

Critical Discourse Analysis of Khofifah Indar Parawansa's Positive Image in Najwa Shihab's Youtube Video

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study analyzes Khofifah Indar Parawansa in Najwa Shihab's YouTube video during the 2024 East Java regional elections. Using Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory, this study aims to determine how Khofifah builds her positive image in Najwa Shihab's YouTube video. **Method:** This study uses observation and documentation methods to collect the necessary data. **Results:** The results of the analysis show that Khofifah successfully built a positive image in the public eye through the use of polite and easy-to-understand language, as well as effective communication strategies on the YouTube platform. The main themes raised included strategies for surviving political contests and previous achievements, with an emphasis on good relations with political rivals and attention to gender equality issues. **Novelty:** Accordingly, through Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, Khofifah has successfully built a positive image as a competent, inclusive, and visionary leader. This study is expected to contribute to political communication theory and provide insights for communication practitioners in building a positive image in digital media.

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 East Java Regional Election is an election for the Governor and Deputy Governor that is held directly by the people of East Java every five years. This election is very important because the results will influence development, social, and economic policies in the East Java region, making it one of the main political contests at the provincial level. [1]. The East Java regional elections are often contested by several pairs of candidates from various political backgrounds, who compete for public support. The election process involves a series of stages, from nomination and campaigning to voting and vote counting. The first pair is Luluk Nur Hamidah and Lukmanul Khakim (Luluk-Lukman). The second pair, Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Emil Elestianto Dardak (Khofifah-Emil), are the incumbent pair who are running for re-election. The third pair is Tri Rismaharini and Zahrul Azhar Asumta (Gus Hans), who also have political experience at the national and local levels. This competition is becoming increasingly interesting given the political support involving various parties, both those in the government coalition and the opposition.

Khofifah Indar Parawansa, as a candidate for governor of East Java, faces stiff competition from a strong and influential female figure in East Java, particularly in the city of Surabaya, namely Tri Rismaharini, the former mayor of Surabaya. Despite having a strong opponent, Khofifah has a supportive track record as an Indonesian politician and previously held the position of Governor of East Java in the 2018 regional elections for the term from 2019 to 2024, securing 53.55% of the total votes [2]. During her tenure as Governor of East Java in 2018, Khofifah was able to develop East Java, from improving

the quality of education, alleviating poverty, to empowering women, which are factors that support Khofifah's suitability to become Governor of East Java in 2025.

Political strategy was also necessary for Khofifah and Emil's winning team. By involving various parties, not only political parties but also non-party groups, the pair with the slogan "East Java Advances and Excels, Continue" won the 2024 East Java regional elections. Khofifah, as the elected governor, with Emil Dardak as deputy governor, won with 12,192,165 votes or 58.81% of the total valid votes. Meanwhile, the third-ranked pair, Tri Rismaharini-Gus Hans, received 6,743,095 votes or 32.2%, and the first-ranked pair, Luluk-Lukman, only received 1,797,322 valid votes or 8.67% of the total valid votes [3].

A positive image is one of the crucial factors for public figures. In political contests, a positive image of a figure becomes an important asset to win the hearts of voters. Building a positive image in society often faces various challenges and does not always run smoothly [4]. Khofifah utilizes various media channels to build a positive image, one of which is through YouTube videos. YouTube, as one of the largest video-based platforms, provides a space for politicians and their supporters to convey narratives, ideas, and work programs that can shape public perception [5]. Becoming a gubernatorial candidate certainly requires a lot of support to win in the political arena. Several YouTube accounts have published videos on how Khofifah and Emil Dardak campaigned in the 2024 regional elections. For instance, the tvOne News YouTube channel reported on the separate campaigns conducted by Khofifah and Emil, while the official iNews channel reported that toward the end of the campaign period, Khofifah distributed free fuel vouchers to ride-hailing drivers. Additionally, the Metro TV YouTube channel reported that hundreds of women from the Prosperous Justice Party across East Java declared themselves as campaigners for the second-ranked gubernatorial candidate.

