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The Power of Visual Communication: Analyzing Visual Multimodal Cybertext Contexts in Indonesian Cyber Pragmatics

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A B S T R A C T

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly influenced the field of linguistics, particularly pragmatics, by expanding its scope from traditional intra-linguistic factors to encompass extralinguistic contexts such as social, cultural, situational, and cyber dimensions. This shift has ushered in functionalistic and post-functionalistic approaches in Indonesia, broadening the field to include semantic, cultural, cognitive, and cyber pragmatics. This study investigates how visual multimodal cybertext contexts in Indonesian digital media affect the interpretation of speech intent. This research draws on five selected visual, multimodal text excerpts from social media collected through free-flowing listening and note-taking, and it employs distributional and extralinguistic analysis methods. The findings reveal three primary roles of visual elements in cybertext: (1) typographic visuals that clarify background context for intended meaning, (2) visual icons that aid in contextual explanation, and (3) illustrative visuals that enhance understanding of the communicated message. These visual components are essential in facilitating accurate interpretation and engagement with speech acts in digital spaces. Addressing the gaps in understanding these elements can enhance communication strategies in Indonesian digital media, supporting clearer interaction and comprehension in a multicultural digital environment. This research contributes to the evolving field of cyber pragmatics by demonstrating the need for effective multimodal approaches to digital communication, especially in diverse sociocultural settings.

I. INTRODUCTION

Post-functional linguistic development demands the study of linguistics and its related fields as pragmatically different from previous studies. Rather than focusing on social, societal, cultural, and situational contexts as manifestations of conventional extralinguistic contexts, post-functional pragmatic studies demand new contexts of a virtual nature (Rahardi, 2020b; Wälti et al., 2019). The virtual context has a cybertext dimension and a multimodal perspective. Therefore, such a context is also called a cybertext context (Rahardi

et al., 2024). It is a virtual dimension in that aspects not yet present in a conventional extra-linguistic context must be reached in this study (Vedantam et al., 2017; Widdowson, 2006). Aspects of social, societal, cultural, and situational contexts have shifted due to technological developments. The speaker and partner aspect and the other side aspect of the speaker are not always visible in a virtual cybertext-based context. Similarly, the dimension of space and time, one of the main considerations of pragmatic studies based on conventional contexts, is now becoming borderless (Streeck, 1984). The context aspect of the so-called supreme meaning

or purpose is now shifting into an aspect that is no longer monofascient but multifaceted.

In one instance, today's communication deals with a communication component that is no longer one-on-one, as in linguistic formalism and linguistic functionalism. Thus, it is clear that context studies in linguistics are shifting due to the changing times and technological developments. The conventional context that was originally used as a fundamental tool in understanding the speaker's meaning in communicating, involving social, societal, cultural, and situational aspects, is no longer sufficient to express the meaning in social media texts (Barbulet, 2013; Rahardi, 2020a; Shubhra & Krishna, 2024). For example, the speech of social-political hatred that has been spreading lately would be too complicated and complex if the conception of the meaning were to be replaced only by the conventional context (Kartika et al., 2023). In other words, substituting conventional contexts must be accompanied by a new type of context:ulti-modality-dimensional cybertext and virtual (Guo, 2017; Rowsell, 2013; (Rahardi, 2022; Rahardi et al., 2024a). Forcing the application of conventional contexts alone to embody the texts in social media, studying the substance of cyber pragmatics will present a downturn in digestion (Perumal et al., 2024; Laaguid, 2023). The social-political conflict that has recently been present in many political events in Indonesia, particularly in the context of media reporting and public discourse, is indeed the result of the exaggeration of the conventional context that is not mixed with the virtual context of the cybertext as mentioned earlier (Wodak, 1995). Based on that fact, this research question is formulated as follows: (1) What are the features of the visual, multimodal cybertext context as the backbone of meaning determination in cyber pragmatics? (2) What is the role of each feature of the visual, multimodal cybertext context in cyber pragmatics? In line with the problem formula, this study aims to describe the nature and role of the features of the context of visual, multimodal cybertext as the backbone of meaning determination in cyber pragmatics. This research will be very useful in providing a theoretical reference to linguistic-pragmatic researchers, especially those focusing on the latest field of pragmatics called cyber pragmatics. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for effectively navigating the evolving landscape of digital communication, particularly

in Indonesia, where media plays a pivotal role in shaping public opinion and political discourse (Rahardi et al., 2024b).

