

# METAPHORICAL REPRESENTATION IN SOCIAL CRITICISM IN INDONESIAN COMEDY

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Received: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024/Revised: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2024/Accepted: 21<sup>st</sup> June 2024

**How to Cite:** Langoday, Y. R. (2024). Metaphorical representation in social criticism in Indonesian comedy.  
*Lingua Cultura*, 18(1), 65-77. <https://doi.org/10.21512/lc.v18i1.11473>

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## ABSTRACT

*The research aimed to investigate the metaphorical representations employed by comedians in delivering social criticism through Indonesian stand-up comedy. Metaphors played a crucial role in shaping how to understand and interpret social reality. Through metaphors, speakers or writers could frame subjects or concepts in ways that influence the audience's perceptions and attitudes, perpetuating certain ideologies and power structures. Stand-up comedy prioritized the individual performer's voice, but its success relied on the ability to make people laugh by tapping into shared cultural ideologies and societal power dynamics. Abdur Arsyad is an example of an Indonesian comedian who presents stand-up material containing social criticism of various societal issues and ideological assumptions. This research analyzed Arsyad's comedy through Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional critical discourse analysis model of description, interpretation, and explanation of text, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. The descriptive dimension examined how Arsyad used language to construct representations of the world shaped by ideology. The interpretative dimension analyzed how his language perpetuated or challenged power relations and social hierarchies. The explanatory dimension focused on how Arsyad's representations of social identities were informed by dominant ideologies. A qualitative methodology was used to obtain data from Arsyad's performances on the KompasTV YouTube channel using documentation, library research, and note-taking techniques. The results reveal that Arsyad employs a range of metaphorical representations across Fairclough's three textual values to critique and influence social norms and actions. Fairclough's paradigm allows for a detailed examination of how comedy functions as social criticism, providing insights into the complex interplay between language, ideology, authority, and community.*

**Keywords:** metaphor, critical discourse, social criticism, stand-up comedy, Indonesia

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian comedy has transcended its status as a mere entertainment medium, becoming a powerful vehicle for social criticism and commentary. It has become one of the potential entertainment industries (Sihombing et al., 2023). It has developed into a platform where society can use satire and humor to discuss its norms, values, and concerns comprehensively and understandably (Firdaus, Setiawati, & Yulianto, 2018; Putri et al., 2022). In Indonesia, comedians have perfected the ability to use humor to address important issues, discussing and analyzing all facets of society, including politics and cultural norms, in a way that

appeals to audiences (Sihombing & Lestari, 2022). In this crucial role, the effectiveness of comedy is often enhanced using metaphorical images.

Metaphors are powerful linguistic tools that can convey complex concepts in a more understandable and straightforward manner (Liu & Chen, 2022; Tabatabaei & Ivanova, 2022). Metaphors allow comedians to convey complex social criticism in a way that is easily understood and appreciated by their audience. This method is particularly important in contexts where direct confrontation is discouraged or where open expression of dissent can lead to censorship or other negative consequences. Indonesian comedy often uses metaphorical representations to gently highlight

societal problems, allowing comedians to incorporate social criticism into their stories. A comedian might use a sinking ship as a metaphor for a failing economy or a puppet show to criticize political manipulation. The analogies are a great way to engage the audience in a discussion about important topics without the need for direct confrontation. Viewers are encouraged to analyze these metaphors, which can lead to a deeper connection with the social criticism presented. Indonesian comedy uses metaphorical representations to entertain and serve as a reflective mirror of society by revealing realities and encouraging critical thinking among audiences. Indonesian comedy's ability to influence public opinion and initiate substantive dialogues about social change is further strengthened by the genre's status as an essential vehicle for social discourse, achieved through the complex interplay of metaphor and humor.

Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method provides a powerful toolkit for examining language and its complex connection to society. Fairclough's critical discourse analysis can analyze how discourse, like humor, can reflect and influence social realities. Researchers can uncover underlying social implications and power dynamics by analyzing the subtle nuances of language in comical situations. This research is important for understanding how comedy can serve as a type of social commentary that reflects and has the potential to influence societal standards. Fairclough's theory is particularly useful for analyzing humor by examining how comedians use language to interact with their audience and society. Comedy is a form of communication that uses various linguistic techniques to quietly express critical viewpoints on social issues, question established authorities, and influence public opinion. Applying Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to comedy allows scholars to uncover the underlying meanings in funny plots and lyrics and uncover the hidden social commentary.

Fairclough's CDA uses a discourse analysis model in text structure with three values, experiential, relational, and expressive, to analyze different levels (Agustia, 2022; Fairclough, 2001; Muhtar, Jufri, & Sukri, 2023; Suciati, 2018). The experiential value examines how language constructs worldly representations that can materialize in comedic contexts as imaginative metaphors that comprehensibly represent social concerns. Relational value analyzes how language influences social connections, particularly in comic conversations, to reveal power dynamics between the comedian and the audience or other social groupings. Expressive value emphasizes the representation of social identities and personal perspectives, which comedians often use to communicate their opinions on the topics they satirize. By examining these three values, scholars can develop a comprehensive understanding of how metaphorical representations in Indonesian comedy operate on multiple levels to critique and influence social norms and actions. Fairclough's paradigm allows for a

detailed examination of the function of humor as a tool of social criticism and provides an understanding of the complex relationship between language, authority, and community. This method extends the research of humorous communication and expands the broader field of discourse analysis by emphasizing the important influence that comedy has on reflecting on and shaping the social environment.

Several previous studies have analyzed textual features and linguistic representations in various texts. Syafitri's (2023) research has examined the representation of grammatical metaphors in Jakarta Post news texts by analyzing congruent and incongruent coding, finding that 71% of the text consists of verbs transformed into nouns, while only 17% has incongruent encoding. Sartika (2021) has used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to uncover the meaning behind the Mata Najwa empty chair interview and the use of the hashtag #MataNajwaMenantiTerawan, focusing on the textual dimension.

Other studies have employed CDA to explore the relationship between discourse, sociocultural practices, and power structures. Kinasih and Marsella (2023) have aimed to examine the underlying assumptions of roast comedy through the lens of television satire's heuristic structures, namely space, target, rhetoric, media, and time. Additionally, the research analyzes the textual features, discourse practices, and sociocultural practices of a Wardah Renew You Series advertisement using Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA. The research focuses on analyzing the text dimension from Fairclough's three-dimensional model, concentrating on the textual analysis without including the context and sociocultural dimensions.

