

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE NEWS IN THE MOLOTOV BOMB CASE IN SAMARINDA

Sri Hadijati¹, Widyatmike Gede Mulawarman², Bibit Suhatmadi³

Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education,
Mulawarman University

E-mail: Srihadijati27@gmail.com¹, widyatmike@fkip.unmul.ac.id², bibitsuhatmady@fkip.unmul.ac.id³

Received : 01 October 2025

Published : 23 December 2025

Revised : 10 October 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/morfaiv6i1.4777>

Accepted : 15 November 2025

Publish Link : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/MORFAI/article/view/4777>

Abstract

This study aims to analyze critical discourse in online media coverage of the Molotov cocktail incident in Samarinda using the approach of Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk. The data consists of three online news articles analyzed from the perspective of text, discursive practices, and social practices. The results show that all three articles tend to present narratives that support the police as the sole source and frame the perpetrators as a threat to public security. The demonstrations are reduced to potential anarchy, and the perpetrators are denied any opportunity to defend themselves. The analysis shows that the media plays a role as a reproducer of state power in constructing public opinion.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Online Media, Molotov Bombs, Samarinda, Fairclough, van Dijk.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of information technology has dramatically transformed the way society accesses and consumes information, particularly through online media. Online media have now become the primary source of news, consumed rapidly and on a massive scale by the public. However, behind the speed of information delivery, the media also possess significant ideological power in shaping opinions, influencing perceptions, and reproducing power through the language they use. This condition makes the analysis of language in the media an important academic necessity, especially in examining how events are constructed within discourse. One approach used to understand the relationship between language, power, and ideology in the media is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This approach not only examines the linguistic structures of texts but also highlights the social, political, and cultural contexts surrounding them. According to Fairclough (1995), discourse is never neutral; it always carries particular interests and reflects power structures within society.

The Molotov bomb case in Samarinda represents an event that is particularly interesting to analyze critically through online media. This incident not only had local impacts but also generated widespread responses from the public, security forces, and the central government. In this context, the media play a strategic role in framing the event, determining narrative focus, selecting diction, and shaping readers' perceptions of the perpetrators, victims, and the motives behind the act. Through this study, the author aims to reveal how discursive constructions in online news coverage of the Molotov bomb case in Samarinda represent certain ideologies, as well as how the media use language to shape social reality. This research is also expected to contribute to enhancing the public's critical understanding of media information and to increasing awareness of the importance of media literacy in the digital era.

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Analyze the discursive construction of online media coverage related to the Molotov bomb case in Samarinda, focusing on language choices, narrative structures, and social representations.
2. Identify the ideologies and specific interests embedded within news texts, as well as how the media frame the perpetrators, victims, and the context of the event.
3. Reveal the power relations implied in media discourse through the Critical Discourse Analysis approach, particularly using Norman Fairclough's analytical model.

4. Provide readers with a critical understanding of how the media shape public perceptions through language and enhance media literacy awareness in society.

Research Questions

In this study, the research questions addressed through the Critical Discourse Analysis approach are as follows:

1. How is discourse constructed in online media coverage of the Molotov bomb case in Samarinda?
2. How do the media represent the perpetrators, victims, and the socio-political context of the incident?
3. What ideologies and power relations are implied in the news texts related to the case?

These research questions are grounded in Norman Fairclough's (1995) view that:

“Discourse is a form of social practice that not only reflects reality but also shapes and sustains it through ideological linguistic practices.”

Thus, through these research questions, this study examines how language in news texts is not neutral but rather constitutes part of social practices imbued with meaning, power, and ideology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its theoretical framework to uncover how the media construct social reality through language. In this research, the author integrates the theories of two prominent figures in CDA, Norman Fairclough and Teun A. van Dijk, both of whom emphasize the importance of the relationship between language, power, and ideology in media discourse.

Norman Fairclough: The Three Dimensions of Discourse

Fairclough (1995) developed a critical discourse analysis model consisting of three main dimensions:

- a. Text (Textual Analysis):

Linguistic analysis of the text, including word choice, metaphors, sentence structures, and cohesion.

- b. Discursive Practice:

An examination of how texts are produced, distributed, and consumed, including processes of intertextuality and the context of production.

- c. Social Practice:

Linking texts to broader social structures, including ideology, power, and domination.

“Discourse contributes to the shaping of social structures, and at the same time it is shaped by them.”

— Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (1992)

Through this model, discourse analysis does not merely examine texts linguistically but also investigates how texts participate in the reproduction of or resistance to power relations.

Teun A. van Dijk: News Structure and Ideology

Van Dijk (2006) emphasizes that the media play a strategic role in disseminating ideology through systematic discourse structures. He divides discourse analysis into three main aspects:

- a. **Macrostructure:**

The main themes or overarching topics of the text.

- b. **Superstructure:**

The narrative schema or general structure of news discourse (lead, background, events, and commentary).

- c. **Microstructure:**

Lexical choices, syntax, coherence, and rhetorical devices used in the text.

Van Dijk also asserts that:

“Discourse is a form of social control; through language, the media can control what readers think.”

— Teun A. van Dijk, *Discourse and Power* (2008)

Within this framework, the analysis of online news coverage of the Molotov bomb case in Samarinda focuses on how language is used to ideologically frame the perpetrators, victims, and the context of the event.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The combined approach of Fairclough and van Dijk enables the researcher not only to analyze textual structures but also to relate them to broader socio-political contexts. This approach is highly relevant to the objectives of the study, which seek to uncover the ideologies and power relations embedded in online media reporting.

METHOD**Research Approach and Type of Study**

This study adopts a **qualitative approach** using **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** as its methodological framework. This approach is chosen because the focus of the study lies in examining how language is used to represent social reality and ideology in media texts.

“Qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from the participants’ perspectives by emphasizing meaning, experience, and interpretation.”

— Moleong (2017:6), *Qualitative Research Methodology*

The type of research is descriptive-analytical, aiming to describe and systematically analyze news discourse data using the theoretical frameworks of Fairclough and van Dijk.

Data Sources and Data Collection Techniques

The data sources in this study consist of online news texts reporting on the Molotov bomb case in Samarinda from several national online media outlets, such as:

- a. *Kompas.com*
- b. *Detik.com*
- c. *Tribunnews.com*

Data selection was conducted purposively by selecting news articles that explicitly present narratives concerning the event, the perpetrators, the victims, and responses from the public or authorities.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was carried out through the following steps:

- a. Downloading and documenting news texts within a specific time period (e.g., one week after the incident occurred),
- b. Identifying the textual structure (headlines, leads, body text, and quotations),
- c. Analyzing the discourse content using predefined categories based on the models of Fairclough and van Dijk.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional model:

1. Textual Analysis

Examining linguistic elements such as word choice (diction), metaphors, sentence structure, modality, and cohesion.

2. Discursive Practice

Analyzing how texts are produced and consumed within the media space, including their intertextual relations.

3. Social Practice

Relating the discourse content to the social, political, and ideological structures underlying the news reporting.

This approach is strengthened by Teun A. van Dijk’s (2008) structural analysis, which includes:

- a. **Macrostructure:** the main themes of the text,
- b. **Superstructure:** the schematic organization of the text (headlines, leads, and chronology),
- c. **Microstructure:** linguistic details such as style, tone, and rhetorical strategies.

“In critical discourse analysis, language is viewed as a form of social action that both shapes and is shaped by power structures.”

— Fairclough (1995)

“The media are agents of ideological production and reproduction; discourse analysis reveals how ideology is manipulated within texts.”

— van Dijk (2006)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that examines how texts and discourse both shape and are shaped by power, ideology, and social structures. This approach views language not merely as a tool of communication, but as a social practice imbued with ideological meaning.

Fairclough (1995) states that:

“Critical discourse analysis seeks to reveal the power relations and ideologies hidden in language through the analysis of text, discursive practice, and social practice.”

Meanwhile, van Dijk (2006) emphasizes that CDA must pay attention to three main aspects: social context, cognitive structures (collective knowledge), and linguistic strategies within texts.

“Discourse analysis is not only about what is said, but also about who has the power to say something, to whom, and in what context.”

— van Dijk (2006)

Media Language and Ideology

Mass media, particularly online media, play a crucial role in shaping public opinion. Language in the media is not neutral; rather, it is constructed with specific ideological content. Every choice of words, narrative structure, and source quotation influences how readers understand an event.

According to Eriyanto (2012), the media convey information through certain “frames” that can direct readers’ interpretations of issues.

“Language in the media is an arena of meaning contestation; the media do not merely report, but also interpret and take sides through particular ways of framing events.”

— Eriyanto (2012)

Therefore, analyzing media news cannot be separated from the ideological aspects embedded within it, whether explicit or implicit.