As a theoretical framework, it is necessary to submit that cyber pragmatics is understood as the study of the speaker's meaning with the object of language study on the Internet (Faisol & Rahmat, 2021). Hence, the source of the data and the data for this research is the Internet. Cyberpragmatics, as a new branch of pragmatism, overlaps with the relevance theory in communication developed by Wilson & Sperber. There was general pragmatism before cyber pragmatics evolved due to the advances in information technology, digital technology, and AI. General pragmatism studies pragmatic phenomena of universal normative dimensions (Leech, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Rahardi, 2019). Essentially, general pragmatism develops principles based on Western pragmatic studies. This is because the language, culture, and societies underlying the compression of these theories are all Western-based. However, the Western language and culture base in expressing the speaker's meaning does not immediately apply to all societies. Indonesian society, for example, is a very large society with many tribes, languages, and cultures, and it has principles and norms of communication that are not the same as those commonly used by Western societies. More specifically, the principle of cooperation and linguistic excentricity, with all kinds of maxims, are not immediately applicable in Indonesian society (Rahardi, 2017, 2022). In other words, the universality of these Western theories has proved to conflict with the realities of Indonesian society (Nugroho et al., 2024).

In the context of Indonesian media, this disparity becomes particularly evident. Indonesian media often navigates a complex landscape of diverse cultural norms and communication styles, which can challenge the applicability of Western-based pragmatic theories. The Indonesian media's approach to reporting, audience engagement, and interpretation of speech acts must consider these unique cultural and linguistic nuances (Rahardi, 2019, 2023). Thus, the study of cyber pragmatics in Indonesia must adapt to these distinct characteristics to effectively understand and interpret communication within the country's diverse digital landscape. Something similar happens in some other societies. Theories, norms,

and laws in the Western world do not automatically apply equally in societies with specific cultures. Based on that fact, Eastern countries such as China, Japan, Korea, and Indonesia have undertaken culturally-specific pragmatic studies to examine meaning. Based on that fact, around the early 2000s, a lot of culturally specific pragmatic research was carried out in academic studies and research projects. In short, increasingly culturally specific pragmatic studies began the development of pragmatics towards cyber pragmatics (Yus, 2011; Rahardi et al., 2023).

The evolving study perspective is bimodality, which in turn shifts to multimodality. From the perspective of bimodality, there are two major dimensions to consider in language research: the language itself and its social aspects, horizontal and vertical (Rahardi, 2020). The involvement of social aspects is what, in the future, gives rise to many theories of language functions. The theory of language functions also shifts backward, focusing on communicative functions, then shifts to functions that initiate and strengthen interaction and functions that strengthen the harmony of relationships. In defining linguistic pragmatism's functions, context's role is enormous. The conventional context that has shifted into the virtual context is manifested in the multi-modality-perspective cybertext context. The multimodal theory affirms that there are five aspects that speakers, speaker partners, and other speaker followers should consider in embracing texts on social media. These five aspects are presented sequentially: visual, spatial, aural, gestural, and linguistic (Kress, 2009, 2015). The visual aspect occupies the most dominant and central role among the five aspects of multimodality. Other aspects of multimodality also play an important role, but not as high as the visual aspect.

In studies that have been conducted, visual aspects in the context of cybertexts are increasingly detailed in various forms, such as colors, shapes, graphics, emoji symbols, or emoticons. Within multimodality, color is crucial as it significantly influences how information is communicated and interpreted (Bezemer & Kress, 2016; Rosdiana et al., 2023). In the context of Indonesian media, these multimodal aspects are vital. Indonesian media must navigate a diverse cultural and linguistic landscape, which requires a more nuanced approach to multimodal communication. Visual elements