By examining metaphorical representations, the research examines social criticism and questions raised in Indonesian humor. However, there is a gap in existing research regarding the analysis of metaphorical representations in stand-up comedy from a critical discourse analysis perspective. Most studies have focused on either linguistic analysis or sociocultural practices, but few have explored the textual dimension of metaphors in stand-up comedy as a means of social critique.

The significance of this study lies in its ability to uncover the underlying meanings and ideologies conveyed through metaphorical language in Indonesian stand-up comedy. By analyzing the textual features and metaphorical representations, the research can shed light on how comedians use language to challenge societal norms, question power structures, and raise awareness about social issues. This textual analysis can contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of humor in shaping public discourse and promoting social change.

Specifically, this research seeks to answer these questions: How does humor function within the text dimension of Norman Fairclough's model of discourse analysis? What are the linguistic features that contribute to the comedic effect in texts? By focusing solely on the text dimension and excluding

the context and sociocultural dimensions, this research aims to provide a detailed examination of the linguistic mechanisms of humor.

## METHODS

The research, which is qualitative in nature, uses a descriptive approach. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the methodology utilized in this research project. The data sources are stand-up comedy videos featuring Abdur Arsyad's performances from his participation in Stand-up Comedy Indonesia (SUCI) Season 4, which aired from September to December 2014 on Kompas TV.

The specific videos analyzed are obtained from the official YouTube channel of Stand Up Kompas TV uploaded from May to August 2020. A total of 29 videos of Abdur Arsyad's stand-up sets from SUCI Season 4 are collected, with a combined runtime of approximately 205.5 minutes. These videos capture Abdur Arsyad's comedic performances throughout his progression in the competition.

The current research uses data collection methods, specifically audio documentation and video observation obtained from Abdur Arsyad's performances on the KompasTV YouTube channel. These videos primarily focus on social criticism and satire. Several of Arsyad's videos are carefully watched, transcribed, and analyzed, with detailed notes taken throughout the observation process. This note-taking approach allows for recording and documenting relevant information from the videos.

The subsequent step involves conducting an analysis of the data using the critical discourse analysis paradigm developed by Norman Fairclough. The present research concentrates on the text dimension, excluding context and sociocultural dimensions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The dimension of experiential value analysis in Abdur Arsyad's SUCI 4 video refers to how a text represents the world, including experiences, events, and entities. It is about the content or 'what' is being communicated. Experiential value is about the representation of social practices and the natural world. This involves analyzing the selection of verbs, nouns, and adjectives that construct a particular version of reality.

Data (1) shows the use of passive voice in Abdur Arsyad's SUCI 4 video. By making the recipient of the action the subject of the sentence, the passive directs attention away from the doer and toward the action itself. Additionally, the passive voice is used when it makes more sense to use formal or polite language, as Omenogor explains (Sherzad & Toma, 2024).

### Data (1)

*"Makanya saya pikir kalau mau buat program begitu,*

*itu dibuat program yang beda, yaitu pohon menjadi keluarga."* (SARD; Minutes 07:25)

("That's why I think if you want to create a program like that, it should be a different program, where the tree becomes a family.")

In Data (1), the speaker uses the passive voice to convey the idea of another program, 'trees into families'. The use of the passive voice in the phrase '*program yang beda*' (a different program) directs attention to the act of making the program, not to who made the program. This reflects the use of the passive voice to shift the focus from the agent of the action to the action itself. The speaker also uses the word '*makanya*' (that is why) to give reasons or justifications for his thoughts. The phrase '*pohon menjadi keluarga*' (the tree becomes a family) is a metaphor used to describe the concept of the proposed program, which emphasizes the importance of trees in family and community life.

In this context, the speaker is trying to convey ideas about the importance of different programs that integrate trees as part of the family. The use of the passive voice 'a different program' shows that the speaker wants to emphasize the importance of the action of making the program without mentioning who should do it. The speaker uses the metaphor 'trees become family' to describe the concept of the proposed program, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of trees in everyday life. This reflects the speaker's attempt to focus attention on the action and the desired outcome rather than on the actor.

Finally, this discourse reflects an awareness of the importance of the environment and sustainability. The use of the passive voice in the phrase '*dibuat program yang beda*' (it should be a different program) reflects an ideology that emphasizes the importance of collective action in protecting the environment. The speaker attempts to focus attention on the act of creating another program without mentioning who should do it, reflecting the view that environmental responsibility is a shared responsibility. The metaphor '*pohon menjadi keluarga*' (the tree becomes a family) also reflects cultural values that value nature and the environment. Speakers try to convey the message that trees should be considered an integral part of family and community life, reflecting the ideology of sustainability and respect for nature.

The active voice is a sentence construction where the subject performs the action denoted by the verb, making the subject an active agent. This structure follows a clear subject-verb-object order, making it more concise and engaging, reducing the overall word count, and capturing attention. It can be seen in Data (2).

### Data (2)

*"Dangdut yang sekarang ini lebih mementingkan goyangan daripada lagu."* (SUCI Abdur – Kalau Raditya Dika Jadi Penyanyi Dangdut; Minutes 03:53)

(“Modern dangdut music is more concerned with shaking hips than shaking souls.”)

In Data (2), the speaker uses the active voice to criticize modern dangdut. The sentence uses a clear subject-verb-object structure, where *‘Dangdut yang sekarang ini’* is the subject, *‘lebih mementingkan’* (more concerned) is the verb, and *‘goyangan daripada lagu’* (shaking hips than shaking souls) is the object. The use of this active clause makes the speaker’s statement more assertive and direct and emphasizes that the subject (modern dangdut) is the active agent performing the action (more concerned with swaying).

In this context, the speaker is trying to criticize the change of focus in modern dangdut. By using the active voice, the speaker emphasizes that modern dangdut has shifted from focusing on the quality of music (songs) to focusing on physical appearance (swaying). This reflects the speaker’s view that there is a value degradation in dangdut music, where aesthetic and artistic aspects have been replaced by visual and sensual aspects.