Another effective campaign platform besides television news YouTube accounts is the YouTube accounts of public figures or politically savvy figures. One such account belongs to Najwa Shihab. There is content belonging to her in the Mata Najwa program entitled "Exclusive: Khofifah - Emil's Survival Strategy". The video, which was uploaded on September 2, 2024, contains information about Khofifah's achievements and also builds a narrative that highlights her leadership qualities and grand vision for East Java, driven by questions asked by Najwa Shihab. Najwa Shihab also invited another candidate pair, Luluk-Lukman. The 55-minute, 48-second video explains the strategy of the number one candidate pair in the 2024 regional elections.

Based on the content titled "Exclusive Luluk-Lukman: The Challenger's Strategy," it has 205,071 viewers. However, when compared to Khofifah-Emil's content, the number of viewers is much higher at 383,731 viewers. Online comments are also more active on the Khofifah-Emil content compared to Luluk-Lukman. The total number of comments on the Khofifah-Emil video is 2,652, while the Luluk-Lukman video only has 949 comments. This indicates that Khofifah and Emil are more widely discussed and attract more public attention. Therefore, Khofifah and Emil were chosen as the subjects of this study.

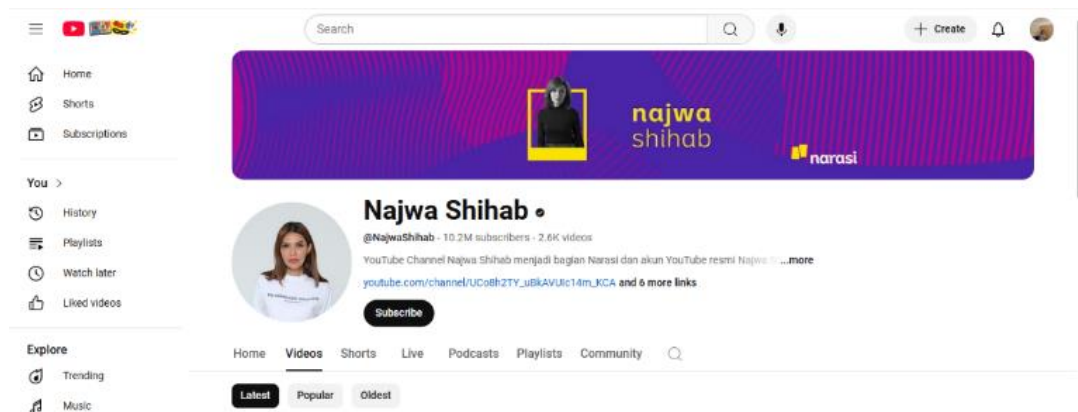


Figure 1. Najwa Shihab's YouTube channel (Source: Najwa Shihab's YouTube page).

Najwa Shihab is a journalist and public figure who is recognized for her dedication to the media world. Her successful career reflects her ability to convey information with a critical approach. With a background in journalism, Najwa Shihab packages information not only in written form, but also through video media, demonstrating her ability to adapt to developments in modern media [6]. She has an official YouTube account named Najwa Shihab with more than 10 million subscribers. On this YouTube channel, Najwa has uploaded various content related to several topics, ranging from politics, social issues, and other factual issues. With its engaging presentation, the 54-minute video serves as an effective communication tool in shaping a positive narrative for Khofifah amid intensifying political competition. This demonstrates that social media, particularly YouTube, is not only a platform for disseminating information but also a medium for shaping the positive image of a political figure.

Research on discourse analysis has been conducted by a number of researchers who have examined various aspects of discourse in social, political, and media contexts. These studies provide a strong foundation for understanding how discourse shapes understanding, identity, and power in society. The first study by Y. Hartinah and F. M. Kindi, [7] titled Political Discourse Analysis of Presidential Candidates Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto in the 2019 Presidential Election Debate, used data sourced from the Kompas TV YouTube channel. Using discourse analysis techniques, this study describes the diction and style of language used in the second round of the 2019 Presidential Election debate held on February 17, 2019. The findings show that the use of sarcastic and cynical language, as well as comparative language, dominated the discourse. This study and previous studies share a similar theme, namely the discourse analysis of political figures. However, this study focuses more on Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory, which created a good image during the election season, while previous studies focused more on the theory of diction and the use of language style.

