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## Semiotic Analysis of Bias Language in Online News: The Case of the Indonesian Teacher Marketplace Policy

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**Abstract:** News discourse is often considered an objective and formal form of discourse. However, the definition of news is rather elusive. News must be extraordinary and compelling enough to attract public attention. This research discusses a semiotic analysis of online news, specifically on *Beritasatu.com*, concerning the new policy for teachers in Indonesia, known as the Teacher Marketplace, proposed by the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim. This policy, an online database of teachers that allows schools to immediately select teachers, was perceived as an insult to the teaching profession. Consequently, social media platforms such as online news pages, TikTok, Instagram, and others saw online demonstrations suggesting that the government is demeaning teachers by 'selling' them in an online database. This study focused on the headlines, lexical choices, language use, typography, and photography in 15 news articles related to the Teacher Marketplace on *Beritasatu.com*. Using the interactive model analysis to analyze the data, the results revealed 15 harsh headlines, 27 harsh lexical choices, 18 instances of unpleasant language, 10 satirical photographs, and standard typography across the online news. These findings highlight the need for news readers to become more aware of harsh language in certain online news platforms.

**Key words:** headlines, lexical choice, language, photography, semiotics, typography

**Abstrak:** Wacana berita sering kali dipandang sebagai bentuk wacana linguistik yang objektif dan formal. Namun, definisi berita itu sendiri masih sulit dipahami. Berita harus menjadi sesuatu yang luar biasa dan cukup menarik perhatian publik. Penelitian ini membahas analisis semiotika dalam berita online *Beritasatu.com* terkait kebijakan baru bagi guru di Indonesia, yang dikenal sebagai *Teacher Marketplace*, yang diusulkan oleh Menteri Pendidikan, Nadiem Makarim. Kebijakan ini berupa basis data daring yang memungkinkan sekolah-sekolah untuk segera memilih guru yang tersedia. Namun, kebijakan ini dianggap sebagai penghinaan terhadap profesi guru. Akibatnya, media sosial seperti laman berita online, TikTok, Instagram, dan lainnya menjadi sarana demonstrasi daring yang menunjukkan bahwa pemerintah dianggap merendahkan profesi guru dengan 'menjual' mereka dalam basis data daring. Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis judul berita, pilihan leksikal, bahasa yang digunakan, tipografi, dan fotografi dari 15 berita terkait *Teacher Marketplace* di *Beritasatu.com*. Dengan menggunakan kerangka kerja dari analisis model interaktif untuk menganalisis data, hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya 15 judul berita yang bias, 27 pilihan leksikal yang bias, 18 penggunaan bahasa yang tidak menyenangkan, 10 foto yang bersifat menyindir, serta

*penggunaan tipografi standar pada berita daring tersebut. Hasil penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran pembaca berita terhadap kata-kata bias dan kasar yang disampaikan pada platform berita online tertentu.*

**Kata kunci:** semiotik, headlines, pilihan leksikal, bahasa yang digunakan, fotografi, tipografi.

## INTRODUCTION

Information can be accessed using a simple swipe, particularly through smartphones, thereby rendering it available daily and universally. There are various sources of information, including mass media, the Internet, newspapers, journals, magazines, and other printed materials. According to Cangara (2010), mass media is a tool or means to convey messages from communicators to audiences. It includes various forms of communication, such as radio, journals, and television, among others. These forms of discourse have become integral to daily life, providing individuals with information and knowledge.

Based on the researchers' experience, mass media often contains misinformation and exaggerated headlines that do not align with the actual discourse. This misinformation can escalate tensions, as seen during demonstrations, where people may misunderstand actual events. Burton (2008) argued that news in the media is often perceived to possess qualities of neutrality and authority that, in reality, they do not and cannot logically be expected to possess. Therefore, news is not a reflection of reality but rather a constructed narrative that contains elements of non-neutrality to create a subjective picture of reality (McCombs et al., 1991).

In the context of the Teacher Marketplace policy in Indonesia, proposed by the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, preliminary interviews with graduates from Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, revealed that some news articles were biased and exaggerated, particularly in their headlines, photographs, and the information presented. This bias can lead to the spread of hate and create an inconducive atmosphere through nonverbal communication via mass media. Thwaites (2002) noted that anyone with an internet account can publish almost anything without general editorial standards or requirements for accuracy. While some content is valuable, much of it is misleading, and in some cases, it is intentionally so.

The connection between semiotics and public policy has been highlighted by several experts. A sign, as defined by Berger (2010), stands for something else. A sign is the "unity of a word-object, known as a signifier, with a corresponding culturally prescribed content or meaning, known as a signified" (Gottdiener, 1997, pp. 8-9). In public contexts, certain words and combinations of words are taken as signs of credibility or validity for policy functions (Evans, 2015). Stone (2012) emphasized the importance of symbols in public policy, identifying devices such as stories, synecdoche, and metaphors used in politics to construct problems. Using symbols to elaborate and summarize beliefs can be highly effective for promoting an organization's preferred narrative or construct. Drawing from these theories, semiotics analysis research in policy has emerged (Szerszynski & Urry, 2002).

Social media platforms and search engines unintentionally facilitate the spread of hate speech and racist ideology (Klein, 2012). As a result, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Indonesian Anti-Fake News Society (*Masyarakat Anti Fitnah Indonesia* or Mafindo), Septiaji Eko Nugroho, during a webinar titled 'Unpacking Hoaxes About Presidential Candidates for the 2024 Election', said that information that lacks a foundation in knowledge often leads to public-

consuming news that is uncertain or unverified (Mulya, 2023). This issue is evident in the coverage of the new policy proposed by the Teacher Marketplace, which aims to serve as a comprehensive database for all teachers, including civil servants (*Aparatur Sipil Negara* or ASN) and contractual government employees (*Pegawai Pemerintah Dengan Perjanjian Kerja* or PPPK), who have passed the teaching qualification and graduated from teacher training programs (CNBC Indonesia, 2023). This policy is set to be launched in 2024, but it has already faced significant opposition, with many believing that it will bring more harm than good.