Discourse Structure of Online News

Online news discourse has specific characteristics that distinguish it from traditional print news. In addition to a more concise writing style, online media are influenced by rapid publication, clickbait practices, and algorithms. The structure of online news generally follows a lead–body–closing pattern, but often includes interactive elements such as hyperlinks, comments, and multimedia.

Van Dijk (1988) argues that news texts are constructed through macrostructure (main themes), superstructure (narrative framework), and microstructure (word choice, sentence construction, and rhetorical strategies).

“The structure of news texts demonstrates how ideology is systematically communicated, not only through content but also through narrative organization and stylistic choices.”

— van Dijk (1988)

Previous Studies

Several previous studies have employed CDA to analyze media discourse, including:

- a. Putra (2021), published in *Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, who examined how negative framing of criminal perpetrators is constructed by the media through labeling practices.
- b. Rahmawati (2023), in *Jurnal Wacana Media*, who analyzed the representation of religious ideology in terrorism-related news using Fairclough’s approach, finding that the media tend to reproduce certain stereotypes.

These studies demonstrate that the CDA approach is highly relevant for uncovering hidden discourse behind news texts.

News Headline:

“Police Arrest the Seventh Suspect in the Samarinda Molotov Bomb Case”

1. Textual Analysis (Fairclough)

Word Choice and Diction:

- a. The terms “seventh suspect,” “intellectual actor,” and “funder” create a hierarchy of roles and suggest an organized or structured criminal network.
- b. Phrases such as “successfully arrested” and “still being pursued” emphasize the success and dominance of law enforcement authorities, reinforcing their active role as maintainers of public order.
- c. Verbs such as “planned,” “financed,” and “personally purchased” portray the suspect as an active and conscious agent of the criminal act.
- d. Repeated use of the term “Molotov bomb” reinforces an image of violence and serious threat.

Modality and Attribution:

- a. The use of “allegedly” conveys caution, yet it is not entirely neutral as it still positions the suspect within a frame of guilt.
- b. Dominant statements come from the Chief of Police, representing an authoritative source and illustrating media narrative control through official voices.

Discursive Practice (Fairclough)

- a. Text production: The news is produced primarily based on police press conferences. There are no voices from the suspect, legal counsel, or campus representatives.
- b. Distribution and consumption: The news is published in national online media platforms with wide and rapid readership. It is presented in a factual crime-news style that focuses on police performance.
- c. Intertextuality: References are made to other similar cases (such as incidents in Yogyakarta), creating associations that suggest similar acts occur elsewhere and reinforcing the perception of a nationwide threat.

Social Practice (Fairclough)

a. Underlying ideologies:

1. Security ideology: Dominant, portraying law enforcement actions as successful measures in preventing potential unrest.
2. Law and order ideology: Mainstreaming the narrative that perpetrators must be punished and society must be protected.

b. Power relations:

1. The police maintain control over the narrative, as only official voices are quoted.
2. Students and alumni are portrayed as subversive groups without being given space to defend themselves.
3. The motives or reasons behind the action are not mentioned, distancing the discourse from the broader social and political context of the act.

CONCLUSION

1. The news is constructed within a strongly pro-law enforcement and pro-security narrative framework, leaving little to no space for the socio-political dimensions of the planned action.
2. The perpetrators are hierarchically constructed: students are portrayed as technical executors, while alumni or senior figures are framed as intellectual actors. This representation creates the impression of an organized network and conspiracy.
3. The media reproduce existing power structures and law enforcement ideology by positioning the police as the sole authoritative source of truth.
4. No critical social context or underlying motivations behind the planned action are presented, resulting in the association of student actions solely with criminality rather than as a form of political expression.

REFERENCES

Detik.com. (2025, September 6). *2 Aktor Intelektual Bom Molotov di Samarinda Ditangkap, Diduga Otak Demo Anarkis.* <https://www.detik.com>

Eriyanto. (2012). *Analisis Wacana: Pengantar Analisis Teks Media*. Yogyakarta: LKiS.

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Longman.

Kompas.com. (2025, September 15). *Polisi Tangkap Tersangka ke-7 Kasus Bom Molotov di Unmul Samarinda*. <https://www.kompas.com>

Media Kaltim (2025, September 13). *Pelaku Bom Molotov di Sekretariat Prodi Sejarah Unmul Ditangkap di Mahakam Ulu*. <https://mediakaltim.com>

Moleong, L. J. (2011). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.

Van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and Power*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.