Ultimately, this discourse reflects the changes in the dangdut music industry, which is influenced by market demands and commercialization (Setiawan & Susanti, 2021). The speaker’s criticism of modern dangdut, which is more concerned with swaying than singing, shows dissatisfaction with the direction of dangdut’s development, which is seen as sacrificing artistic quality for popularity and economic gain. The mockery in question is not solely focused on criticism. It becomes increasingly prevalent as Dangdut is increasingly identified with erotic music performances (Amzy, Pramudita, & Pratama, 2019). The use of the active voice in this criticism also reflects the speaker’s ideology, which is to restore the focus on musical quality and artistic values in dangdut. The speaker rejects the excessive commercialization that has turned dangdut into mere visual entertainment without strong musical substance.

The way in which social actors are represented or positioned in a text or discourse is called the ‘actor position’. This attitude can influence how the audience or reader perceives, interprets, and understands topics, entities, or social groups (Černý & Ocelík, 2020; Mercado-Sáez, Sahuquillo-Verdet, & Chavez, 2019). In examining how language is used to create, maintain, or change power structures and social identities, critical discourse analysis examines the connection between language use and power in social, political, and cultural contexts. Data (3) shows the actor position in Abdur Arsyad’s SUCI 4 video.

### Data (3)

*“Teman-teman. Sudah 16 tahun kita tertatih dalam reformasi. Ditipu oleh para politisi yang katanya berikan bukti bukan janji. Tapi, begitu ada tangis suara minor di pelosok negeri, mereka sibuk mencari koalisi, bukan solusi.”* (SUC Abdur- Anggota DPR Sudah Gila dari Awal; Minutes 01:10)

(“Guys. For 16 years we’ve been stumbling through

this reformation. Deceived by politicians who promised proof, not just promises. But as soon as they hear the faint cries from the fringes of the nation, they busy themselves forging coalitions instead of finding solutions.”)

In Data (3), speakers employ a variety of rhetorical techniques to position social actors within the discourse. The use of the term *‘teman-teman’* (guys) as an opening gesture indicates the speaker’s intention to foster a sense of closeness and solidarity with the audience. The speaker then describes the 16-year journey of reform with the term *‘tertatih’* (have been stumbling), which conveys the challenging nature of the process and the numerous obstacles encountered along the way. The speaker also employs the term *‘ditipu’* (deceived) to describe the actions of politicians, suggesting a betrayal of public trust. The phrase *‘tangis suara minor di pelosok negeri’* (the faint cries from the fringes of the nation) describes marginalized groups that are ignored by politicians, while politicians are busy *‘mereka sibuk mencari koalisi, bukan solusi’* (they are busy themselves forging coalitions instead of finding solutions), which shows their indifference to the real problems faced by society.

In this discourse context, the speaker is attempting to highlight politicians’ injustice and indifference towards the people. He uses emotional and descriptive language to describe the people’s suffering and the politicians’ betrayal. The choice of words *‘tertatih’* (have been stumbling), *‘ditipu’* (deceived), and *‘tangis suara minor’* (the faint cries) serves to highlight the suffering and injustice experienced by the people. The speaker also positions politicians as negative and irresponsible actors, while the people are described as suffering victims. This is done in order to elicit empathy and support from the audience for the people’s struggle and against the actions of politicians.

Ultimately, this discourse reflects the power imbalance between politicians and the people. The speaker attempts to elucidate the manner in which politicians utilize their authority for personal gain and the formation of political alliances while disregarding the needs and afflictions of the populace (Kuipers, Yesilkagit, & Carroll, 2021). The deployment of the terms *‘koalisi’* and *‘solusi’* suggests a critique of the political system that prioritizes political alliances over the resolution of genuine societal issues (Bergman, Ilonszki, & Hellström, 2023). This discourse also reflects the tenets of social justice espoused by the speaker, which underscores the significance of listening to and assisting marginalized groups within society.

Positive remarks are any written or spoken words that lead to positive or constructive outcomes in a specific social context. They are often used to highlight aspects that support social justice, equality, and empowerment. They also could help challenge popular narratives that may perpetuate unequal power dynamics or specific ideologies that disadvantage

certain groups in society. It can be seen in Data (4).

#### Data (4)

*“Teman-teman. Kalau tidak ada mereka, siapa yang mau puluhan tahun mengajar di pelosok-pelosok desa sana? Siapa? Sinyal saja masuk desa itu sinyal pikir-pikir.”* (SUC Abdur (UAS)- *Mama Saya Guru, tapi Ujian Online Kompetensi Tak Pernah Lulus*; Minutes 02:38)

“Guys. If it weren’t for them, who would want to teach for decades in those remote villages? Who? Even getting a signal in those villages is a struggle.”)

In Data (4), the speaker employs a number of positive verbal expressions in order to underscore the crucial role of teachers who instruct in remote villages. The use of the term ‘*teman-teman*’ (guys) as a salutation indicates the speaker’s intention to foster a sense of intimacy with the audience. Furthermore, the rhetorical question “*siapa yang mau puluhan tahun mengajar di pelosok-pelosok desa sana? Siapa?*” (who would want to teach for decades in those remote villages?) serves to underscore the dedication and sacrifice of these teachers. The speaker employs the metaphorical phrase “*Sinyal saja masuk desa itu sinyal pikir-pikir.*” (even getting a signal in those villages is a struggle) to describe the challenging conditions in remote villages. This metaphor serves to reinforce the argument that these teachers deserve greater appreciation. The speaker’s use of positive verbal expressions is designed to enhance the dignity and significance of teachers in remote areas.

In this discourse context, the speaker is attempting to highlight the crucial role of teachers who teach in remote villages and to convey his appreciation for their dedication. He employs emotional language and rhetorical questions to emphasize his argument. The phrase ‘*sinyal pikir-pikir*’ (getting a signal in those villages is a struggle) is employed by the speaker to describe the challenging circumstances faced by these teachers, thereby reinforcing the positive message to be conveyed. Additionally, the speaker attempts to foster solidarity with the audience through the use of the word ‘friends’ and rhetorical questions that prompt the audience to reflect on the significance of the role of teachers in remote villages.