Despite the limited amount of news coverage on this policy, it has gone viral on TikTok and other social media platforms, where people have ridiculed the policy, even though the full details have not been released. The researchers identified sarcastic content related to this policy on platforms like TikTok, including an ITD News in 2023 headline stating, “2024, Nadiem Rekrut Guru Via “Marketplace”. Degradasi Guru Jadi Barang Jualan!” [2024, Nadiem Recruits Teachers via 'Marketplace.' Degrading Teachers into Merchandise!!] (see <https://www.tiktok.com/@itdnews/video/7238468935014780166>). The phrase “Teachers as Merchandise!” is an example of sarcasm, suggesting that teachers are being commodified, which has provoked anger and hate comments from netizens. Similarly, the media *Kabar Terkini* in 2023 published the headline, “Jual Beli Guru di Marketplace?” Tahun 2024 Aturan Baru Diterapkan, Sekolah yang Butuh Guru Cukup Beli Saja di Marketplace!” [Buying and Selling Teachers in the Marketplace? In 2024, A New Rule Will Be Implemented; Schools that Need Teachers Can Just Buy Them From The Marketplace!]. This sarcastic statement implies that teachers are readily available in the marketplace, further fueling public outrage.

In the meantime, retrieved from DetikEdu on November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024, the government and the president of Indonesia announced various policy efforts to create better education and to improve teachers’ welfare, such as a budget increase in 2025 for the ASN (Official Civil Servant) and non-ASN (non-Official Civil Servant) teachers. The increase is said to be as high as IDR 16.7 trillion, which means the total budget for teachers’ welfare will be IDR 81.6 trillion. Another effort made by the government is the procurement of the PPG (*Program Pendidikan Profesi Guru/Teachers Professional Education Program*) which is beneficial to improve the quality of teachers’ teaching. This program is specifically for teachers who have earned a bachelor’s degree. Furthermore, teachers’ performance management should be made simpler and less complicated by eliminating the obligation for teachers to submit various documents as part of their administrations that can distract them from teaching professionally.

These efforts by the Indonesian government indicated that the government pays attention to improving teachers’ welfare while respecting the profession. The Teacher Marketplace is a new policy for the public and, as always, causes controversy. Before announcing the policy, the government conducted comparative studies and negotiations. Outside Indonesia, the Teacher Marketplace program has been implemented in certain countries, such as Sweden and the United States, and has been running well. One of the popular websites for the Teacher Marketplace is called “Humly”, and people can access several teachers on their website through <https://careers.humly.io/>. This policy is expected to increase efficiency in job searches, and teachers can access information about available teaching positions and compare job requirements and locations offered online. This method can save time and effort in finding job vacancies.

Given these issues, it is imperative to conduct a study to explicate that new policies designed to enhance teachers’ conditions are a matter of governmental priority, despite the

ongoing challenges and injustices faced by teachers in Indonesia. Public sector policy evaluations are often misunderstood because the public is predisposed to distrust government efforts, whether for justified reasons or not (Hacker & Pierson, 2016).

To support this study, the researchers reviewed related studies, such as an analysis of online news discourse on the evolution of government policy in Indonesia. For example, research on the discourse analysis of the “Saweran for KPK Building” report (KPK is *Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*, or Corruption Eradication Commission) in Media Indonesia revealed that aspects of language diction, sentence usage, and source selection in direct quotations placed figures or institutions, particularly the House of Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat* or DPR), in a negative light (Mayasari et al., 2013).

This study aims to analyze the discourse legitimation of public policy from the semiotics and Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, demonstrating that public policy formation is a reformulation of several foundations used to address social problems. Understanding the communication roles of participants should provide a clearer picture of how policies should be developed. Based on the aforementioned reasons, the following research questions are formulated:

- (1) What semiotic elements are found in the Teacher Marketplace online news?
- (2) How can the semiotic analysis of online news from the Teacher Marketplace be explained?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Text and Discourse

Widdowson (2007) defined discourse as the study of language patterns beyond the sentence level, suggesting that if discourse analysis is understood as the study of language patterns above the sentence, it implies that discourse is essentially a larger quantitative form of a sentence but not qualitatively different. This perspective suggests that discourse cannot exist below the sentence level. Systematic textual analysis, incorporating both linguistic and intertextual elements, enhances the comprehension of discourse (Fairclough, 1992). This methodology makes substantial contributions to semantics by examining contextual factors and analyzing language across sentence boundaries (Chen, 2012). The concept of communicative dynamism has been introduced as a way to classify different levels of contribution within a text, particularly regarding theme and rheme. The sustained significance of communicative dynamism in contemporary linguistic analysis highlights its ongoing importance in comprehending information structure (Davidse et al., 2019). Therefore, discourse analysis not only presents a method but also embodies a perspective on language and its relationship to issues in the social sciences. More specifically, discourse analysis is seen as a collection of related approaches to discourse that include practices of data collection and analysis, along with metatheoretical and theoretical assumptions, and a body of research claims and studies (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Text, on the other hand, is a non-interactive behavioral event limited to the reader’s experience with its characteristics and meaning, with information as its singular purpose. Discourse is a social interactive event with multiple layers of communication and purpose (Hardison, 2011).