The second study by S. Bin Sakka, N. Nurhadi, and E. S. Sari [8] titled Critical Discourse Analysis of Teun A. Van Dijk's Model in the President's Speech at the 42nd ASEAN Summit. This study focuses on the explanation of texts that have been evaluated by individuals or groups. The results of this study indicate that the three levels of structure in Van Dijk's theory, namely macro structure, superstructure, and micro

structure, are included in the dimensions of text in critical discourse analysis. The topics or themes in the president's speech are included in the macro structure, while the superstructure consists of schematic elements, such as the introduction, content, and conclusion, which organize the sequence of thoughts systematically. Meanwhile, semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical elements form the micro structure. Context and details are related to semantic components; sentence structure, coherence, and the use of pronouns are related to syntax; word choice is related to style; and the phrases used are the focus of rhetorical elements. In terms of the use of the same theory for discourse analysis, this study is comparable to previous studies. Previous research concentrated on presidential speeches in which the subject spoke in one direction, but the current study involves a two-way discussion.

The third study by D. Fadiyah and J. Simorangkir [9] titled *The Use of Instagram Social Media in Building a Positive Image of President Joko Widodo in the 2019 Presidential Election*. The purpose of the previous study was to examine and explain how Instagram contributed to the public's positive perception of President Joko Widodo during the 2019 Presidential Election. This study's main objective is to examine and track Joko Widodo's Instagram posts from October 1, 2018, to April 17, 2019, which was the campaign period leading up to the presidential election. The findings show that Joko Widodo's positive image was successfully built through the use of Instagram, as seen from the ability of his Instagram account to have a positive impact on public perception. One similarity between the previous and current studies is the use of social media to build a positive reputation. However, while the previous study focused on Instagram, the current study focuses more on YouTube.

The three studies above have contributed to the understanding of discourse analysis, most of which discuss how Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis is applied in analyzing Indonesian political figures. Based on the three previous studies discussed above, there is a research gap in that there has been no study examining political figures in the context of regional head elections, as several of these studies lean more towards presidential elections. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine how Khofifah, as a political figure who is a candidate in the 2024 East Java regional head election, builds her positive image using Najwa Shihab's YouTube channel. The study focuses on how Khofifah's speaking style, word choice, and communication strategies are able to create a convincing narrative and strengthen public trust in her.

This study uses Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory. This approach allows for an in-depth analysis of text structure and communicative strategies used [10]. Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model is a commonly used method of discourse analysis because it is considered practical in its application. Critical discourse analysis is the process of interpreting and examining discourse presented by someone in written or oral form, which contains linguistic meaning in the form of text, speech, sentences or images, which can be analyzed using a critical approach[11].

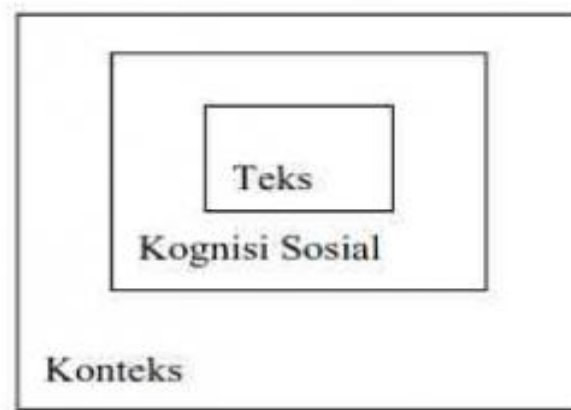


Figure 2. Van Dijk's discourse analysis model.