In the end, this discourse reflects the unequal access to education and technology in remote areas. The speaker endeavors to enhance the prestige of educators who instruct in remote villages and underscores their self-sacrifice in the face of challenging circumstances (Sitnikova & Nikolaeva, 2021). This demonstrates an aspiration to advocate for social justice and to acknowledge the pivotal role of teachers in remote regions. This discourse also suggests the underlying ideology of social justice that the speaker is attempting to convey. He rejects the inequality of access to education and technology that persists within society, particularly in remote areas (Chatterjee et al., 2019; Van Jaarsveld, 2021). The speaker employs a variety of

positive verbal expressions in an attempt to reinforce the argument and foster solidarity in the pursuit of social justice and the recognition of the pivotal role of teachers in remote areas.

Negative remarks (Data 5) express rejection, denial, or critical views of an idea, situation, or social actor, often challenging the status quo, power structures, or dominant ideologies. CDA analyzes negative statements not only linguistically but also socially, politically, and ideologically, focusing on the broader context of communication.

#### Data (5)

*“Di Indonesia itu, jasa pendidikan itu tidak masuk dalam PPN, tidak kena PPN. Tapi, barang pendidikan: sepatu, buku, seragam, buku, tas, itu kena PPN. Ini sama seperti tidur itu gratis, tapi kalau tutup mata bayar.”* (SUC Abdur – *Tradisi di Timur Abis Sunat Dibawa ke Pantai*; Minutes 03:53)

“In Indonesia, educational services are exempt from VAT (Value Added Tax), they don’t get charged VAT. But educational goods like shoes, books, uniforms, bags - those get taxed with VAT. It’s like sleeping is free, but you have to pay to close your eyes.”)

In Data (5), the speaker, Abdur, utilizes negative remarks to critique the tax policy in Indonesia. The use of the phrases ‘*tidak masuk dalam PPN, tidak kena PPN*’ (exempt from VAT, they do not get charged VAT) and ‘*kena PPN*’ (get taxed with VAT) indicates the perceived injustice in the tax policy applied to educational services and educational goods. The speaker employs the analogy ‘*tidur itu gratis, tapi kalau tutup mata bayar*’ (sleeping is free, but you have to pay to close your eyes) to illustrate the absurdity of the policy. The speaker’s use of this analogy serves to reinforce their criticism of the policy, which is perceived as absurd and unfair.

In the context of this discourse, the speaker attempts to elucidate the injustice inherent in the education tax policy in Indonesia. He employs straightforward language and compelling analogies to underscore his critique. His use of negative statements, such as ‘*tidak masuk dalam PPN*’ (exempt from VAT) and ‘*kena PPN*’ (get taxed with VAT), serves to reject and criticize policies that are considered unfair. The speaker employs the analogy ‘*tidur itu gratis, tapi kalau tutup mata bayar*’ (sleeping is free, but you have to pay to close your eyes) to reinforce his argument and facilitate comprehension of his criticism.

Ultimately, this discourse reflects a general dissatisfaction with government policies that are perceived as unfair. The speaker attempts to elucidate the perceived injustice of the education tax policy implemented in Indonesia. The utilization of negative remarks and compelling analogies suggests an intention to challenge the status quo and existing power structures. Speakers have been known to criticize policies that are considered detrimental to society, especially in terms of access to education. This

discourse also implies the ideology of social justice, which the speaker is attempting to convey. The speaker rejects the discriminatory application of tax policies to educational services and goods. The exemptions and facilities provided to educational foundations can be seen as unfair, and the tax burden on low-income families is significant (Rachmat, Bagja, & Rachman, 2023). The speaker employs a negative statement as a means of drawing attention to the perceived injustice of the current policy and advocating for a more equitable policy change.

Relational value analysis in Abdur Arsyad's SUCI 4 video is concerned with the social relationships and identities constructed through a text. It is about the how, the form, and the manner of conveying content. Relational value includes analysis of modality, language function, and pronoun use and nominalization, which can indicate social distance, power relations, and formality among discourse participants.

Commands (Data 6) in CDA are discourses used to direct, influence, or control an audience's actions, behavior, or thoughts. They are not just direct instructions but also ways in which texts promote ideologies, values, or norms. CDA analyzes commands in the context of power and ideology, examining how language constructs power relations, influences social perceptions, and challenges existing structures.

#### Data (6)

*"Eh, itu yang di pojok. Yang di bawah pohon beringin itu. Kalian masuk saja! Kalian kan sudah biasa nepotisme."* (Abdur – Handphone Sumber Kecelakaan; Minutes 2:40)

("Hey, over there in the corner. The one under the banyan tree. Just go on in! You're all used to nepotism, aren't you?")

In Data (6), the speaker employs commands to direct and influence the audience's actions. The sentence *"kalian masuk saja!"* (Just go on in!) is a direct command that illustrates the speaker's attempt to control the audience's actions. The use of the word 'kalian' indicates that this command is addressed to a specific group of people who are 'di bawah pohon beringin' (under the banyan tree). Additionally, the speaker employs the phrase 'kalian kan sudah biasa nepotisme' (You are all used to nepotism, aren't you?) to underscore the group's familiarity with the practice of nepotism. This is a form of satire that contains criticism of the group associated with the banyan tree, which, in the context of Indonesian politics, refers to a political party, which is known for its nepotistic practices in the past (Pratiwi & Arifin, 2019).

In this discourse context, the speaker attempts to direct and control the audience's actions by issuing direct commands and employing innuendo to criticize the group associated with the banyan tree, a symbol of political parties. The use of these commands and insinuations demonstrates the speaker's intention to influence the audience's perception of the group. The

speaker employs the command *"Kalian masuk saja!"* (Just go on in!) to indicate that the group has no place outside the area associated with the banyan tree. This form of exclusion aims to reinforce criticism of the group (Pertwi & Widodo, 2021). Ultimately, this discourse reflects the power relations and ideologies that the speaker is trying to maintain. The use of commands and insinuations demonstrates an attempt to criticize and control the group associated with the banyan tree. This reflects a negative view of the practice of nepotism associated with the party. This discourse also demonstrates how language is employed to construct and perpetuate power relations. The speaker utilizes commands to direct audience actions and innuendo to criticize specific groups. This is a method of influencing the social and political perceptions of the audience through the use of language.