## B. Semiotics in Newspapers

Semiotics is a science and method of analysis that examines signs contained in an object to uncover the meaning of that object (Sobur, 2001). Meanings arise within and through social relations—among people, groups, classes, institutions, structures, and things. While some meanings are relatively stable, others are highly variable. This variability means that although meanings are always generated in a social context, they are never fully determined by that context (Thwaites, 2002).

News discourse is an ideological representation of the world because it selects what will be reported and sets the terms of what is significant (Sari & Yusuf, 2012). News is not merely a collection of facts but representations produced through language and other signs such as photographs. Hence, semiotic analysis can be conducted to understand meaning (Arafah et al., 2023). It reveals sign processes in texts and discusses how meaning is constructed and understood (Sari & Yusuf, 2012). Therefore, a semiotic analysis of news discourse includes a discussion of the connotations of the linguistic and visual signs used in news stories (Bignell, 2002). Connotations shape the meaning of a news story, and they can only be perceived when they belong to coded ways of using signs that readers recognize.

In media studies, it is challenging to justify any interpretation of an advertisement as a self-contained system of signs with a fixed ideological effect as being wholly “true” (Bignell, 2002, p. 5). According to Bignell (2002), this difficulty arises from the complexity of media texts, which are often analyzed through both linguistic and graphic signs. Bignell's framework emphasizes that understanding advertisements requires a distinctive approach, incorporating the analysis of both verbal and visual elements in newspapers to fully grasp their ideological implications. This dual analysis helps reveal how different elements of media texts shape and communicate ideological messages.

### 1. Linguistic Signs

#### a. *Headlines*

The function of the linguistic syntagms in headlines is to capture the reader's attention to the topic of each news story (Bignell, 2002). For example, Kopaleishvili (2019) explains a headline from *The Guardian* newspaper covering a 1972 attack on a peaceful demonstration in Northern Ireland, using both text and a photograph published in 2010. The photo, showing a little girl behind an armed soldier, contrasts peace with conflict and aims to highlight the unreasonableness of the attack while evoking a call for peace and shame among supporters of the conflict (see <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/jun/15/bloody-sunday-inquiry-derry-massacre>). This intent is reinforced by the article's headline, “Bloody Sunday inquiry reveals mutual hostility that exploded into a massacre” (Cobain & Norton-Taylor, 2010), and the accompanying text, which provides a chronological account of the event.

#### b. *Lexical Choices*

According to Matheson (2005), lexical choices are tools used to construct the meaning of a text in the news. Writers can select specific vocabulary items to evaluate and repeatedly use in the news text. Sari and Yusuf (2012) analyzed and compared semiotic approaches and coverage of the deaths of three girls by Israeli military tank shelling, as reported by *The*

*Jerusalem Post*, *The Guardian*, and *Aljazeera* in 2009. *The Jerusalem Post* used *killed*, *The Guardian* used *died*, and *Aljazeera* used *killing*, with *killing* conveying the most severe connotation due to its noun form and association with acts like murder. Additionally, while the word *reasonable* was presented differently across the outlets, with *The Guardian* and *Aljazeera* emphasizing it in their headlines and using quotation marks, *the Jerusalem Post* placed it later in the text without such marks, potentially influencing readers' perceptions of the incident's justification.

c. *Language Used*

Language use reflects thinking through word choices (goFLUENT, 2020). Words are needed to consider the use of language in any cognitive act, identification, or recognition. For example, Fitriani et al. (2021) studied how *The Jakarta Post* newspaper portrayed the 212 Rallies in Jakarta in 2016 as a violent, political event organized by anti-democratic groups, using metaphors like *war*, *disaster*, and *wild animals*. This highlights the need for readers to critically analyze news lexicons and sentence structures to properly interpret and understand media representations.

2. Graphic Signs

There are two types of graphic signs in news discourse analysis: typography and photography. Typography is the art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable, and visually appealing (Robert, 2005). For instance, Nørgaard (2009) explained the opening of the charity meeting in the life story of homeless Stuart Shorter in his biographical novel entitled *Stuart. A Life Backwards* by Alexander Masters, tall caps are used to emphasize sound, as seen in the phrase: "Order, order, ORDER! WILL YOU PLEASE BE QUIET!" (Masters, 2005, p. 16). While this visual technique highlights sound, italics are used to emphasize the meaning of words.

Photography, on the other hand, has been described in various ways; as a 'visual', 'visual ethnographic', 'participatory' and 'arts-based' method (Hanna, 2020, p. 11), depending on how and with whom it is used. Photography began to be used as a research method in anthropology and ethnography in the early 20th century, when photographic equipment became accessible to researchers (Banks, 2001). Engaging photographs can captivate readers, and if a photo is compelling enough, it encourages readers to read the accompanying caption (Oparaugo, 2021). An example from *Liputan6* in 2023 includes a photograph of nine teachers standing in line in front of a smartphone waiting to be recruited. This image suggests that teachers must endure this kind of struggle and wait for schools to hire them so that they can secure teaching positions and earn a livelihood. The image of teachers standing and waiting around a smartphone is akin to an insult, as it portrays teachers as mere commodities rather than valued professionals.



**Figure 1:**  
**A photograph of teachers standing in line in front of smartphones, waiting to be recruited**  
(Source: *Liputan6*, 2023)

From the sentiments that emerged from Figure 1, it can be concluded that analysis research related to education policy continues to be a relevant area of study. People must understand these analyses before jumping to conclusions or engaging in conflicts over education systems or other government policies. Research on semiotics in education policy has a long history, with early studies such as Symes (1998) focusing on semiotic analysis of school prospectuses and other forms of educational marketing. In Symes' (1998) work, various types of 'impression management' strategies (Schlenker, 1980) were described, particularly those related to school prospectuses and advertisements. These subjects were examined through textual analysis, specifically social semiotics, which highlights the influence of context and the changing political economy on symbolic processes. Therefore, continuing research on semiotics is necessary to deepen public understanding and convey the underlying signs and intentions in news and educational policies.