According to Van Dijk, discourse has three structural dimensions: text, social cognition, and social context. The first text dimension analyzed focuses on how the text affirms a theme. This text dimension of discourse is divided into several parts. First, there is the macro structure, which refers to the general meaning that can be captured based on the topic or theme of the discourse being read. Next, the superstructure describes the relationship between discourse and the schema or form of the text being analyzed. Finally, the micro structure relates to the meaning of discourse that can be observed through small elements in the text, such as words, sentences, or paraphrases[11].

Van Dijk argues that the second structure is social cognition, which relates to how a text is produced. Social cognition focuses on the psychology and cognitive processes of journalists in creating a text. This process is important for deepening and exploring the meaning contained in the text, so social cognition analysis is necessary. Several schemes or models that can be used in social cognition analysis include Person Schemas, Self Schemas, Role Schemas, and Event Schemas. Social context studies the discourse structure that is formed in society regarding an event[12]. Social context studies the discourse structure that is formed in society regarding an event. This analysis looks at how the event is discussed and understood by the general public.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to conduct an in-depth analysis. Qualitative research seeks to understand, explore, and delve into deep phenomena, then interpret and draw conclusions based on the selected context. By using this approach, the study is expected to produce accurate, clear, and useful descriptive data. Based on the source, according to Spradley in Hardani (2020) the objects in qualitative research consist of three elements, namely actors, activities, and places. The data source or research object is Najwa Shihab's YouTube channel with the title "Exclusive: Khofifah-Emil's Survival Strategy," published on September 2, 2024. Other supporting data may include comments, articles, and other related videos. Individuals or groups involved in a study

and contributing information are referred to as research subjects. The selected research subject is Khofifah Indar Parawansa.

This study uses observation and documentation methods to collect the necessary data. Observation is one of the methods used to collect data by directly observing the subject and the environment surrounding the event being studied[14]. Meanwhile, documentation is information taken from various textual sources, including books, archives, notes, and reports, as part of the data collection process[15]. Data collection is carried out by viewing the selected video content in its entirety. Then, sorting out which parts to study, namely the parts that show how Khofifah conveys her information or opinions.

The next stage is to identify and analyze the data that has been collected. This process includes converting the audio into a transcript of Khofifah's speech, which is then analyzed using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory, which covers text structure, social context, and social cognition. At the macro level, video analysis was conducted to determine the main themes. At the superstructure level, the opening, content, and closing were analyzed. Micro analysis was conducted on the semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical aspects of Khofifah's conversation. Social cognition was analyzed through Khofifah's answers to determine the schemes used. Meanwhile, the social context was obtained from Khofifah's answers and the public's responses in the comments section. Finally, conclusions are drawn based on the results of these analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the phenomena described above, an analysis of Khofifah Indar Parawansa's discourse in an interview on Najwa Shihab's YouTube video entitled Exclusive: Khofifah-Emil's Survival Strategy was conducted using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory as a reference.

1. Text

1.1. Macro Structure / Thematic

The macro structure is the general meaning that can be understood based on the topic or theme of the discourse being read. This section helps identify the main themes or topics in the conversation between Najwa Shihab and Khofifah. The main theme of the conversation with Khofifah was issues and strategies for surviving the 2024 regional elections and responding to performance achievements in the previous period.

Minute 14:27: "I feel that our relationship is very close, very good. Even when I was Minister of Social Affairs, she (Risma) was willing to celebrate her victory in the second term of the mayoral election, but she asked to celebrate at my house."

Here, Khofifah responded to questions about her relationship with Tri Rismaharini, who is her rival in the 2024 regional elections. Khofifah explained directly that her relationship with Risma is fine, even very good. This shows healthy competition between the candidate pairs in the 2024 East Java regional elections.

Minute 30:44: "If we want to measure the indicators, we can use the Key Performance Index (IKU). So, we first compiled eleven IKUs, and gender equality is one of them, and it is far above the national average."

This statement indicates that issues related to gender equality are her priority in the East Java Regional Election. This shows that Khofifah cares about and wants to prioritize gender equality in the region she will lead.

