POLITICAL PROPAGANDA OF 2024 ELECTION IN DIRTY VOTE MOVIE (Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis)

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Abstract

The development of movies in Indonesia is very diverse, ranging from fiction to documentaries. In 2024, Indonesia was shocked by one of the documentary films that was beyond people's expectations. The movie was titled "Dirty Vote" and directed by Dandhy Laksono. This movie has generated controversy and sparked various public opinions in the community. The purpose of this research is to find out and dig deeper into the movie "Dirty Vote" and whether there are elements implied as propaganda or not. This research uses a critical paradigm and the method used is qualitative with Teun A. Van Dijk's discourse theory model. The results show that although this movie is to educate the public, the production and distribution process is inseparable from the interests of the media to seek profits in the form of increasing the existence of the media and also the target audience. The power formed is a social movement to watch and discuss the Dirty Vote movie. Researchers found propaganda in this film in the form of spreading the ideology of patriotism or nationalism to attract public attention and influence public opinion so as not to vote for certain candidate pairs and spread hatred towards the government. The implication of this research is to open a new paradigm about a movie so that people become critical and open to the messages conveyed in mass media.

Keywords: Mass Communication, Dirty Vote, Critical Discourse Teun A. Van Dijk, Election Fraud, Propaganda

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1. Introduction

Mass media is an effective means of realizing democracy in Indonesia, one of which is film. Films are a means of entertainment that is popular with Indonesian people. In research conducted by

(Munjani, 2020) in *Research & Consulting* shows that 67% of young Indonesians like to watch films, this proves that Indonesians prefer audiovisual viewing compared to reading text. Films do have their own charm, apart from being entertaining, films can also convey ideas and messages more easily to the audience. Research conducted by (Kamil, 2022) states that films are the most interesting mass media products compared to other mass media. Currently, many films include journalistic elements such as documentary films. Documentary films are a film genre that is different from others. This film depicts phenomena that occur in a real way and according to facts (Sundari, 2019).

One of the founders of Watchdoc, Dandhy Dwi Laksono, has again made a documentary film that has attracted public attention and is phenomenal with the title *"Dirty Vote"*. This film, which was produced under the auspices of Watchdoc, was broadcast ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election, to be precise on February 11, 2024. This film succeeded in stealing the public's attention and became a topic of conversation in several media and social media platforms. This film was shown to coincide with the quiet days leading up to the election where presidential and vice presidential candidates are prohibited from holding any form of campaigning. So when it was released, this film reaped many pros and cons among the public. This film, which lasts 1 hour 57 minutes, features three constitutional law experts, namely Zainal Arifin Mochtar, Bivitri Susanti, and Feri Amsari. They explained an in-depth analysis of fraud in the 2024 Election (Purnama & Arjanto, 2024).

According to film researchers *"Dirty Vote"* is very interesting to research. *First,* This film is a form of criticism for the government regarding the many policies and powers that have violated the law and damaged the country's constitutional order. *Second,* This film contains many interpretations, causing debates to arise in society and becoming a trending topic on social media. The release, which coincided with the quiet day of the election, caused suspicion among several parties, some even called it a "covert campaign" and put candidate pair 02, namely Prabowo-Gibran, in a corner. So this film invites various public opinions to be debated. The presence of this film is an interesting phenomenon and it is necessary to pay attention to how a film so serious is able to attract so much public attention. This made researchers interested in conducting this research because it was to see how the election fraud discourse was formed and whether this film was a propaganda tool or not.

Based on research conducted by (Jufanny & Girsang, 2020) entitled *"Toxic Masculinity in the Patriarchal System (Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis in the Film Possessive)"*, the research uses critical discourse analysis methods Van Dijk with the critical paradigm. The results of this research conclude that there are interrelated relationships in highlighting *toxic masculinity* as a form of negative masculinity in a patriarchal system. Study *second*, conducted by (Sumakud & Septyana, 2020) entitled *"Analysis of Women's Struggle in Rejecting Patriarchal Culture (Critical Discourse Analysis - Sara Mills in the Film "Marlina the Murderer in Four Acts")",* This research uses critical discourse analysis by Sara Mills, concluding that the actions of women's struggle in rejecting patriarchal culture are represented by the discourse and movements carried out by subjects in which women carry out anarchic actions such as poisoning food, cutting heads, threatening with machetes.