## METHOD

### A. Type of Research

This study is qualitative and employs Miles et al.'s (2014) method, which enables researchers to select, focus, and select data included in the research. The data were specifically selected, collected, compiled, and analyzed to address the research questions.

### B. Research Subjects

The data sources were documented from the online news site *Beritasatu.com*, which features recent news related to Teacher Marketplace from January to July 2023, with approximately 15 related news articles published each week.

### C. Research Procedures

Following the research procedures theorized by Miles et al. (2014), the following steps were taken to ensure the validity of the research:

#### 1. Documentation

Before determining *Beritasatu.com* as the source of data for this study, the researcher first studied related news sources from *Republika.co.id* with 5 news articles, *Beritasatu.com* with 15 news reports, *Kompas.id* with 2 news reports, *Jakarta Globe.id* with 1 news article, *Liputan6.com* with 2 news articles, *Kompasiana.com* with 2 news articles, *Liputanoke.com* with 1 news article, *Fajar.co.id* with 1 news article, *Bantenhay.com* with 1 news article, and *Rariamedia.com* with 1 news article. Based on this documentation, *Beritasatu.com* was chosen for the analysis because of its frequent and up-to-date coverage of teacher marketplace issues.

#### 2. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique is grounded in the framework theory proposed by Miles et al. (2014) and is processed as follows:



a. *Data Condensation*

According to Miles et al. (2014), data condensation involves selecting, focusing, and simplifying field notes, interview transcripts, documents, and other empirical materials. In this stage, the researchers searched for online news websites that provided relevant news on the Teacher Marketplace and then selected and focused on specific online news pages for analysis.

b. *Data Display*

Miles et al. (2014) described data display as an organized, compressed assembly of information that facilitates conclusion drawing and action. In line with this theory, the researchers presented the data in tables and provided narrative explanations. The data display framework was based on Bignell (2002), focusing on the analysis of linguistic and graphic signs in newspapers.

c. *Drawing/Verifying Conclusions*

Conclusions can range from brief, passing thoughts during the writing process, accompanied by a quick review of field notes, to detailed, elaborate arguments and analyses. In this section, the researchers provide a concise explanation of the findings, elaborating on the data analysis described by Miles et al. (2014).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the linguistic and graphic signs found in news articles from the teacher marketplace at *Beritasatu.com*. Linguistic signs include headlines, lexical choices, and language use, while graphic signs consist of typography and photography. The findings revealed 15 biased headlines on *Beritasatu.com*, 18 instances of unpleasant lexical choices, a consistent typography format, and 10 photographs with implied meanings related to teacher issues in Indonesia, as detailed below.

### A. Headlines

Headlines are key to capturing readers' attention, often requiring a deep inferential process to understand their full meaning (Ifantidou, 2009). In *Beritasatu.com*, headlines are often semantically underdetermined, as shown in the following findings:

#### 1. Nepotism and Collusion

The Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) defines 'collusion' as 'intrigue' and 'nepotism' as giving advantages to relatives or close associates for government positions. Several headlines have warned of potential nepotism and collusion from the new Teacher Marketplace policy.

Excerpt 1: "*Marketplace Guru berpotensi timbulkan praktek kolusi dan nepotisme*" (Teacher marketplace has the potential for collusion and nepotism practices) (June 16, 2023).

Excerpt 2: “*Marketplace Guru berpotensi munculkan praktek KKN*” (Teacher marketplace has the potential for KKN practices) (June 13, 2023).

In Excerpt 1, this headline suggests that the policy could lead to unfair practices, drawing attention with negative terms that imply government favoritism. In Excerpt 2, the term “KKN,” typically associated with a university program, is repurposed here to highlight corruption-related practices, creating a sense of confusion and curiosity.

## 2. Responsibilities

Responsibility, as defined by Burhanuddin (2000), involves determining one’s attitude toward an action and bearing the associated risks. Reporters have suggested that the government is neglecting its responsibility for the welfare of teachers.

Excerpt 3: “*Gagas Marketplace guru, Kemendikbudristek dinilai lempar tanggung jawab*” (Teacher marketplace idea: Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology allegedly shirks responsibility) (June 16, 2023).

Excerpt 4: “*Sentil Marketplace guru, usulan Nadiem pengamat sebut PR lebih besar*” (Satirizing teacher marketplace, observers call Nadiem's proposal a bigger task) (June 16, 2023).

The headline in Excerpt 3 criticizes the Ministry of Education for allegedly evading its duties regarding the welfare of teachers. Moreover, the headline in Excerpt 4 suggests that the policy provokes negative responses and questions the government’s ability to manage unresolved issues.

## 3. Accusations

The term ‘accuse’ means to assert that someone has done something morally wrong, illegal, or unkind. Several headlines accused the Minister of Education of various issues within Indonesia’s education system.

Excerpt 5: “*Marketplace guru ditengah kesenjangan internet, teknologi dan SDM*” (Teacher marketplace amid internet, technology, and human resource gaps) (June 19, 2023).

Excerpt 6: “*Soal marketplace guru, pengamat nilai Nadiem tak paham kondisi pendidikan Indonesia*” (Regarding the teacher marketplace, observers claim Nadiem doesn’t understand the state of education in Indonesia) (June 14, 2023).

The headline in Excerpt 5 suggests that the government is creating new problems while failing to address existing issues such as internet access, technology, and human resources. Furthermore, the headline in Excerpt 6 critiques the Minister of Education, implying a lack of understanding of Indonesia’s educational challenges, potentially inciting public dissatisfaction.

