socio-political situation gives urgency to the importance of in-depth observations from researchers and scholars in the social-humanities field. Therefore, this article will analyse the topic of strategic communication conducted in the 2024 general election in Indonesia. The researcher focuses on the slogans chosen by political communication teams to refer to their presidential candidates. The slogans used are common terminology in political contestation in Indonesia's social media digital space at the end of 2023, which is after entering the political campaign period for the presidential and vice presidential general elections to be held in February 2024.

Political communication like this and other forms of communication is a process that involves coding from the source (source / coder) and encoding from the recipient of the message (receiver / encoder). Political communicators are considered as parties who initiate and direct an act of communication through certain channels, namely the media (channel) to the public receiving the message to achieve predetermined political goals (political orientation). This process is a political communication activity which is the input of the political system that will determine how the output of the system. The main components of a political communication system can be found in political institutions, media institutions, audience orientation, and cultural aspects relevant to the field of communication (Gurevitch & Blumler, 1990). This perspective provides a further understanding that political communication can be seen in two perspectives: first, the set of political institutions and media organisations involved in horizontal relations for the distribution of political messages, and second, the vertical relations for political institutions and media organisations in processing information and ideas from and for society.

Doob states that political communicators who conduct a continuous political communication process play a significant social role, especially in shaping public opinion (Nimmo, 2010). The political communicators are a combination of several professional elements with different backgrounds. The raw material of the political communication material they build comes from society itself. Socrates divided the multi-background society into three major parts, namely first; traders who work to make as much money as possible, second; soldiers who work to maintain the order of society, and third; philosophers who function as rulers. Socrates stated that society will achieve the principle of justice when each part of society does its job optimally and works together harmoniously.

(Strauss & Howe, 1991) identified several generations to map the social cycles that occur in society. This theory maps generations into several types, namely, Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, X Generation, Y Generation, Z Generation and Alpha Generation. Each of these generations is characterised by its own behaviour, lifestyle, profession and culture. Although the division was made in the American context, the theory is also relevant when used to map how the differences between generations in Indonesia. The differences in generational characteristics are also relevant enough to identify how political audiences in Indonesia respond to social change.

Strauss and Howe explain that the Traditionalist generation was born between 1928-1945, when Indonesia was still under colonialism by the Dutch and Japanese. This period was dominated by a generation that was solid in social movements, as evidenced by the various social organisations that were formed in order to reconcile the country's independence. The Baby Boomers were born between 1946-1964 in the post-World War II era, and Indonesia was characterised by many uprisings from various social groups. This generation is considered quite adaptive due to the many social and political changes that occurred at that time. X Generation are those who were born between 1965-1976, in a relatively stable political situation as Indonesia was led by the New Order government, but with the consequence that the political

situation at that time was quite constrained. The authoritarian government model and restrictions on the number of political parties shaped this generation into a character that tends to be uncritical. In contrast, Y Generation, born in 1977-1998, has been in a situation of high criticism since the beginning of its birth. The existence of social and bureaucratic reforms made the generation born in this period characterised by critical individuals who did not hesitate to express their opinions, especially on matters of public interest. This generation is also called the millennial generation, which is closely related to various new changes in the world of information technology. As a result, this generation has created many new inventions in the field of media, including digital media. The inventions produced by Y Generation are consumed by the next generation known as Z Generation, those born in the period 1999-2012. Some of them have been exposed to contemporary digital media, including social media, since the beginning. This generation also witnessed social changes in society in the form of the emergence of various new print, electronic and digital mass media, which implies that this generation is a media-savvy generation. Intense interaction with devices in an individualistic manner, makes this generation quite different from previous generations who were more "social". The latest generation is Generation Alpha, born between 2013-2025, in a social situation that is highly dependent on fast-paced, digitalised communication. This generation is also partly already living in a well-established family environment, so that they are able to support their every economic need.

Methodology

To find out how the discourse of the slogan mentioning the candidates participating in the presidential and vice-presidential general elections is constructed, this research uses the critical discourse analysis method with the aim of finding hidden meanings that are not visible in the text carried. This method is considered effective to map, find, and analyse the text as a whole not only on the text itself, but also on the context that surrounds it, so that we can find out the true meaning of a text in a particular social phenomenon.

In the media, discourse is able to change the perspective of the audience through different ways of looking at reality. Media in any form, including contemporary digital media, has a cultural transmission function (Littlejohn & Foss, 2011). Discourse is also oral or written communication that is understood through the perspective of beliefs, values, and categorisations that exist in it, and these beliefs represent a view of the world as a form of organisation or representation of experience (Ratnaningsih, 2019). Meanwhile (Foucault, 1972) explains that discourse is all statements that are often a form of individualisation of statements, and becomes a regulative practice when viewed from a number of existing statements. Discourse can also be categorised into two definitions, namely first; as a series of sentences that link each other, connecting various forms of propositions, forming a unity, so as to produce a harmonious meaning between the sentences, and second; discourse is also the most complete and highest or largest language unit above the sentence with a high level of coherence and cohesion and continuous, has a real beginning and end and is delivered orally or in writing.