A statement is a declarative sentence used in writing and communication to express facts, opinions, or viewpoints. It ensures clarity and unambiguity in various types of writing and avoids speaking mistakes. It can be seen in Data (7).

#### Data (7)

*"Pencuri... Bahkan makanya kejahatan itu datang ke sini juga. Begitu pencuri itu teman-teman di timur itu dapat tangkap itu pasti dapat pukul sampai busuk. Sampai busuk. (Peragakan ditinju) Busuk. Pencuri di sini itu dapat foto. Dapat syuting. Wawancara masuk TV, masuk penjara fasilitas mewah."* (SUC – Gedung Kemendes di Jakarta, Fungsinya Apa; Minutes 04:39)

("Thieves... That's why crime comes here too. When those friends in the east catch a common thief, they can beat them to a pulp. To a pulp. (Mimes punching) Pulverized. But thieves here get photographed. They get filmed. Interviewed on TV, sent to luxurious prison facilities.")

In Data (7), the speaker employs statements to convey his opinions on the disparate treatment of ordinary thieves and corruptors. The statement, *"pencuri itu teman-teman di timur itu dapat tangkap itu pasti dapat pukul sampai busuk"* (those friends in the east catch a common thief, they can beat them to a pulp) is an illustrative example of the harsh treatment received by ordinary thieves in the eastern region. The repetition of the word 'busuk' (pulp) on three occasions serves to highlight the physical violence experienced by the thief. In contrast, the statement *"pencuri di sini itu dapat foto"* (thieves here get photographed) suggests that the treatment of thieves in the eastern region is less severe than that of their counterparts in the west. They are subjected to filming. The juxtaposition of interviews on television and incarceration in opulent facilities illustrates the preferential treatment received by corruptors. The use of the words 'foto', 'syuting', and 'wawancara' indicates that those who engage in corrupt activities receive media attention and better facilities in prison (Pasaribu, 2021).

In the context of this discourse, the speaker

attempts to highlight the perceived injustice in the treatment of common thieves and corruptors. He employs clear and assertive statements to express his views. The repetition of the word *'busuk'* on three occasions serves to highlight the physical violence experienced by ordinary thieves. The use of the words *'foto'* (get photographed), *'syuting'* (get filmed), and *'wawancara'* (interviewed), on the other hand, indicates the preferential treatment received by corruptors. Additionally, the speaker employs a physical demonstration, namely, the act of being punched, to reinforce his assertion about the violence experienced by common thieves. The objective is to foster an empathetic and supportive response from listeners to injustices that occur.

In the end, this discourse reflects the inequality inherent in the legal system and the treatment of criminals in society. The discrepancy in the treatment of ordinary thieves and corruptors illustrates the existence of imbalanced power relations (Sulistiani et al., 2022). Those who hold power and influence, namely corruptors, receive preferential treatment, whereas ordinary thieves who lack such influence are subjected to harsh treatment (Wijaya, 2021). This discourse also implies the ideology of social justice that the speaker is attempting to convey. He rejects the discriminatory and unjust treatment of criminals. The speaker's statement serves to reinforce the argument and to foster solidarity in the pursuit of social justice.

Questions are essential linguistic expressions for seeking knowledge and understanding, playing a crucial role in education, conversations, and research, facilitating critical thinking and inquiry. Data (8) is an example of a question.

#### Data (8)

*"Pertanyaannya sekarang adalah orang gila mana yang mau menghabiskan uang banyak untuk investasi yang peluang dia kalah adalah 92%?"* (SUC Abdur – Anggota DPR Sudah Gila dari Awal; Minutes 01:59)

("The question now is what madman would want to spend a lot of money on an investment where the chances of them losing are 92%?")

In Data (8), the speaker employs rhetorical questions to highlight the illogicality of the actions taken by the DPR (House of Representatives) members. The question, *"orang gila mana yang mau menghabiskan uang banyak untuk investasi yang peluang dia kalah adalah 92%?"* (what madman would want to spend a lot of money on an investment where the chances of them losing are 92%?) is used to emphasize the absurdity of the action. The use of the word *'orang gila'* (madman) as a euphemism for the DPR members demonstrates sharp criticism of their decision. Additionally, the speaker employs the numerical value '92%' to convey objectivity and reinforce his assertion that the probability of success in the legislative elections is exceedingly low. This question not only seeks an answer but also

guides the listener to the conclusion that the action is unreasonable.

In the context of this discourse, the speaker is attempting to criticize the decision of the DPR members, who are perceived as irrational. The rhetorical questions employed by the speaker serve to highlight the illogical nature of the action in question and to encourage the listeners to engage in critical thinking. The use of the number '92%' gives the impression that the speaker's argument is based on concrete data, although, in fact, it is employed to reinforce the rhetorical impact of the discourse.

Ultimately, this discourse reflects the public's discontent with the decision taken by the DPR members. The rhetorical question employed by the speaker evinces a lack of confidence in the capacity of DPR members to make rational decisions. This reflects a power dynamic where individuals perceive that members of the DPR do not adequately represent their interests. The use of the euphemism *'orang gila'* (madman) also reflects an ideology that critiques the inability and irrationality in decision-making by members of the DPR. This rhetorical question serves to reinforce the criticism and invites listeners to question the legitimacy of decisions made by members of the House.

Euphemism, a gentler term, is used to avoid hurtful language, improve communication, and make exchanges comfortable and enjoyable for everyone involved, as opposed to direct language, which is typically used to indicate unpleasant or embarrassing situations (Hasibuan, Tausya, & Sinaga, 2023; Hornby & Crowther, 1997; Shi, 2023). It can be seen in Data (9).

#### Data (9)

*"Makanya terkadang itu saya miris teman-teman. Saya miris. Perempuan-perempuan di sana itu berjuang hidup dan mati untuk melintasi lautan yang dalam. Tapi, perempuan di sini ada yang tidak pikir mati, tapi yang penting hidup di dunia malam."* (SUC Abdur – Saya Itu Lahir dari Tangan Dukun Beranak; Minutes 03:09)

("That's why sometimes I feel sorry for my friends. I feel sorry. Those women over there are struggling between life and death to cross the deep ocean. But here, some women don't think about death, all that matters is living in the nightlife.")