## B. Lexical Choices

The lexical approach emphasizes developing learners’ proficiency by understanding and using words and word combinations (Lewis, 2002). In the context of *Beritasatu.com*’s coverage of

the Teacher Marketplace policy, several lexical choices that reflect specific perspectives were identified.

### 1. Teachers as Objects

The term ‘object’, as defined by KBBI, refers to anything discussed, researched, or focused on, including people. This research found that teachers were often depicted as objects or commodities in the policy coverage of the teacher marketplace.

Excerpt 7: “*Apakah Mas Menteri lantas menyamakan guru dengan komoditas?*” (Does Mr. Minister equate teachers with commodities?) (June 11, 2023)

Excerpt 8: “*Konsep marketplace menunjukkan kesan guru sebagai sebuah produk atau objek.*” (The marketplace concept shows the impression of teachers as a product or object) (June 5, 2023)

Excerpt 9: “*Guru-guru itu diharuskan antre di pasar manusia modern.*” (Those teachers are required to stand in line at the modern human market) (June 16, 2023)

Excerpt 7 suggests that the Education Minister views teachers as goods that can be bought and sold. This directly labels teachers as ‘products’, as depicted in Excerpt 8, reinforcing the idea that they are treated like marketable goods. The phrase in Excerpt 9 implies that teachers are being treated as commodities, waiting for others to select them.

### 2. Drawbacks

Lexical choices in the coverage also highlight the challenges associated with the new policy, emphasizing the difficulties faced by both the government and teachers.

Excerpt 10: “*Praktek kongkalikong*” (Conspiracy practices) (June 16, 2023)

Excerpt 11: “*Kendala birokrasi*” (Bureaucratic constraints) (June 16, 2023)

Excerpt 12: “*Hidup terkatung-katung*” (living adrift) (June 19, 2023)

The term *praktek kongkalikong* in Excerpt 10 refers to secretive and dishonest practices, particularly in politics, suggesting ongoing corruption in policymaking. Meanwhile, the phrase *kendala birokrasi* criticizes inefficiencies in Indonesia’s bureaucracy, which hinder effective policy implementation. Finally, *hidup terkatung-katung* portrays the uncertain and unstable lives of teachers, as shown in Excerpt 12, especially those in honorary positions, who often face unfair treatment and lack proper recognition.

### 3. Profession’s Insult

Certain phrases in the coverage were found to demean the teaching profession, implying that the policy undermines the value and dignity of teachers.

Excerpt 13: “*Mencederai profesi*” (Harming the profession) (June 19, 2023)

Excerpt 14: “*Mendegradasi profesi*” (Downgrading the profession) (June 16, 2023)

The phrase in Excerpt 13 suggests that the policy treats teachers as commodities, potentially damaging the profession’s integrity. Furthermore, the phrase In Excerpt 14

implies that the policy lowers the status of the teaching profession, reducing it from a highly respected role to a less valued job.

### C. Language Use

Language use refers to the specific terms and styles in which a person communicates, whether orally or in writing. According to Croft (2000), understanding the basic processes of human cognition and communication, particularly through utterances, is essential for identifying the fundamental units of language. An utterance is a linguistic act in which a person expresses something within a single intonation contour, conveying a coherent communicative intention in a specific context.

#### 1. Failed PPPK Recruitment

PPPK refers to Indonesian citizens who meet specific requirements and are appointed based on a work agreement for a certain period to perform government duties. Numerous news reports have highlighted the unclear and disorganized process for work placements for those who apply for PPPK positions. The following are critiques of the unorganized PPPK recruitment from *Beritasatu.com*:

Excerpt 15: *“Jadi, saya katakan yang menghambat proses rekrutmen guru PPPK itu pemerintah sendiri, sekarang mereka malah lompat tanggung jawab ke Kemendikbudristek.”* (So, I stated that the government itself hampered the recruitment process for PPPK teachers. They are now shifting the responsibility to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. (June 16, 2023)

Excerpt 16: *“Marketplace ini tidak menjawab bagaimana agar tenaga guru honorer bisa secepatnya diangkat jadi ASN hingga mereka dapat kelayakan kehidupan.”* (This marketplace does not address how honorary teachers can be appointed as ASN quickly so they can achieve a decent living) (June 16, 2023)

Excerpt 17: *“Marketplace guru itu tidak pasti pengangkatannya!”* (The teacher marketplace is uncertain about its appointments!) (June 19, 2023)

Excerpt 15 expresses frustration, noting that since 2019, over 51,000 PPPK employees have remained in limbo, with decision letters (*Surat Keputusan* or SK) still pending, affecting many teachers and lecturers. Similar lexis are also expressed in Excerpts 16 and 17. These quotes highlight the unfair treatment of honorary teachers, who often work long hours for inadequate salaries without official status as PPPK or ASN. The language suggests that marketplace policies fail to prioritize their appointments, thereby risking their financial stability.

#### 2. Teachers as Gojek Drivers

Gojek is an Indonesian technology company that offers transportation and food delivery. Founded by Nadiem Makarim, now Minister of Education, Gojek has become a household name. In *Beritasatu.com*, the researchers found language-likening posts by teachers to Gojek drivers.

Excerpt 18: *“Sebagai menteri yang memiliki latar belakang sebagai pendiri perusahaan Gojek, bukan kali ini saja Nadiem mencetuskan istilah yang asing di dunia pendidikan.”* (As

a minister with a background as the founder of Gojek, this is not the first time Nadiem has introduced unfamiliar terms in the world of education.) (June 19, 2023).

The phrase “foreign terms in the education world” in Excerpt 18 implies that Nadiem’s business background may not align with his role as Minister of Education, although his tenure has brought various innovations like the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum).