Through in-depth observation techniques, this discourse analysis method is considered accurate to find the hidden meaning behind each candidate's slogan. The selection of this method also has the risk of being less accurate, due to the socio-political context factors that must be considered. Therefore, the researcher limits the time and space context in this research to the momentum leading up to the Indonesian general election in 2024, and the study area is limited to Indonesia.

Discussion

From the mapping of several generations in Indonesia, we can find out the characteristics of political audiences in responding to social change and public policies produced by the government. Public participation in political events indicates the level of success of the political momentum, which in turn also represents the success or failure of the discourse carried by candidates in the general election process. Therefore, candidates must organise a well-calculated campaign strategy, in order to win votes from each generation in society according to the characteristics of each generation.

Presidential candidates Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar carry the slogan "Amin" which is a combination of pieces of their names, Anies and Muhaimin. This slogan is relevant to describe the background of both of them who come from religious groups. The diction "Amin" is an utterance called to end a prayer. The utilisation of this diction as a slogan is quite an appropriate strategy because this diction is known by various groups from various backgrounds, and all current generations can easily understand its denotative and connotative meanings. In the context of Indonesian society, which is known as a fairly religious country, this diction will easily be formed into a political support movement. However, the strategy must also be able to convince secular groups, given that these groups are also quite dominant in the young generation in Indonesia today. This means that this candidate has great potential as well as a specific challenge to not only popularise the slogan, but also be accepted as a spirit of political struggle across generations.

Prabowo Subianto is a presidential candidate who comes from the Baby Boomers generation, inviting Gibran Rakabumingraka who comes from Y Generation. To balance the social position between generations, the term "Gemoy" is used to identify Prabowo Subianto as a figure who has a character that is easily recognised by the generation after him. Y Generation at the moment can be said to be the bridge that connects generations. This is because they are the ones who created new digital media such as social media and have interacted intensively with these media since the beginning. They can explain in the most adaptive way through the content produced so that the message content can be easily understood by the generation above them and the generation below them. The diction "Gemoy" is a popular diction among young people today, although it has not been officially recorded in the Big Indonesian Dictionary. However, the meaning circulating from the diction can be equally understood by social media users across generations.

As a generation that represents the Baby Boomers era, Prabowo Subianto is an individual who is connected to the Traditionalist Generation and X generations. When choosing Gibran Rakabumingraka, Prabowo Subianto has widened the intergenerational connection to Y Generation. Gibran as the vice presidential candidate from Y Generation, is also directly connected to X Generation and Z Generation. This means that both presidential and vice presidential candidates can connect 5 generations at once, namely, Traditionalist Generation, Baby Boomers Generation, X Generation, Z Generation. In the context of the demographic distribution of Indonesian society, which is currently dominated by a surplus of young people who are active voters, the role of vice-presidential candidate Gibran Rakabumingraka becomes quite crucial to win the votes of X and Z Generation. Gibran Rakabumingraka as a millennial generation (Y Generation), has slightly different characteristics from other generations. Those in this generation grew up with the freedom of access to information, so that this generation appears to be more liberal, critical and concerned about change, and easily switch professions because of their very rational way of thinking, and have political preferences according to the

ratio and logic built from their open search for new information independently. This includes their ability to seek information about the latest political discourse online.

Presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo who is paired with Mahfud MD carries the slogan "SatSet" referring to Javanese terminology that is often associated with the meaning of fast, immediate, or agile. This represents the spirit of the two candidates who come from X Generation and the Baby Boomers generation, which has been synonymous with socio-political change. Both candidates must be able to gain votes from other generations, namely Y Generation and Z Generation. The choice of the slogan "SatSet" is a fairly common diction that can be understood culturally by all groups. However, in principle, this diction is not a word that originated from Y Generation and Z Generation. In addition, the slogan is also not taken from the Indonesian language, so the true meaning of this diction is not necessarily understood by people who are not from the island of Java. The political communicators working behind Ganjar and Mahfud's winning team should be able to socialise this slogan more massively, so that the diction still gets its full meaning and is not reduced.