Minute 51:32: "Our manufacturing industry in East Java has reached 35% as of May 2024. The national target for 2045 is 30%."

Based on the above statement, Khofifah's performance in the manufacturing industry in the previous period has exceeded the national target. This shows that Khofifah is capable of maximizing the existing potential for progress in East Java.

1.2 Superstructure / Schematic

The superstructure is the framework or organization of the text that includes various parts that build the flow of communication, such as the introduction, content, closing, and conclusion. The introduction opens with an introduction to the Khofifah-Emil candidate pair. This section explains the reasons why Emil Dardak was chosen to accompany Khofifah in the 2024 East Java regional elections.

Minute 4:39: "First, there must be understanding; we must understand each other. After understanding emerges, trust must emerge. Without trust, it is difficult. And third, respect must emerge; mutual respect."

This statement opens the conversation to build a positive perception by emphasizing trust, mutual understanding, and respect with his partner in the East Java Regional Election.

The conversation continued with a discussion of issues related to the East Java Regional Election, including coalitions and responses to other candidate pairs running in the 2024 East Java Regional Election.

Minute 06:38: "There are eight parties that have seats in the provincial DPRD. Then there are five parties that do not have seats. There is one party that did not meet the requirements to participate in the election during the verification process, but they still support us."

Based on this statement, it can be seen that Khofifah was able to convince many parties with her goals, so that she was supported to achieve victory. This also shows that the large number of party coalitions that Khofifah has is one of the successful strategies in winning the regional elections.

Minute 18:56: "I never consider any particular contestant to be an underdog."

This statement means that Khofifah does not underestimate or look down on any of her opponents in the 2024 East Java regional elections.

The conversation closed with a discussion of hopes for East Java in the future after her successful previous term in office.

Minute 51:30: "Because we have worked for five years, we hope that East Java will move up a class."

This closing statement implies that East Java can become better in the next term by looking at the progress that has been made in the previous five years. This serves as a reminder that whoever occupies the East Java Governor's seat needs to lead East Java in a better direction.

1.3 Micro Structure:

Microstructure focuses on the small elements within a text, such as word choice, sentences, and the style of language used.

Semantics

Teun A. van Dijk describes semantics as the meaning intended to be conveyed in a text, which can be seen from various aspects such as context, details, intent, and presuppositions. Context, details, and intent are related to which information is emphasized and given more weight.

Minute 25:12: "Is that considered entering the internal domain of the party or reminding you that you were born here?"

This statement contains a context related to internal dynamics within a party. Khofifah seems to be questioning whether certain actions or statements are considered interference in the party's internal affairs or rather a reminder that the individual comes from that party. This context shows that there is a poor relationship between PBNU and PKB, of which Khofifah is a member of both PKB and PBNU. This statement can be considered a mediating response to the case that is currently being discussed.

Minute 53:07: "So there are things that I often say, of the 32 sea toll roads in this country, 27 are from Surabaya. Therefore, 80% of East Indonesia's logistics are supplied from East Java."

In this sentence, details are used to convey concrete facts that reinforce Khofifah's point about the importance of Surabaya and East Java in Indonesia's logistics. Through the use of specific figures and statistics, Khofifah implicitly conveys her stance that East Java plays a vital role in the country's logistics infrastructure, which could be used as a basis for advocating policies that support this region.

Minute 15:18: "What is the rivalry? Something that may not be equal in position, I mean unequal in this sense. When I was in the provincial government, he was in the city, which is not something that should be contested."

According to the above sentence, Khofifah intends to emphasize that the rivalry that occurs is unfair or unequal in the context of their positions. There is an impression that competition between two different positions is irrelevant or unnecessary. The sentence "I mean unequal in this sense" shows that the speaker wants to provide further explanation to clarify that this imbalance is related to the different power structures or roles between the provincial government and the city. This leads to a rejection of the view that the two positions should be considered equal in terms of contestation.