In Data (9), the speaker utilizes euphemisms to describe the condition of women in two distinct geographical locations. The phrase *'berjuang hidup dan mati'* (struggling between life and death) is employed to convey the arduous struggle of women in one location to survive. However, speakers utilize the euphemism *'hidup di dunia malam'* (living in the nightlife) to describe women in other locations who have opted for an expedient method of survival. This euphemism is employed to circumvent direct reference to activities that might be deemed inappropriate

or shameful, such as prostitution. Additionally, the speaker employs the term '*sedih*' (sorry) to convey her emotional response to the stark contrast between the two groups of women. The euphemism '*hidup di dunia malam*' (living in the nightlife) serves to circumvent any direct mention of the prostitution activities carried out by women in the locale.

In the context of this discourse, the speaker attempts to convey a moral message about the importance of assisting others, particularly women who are in challenging circumstances. He employs emotional language to accentuate the contrast between the struggles of women's lives in two disparate settings. The use of the euphemism '*hidup di dunia malam*' (living in the nightlife) is intended to maintain the sensitivity of the listener and to avoid any implication of judgment. Speakers utilize euphemisms to describe activities that may be considered inappropriate or shameful, such as prostitution, in a more indirect and subtle manner. The objective is to facilitate communication and prevent harsh or hurtful language use.

Ultimately, this discourse reflects the social and economic inequality that exists in society. The disparity in the challenges faced by the two groups of women is indicative of a discrepancy in access to resources and opportunities. The euphemism '*hidup di dunia malam*' (living in the nightlife) also reflects the stigma and discrimination against women engaged in prostitution activities (Wrightson-Hester, Allan, & Allan, 2022). This viewpoint is also supported by Anthropologist Stan Frankland, who asserts that in urban settings, poor urban women are to be regarded as '*bamalaaya*', or prostitutes, rather than as '*bayaaye*', or hooligans (Pier, 2021). Although the speaker is attempting to convey a moral message, he is also inextricably linked to the societal views that tend to judge women in these situations. The use of euphemisms in this discourse indicates the speaker's intention to avoid the use of harsh or hurtful language, as well as to maintain the sensitivity of the listener.

Dysphemism is characterized by the conscious use of words with reduced stylistic emphasis or taboo forms of speech, as well as neutral vocabulary that conveys a negative evaluation that is outside the context of the speaking situation (Sydoruk & Samoilenko, 2022). It can be seen in Data (10).

#### **Data (10)**

*"Teman-teman. Kini 2014 telah tiba. Saatnya kita kembali memilih nahkoda. Pastikan dia yang mengerti Bhineka Tunggal Ika, bukan boneka milik Amerika."* (Grand Final! SUC Abdur- *Indonesia Seperti Kapal Tua, Berlayar tanpa Arah*; Minutes 05:33)

("Friends. Now 2014 has arrived. It's time for us to choose a new captain again. Make sure he understands the essence of Unity in Diversity, not a mere puppet of America.")

In Data (10), the speaker utilizes dysphemism to describe prospective leaders who are deemed

undesirable. The term '*boneka milik Amerika*' (American puppet) is a form of dysphemism that is employed to denigrate and impart a negative connotation to prospective leaders who are perceived as lacking independence and as merely following directions from the United States. Additionally, the speaker employs the term '*nahkoda*' (captain) as a metaphor for the country's leader, underscoring the significance of selecting a leader who is adept at guiding the country effectively. The utilization of the phrase '*memahami Bhineka Tunggal Ika*' (Unity in Diversity) underscores the importance of comprehending the nuances of diversity and unity within the Indonesian context.

In the context of this discourse, the speaker attempts to persuade listeners to select leaders who comprehend Indonesian national values and to eschew leaders who are perceived as '*boneka*' (puppets) of foreign powers. The use of the pejorative term '*boneka milik Amerika*' (American puppet) is designed to engender a sense of distrust and animosity towards potential leaders who are deemed to lack independence. Additionally, the speaker utilizes narrative techniques by referencing the concept of '*kembali memilih nahkoda*' (to choose a new captain again), which they use to describe the electoral process as a repetitive and significant aspect of national and state life.

Ultimately, this discourse reflects a distrust of foreign influence in Indonesian politics. The use of the dysphemism '*boneka milik Amerika*' (American puppet) reflects anti-American sentiments and the desire to have an independent and sovereign leader (Eryanto, Jones, & Lasthuizen, 2022). This discourse also implies the ideology of nationalism that the speaker is trying to maintain. He rejects foreign intervention in domestic affairs and emphasizes the importance of understanding national values such as Unity in Diversity (Satria et al., 2019). This verbal expression serves to reinforce the argument and to foster solidarity in the struggle for national independence and unity.

Expressive Value Analysis in Abdur Arsyad's SUCI 4 video focuses on the author of the text and his/her subjective attitude or assessment of the world. It concerns the 'who' behind the text and their social identity. Expressive value is often analyzed through the research of evaluative language, intonation, and style, which can reveal the speaker's or writer's judgment, affect, and commitment to what is being communicated.

Verbal reinforcement expressions are linguistic tools used to reinforce, confirm, or emphasize a statement or attitude. They are often used to bolster an argument, demonstrate a strong belief or rally support. Reinforcement expressions can influence public opinion, strengthen collective unity, and counter counterarguments in social and political arenas. It can be seen in Data (11).

#### **Data (11)**

*"Tapi, teman-teman. Paling tidak enak tuh kalau kalian nonton dari tribun timur. Karena kalau di tribun barat*



*itu nonton pakai lampu, cahaya terang, kerlap-kerlip di mana-mana. Tapi, di tribun timur itu masih gelap, listrik tidak ada. Tidak ada. Di tribun barat itu dikasih sofa, dikasih makan enak-enak. Tapi di tribun timur masih beralaskan tanah, makan seadanya. Bahkan orang dari tribun barat itu berteriak ke tribun timur: "Weh, kalian yang di tribun timur. Sabar saja. Nanti kami bangun kursi di situ, kasih makan enak-enak. Tapi sampai pertandingan berakhir, tidak ada yang datang."* (SUC Abdur – *Main Bola di Timur Akan Berakhir Kalau Sudah Terjadi Baku Pukul*; Minutes 03:50)

("But guys. It's most unpleasant if you watch from the eastern stands. Because if you're watching from the western stands, you're watching with lights, bright lights, flickering everywhere. But, in the eastern stands it is still dark, there is no electricity. Nothing. In the western stands, they are given a sofa, given delicious food. But the eastern stands were still on the ground, eating rough food. Even people from the western stands shouted to the eastern stands: "Weh, you guys in the eastern stands. Just be patient. Later we will build chairs there, give you delicious food. But until the game ended, no one came.")