In the 2024 general election, Z Generation is already an active voter, and their votes are made up of a critical mass of young people. Some of them are still in college, and others are already in the professional world. Sociologically, various social backgrounds such as education, work, and the social environment of an individual can influence a public decision. Truth and generalisation can be obtained through cause-and-effect relationships between variables as understood in empirical and positivistic paradigms. In the political context, the diverse opinions and sentiments that emerge in the midst of public discussions provide free space for the process of social construction based on various messages disseminated in the media. The presence of digital media, especially social media, provides a very wide space for this process. As a result, the public finds it difficult to make decisions in a short time, so they will follow the flow of discourse distribution which is the most dominant and often heard to determine their political choices.

This process requires special techniques related to marketing models in the digital space. One technique that is often done by practitioners in the marketing field is to mention a product with general terms or diction that is widely known by the public or is currently being used. This means that this technique must be attached to the context of time, location and certain issues. In the momentum of the general election in Indonesia, the three candidates who carried the slogans "Amin", "Gemoy", and "Satset" intended to represent their spirit and vision and mission. These terms (except "Amin") have not been absorbed into the standardised language listed in the Big Indonesian Dictionary. This term is a slang word that is often used in communication on social media. Referring to several sources, the term Gemoy has the equivalent meaning of gemas, while several other sources mention that Gemoy has a denotative meaning (Hamidah et al., 2023) meaning fat and adorable. There are also sources that state that Gemoy means annoying / annoying (CNN Indonesia, 2023), but in a positive context and not a mockery. Meanwhile, the term "SatSet" is understood as the spirit to move fast and be agile.

These various meanings also create various perceptions from various social media users. This results in a high intensity of interaction with content that uses this term. Many users reproduce it massively as a form of support, while others criticise the use of this term. The terms "Amin", "Gemoy", and "SatSet", in fact, do not seem serious, so they seem less harmonious when used to refer to presidential candidates. However, it turns out that this difference of view actually gave birth to many arguments that increased the publicity of each candidate. (Latour, 2004) mentions conspiracy theory, which according to him is a change in the absurd form of arguments, but still a weapon to deal with conversations or debates. This means that when

referring to this theory, the mention of these slogans is a technique used to shape arguments from open discussions in the public sphere with the aim of increasing socio-political interaction in the digital space.

When using a critical analysis approach, in dissecting how the mention is a political strategy, (Zelizer, 2004) offers a formula to distinguish each of the following concepts: truth, reality, fact, construction, subjectivity, and relativity. Truth is the truth that accurately describes something, while reality is a condition or statement as it is, not as a condition or statement is imagined. While fact is what is known to occur or exist, especially those that are proven to exist or have information. When these elements are analysed based on construction, subjectivity and relativity, constructivism states that the so-called truth, facts and reality are something that results from social construction, which leads to social agreement. Subjectivism argues that truth, facts and reality are the result of the human mind in the form of perceptions, beliefs and feelings. Meanwhile, relativism views truth, facts and reality as not being in a condition that is called true, real and as it is. Relativism believes that each context has its own understanding and legitimacy, and tends to be different, towards what is called truth, facts and reality. Therefore, in the view of the relativism paradigm, there is no sense of right or wrong.

In the social conditions of people living in the post-factual era, no one believes in facts. The post-factual world includes the absence of facts and the primacy of subjective perception due to constructed relativities (Lippmann, 1998). The post-factual world also includes the erosion of the power of tradition, as a result of an uncertain world. (Bybee, 1999) mentions that the relativity of truth is related to the context of authority in determining what will be called a truth. Truth-testing produces consequences for the public, and the truth can be represented or judged by the people who experience and are in those consequences. Furthermore, Bybee also mentions that science is a way of understanding the world and cannot be separated from the world, so science is the result of the development of the interests of the human community that produces it, along with the values of knowledge in it. When referring to (Foucault, 1972), knowledge can be lost or even eliminated by the authorities or can be replaced by other sciences, and the authorities can determine whether a science is worthy or used or not.

The mention of the terms "Amin", "Gemoy", and "SatSet" in a sociological review means an attempt to bring the politician's profile closer to the wider social space of society, because the resulting meaning becomes widened and multi-interpreted. This means that there is a construction process on certain truths that continue to experience dialectics, until the political interests of these figures can reach and be heard by the audience. This will create a certain level of popularity which is the goal of the political strategy. In the context of post-truth, the public will accept the understanding that is generally understood due to the mixing of information and ideas. The boundaries between the two will be increasingly thin, so that people will tend to accept the idea according to public tastes based on the understanding built by certain groups even if it does not reflect the real truth. Public trust is no longer formed by empirical and objective knowledge, but based on a common understanding that is aligned with the interests of the group. The post-truth condition has changed the joints of people's lives. Moreover, this pattern has also become a battleground for the power of society in the public sphere. Marx saw that those who control the material base will control ideas in an era (Ritzer, 2010). In the contemporary digital media era, those who control the media (as social capital) will control ideas in this period. This is a reflection of the complex mechanism of the media that makes the public do and accept what the sender of the message in the media wants.