Minute 00:58: "I think East Java is, God willing, relatively harmonious and peaceful, that's roughly the situation. So it's likely to carry over into the regional election process, both in the regencies and cities and in the province."

Based on the above statement, with Khofifah stating “relatively harmonious and peaceful, insha Allah,” Khofifah reinforces the positive impression of East Java. This is compounded by her follow-up statement, which serves as a stimulus to expand the meaning. In this context, the stimulus gives the impression that this harmonious situation could influence the course of the regional elections in East Java.

Syntactics

Teun A. van Dijk defines syntactic analysis as analysis related to the structure and arrangement of the speaker's sentences, such as the use of pronouns. This structure and arrangement are well organized so that the intended meaning and purpose can be achieved.

Minute 12:17: “Specifically, it was not the focus of the program, but at that time he discussed in some detail how to provide nutritional support to the community.”

The pronoun “he” in this sentence is used to refer to Mr. Prabowo in a polite and formal manner. Khofifah reflects respect for him as a figure discussed in the context of certain policies or issues. The context in this case is the strengthening of community nutrition in the East Java region.

Stylistics

Stylistics can be described as the process of selecting words or lexicon chosen by speakers to convey their goals and thoughts. Lexicon itself relates to how a person chooses words from a range of available options. This choice of words will give a different impression and can reflect certain attitudes and ideological views.

Minute 07:18: “That the elements of the party can move together to achieve common goals, achieve common victory.”

The use of the phrase “elements of the party” shows recognition of internal diversity within the party, but is emphasized by the words “move together,” which reflect a push for unity and collaboration. The phrases “common goals” and “shared victory” reinforce the impression that political success is not an individual achievement, but a collective one. Stylistically, this choice of words is part of Khofifah's strategy to build a positive image as an inclusive figure, capable of embracing various parties, and emphasizing the importance of teamwork in achieving greater political goals.

Minute 24:27: “If I don't see it that way, this is a value where at the beginning of the reform, PBNU wanted to take steps, perhaps corrective ones, steps that could be more productive.”

This sentence uses vocabulary that reflects Khofifah's personal views on the PBNU's reform measures. The word “corrective” indicates an awareness of potential mistakes or shortcomings in the past. Meanwhile, ‘productive’ indicates an orientation towards better and more beneficial results. Khofifah also uses the word “value” to emphasize that this is an important principle or belief in the context of the reforms being discussed.

Minute 32:24: “So, the way I build togetherness among them, the ojol drivers, there are many formats.”

Khofifah uses a lexicon that reflects an inclusive and humanistic approach through the phrase “building togetherness among them, the ojol drivers, there are many formats.”

The choice of the word “building togetherness” indicates an active attitude in creating social solidarity, while the direct mention of “ojol drivers” reflects concern and direct involvement with grassroots communities. The phrase “there are many formats” signifies flexibility and openness in establishing social relations. Stylistically, this choice of words not only reflects a participatory and adaptive ideological view, but also serves as Khofifah's strategy in building a positive image as a leader who is down-to-earth, responsive, and concerned about the welfare of the grassroots community.

Rhetoric

Van Dijk's rhetorical analysis also highlights the use of metaphors and graphics in discourse, as these elements can reveal deeper meanings and discourse strategies used by speakers or writers.

Minute 09:57: “I think the significant increase in seats in the Regional Representative Council will also strengthen their enthusiasm.”

The metaphor of “seats” as power or influence. In a political context, ‘seats’ are often used as a symbol of power, position, or political representation. When we say “increase in seats,” this does not only refer to an increase in the number of seats held in the Regional Representative Council (DPRD), but also describes an increase in the political power or influence of a group or party. This metaphor illustrates that an increase in the number of seats has more meaning than just a number, but is also related to greater opportunities to influence political decisions.



Figure 3. Khofifah's body language while expressing her opinion (Source: Najwa Shihab's YouTube page).