In Data (11), the speaker utilizes a number of verbal expressions to accentuate the distinction between the east and the west stand. The repetition of the word '*tapi*' (but), which occurs twice, serves to accentuate the stark contrast between the two stands. Additionally, the speaker employs the repetition of the word '*tidak ada*' (nothing) to underscore the dearth of facilities in the east stand.

Additionally, the speaker utilizes vivid and emotive language to describe the conditions of the eastern stands, including '*beralaskan tanah*' (on the ground) and '*makan seadanya*' (eating rough food). This serves to reinforce the argument that there is an inequality of facilities between the two stands. Another reinforcing verbal expression is the use of the word '*weh*' as an interjection to emphasize the calls of people from the western stands to the eastern stands.

In the context of this discourse, the speaker attempts to highlight the disparity in facilities and treatment between the east and the west stand. He employs straightforward and emotionally charged language to reinforce his argument. The use of the word '*tapi*' (but) and the repetition of '*tidak ada*' (nothing) demonstrate the speaker's attempt to accentuate the contrast and strengthen his assertion. Additionally, the speaker employs narrative techniques to describe the condition of the eastern stands in a more vivid manner.

The objective is to elicit empathy and support from listeners for the plight of the audience in the east stand. Another persuasive verbal technique employed is the use of the word '*weh*', which underscores the speaker's appeal to people from the western stands to extend assistance to those in the east stand.

Ultimately, this discourse reflects the social and economic disparities that exist within society.

The disparity in amenities and treatment between the eastern stands (eastern Indonesia, such as NTT, Papua) and the western stands (western Indonesia, such as Jawa, Sumatra) can be viewed as a metaphor for the societal inequality that exists (Hidayati & Permana, 2022; Ramadanti, Agussalim, & Suhab, 2023). The speaker attempts to voice injustice and advocate for the rights of marginalized groups represented by the audience in the east stand. This discourse also implies the ideology of social justice that the speaker is attempting to convey. He rejects the discrimination and inequality of facilities that occur in society. The speaker's use of verbal reinforcement is an attempt to strengthen the argument and build solidarity in the pursuit of social justice.

Nonverbal expressions play a crucial role in reinforcing verbal messages and shaping opinions (Data 12). They can reveal the speaker's power relations and social status, such as dominant body language and strong eye contact. Understanding these expressions can reveal broader power dynamics in social interaction and communication, making them essential in critical discourse analysis.

#### **Data (12)**

*"Pemerintah itu memberi sertifikasi pada guru-guru tua. Tapi, mereka menuntut agar guru-guru ini bisa kreatif. Sekarang pertanyaannya, apa yang bisa kita tingkatkan dari mereka yang lagi 1-2 tahun pensiun? Yang bisa ditingkatkan tinggal amal dan ibadah saja."* (SUC Abdur (UAS)- *Mama Saya Guru, tapi Ujian Online Kompetensi Tak Pernah Lulus*; Minutes 01:37)

"The government is giving certification to old teachers. But they demand that these teachers be creative. Now the question is, what can we improve in those who are 1-2 years away from retirement? The only things that can be improved are their charity and worship."

In Data (12), there is a verbal expression that critiques the government's policy regarding teacher certification and demands for creativity from older teachers nearing retirement age. The speaker uses rhetorical questioning to highlight the perceived absurdity of the situation, stating "*Sekarang pertanyaannya, apa yang bisa kita tingkatkan dari mereka yang lagi 1-2 tahun pensiun? Yang bisa ditingkatkan tinggal amal dan ibadah saja.*" (Now the question is, what can we improve in those who are 1-2 years away from retirement? The only things that can be improved are their charity and worship.)

The use of rhetorical questioning and the sarcastic tone convey the speaker's rejection of the government's demands on older teachers. The speaker implies that it is unreasonable to expect significant improvements in creativity or skills from teachers so close to retirement age. Instead, the speaker suggests that the focus for these teachers should be on spiritual matters like charity and worship rather than professional development.

This verbal expression demonstrates the speaker's

attempt to critique and reject the government's policy through the use of sarcasm and rhetorical questioning. The speaker positions themselves in opposition to the perceived unreasonable demands placed on older teachers, asserting their perspective on what should be prioritized for this group of educators.

The choice of words like *"apa yang bisa kita tingkatkan dari mereka yang lagi 1-2 tahun pensiun?"* (what can we improve in those who are 1-2 years away from retirement?) and the dismissive statement *"Yang bisa ditingkatkan tinggal amal dan ibadah saja"* (The only things that can be improved are their charity and worship) convey a sense of rejection and disagreement with the government's stance. The speaker appears to be challenging the power dynamics at play, where the government imposes demands that the speaker deems unrealistic or inappropriate for the specific circumstances of older, soon-to-retire teachers.

Overall, this data reflects the speaker's efforts to verbally reject and critique a government policy through the use of sarcasm, rhetorical questioning, and dismissive language. The speaker attempts to assert their perspective and challenge the power dynamics at play, rejecting the demands placed on older teachers nearing retirement age.

Verbal expressions of rejection are crucial in CDA as they express disagreement or rejection of an idea, action, or situation. These expressions can be analyzed to understand how power, domination, and inequality are reproduced in social interactions. CDA considers the social, political, and ideological context, considering factors like the speaker and receiver's social status, power relationship, and prevailing norms. Verbal expressions of rejection are essential indicators of language use for negotiating identity, maintaining autonomy, and challenging power structures. It can be seen in Data (13).

### Data (13)

*"Kalau itu beringin di sebelah bagaimana?"*

*"Weh itu beringin jangan dipotong, backingan-nya kuat itu."*

(SUC Abdur Roasting Dzawin, *Bilang Kalo Pintar Ngaji tapi Jarang Solat*; Minutes 07:53)

("What about that banyan tree over there?")