such as colors and symbols can carry different connotations across various Indonesian cultures, making it essential for media practitioners to understand and apply these elements thoughtfully. Such an understanding can help reduce miscommunication and enhance the clarity and impact of messages in Indonesia's multicultural society. Moreover, the growing use of social media in Indonesia underscores the importance of cyber pragmatics in analyzing and interpreting digital communication, especially in light of the country's diverse and complex cultural landscape. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) discuss several facets of color within multimodal communication: (1) **Color perception** refers to how viewers understand and interpret specific colors. In multimodal contexts, colors can carry emotional significance or serve as cultural representations within a society (Mujiyanto & Fitriati, 2019). For instance, red often signals urgency or passion in many cultures, while blue conveys tranquility or trust. This is just one layer of the complex role color plays in multimodality. (2) **Color symbolism** examines the cultural meanings attributed to colors in specific communities. For example, white symbolizes purity in Western societies but represents mourning in certain Eastern traditions. While related to color perception, this aspect explores how colors act as cultural symbols in different contexts. (3) **Color contrast and harmony** affect readability and user engagement within multimodal texts. By contrasting or harmonizing colors, designers can highlight key information or direct the audience's attention (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). A deep understanding of how visual elements and colors function in the cultural context of Indonesia is crucial for content creators, especially in social media. With the rapid growth of technology and the ways we communicate digitally, understanding the nuances of colors and symbols in multimodal communication will be increasingly significant in determining how effectively messages are received by the diverse society (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Additionally, graphic layout plays a major role in multimodality, aiding information organization and clarity. Effective layout arranges visual elements like text, images, and graphics to create a coherent visual structure, facilitating comprehension (Chen & Wang, 2016; Harwath et al., 2016).

Furthermore, as the theoretical framework in this study, it is necessary to explain that the virtual

context of the cybertexts has five dimensions of the context, namely the visual, spatial, aural, gestural, and linguistic contexts. Among the various aspects of communication mentioned above, the visual aspect plays the most dominant role in interpreting meaning. The other aspects do not dominate the visual aspects as the means of meaning in texts. Even the linguistic aspects, which played the most predominant role in the era of formalism, now, in the age of post-functionalism, occupy only one-fifth of the total element of communication to be observed. This reality differs from the era of functionalism, which considers language as half of the overall aspect of communication. The change not only occurred in the contextual aspects as mentioned earlier, but the perspective of multimodality also brought about a change from the revision of language as a social semiotic characterized by the emergence of “functional grammar” by Halliday and in the era of post-functionalism that change towards the “visual grammar”, as proposed by Kress & Leeuwen. (Leeuwen, 2005). In the post-functionalism era, languages were seen as social semiotic symbols and visual devices. In the past, non-human dimensions were primarily ruled out, but in today’s era of linguistic post-functionalism, the absolute non-humane dimensions must be involved in communication. Linguistics-pragmatics in the era of post-functional linguistics cannot rule out the dimensions of information technology, digital technology, and cybersecurity; even recently, there has been much artificial interaction between languages and AI. (Higgins, 2014; Rahardi, 2021). All the concepts and theories presented in front are placed based on a reference framework and a knife analysis in research.

II. METHODS

This study employs a descriptive-qualitative research methodology, focusing on analyzing the influence of visual, multimodal cybertext features on the contextual background of textual meaning. The primary data comprises carefully selected text excerpts from the Internet, representing various relevant visual, multimodal cybertext contexts (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2006). The study deliberately limits the data set to 5 visual multimedia texts to facilitate a thorough analysis. In Indonesia’s media landscape, the primary data sources are drawn from various social media platforms, ensuring diversity and relevance in content selection throughout

the study period. The data collection method is succinct, particularly utilizing concise discourse and a recording technique to capture significant information from each text fragment. The data analysis process employs distribution methods to infer the linguistic dimensions embedded within the texts, drawing on methodologies outlined by Kate Beeching (2015) and Pflaeging et al. (2021). Furthermore, extra-linguistic methods are applied to elucidate the pragmatic meaning dimensions implied within the text. The analytical measures include identification, classification, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of results, alongside systematic data interpretation. Through a meticulous and comprehensive approach, the study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how visual multimodal cybertext context’s features shape the text’s meaning and syntactical background.