In the post-truth era, truth is produced by the dominant group, those who can control the media. This may not be based on the truth version of science that is formed based on the

foundation of scientific methods, but is formed based on audience perceptions, with a tendency to override supporting evidence that is relevant to their political vision and mission. People can easily believe what they often hear, what is popular as a truth, and their decisions are built on irrational considerations including emotional considerations, tastes, and others. This means that a term will have different meanings depending on how an individual interprets it. With the control of political elites and activists over the media, the goal of politics to achieve popularity seems no longer related to the spirit of the political movement, but rather the ability to influence the public due to its more massive publicity.

In politics, political statements, marketing diction, have an emotional appeal that does not always intersect with logic. This makes the responsibility of understanding the political integrity of a presidential candidate entirely that of the individuals in the society. Unfortunately, people tend to accept the popularity of politicians based on the popularity that has already been built, so the media will also ultimately support the distribution of information content favoured by its user market. As a result, the diction and terminology that has been developed as a political strategy tends to spread easily, go viral, and be understood by the public as a social movement, new values, good, in accordance with the breath of the times, and contextual. Everything is interpreted according to the way of thinking, emotions, culture and structure of society. At a certain point, the public has been dissolved in the distribution of media content that has been fulfilled by political interests that are relatively favourable to the politicians concerned. In an idiom that we often hear, good news is a good news, bad news is also a good news, meaning that popularity is more important than the nature of good and bad. As long as it gets attention, then political publicity can be said to be successful.

In the case of post-truth, people will feel that their choices and opinions are the most correct, even though the issues conveyed in the post-factual politics situation are still unproven knowledge, and only excel in their massive distribution. Whereas the principle of truth, as mentioned in the previous sub-chapter, emphasises the search for truth through systematic methods and must be done scientifically. Wordplay in this case is only an attempt to legitimise the values they publish and distinguish them from other views. This is different from science, which is achieved through logical and coherent methods to justify its opinions. In the context of virality on social media, we easily find that anyone, any group can easily duplicate and replicate various issues, although in the end we often also find that the issue ultimately becomes ambiguous and vague. This is of course different from the scientific model of knowledge which uses science as its philosophy, truth helps in expanding knowledge, description, interpretation and control. The process must also be based on clear methods, and the delivery of language and data must be firm and straightforward using verification mechanisms.

In the post-truth era, the issues that develop are like a snowball that continues to grow based on political interests and according to the tastes of the general public. This happens in the absence of universality in language, it is a collection of dialects, popular expressions, using a specialised language, which is distributed without an ideal spokesperson in communication except as a homogeneous form of linguistic communication. Deleuze and Guattari mention that the absence of a mother tongue indicates the usurpation of power by the dominant discourse in a political diversity (Lubis, 2016). The issues discussed in post-truth are in line with Foucault's thoughts that pay attention to discourse formation and the role of discourse in the formation of public consciousness, which occurs through the relationship between discourse and power, and this happens in every society whose discourse production is always controlled, selected, redistributed by power (Lubis, 2016). This means that media rulers and media users who control certain discourse fields can control media knowledge through political and economic power.

The discourse rumoured in this post-truth includes ways of thinking, ways of knowing and stating things through various perspectives of different interests and power in shaping the subject. Therefore, today we can find a variety of discourses that shape the thinking of the general public. This is in contrast to the model developed in the philosophy of science that a knowledge must be based on a logical epistemology and scientifically proven through repeated verification. The scientific approach can provide clearer, more systematic explanations and descriptions with justifiable statements based on experience and experimentation.

Conclusion

The communication strategy in the digital era is to place all political communicators in a high level of engagement. The diction of “Amin”, “Gemoy”, and “SatSet” used by the three presidential and vice-presidential candidates represent a light political communication strategy that is easily accepted and understood by a wide audience. This is included in the joint process of creating meaning, so that the communicated content has the freedom to get attention, receive modifications, in the process of forming it to become new knowledge. This can be in the form of terminology formed from the dialectics of discourse on social media. The multi-generational interaction that is the context of Indonesia's 2024 general election shows that public space is an important arena for the formation of social issues. It is a critical place, a space that provides various references and free preferences for its users. The level of popularity of a concept, terminology, figurehead and so on in social media has an important influence on making an issue a point of widespread attention in society. Social media is a meeting place for individuals from various backgrounds across generations, providing new experiences for each user. This will become a momentum to complement each other, collaborate, as well as politically oppose, in a socio-cultural space that is open, egalitarian and influences each other. Ultimately, social space is both a union and a separation of diverse dialectics.

Conflict of Interest

The author declare no conflict of interest.

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