Excerpt 19: “*Marketplace guru hanya memiliki manfaat layaknya app Gojek yang memudahkan pertemuan ojek dengan penggunanya.*” (The teacher marketplace only benefits like the Gojek app, which facilitates meetings between drivers and users.) (June 19, 2023).

The comparison in Excerpt 19 suggests that teachers are being treated like on-demand service providers, waiting for schools to ‘click’ and hire them, undermining their professional status.

### 3. Delayed Salary Payment

A salary is a periodic payment from an employer to an employee, typically specified in an employment contract. Delays in payments are common among honorary teachers, often due to various factors, particularly at the start of each year. Below are critiques of late salary payments from *Beritasatu.com*.

Excerpt 20: “*Dana BOS itu tiga bulan sekali, apa pola gaji guru-guru yang dari ruang talenta itu juga akan seperti ini? Kan lebih bahaya lagi, masa guru-guru digaji per tiga bulan?*” (BOS funds are disbursed every three months; will the salary pattern for teachers from the talent pool be the same? Is it not even more dangerous when teachers are paid every three months?) (June 15, 2023)

Excerpt 20 refers to Dana BOS, a government program providing financial assistance to schools. The findings suggest that the Teacher Marketplace policy could lead to similar delays in salary disbursements, conveying concern and frustration.

Excerpt 21: “*Kami pesimis bahwa guru akan dapat penghasilannya tepat waktu per tanggal satu awal bulan, atau mungkin kayak marketplace dalam tanda kutip yaitu paylater.*” (We are pessimistic that teachers will receive their income on time by the first of the month, or perhaps, like the marketplace, it will be ‘pay later’) (June 15, 2023)

Excerpt 21 further reflects resignation and pessimism, comparing delayed payments to the ‘pay later’ option in online shopping, emphasizing the potential risks teachers face in the marketplace system.

Excerpt 22: “*Tunjangan profesi guru non-ASN aja tetap dibayar pemerintah pusat dengan tidak tepat waktu*” (“The central government still pays professional allowances for non-ASN teachers late.”) (June 15, 2023)

Excerpt 22 suggests that even ASN teachers experience delays in receiving allowances, implying that marketplace teachers could face even worse delays because of their uncertain placements.

#### D. Photography

Semiotics in photography involves observing and interpreting symbols in images. According to Borchers (2006), it is the study of symbols conveyed through photographs. Semiotics in photography on *Beritasatu.com* is explained below.

##### 1. Teachers' Demand

This section examines how *Beritasatu.com* handles the high demands and inadequate compensation faced by teachers. The visual representations highlight the strain on teachers and the ongoing issues related to their treatment.



Figure 2:  
Teachers saluting under the sun  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*, 2023)

This photo, dated June 14, 2023, shows fatigued teachers saluting under the sun, reflecting the heavy demands placed on them despite their inadequate rights and benefits.



Figure 3:  
A teacher visiting students' home to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*, 2023)

A photo taken from June 16, 2023, illustrates teachers visiting students' homes during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is unrelated to the article's headline about the PPPK marketplace. This disconnect seems to highlight the ongoing poor treatment of teachers.

## 2. Conditions Comparisons

Here, the focus is on comparing the conditions of teachers in rural and urban settings. These images underscore the disparities in educational environments and facilities between these areas.



**Figure 4:**  
**The classroom conditions of teachers teaching in rural areas and urban areas**  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*, 2023)

Two photographs, both taken from June 13, 2023, compare the conditions of rural teachers with those in urban areas. Rural teachers face poor facilities and low salaries, whereas urban teachers work in well-equipped classrooms, emphasizing the need for government attention to rural schools and honorary teachers.

## 3. Demonstrations by Teachers

This section presents the visual documentation of teacher protests against unfair treatment and inadequate policies. The images reflect teachers' dissatisfaction and their calls for better conditions and recognition.



**Figure 5:**  
**Teachers protesting**  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*, 2023)

Two images from June 13, 2023, depict protesting teachers. The first shows the teachers holding duct tape over their mouths, symbolizing their silence and the struggle for fair treatment. The second image features a protester with a sign advocating for honorary teachers, highlighting the government's failure to resolve issues during the launch of a new marketplace system.

#### 4. Teacher Ratios and Percentage Decline

The images in Figure 6 illustrate imbalances and changes in the teacher workforce. In 2022-2023, Indonesia had 3,340,590 teachers, over half (52,2%) of whom were in honorary positions, attributed to the CPNS moratorium and retiring teachers.



Figure 6:

The imbalance in student-to-teacher ratios  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*, 2023)

The news also reported an imbalance in student-to-teacher ratios in 2021-2022, with most schools having fewer students per teacher than the ideal 20:1 ratio, except for vocational schools. Changes in teacher percentages in public and private schools: public vocational schools saw an increase in teachers, whereas private vocational schools experienced a significant decrease. Meanwhile, Figure 7 shows the shortage of teachers in Indonesia, with the number increasing annually from 2022 to 2024.



Figure 7:

The shortage of teachers in Indonesia  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*, 2023)



Figure 8 highlights the uneven distribution of teachers across Indonesian provinces, with Java at the highest concentration and other regions facing shortages. The image shows a growing teacher shortage in Indonesia, which increased from 1.17 million in 2022 to a projected 1.31 million in 2024 because of uneven distribution, new schools, retiring teachers, and poor cooperation between governments.