("Oh, that banyan tree shouldn't be cut down, its roots/origins are deeply entrenched.")

In Data (13), there is an expression of verbal rejection expressed through the sentence *"Weh itu beringin jangan dipotong, backingan-nya kuat itu"* (Oh, that banyan tree should not be cut down, its roots/origins are deeply entrenched).

The use of the word *'weh'* as an interjection demonstrates emphasis on rejection. Additionally, the use of the prohibition sentence *'jangan dipotong'* (should not be cut down) emphasizes the speaker's rejection of the idea of cutting down the banyan tree. The speaker also provides a rationale for their refusal by stating *'backingan-nya kuat itu'* (its roots/origins

are deeply entrenched).

The use of the word *'backingan'*, which means support or strength, indicates that the banyan tree is of greater value than can be easily dismissed. Overall, the verbal expression of rejection in this data demonstrates the speaker's efforts to maintain the existence of the banyan tree, which is considered important.

In the context of this discourse, the speaker attempts to reject the idea of cutting down the banyan tree mentioned by the interlocutor. They employ firm and straightforward language to express their rejection. The choice of the word *'weh'* and the prohibition sentence *'jangan dipotong'* (should not be cut down) demonstrate the speaker's efforts to emphasize rejection while maintaining the existence of the banyan tree.

This discourse reflects power relations between speakers and interlocutors. By rejecting the interlocutor's proposal to cut down the banyan tree, the speaker demonstrates an attempt to maintain control over decisions related to the surrounding environment.

This can be attributed to the assumption that banyan trees possess significant cultural or ecological value for the local community. This discourse also suggests an ideology of conservatism that the speaker is attempting to uphold. They reject any alterations or interventions to the natural environment, such as the banyan tree, which is considered culturally significant. The verbal expression of rejection articulated by the speaker is an attempt to maintain existing ideologies and power relations.

Symbolic expressions in discourse carry deeper meanings and reflect societal values, beliefs, and ideologies. These expressions are used to influence power relations, maintain social structures, and challenge existing structures. CDA analyzes hidden meanings, power relations, ideology, social identity, and cultural and social contexts. Symbolic expressions are not just aesthetic or rhetorical elements but integral to discourse production and reception, influencing social reality and revealing deeper layers of meaning. Understanding the social and political implications of symbolic expressions is crucial in CDA. It shows in Data (14).

### Data (14)

*"Teman-teman. Di NTT sekalipun, belajar Sasando itu tidak masuk dalam kurikulum. Tidak masuk. Sedikit lagi masuk museum itu. Iya. Saya takutnya ini lama kelamaan Sasando itu hanya tinggal cerita."* (SUC Abdur- *Saya Takut Sasando Hanya Tinggal Cerita*; Minutes 00:34)

("Guys. Even in East Nusa Tenggara, learning the Sasando (a traditional stringed instrument) is not part of the curriculum. It's not included. It's on the verge of becoming a relic in a museum. Yes, I'm afraid that over time, the Sasando will become merely a story.")

The metaphor *'Sedikit lagi masuk museum itu'* (It is on the verge of becoming a relic in a museum)

used by the speaker to describe the status of learning *Sasando* in the curriculum is a symbolic expression that carries a deeper meaning. On the surface, it suggests that *Sasando* is becoming marginalized and treated like an artifact of the past. However, this metaphor also reflects an underlying ideology that values traditional culture. The speaker positions themselves as concerned about the potential loss of this cultural tradition.

Contextually interpreted, the speaker is drawing attention to the education system's failure to preserve *Sasando*, a symbol of local identity in East Nusa Tenggara. The use of emotive language, such as '*Saya takut*' (I'm afraid) and the repetition of '*masuk*' (enter), creates a sense of urgency and attempts to foster solidarity with the audience.

The discourse elucidates the social implications of the aforementioned power dynamic, wherein dominant forces, represented by the education curriculum, are displacing and devaluing local culture. The speaker challenges this by asserting the importance of *Sasando* and lamenting its marginalization. This reflects a struggle over cultural identity and the preservation of tradition in the face of globalization and homogenization (Natunis, 2019). The symbolic representation of *Sasando* as a museum piece symbolizes the speaker's concern that this cultural heritage will be lost if action is not taken. In conclusion, the speaker's use of symbolic language reveals an implicit ideology that values local tradition, concern over its displacement by dominant forces, and a call to action to preserve cultural identity. Critical discourse analysis allows people to unpack these more profound layers of meaning and power relations embedded in the symbolic expressions of the text.

## CONCLUSIONS

The research has shown that in Indonesia, stand-up comedy, particularly through the performances of Abdur Arsyad, serves as a powerful medium for social criticism. By employing critical discourse analysis, the research reveals that comedians like Arsyad use their platforms to articulate, negotiate, and question social power structures and ideologies. The analysis focuses on the experiential, relational, and expressive values within Arsyad's performances, highlighting how he uses language to represent social practices, construct social relationships, and express subjective attitudes.

Arsyad's use of metaphors and rhetorical devices allows him to address sensitive and taboo topics, such as educational inequality, political corruption, and social justice, in a manner that is both engaging and thought-provoking. For instance, his critique of the Indonesian tax policy on educational goods versus services employs analogies that make complex issues more relatable and understandable to his audience. Similarly, his portrayal of the struggles faced by teachers in remote areas underscores the dedication and sacrifice of these educators, fostering empathy and

solidarity among listeners.

The research also demonstrates that comedy, through its unique blend of humor and critique, can bring to light issues of injustice and inequality without overtly provoking conflict. This subtle approach not only maintains audience engagement but also promotes a deeper understanding of the topics discussed. Arsyad's performances reflect and influence power dynamics in society, encouraging public conversations and inspiring audiences to question accepted norms and ideals.

In conclusion, the research suggests that stand-up comedy in Indonesia is not merely a form of entertainment but a democratic expression that facilitates social criticism and promotes social change. By engaging audiences in an accessible and entertaining manner, comedians like Abdur Arsyad contribute to critical discourse and the potential for societal transformation. Future research could further explore the impact of different comedic styles and genres on audience reception and understanding of social issues, as well as the role of comedy in various cultural contexts to assess its effectiveness in addressing specific societal challenges.

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