Based on previous research analysis, researchers found that discourse research does not have to be about text content but can also be audio-visual content, one of which is film. Film as a discourse expressed through audio-visual media can also be treated as text. Researchers see that various film production houses can package journalistic products through documentary films or videos differently. In this case, films are able to convey messages that can influence and change the audience's perception of something. For this reason, it is necessary to study how to uncover hidden

meanings and intentions in the process of a film. One method used to study how language is used in films is through discourse analysis.

This research uses critical discourse analysis because in the film there are highlighted facts and news footage that lead to people's understanding and thinking according to the perspective of the filmmaker. The novelty in this research lies in the focus of the research being studied, namely the issue of fraud in the 2024 election, thereby providing a new and in-depth understanding of the problems in the 2024 election. Researchers use critical discourse analysis to find out how reality is constructed and whether there is power behind the construction of the discourse, so as that determine what facts can be trusted and not trusted. Critical discourse analysis of documentary films helps viewers rethink the message conveyed by the film and the way it influences their worldview.

2. Method

The research method used is qualitative research. According to (Sugiyono, 2021) in his book *"Quantitative, Qualitative and R&D Research Methods"* stated that quantitative research methods are artistic methods because they are more artistic or less polarized and are also more concerned with interpreting data in the field. This type of research is descriptive qualitative research. Descriptive research is a strategy where researchers collect research data from research objects and other literature, and then explain it in detail to identify research problems and answers (Chairunnisa, 2022). The data collection technique was carried out by means of in-depth observation by repeatedly watching films and documenting and studying literature. The data analysis technique was carried out using Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model which includes text, social cognition, and social context.

The theory used in this research is Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model. Critical discourse analysis *(Critical Discourse Analysis/CDA)* is the study of discourse and is not considered solely as a study of language. Although discourse analysis uses language in texts to be analyzed, the approach used to analyze discourse is somewhat different from traditional linguistic studies. Language is studied not only from a linguistic perspective but also from a context perspective. The context here means language is used for certain purposes and practices, including the practice of power (Eriyanto, 2012:7). Critical discourse theory is used to analyze fraud in the 2024 election and reveal implicit messages in the film *"Dirty Vote"*.

Van Dijk's model of discourse has three dimensions, namely text, social cognition, and social context. In the text dimension, the text structure and discourse strategies used to emphasize certain themes are analyzed. The social cognition dimension analyzes the news text production process which involves the individual cognition of journalists. Meanwhile, the social context dimension studies the discourse framework that develops in society regarding an issue (Siregar et al., 2022).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Analysis Film Dirty Vote

Based on text analysis, researchers found that in terms of producing the text, the film Dirty Vote tends to use a lot of legal and political diction or language styles as well as hyperbolic expressions or proverbs. So this film seems to exaggerate the facts that actually happened. Apart from that, this film uses many arguments or assumptions from the three legal experts. This can be seen from the results of text analysis, social cognition, and social context. Election fraud is illustrated by four problematic themes raised, namely non-neutrality of government officials, alleged politicization of social assistance, covert campaigns and misuse of state facilities, and contradictions in Constitutional Court decision number 90.

In the results of the first theme analysis, election fraud is illustrated by problems regarding governor officials who are considered less than neutral during the election process. This non-neutrality is proven by several media reports and recordings or documents resulting from investigations whose source of truth is still in doubt. Legally and ethically, officials up to the president must be neutral to maintain public trust during the democratic process. Viewed from the context, as citizens they have the right to vote for the candidate they choose (Jayanti, 2019). Because this is included in political rights and freedom of expression. There are no explicit legal regulations regarding the prohibition of expressing support for certain candidate pairs. However, it is also necessary to pay careful attention that this support does not involve abuse of power (Saputro, 2024).