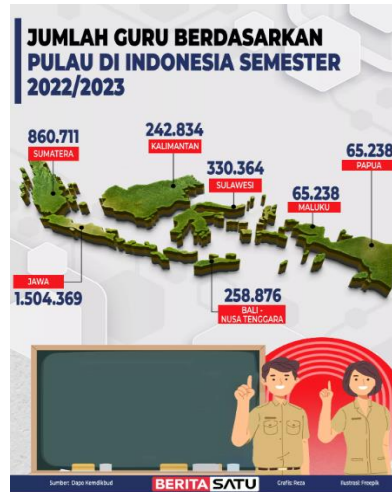
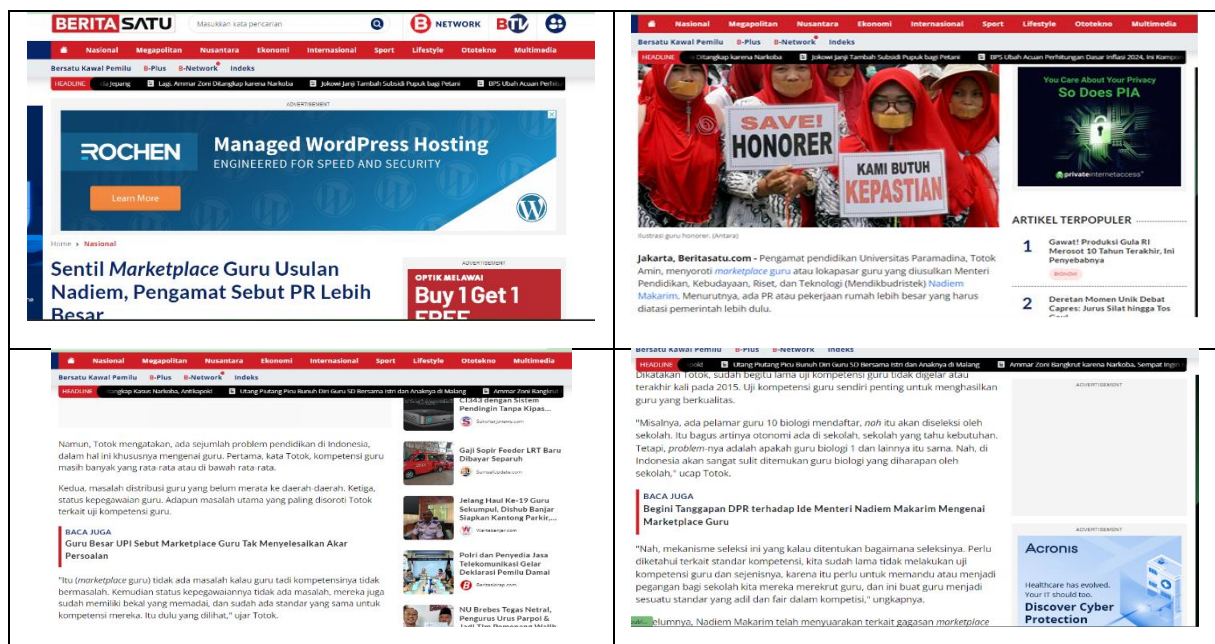


Figure 8:  
The uneven distribution of teachers across Indonesia  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*, 2023)

### E. Typography

Typography is a skill related to the profession of typewriters in printing presses and artists who work in type-making companies (known as type foundries). Generally, typography refers to the study of printed characters. More scientifically, it is the art and technique of designing and arranging letters in visual publications, both printed and digital (Kusrianto, 2010). The study found that *Beritasatu.com* follows a specific standard for arranging typography across its news pages, as shown in Figure 9.



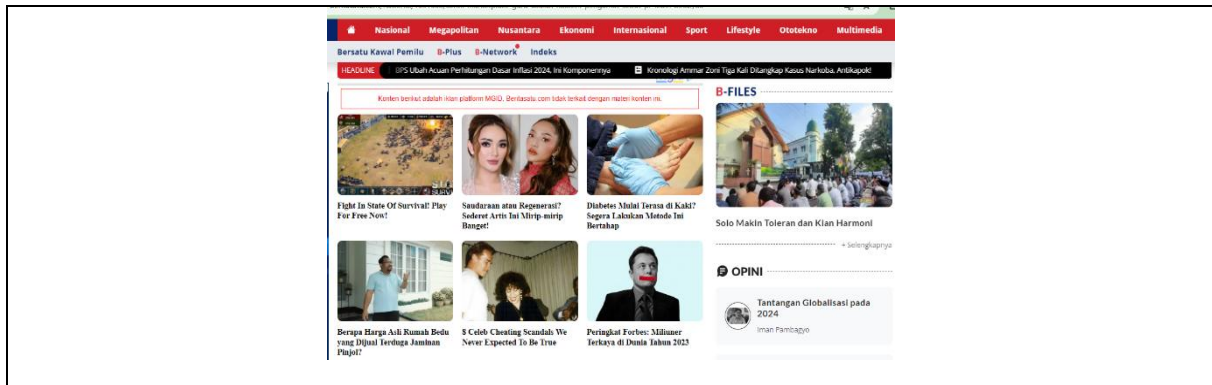


Figure 9:  
Specific typography standards for *Beritasatu.com* news pages  
(Source: *Beritasatu.com*)

There are six primary elements of typography: typeface, font size, hierarchy (the overall structure of a written design piece), alignment (the direction of the text), style (additional formatting of the characters), and color. As shown in Figure 9, all typography on *Beritasatu.com* has the same headline size and font. The headlines use Lato font (size 16) and are bolded to draw attention to the beginning of the article. This design choice unconsciously guides readers to the headline before they are given the content.

All headlines are in bold blue text. According to Kusrianto (2010), blue represents trust, conservatism, security, technology, cleanliness, and order. Using blue font in headlines, recommendation links, and advertisements conveys clear and trustworthy news. The menu bar is designed in red, a color associated with passion and energy in color theory. Red is used to capture attention because it is bright and eye-catching.