III. RESULTS

This study has identified several functions of visual cybertext context elements in determining the background alignment of meaning, albeit with limited research data. The roles of implicit visual text context elements are delineated as follows: Visual typographical elements emphasize the covert delivery of meaning. Visual typography acts as a tool to clarify the delivery of significance subtly. Visual typography serves as a preview of the purpose behind the text. Visual icons function as condensed representations of reasoning. Visual illustrations affirm the intent behind the text discreetly. In the Indonesian media landscape, these findings may shed light on the strategic use of visual elements in digital content creation, especially considering the prevalence of visual-based communication platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. Understanding the nuanced roles of visual elements can aid content creators in crafting messages that resonate effectively with their target audience, considering Indonesia’s diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Visual Typography as an Emphasizing Role of the Background of Conveying Intent

The context of cybertext cannot be separated from the dimensions of multimodality studies. The dimensions of multimodality include visual, aural, gestural, spatial, and environmental aspects. From the author’s research, the multimodality aspect in

the context of cybertext is dominant in conveying the intention of speech through text, which is the visual aspect. The replacement of the visual aspect cannot be separated from the linguistic dimension because even though the aspect only occupies 1/5 of the total dimension in multimodality, the main substance of the meaning of a speech is always conveyed through the device of human natural language. The typographic element in the visual aspect plays a significant role in determining the meaning of speech.



Fig. 1. Data1/VGPM1: Typography Visuals That Emphasize the Role of Background
(Source: https://www.instagram.com/reel/C3TEBy_oHyr/?igsh=dWhxcHlhdnIwMDUy)

In the provided data, the visual element of typography takes center stage, showcasing a specific message attributed to Anies Baswedan, framed within a red background with white typography. This content of the text itself, “*Bener Apa kata Anies, Mari terlibat..., Mari kita tentukan pilihan..., Mari kita pastikan..., Kita memilih nomor 2*” (What exactly did Anies say, Let’s get involved..., Let’s make a choice..., Let’s make sure..., We voted number 2”), invokes a call-to-action structure. This message aims to establish a shared identity and a communal resolve among the audience. By using first-person plural pronouns like “*kita*” (we), it positions the reader as part of a larger collective effort, reinforcing a sense of unity and shared purpose. The rhetorical structure in this context relies heavily on familiarity and

inclusivity, common persuasive strategies used in political communication, especially during campaign periods. By employing these strategies, the campaign seeks to engage a broad audience by emphasizing shared values and a sense of connection. The consistent use of imagery—particularly Anies Baswedan’s illustration, where he is portrayed with a smile—further strengthens this connection. The smile is a visual cue portraying Anies as approachable, trustworthy, and likable. These subtle visual cues are strategically designed to influence the viewer’s perception, making the candidate appear more relatable and in tune with the audience’s sentiments.

An interesting layer is added through the inclusion of playful or mocking emoticons scattered throughout the text. These emoticons serve a dual purpose: first, they inject a sense of irony or ambiguity into the message, and second, they invite the audience to question the sincerity of the political message. The emoticons suggest that there might be a satirical undercurrent in the message, prompting the audience to consider the possibility of a more nuanced or even critical viewpoint. This approach appeals to a subset of the audience that might be more politically skeptical or cynical, allowing the campaign to subtly engage with viewers who might question the intentions behind the message. These visual and typographic choices are not unusual in the broader context of Indonesian media. Political campaigns frequently use these strategies to shape public opinion, and elements like color schemes, visual emphasis, and inclusivity are often employed to appeal to voters. The deliberate use of these visual cues reflects the deep connection between media design and the cultural context in which the message is communicated. In this case, shared cultural symbols, familiar imagery, and emotional appeals are leveraged to strengthen the political narrative.

The socio-political context is essential to understanding the impact of this rhetoric. Viewers interpret these visual elements through their own cultural and political lenses, which can significantly alter how the message is received. Those who align with the presented political stance may perceive these elements as reinforcing their values. At the same time, those who are more skeptical may interpret the message with a sense of irony or critique. Ultimately, this strategy underscores the power of visual rhetoric in political communication. By

combining iconic imagery, typographic emphasis, and culturally resonant cues, political campaigns can communicate complex ideas efficiently and persuasively, influencing how voters view the candidate and the political narrative.