In the results of the second theme analysis, election fraud is illustrated by the alleged politicization of social assistance. The problem raised is based on the phenomenon of increasing social assistance ahead of the election. The results of the analysis show that this film uses many assumptions or expressions to satirize Jokowi's government, for example in the parable of Pork Barrel Politics there is a minister who is suspected of politicizing social assistance. Where social assistance is used as a political exchange tool to get people's votes. In context, the increase in the social assistance budget in 2024 is already part of the APBN budget and has been discussed in the APBN law and approved by the DPR and political factions. The details of the allocation of social assistance assistance in 2024 are clear (Rahmanto et al., 2021). This was stated directly by Sri Mulyani as minister of finance.

In the third theme analysis, election fraud is illustrated by the problem of ministers carrying out covert campaigns and using state facilities to campaign. The film shows several ministers involved, such as Erik Tohir, Zulkifli Hasan, and Luhut. Judging from the context, it is true that presidents and mayors involved in elections are prohibited from campaigning using state facilities and must take leave from their duties as state officials (Ardenolis et al., 2020).

This film only shows news from one side and does not see clarification from the relevant ministers. So the credibility of the facts in this film is still doubtful because it is conjectural and argumentative. The minister who is suspected of carrying out a covert campaign and using state facilities to campaign, in the film shows more ministers who are in coalition with 02. This means that this film is cornering 02 and showing the ugliness of the Jokowi government. Indirectly, this film is a tool for propaganda so that people do not vote for candidate pair 02.

In the fourth theme analysis, election fraud is described with the culmination of all these problems being the Constitutional Court decision no. 90. This section uses the most diction and arguments from the three legal experts. in the film, they think that this decision is very unfair and only benefits one party (Zulqarnain et al., 2023). However, in the context of changes to MK decision no. 90, will open up opportunities for the younger generation who want to enter the world of politics.

Many of the details depicted in this film include news videos which are then packaged neatly according to the theme of the issues raised. In each report, the three legal experts provide their arguments subjectively and implicitly. This means that the facts that actually happened in the field in this film are hidden. This can be seen from cases of news reports of ministers suspected of carrying out campaigns, politicizing social assistance, and misusing state facilities for campaigning. From the problems, news evidence, details, and rhetoric of the film, a discourse regarding fraud in the 2024 election was formed.

3.2 Dirty Vote as a Propaganda Film

The film Dirty Vote was directed by Dandhy Laksono who is an investigative journalist and founder of the production house *Watchdoc* and also the founder of the New Indonesia Expedition. The producer of this film is Joni Aswira who is the General Chair of the Indonesian Society of Environmental Journalists (SIEJ) and also the Editor of CNN Indonesia. The two of them often make documentary videos containing criticism of the government regarding the social and environmental problems of Indonesian society. Apart from the director and producer, the actors involved in this film, namely Zainal Arifin Mochtar, Bivitri Susanti, and Feri Amsari, are critics of government policies and are often actively involved in YouTube and television shows (Azizah, 2024).

From the background of the director and actors in this film, it shows why they did not invite sources who were pro-government, because the aim of this film was to highlight election fraud. This requires someone who can do it, an *opinion leader*, so they can influence public opinion (Fahreinsyah et al., 2023). In this way, this film is used as a tool for public propaganda not to vote for candidate pair 02. The purpose of this film is to educate the public about fraudulent practices during the election process. However, behind this goal, there is another hidden meaning or purpose, namely hidden propaganda in the form of indirectly inviting the audience not to vote for 02 and causing the Indonesian people's trust in the government to decrease.

In its concept, propaganda is an activity that aims to influence people's opinions and views so that they take certain actions (Jason, 2023). Propaganda aims to spread biased and inaccurate information (Olivia & Limantara, 2023). Propaganda can be done through communication media such as films, radio, magazines, television, and posters. Propaganda involves experts in the field, such as filmmakers and intellectuals (Budiarto, 2021). Propaganda films are packaged with fictional or documentary-style scenarios presented from a particular political point of view. Propaganda can function as a weapon if used without considering the truth of the message (Wirianda, 2023).