*Beritasatu.com* also appears to follow a standard for its content font, using Open Sans font in size 13. This font is often found in books and magazines and was chosen to create a dynamic and simple character in the text. The text alignment on all news pages is from left to right. Furthermore, the structure of news pages typically begins with the red header menu, followed by the headline, an image, and then the content. In several paragraphs, readers will find a menu bar with related reading recommendations, followed by continued news content and additional images. The bottom of the page is usually filled with advertisements.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results, it can be observed that there are numerous biased statements, critiques, and biased language, even in the photography used in *Beritasatu.com*'s coverage of the Teacher Marketplace policy involving Indonesia's Education Minister, Nadiem Makarim. A number of 15 headlines contained critiques, all of which expressed disagreement with the policy. These headlines conveyed information through utterances that, along with real-world knowledge and sensory input, contribute to inferring meaning. An utterance is considered 'relevant' if it produces significant positive cognitive effects with minimal mental processing effort. Therefore, the more positive cognitive effects and less processing effort required, the more relevant the utterance is. Hence, headlines are the first elements that readers encounter in the news.

Additionally, some 27 instances of unpleasant lexical choices were identified, primarily through repeated phrases like “commodity” and “goods to sell in the modern human market”, used to describe teachers. These phrases were intended to draw readers’ attention by emphasizing the critique that teachers are being treated as products in an online marketplace. Meanwhile, the government has no intention of equating teachers with commodities displayed online. Quoted from Jawapos.com on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, an online news platform, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Technology (Nadiem Makarim) chose the word “Marketplace” because its use reflects the ease of inclusive access. The term is also commonly used, familiar, and easily understood by the public. However, quoted from the Republika.id news platform on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Technology heard some complaints from the public related to this unpleasant term; thus, , thus Nadiem Makarim decided to change the term “Teacher Marketplace” used for the teacher’s recruitment platform to the new term as “Teachers Talent Space” platform.

News with a satirical tone often attracts more readers. Edgerly et al. (2019) explained that the connection between satirical news and negative effects lies in the target of satire. If a specific joke or comment crosses the line, the satire may be offensive. Furthermore, 18 instances of unpleasant language were identified, many of which expressed concern about potential future consequences if the policy is implemented, such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism, as well as protests over the failed recruitment of PPPK. Corruption is predicted to occur when the government releases teachers’ salaries, which will be given directly to schools, potentially leading to misuse by certain school staff. Nepotism may arise as schools may choose teachers from the marketplace based on personal connections rather than qualifications. Collusion could occur through the abuse of authority by government officials or other parties seeking profit, involving secret agreements such as price gouging.

The harsh critique also extends to failed PPPK recruitment. Prasetyo (2022) discussed the failed PPPK recruitment in 2022, explaining that the PPPK formation for non-teacher staff in the Provincial Government of DKI Jakarta was canceled. The reporters repeatedly mentioned the failed PPPK recruitment to remind the government and readers that the agreement had been implemented for a long time but had not produced satisfactory results. They argue that the Education Minister is adding more unresolved problems by creating the Teacher Marketplace.

*Beritasatu.com* further involved critiques by incorporating typography charts and data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency. One photograph compared classroom conditions in urban and remote areas, suggesting that the teacher marketplace is not a viable solution for rural areas with limited internet access. The policy is likely to incur significant costs, and reporters suggested that it would be better to use these funds to provide schools in rural areas rather than to implement an uncertain policy.

Another photograph shows that more than 50% of teachers in Indonesia still hold honorary status. In the 15 news articles related to the Teacher Marketplace, five photographs were found to illustrate the uneven distribution of teachers in Indonesia, leading to problems such as underpayment, lack of legal status, and teacher shortages in schools. Meanwhile, the typography of the 15 news articles related to the teacher marketplace on *Beritasatu.com* follows the same structure/format, using an inverted pyramid style. This style presents information in descending order of importance, allowing the audience to quickly read the most crucial details and decide whether to continue reading. The inverted pyramid style, which was invented more than a century ago, remains the basic formula for news writing (Scanlan, 2003).

The repetition of phrases, images, and supporting data, such as field research results, strengthens the prominence of the issues raised by *Beritasatu.com* in its critical coverage of Indonesian education problems, often with a negative bias. This is reflected in the content, which influences the reader's perspective on the issues. However, a lack of photography directly related to the Teacher Marketplace was noted, with some images being unrelated and previously used in COVID-19 coverage in 2020. Despite these limitations, the researcher believes they do not significantly impact the primary outcome of the study, and future work should include additional controls.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the delivery and packaging of information in online news discourse shape reader attitudes and perspectives. This study focused on the headlines, lexical choices, language use, typography, and photography in 15 news articles related to the Teacher Marketplace on *Beritasatu.com*. Using the interactive model analysis to analyze the data, the results revealed 15 unpleasant headlines, 27 harsh lexical choices, 18 instances of unpleasant language, 10 satirical photographs, and standard typography across the online news. Ideally, *Beritasatu.com* should convey accurate news, as the sources are clearly stated. Regarding Indonesian education news, it should be framed neutrally, with expert perspectives guiding readers' opinions. The news framing analysis of *Beritasatu.com* shows that the process of structuring news with prominent headlines and source quotations directs readers toward the media's perspective on the issues raised.

The study's limitations include a narrow focus on *Beritasatu.com* and a lack of diverse photographic representation. Future research should expand to include multiple news sources and regions to provide a more comprehensive view of media bias. In addition, incorporating a broader range of visual and textual elements can enhance the analysis. Future studies could also explore the impact of such biases on public opinion and policy perception.

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