The use of hand gestures when expressing opinions such as “I think the significant increase in seats in the Regional Representative Council will also strengthen their enthusiasm” can have several important functions in nonverbal communication. Hand gestures are often used to emphasize certain points, convey emotional emphasis, and reinforce the verbal message being conveyed. Waving your hands is often used to convey energy, illustrate continuity, or describe something that continues to develop. In this context, swinging hand gestures can illustrate an ongoing process or change, such as a gradual or continuous increase in enthusiasm as the number of seats in the Regional Representative Council increases. This gesture can give the impression that the speaker

sees the impact of the increase in seats as something dynamic and evolving and may indicate a belief that the change will lead to something greater, such as increased enthusiasm. This hand gesture can also create a visual effect that makes the audience more emotionally engaged in the message being conveyed.

2. Social Cognition

Social cognition is the cognitive process journalists use in creating a text. This process is important for deepening and exploring the meaning contained in the text, so social cognition analysis is necessary.

Minute 16:09: "Try to find my statement. I don't think I ever respond to things I don't know about, how the public or part of the public perceives things."

Based on this statement, Khofifah, as a candidate for governor of East Java, shows awareness of how public perception can be shaped and influenced by various external factors, and she chooses not to respond to things she does not fully understand. In the context of her rivalry with Tri Rismaharini, Khofifah does not want to get caught up in a competition driven by vague or incorrect perceptions. This reflects self-control and selectivity in responding to situations, which are important aspects of social cognition, where individuals consider how other people's perceptions can influence their actions.

3. Social Context

Social context refers to the discourse structure that is formed within society regarding an event. This analysis looks at how the event is discussed and understood by the general public. Discourse must be understood and interpreted based on the underlying social conditions and environment.

This can be seen from how Khofifah carried herself in the program. Khofifah rarely used complicated political sentences so that the public could understand what she was talking about. With this semi-formal setting, Khofifah was able to position herself to respond to various questions asked by Najwa Shihab, the host of the program.



Figure 4. Evidence of support for Khofifah in the comments section.

Based on the evidence in the comments above, this shows that he has succeeded in gaining support among the people of East Java. This support reflects the trust and agreement that has been formed between the individuals or groups who support him and the vision or program he offers. This could be due to factors such as his success in meeting the needs of the community, his ability to build effective communication, or his

leadership, which is recognized and appreciated by local residents. In addition, the social and cultural conditions in East Java, which tend to prioritize harmony and cooperation, may also be a strong reason why this support has grown. Thus, this support not only reflects success in politics, but also shows that the people of East Java feel connected and well represented by this figure, both politically, socially, and economically.



Figure 5. Evidence of public rejection in the comments section.

Despite having a lot of support, there are still some people who disagree with Khofifah's leadership as Governor of East Java. However, this is normal in the dynamics of regional elections, because in a democratic process, differences of opinion and perspective are natural. Each individual or group has different political preferences based on various considerations, such as the vision, mission, and track record of the prospective leader. This disagreement can be triggered by factors such as differences in political ideology, disappointment with previous policies, or incompatibility with the candidate's program. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that these differences of opinion are part of the checks and balances process in a democratic system, which allows the public to criticize and provide input for the advancement of the region. This process also reflects the active involvement of the community in political life, which ultimately strengthens the principles of transparency and accountability in government.

Discussion

In the Text section, Khofifah's macro structure is designed to shape the perception that she is a progressive leader. This is evidenced by her dedication to maintaining good relations despite political competition, paying attention to important social issues such as gender equality, and demonstrating effective performance in the economic and manufacturing sectors. In the superstructure, the discourse scheme used by Khofifah in this discussion shows a systematic sequence of thoughts, starting from building a good relationship with Emil (trust, understanding, and respect), to explaining the political support she has received and her positive attitude towards competition, and ending with a grand vision for East Java. This discourse is carefully constructed to create a positive image, emphasizing the strength of the supporting coalition and optimism about the province's future. At the micro level, Khofifah's positive image is reflected in several aspects of her language use. Semantically, she often emphasizes factual details such as data on East Java's manufacturing and logistics industries, presenting herself as an

