

## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a wide-ranging description 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 The Study**

In educational reform, it is often not just the content of policies that are communicated but the way such policy issues have been presented to the public. The language in public utterances by such a key figure informs also persuades and shapes public perception (Paul, 2016).

However, one problematic issue that arises in this context is how educational policies, such as *Merdeka Belajar*, are framed and justified through language. Although the *Merdeka Belajar* policy is widely promoted as a transformative reform, there is still a gap in understanding how Nadiem Makarim's choice of language builds and promotes a particular ideology while strengthening his authority. He, the minister of culture and education who designed the *Merdeka Belajar* policy, used public statements to communicate this policy to various stakeholders. The way he frames *Merdeka Belajar* reflects the broader ideological positions and power relations that influence the way the policy is implemented throughout Indonesia's education system (Soedijarto, 2009). In addition, the use of language plays an important role in shaping how the policy is perceived, understood, and adopted by students, educators, and society alike (Moreno, 2011), and it has a direct impact on their acceptance and implementation (Mulderriq, 2009 ; Tollefson, 2015). The reason for focusing on the *Merdeka Belajar* policy arose because there were several problematic issues in how the policy was communicated and accepted by the community (Putra et al., 2022). This is important considering the need for the wider community to increase awareness of multiperspectives in interpreting an education policy (Whitty, 2002).

Without this awareness, of course, the community often accepts the policy without criticizing the power relations and ideological foundations behind the policy.

In the previous studies, Nadiem Makarim's public statements were analyzed focusing on rhetorical strategies and how these strategies influenced the acceptance of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. For example, Obos et al. (2022) analyzed Nadiem's speech on National Education Day which identified the use of persuasive language and rhetorical devices. Additionally, Azizah & Putra (2024) compared the rhetorical strategies of Nadiem Makarim and Muhadjir Effendi which showed how their speeches used different techniques to engage the public. As a result, Nadiem Makarim's speech was considered more dynamic and attractive to the younger generation compared to Muhadjir Effendi. However, the researchers above only examined the linguistic characteristics on the surface without delving deeper into the ideology and power structures embedded in Nadiem Makarim's discourse. This limited perspective ignores how the language used by Nadiem serves to emphasize and legitimize his ideological stance on education reform, especially regarding power relations in the education system in Indonesia.

This reresearch is important because education policies are constructed and legitimized through language. In the context of Indonesian education, especially the *Merdeka Belajar* policy, language plays an important role in shaping public understanding, acceptance, even rejection. By analyzing how Nadiem Makarim as a key policy maker, this study reveals how discourse contributes to the formation of educational ideology and the distribution of power. Therefore, this study uses the Critical Discourse Analysis framework to uncover the socio-political and socio-cultural meanings of Nadiem Makarim's public discourse.

This study aims to explore how Nadiem Makarim's public statement on *Merdeka Belajar* policy in *Tempo* described through Fairclough's Three-Dimensional model. Nadiem Makarim uses his public statements to build

ideology and power relations in promoting the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. Using Critical Discourse Analysis, this study analyzes how language is used to legitimize policies and influence public acceptance (Winton, 2013). In more depth, this study highlights how linguistic elements are used to promote certain beliefs and how this aligns the existing power structures in the education system in Indonesia (Cummins, 1997).

## **B. Formulation of The Problem**

How is the news coverage of Nadiem Makarim's public statement on *Merdeka Belajar* policy in Tempo described through Fairclough Three-Dimensional model?

## **C. Operational Definitions**

To avoid misinterpretation of this research, here are the operational definitions of each keyword:

### **1. Fairclough Three-Dimensional Model**

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional model in this study is a comprehensive framework for analyzing discourse that connects language to social practices. Specifically, the model consists of three interrelated dimensions. Namely Descripton (Text analysis), Interpretation (Processing analysis), and Explanation (Social analysis).

### **2. Nadiem Makarim's Public Statement in Tempo**

Nadiem Makarim's public statements serve as a medium to communicate the ideology and power contained in the news Tempo regarding *Merdeka Belajar* policy. The language used emphasizes empowerment and reform in framing the policy as a transformative initiative aimed at building public trust and legitimizing the policy.

### **3. Merdeka Belajar Policy**

*Merdeka Belajar* is an education policy initiated by Nadiem Makarim as the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of

the Republic of Indonesia, in 2019. Its main objective is to provide greater freedom to students, teachers, and schools to focus on developing basic competencies and character education.

#### **4. Ideology in Merdeka Belajar**

Ideology refers to a set of values and beliefs communicated through Nadiem Makarim's public statements regarding the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. Including how language is used to promote educational ideologies such as independence, flexibility within the education system.

#### **5. Power Relation in *Merdeka Belajar***

Power relations are defined as the dynamics of control and authority reflected in Nadiem Makarim's public statements particularly about educational decision-making and autonomy regarding *Merdeka Belajar*. In this study, power is examined through a discourse perspective, where language is a means to strengthen authority.

### **D. Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that connects language with social context that focuses on how ideology, power and social structures are reinforced through discourse. In the context of this research, CDA is used to analyze the representation of ideology and power relations in Nadiem Makarim's public statements regarding the *Merdeka Belajar* policy.

### **E. Aim of the Study**

To investigate how is Fairclough's Three-Dimensional model describing the news of Nadiem Makarim's public statement on *Merdeka Belajar* policy in Tempo.

## **F. Significances of the Study**

### **1. Theoretical Significance**

Theoretically, this research will add to knowledge about how language functions as a tool to advance ideology and strengthen power in public discourse on CDA in the context of education policy.

### **2. Practical Significance**

Practically, this research provides information to policy makers, educators, and the public on how language can be used effectively to promote and legitimize educational reforms such as the *Merdeka Belajar* policy.

### **3. Empirical Significance**

Empirically, this study provides an analysis of how Nadiem Makarim's public statements on *Merdeka Belajar* policy in *Tempo* reflect the ideology and power relations and is useful as a basis for future research on the discourse of education reform in Indonesia, as well as the development of the field of discourse analysis in the context of education.