

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents a comprehensive overview of the study. It consists of the background, formulation of the problem, operational definitions, aim of the study, and significance of the study.

#### **A. Background of Study**

Education has become a critical focus of public discourse in Indonesia, particularly during President Jokowi's administration, where various policy changes have sparked significant debate and scrutiny. Under Jokowi's leadership, the Indonesian education system has undergone substantial reforms, including curriculum modifications, budget reallocations, and structural changes aimed at improving educational quality and access (Romlah et al., 2023). These reforms have generated intense public discussion in the media, with news outlets employing various argumentative strategies and linguistic choices to frame educational policies. According to Tintigon et al. (2023), these media representations range from overt criticism to subtle policy endorsements, reflecting complex patterns of argumentation in public discourse about educational reform.

Although there is extensive research on educational policy in Indonesia, there remains a significant gap in understanding how media outlets construct and articulate arguments about education policies during the Jokowi era. Although studies have examined various aspects of Indonesian education reform (Afifah, 2017; Romlah et al., 2023), remarkably few have specifically analyzed the argumentative structures and linguistic strategies used in media discourse about these policies. This gap is particularly significant given that media outlets often employ various rhetorical devices to either intensify or mitigate their arguments about educational policies. Furthermore, as Freedman (2006) and more recently Arreortúa (2016) note, understanding how arguments are constructed and

articulated in media coverage is crucial for comprehending how educational policies are communicated and interpreted in the public sphere.

Within this context of policy discourse, the news media play a pivotal role in shaping public perception through both explicit and implicit argumentation about educational policies. According to Crow and Lawlor (2016), media outlets employ various argumentative strategies, ranging from overt statements to subtle implications, in their coverage of policy initiatives. In the Indonesian context, these arguments are often intensified through strong language and emphatic assertions or mitigated through hedging and qualification. Notably, as Taylor (2004) and Jansky (2023) demonstrate, the way media sources articulate their arguments, whether through direct criticism, subtle suggestions, or measured analysis, significantly impacts how the public understands and responds to educational policies.

To understand these complex patterns of media representation, Critical Discourse Analysis provides valuable insights into how arguments about educational policies are constructed and articulated in media coverage. Wodak and Meyer (2016) emphasize the importance of examining not just what arguments are made, but how they are expressed through specific linguistic choices and rhetorical strategies. The Discourse Historical Approach (DHA), as outlined by Wodak (2011) and developed by Mullet (2018), offers a particularly relevant framework for analyzing both the content of arguments and the ways they are intensified or mitigated in media communications. This approach enables researchers to examine how media outlets use various linguistic devices to strengthen or soften their arguments about educational policies.

Based on these theoretical and practical considerations, this study aims to examine how Indonesian online news media construct and articulate arguments about educational policies during President Jokowi's administration through a critical discourse analysis approach. By employing the Discourse Historical Approach, this research will analyze both the explicit and implicit arguments present in media coverage, as well as the linguistic strategies used to intensify or mitigate these arguments. The study will focus specifically on analyzing articles from prominent Indonesian online news platforms, examining their argumentative

structures and rhetorical devices. This analysis will contribute to a deeper understanding of how media discourse shapes public perception of educational policies in Indonesia, with particular attention to the ways arguments are constructed and modulated in news coverage.

## **B. Formulation of the Problem**

Based on the background above, this research will answer the following questions:

1. What arguments are employed in the discourse?
2. Are the respective utterances articulated overtly? Are they intensified or mitigated?

## **C. Operational Definitions**

To avoid misinterpretation, the following are the operational definitions of key terms used in this study:

- 1. Media Framing** : The process of selecting, emphasizing, and presenting aspects of education policies in news coverage, including linguistic choices, metaphors, argumentative structures, source selection, and thematic emphasis in digital news platforms.
- 2. Educational Policy** : Official decisions, regulations, and programs implemented related to education in Indonesia during the Jokowi administration (2014-2024), encompassing curriculum changes, budget allocations, and educational reform initiatives as reported in selected online news articles.
- 3. Jokowi Era** : The Jokowi Era refers to the period when Joko Widodo served as President of Indonesia, starting from October 20, 2014, and continuing through his second term, which is set to end on October 20, 2024. This timeframe is used in research to provide a clear and concise analysis of his

administration's impact on the education sector, without extending the scope unnecessarily.

- 4. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)** : It is an approach of analysis that correlates the language with social context. In this proposal, using discourse historical approach as an analytical approach within CDA framework that examines how language use reflects and shapes social context through systematic analysis of texts' linguistic features, argumentation strategies, and historical-political contexts, as developed by Wodak (2015).

Specific linguistic and rhetorical tools used to construct meaning in news texts, including referential strategies (how objects/actors are named), predication strategies (what qualities are attributed), argumentation strategies (how claims are justified), perspectivization (from what point of view expressions are made), and intensifying/mitigation strategies.

#### **D. Aim of the Study**

This study aims to achieve the following:

1. To analyze the argumentative patterns employed by Indonesian online news media in framing education policies during President Jokowi's administration (2014-2024), specifically focusing on how arguments about these policies are constructed within media discourse.
2. To examine the linguistic strategies used in the media, including whether utterances are articulated overtly, and how they are intensified or mitigated in news coverage, using Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach within the Critical Discourse Analysis framework.

## **E. Significances of the Study**

### **1. Theoretical Uses**

This study contributes to the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly by applying Wodak's Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) in the Indonesian media context. It expands the theoretical application of argumentation and intensification/mitigation strategies to understand how education policy discourse is constructed and delivered in the press. By analysing topoi, transitivity, and rhetorical framing in media texts, the study offers a model for examining how power, ideology, and political context shape public discourse around policy.

### **2. Practical Uses**

The findings provide insight into how media outlets, specifically Tempo.co and The Jakarta Post frame educational reforms under different political moments. The analysis helps readers and stakeholders understand the role of media in shaping public perception, highlighting that news reporting is not neutral but ideologically constructed. This can serve as a reference for educators, media professionals, and policy communicators in developing more transparent and critical media literacy practices related to educational discourse.

### **3. Empirical Uses**

This study can serve as a reference for future research that examines media framing and language use in political or educational contexts. By applying the Discourse Historical Approach to Indonesian media, it offers an empirical model for analysing how discourse strategies reflect institutional roles, ideological positioning, and sociopolitical change. It may also benefit researchers interested in combining Critical Discourse Analysis with media studies or policy discourse.