evidence-based and performance-oriented leader. Syntactically, her use of polite and formal pronouns reflects her respect for her audience while maintaining the ethics of political communication. Stylistically, her choice of inclusive words such as “together” and “common goals” reinforces her image as an inclusive figure who promotes unity. Rhetorically, Khofifah uses metaphors and repetition appropriately to emphasize important messages, accompanied by convincing body language that adds to her credibility. The combination of these elements builds Khofifah's image as an intelligent, down-to-earth, communicative leader who is able to effectively convey her political messages to the public.

In terms of social cognition, Khofifah's positive image is evident in her ability to manage responses to public issues. She chooses not to respond to matters that are unclear or have the potential to cause misperceptions, thereby demonstrating self-control, caution, and political maturity. This selective attitude builds Khofifah's image as a wise leader who is not easily provoked and focuses on substantial matters that benefit the community. In a social context, Khofifah presents herself using simple, straightforward, and easy-to-understand language, so that her message can be accepted by various levels of society. She is able to adapt her communication style to the culture of the people of East Java, who uphold the values of harmony, togetherness, and peace. This reinforces her image as a populist, communicative leader who is able to represent the people of East Java at large.

Therefore, the novelty of this study compared to previous studies lies in its focus on political figures in the context of regional elections (2024 East Java Regional Elections) through YouTube as a means of creating a positive image. While previous studies have mostly discussed political figures at the national level, such as the President in presidential debates or the use of Instagram to build a political image, this study offers a new contribution by analyzing Khofifah Indar Parawansa's discourse using Van Dijk's critical analysis model, which includes macro structure, superstructure, micro structure, social cognition, and social context. The results show that Khofifah has successfully built a positive image through a simple, data-driven, and inclusive communication style, while also being able to adapt to the culture of the people of East Java. Thus, this study provides an update both in terms of the object, namely regional elections rather than presidential elections, and in terms of the media, namely YouTube rather than mainstream media or Instagram, which are used as digital political arenas.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : Based on the results of Teun A. Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model, Khofifah's success in building a positive image cannot be separated from the application of communication strategies that cover all dimensions of discourse. At the macro level, Khofifah emphasized important issues such as gender equality, harmonious relations with political rivals, and economic development achievements that exceeded national targets, thereby positioning herself as a progressive leader. At the superstructure level, a systematic communication flow, starting from

building trust with political partners, demonstrating broad support from party coalitions, to closing with an optimistic vision for East Java, creates a convincing and consistent narrative. At the micro level, the use of semantics in the form of factual details, inclusive language, populist word choice, and strong rhetoric reinforces her image as a leader who is close to the people. From a social cognition perspective, Khofifah demonstrates full awareness of how public perception is formed and carefully chooses which issues to respond to so as not to get caught up in negative narratives. Meanwhile, in a social context, her simple and easy-to-understand communicative style makes her political message relevant to the culture of the people of East Java, who value harmony and togetherness. Thus, through Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, Khofifah has successfully built a positive image as a competent, inclusive, and visionary leader.

Implication : The results of this analysis are expected to contribute to political communication theory and provide insights for communication practitioners in building a positive image in digital media. **Limitation** : This study focuses specifically on Khofifah's communication strategies through the lens of Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model, which may limit its generalizability to other political figures or different cultural contexts. The emphasis on a single case study also means that variations in communication patterns among other leaders are not fully captured, thus restricting the broader applicability of the findings. **Future Research** : Further studies could expand the scope by comparing Khofifah's discourse strategies with those of other political leaders, both within Indonesia and internationally, to identify similarities and differences in image-building practices. Future research may also integrate other theoretical frameworks alongside Van Dijk's model, such as framing analysis or multimodal discourse analysis, to capture the complexity of political communication in the digital era. Additionally, longitudinal studies can be conducted to examine whether such strategies remain effective over time, particularly in the face of shifting public opinion and evolving media landscapes.

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