Propaganda consists of 7 types, *First,* the use of derogatory names *(Name Calling),* which gives a name to ridicule an idea, belief, or group, with the aim of rejecting or disliking it. *Second,* the use of hyperbolic words (Fahreinsyah et al., 2023). *Third,* diversion to persuade the target. *Fourth,* quoting provides an opportunity to convey ideas. *Fifth,* humiliation attracts the target's sympathy that they are part of ordinary people who have no bad intentions. *Sixth,* falsification, lies, and distortion of facts occur. *Seventh,* commotion to convince the target that the idea has been accepted by society (Olivia & Limantara, 2023).

Based on the characteristics of propaganda, the film Dirty Vote fits very well with the concept of propaganda. From text analysis, researchers found that this film uses many derogatory names, such as constitutional illegitimacy, pork barrel politics, deceitful mentality, and dirty scenarios. The use of this derogatory name is aimed at the Indonesian government which has cheated in the 2024 election process. The excessive use of words such as election fraud is designed to be very dirty and also the Constitutional Court's decision smells rancid. This film was broadcast on D-3 before the election, as a diversion so that people would not think about the election and focus on this film so they would believe it. The aim is to educate the public, but behind this aim, there is a nationalist ideology and also patriotism to attract public sympathy.

To convince its target, this film creates a social movement in the form of *"Dirty Vote Roadshow Film Review and Discussion"* at several universities on the islands of Java and Sumatra. This is what is meant by persuasive power according to Van Dijk. Social power is formed by inviting discussions that can move the public indirectly. Apart from that, the discourse regarding election fraud is developing in society, creating various opinions and

assumptions. The collaboration with many institutions makes it easier to access this discourse which is developing rapidly in society.

From the analysis of cognition and social context, researchers found that the facts depicted were only one side and had deviated from reality. Apart from that, propagandists or directors also do *framing* regarding the selection of which facts are and are not shown in this film. The production costs for this film were obtained from a crowdfunding system and donations from institutions. *Crowdfunding* is a system for collecting funds obtained by utilizing the Internet such as social media to realize a project, campaign, or business (Barthelemy & Irwansyah, 2019). There are several types *crowdfunding* namely donation-based, equity-based, and prize-based (Vatanasakdakul & Azka, 2021). Thus the production of this film is included in the system *crowdfunding* donation.

Even though the costs for this film were obtained from fundraising, its production certainly did not escape the negotiation and political-economic process with the institutions collaborating on the film. Thus, all the problems in this research are answered by political, and social propaganda, the ideology of patriotism or nationalism is depicted in this film explicitly and implicitly. The aim is to influence public opinion and spread hatred towards candidate pair 02 and the Indonesian government.

4. Conclusion

Based on research that has been carried out by researchers regarding how films *Dirty Vote* was analyzed using the Van Dijk model includes text, social cognition, and social context. So the researcher concluded that the choice of theme, title, and poster used in this film formed the ideology a *Dirty Vote* is a dirty vote obtained from an unlawful process. This is explained by the subtitle, namely a design for fraud in the 2024 election which leads public opinion to believe that there is fraud in the 2024 election.

This film uses an academic legal and political language style that is easy to understand, and the details depicted are very complete. The production of this film is not for personal gain but to educate the public and this film is a summary of the facts that occurred before the 2024 presidential election. The power that was formed was a social movement to watch and discuss the film *Dirty Vote*. This discourse develops in society and forms various opinions and assumptions. The film was widely distributed because the production involved collaboration between civil society and institutions.

Thus, through this film, we increase awareness of the issues that occur, but we also have to be critical of the messages conveyed in a film, because films themselves are the result of human construction themselves. Researchers found that there was propaganda in this film, namely spreading the ideology of patriotism or nationalism to attract public attention and influence public opinion so as not to vote for certain candidate pairs and spread hatred towards the government. Truth is relative and what is conveyed in a film is not necessarily completely true. On the other hand, this film is educational, reflective, and a form of freedom of opinion to be more critical of the phenomena that are occurring.

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