It's worth noting that misunderstandings and misinterpretations are not uncommon, particularly due to variations in contextual comprehension, as evidenced by historical socio-political incidents. Therefore, recognizing the contextual intricacies embedded within visual and textual elements is imperative for accurate interpretation and comprehension, especially within the Indonesian media milieu. With the rapid proliferation of digital media platforms and the advent of social media, disseminating such visual messages has become more prevalent, necessitating a critical eye and an acute awareness of the socio-political landscape to navigate the complexities of modern media communication effectively.

Visual Typography as an Explanation of the Role of Background Conveying Intent

As explained earlier, the visual aspect of multimodality holds the most central role as part of the cybertext context in cyber pragmatics (Rahardi., 2022). Visual aspects can manifest in various forms, such as colors, shapes, graphics, and typography.

In this second data set, denoted as VTTM1, typography is again central to conveying a message, but it plays a more deceptive role here. The text prominently reads, "*Tangkapan layar status Gibran di Akun X nya saat Pelantikan*

AHY!!!" ("Screenshot of Gibran's account on his X account during the inauguration of AHY!!!"). This typographic element presents itself as an authentic snapshot of a statement from Gibran Rakabuming, a notable public figure. Yet, closer inspection reveals that the account tagged, @GibranRakabumi, is not Gibran's official Twitter account. His verified account is, in fact, @gibran_tweet, and this alleged statement does not appear there. This disparity signals a classic instance of misinformation, where typography is used to lend a misleading sense of legitimacy to a fabricated claim.

This approach to disinformation is especially prevalent in Indonesia's media landscape, particularly in the context of political discourse and public figures, where unauthorized accounts or fabricated content can swiftly gain traction. Typography is manipulated here to craft a semblance of authority and to promote false narratives, often tapping into the audience's familiarity with digital layouts that resemble authentic social media posts. In this instance, the credibility of typography as a visual tool for information dissemination is exploited, illustrating how it can become a vehicle for fake news. Such uses of typography are not merely aesthetic but strategic, guiding the audience's perception by embedding misleading cues in the design.

Accompanying the typographic element is an additional phrase, "Masak si Sekji ini, ETIKA CAWAPRES RI" ("This heinous period, the Ethics of the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia.>"). This statement builds upon the primary typographic misdirection, creating a layered message that



Fig. 2. Data 2/ VTTM1: Visual Typography Clarifying the Role of Background Facilitators (Source: <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C3uS4T3pQDo/?igsh=ajQ2NTRkZGZ0ZHYw>)

criticizes the ethical standards of high-ranking political figures. Here, the typographic emphasis shifts the focus toward a critical commentary on ethics, likely intended to provoke strong reactions from the audience, further reinforcing the narrative constructed by the preceding misleading element. This supplementary statement illustrates how loaded language is effectively employed in political media, aiming to strike an emotional chord with the reader while subtly influencing public opinion. Loaded language, often crafted with care, taps into the audience's emotions, biases, and beliefs, ensuring that the message resonates deeply and encourages alignment with a particular political narrative. This method is especially effective in shaping perceptions, as it works on an emotional level rather than a purely rational one. A deeper analysis of VTTM1 reveals the central role of typography in shaping not just the aesthetic appeal of the message but its power to influence perception and frame the narrative context. Typography, often seen simply as a design element, now plays a more strategic role in the digital age, where visual content can be swiftly produced and disseminated. In this case, the typography is bold and visually striking, potentially leading readers to accept the statement at face value. The design elements, such as font size, weight, and placement, guide the reader's eye and influence how the information is processed. This makes it all the more crucial for readers to engage in critical thinking and fact-checking, especially when the typography may lend an unwarranted sense of credibility to the statement.

The case of VTTM1 emphasizes the growing need for digital literacy in the modern media landscape. Misinformation is often presented with a veneer of legitimacy, made all the more convincing by polished design and effective typographic choices. This phenomenon underscores the importance of vigilance and skepticism when interacting with digital content. As consumers of online information, we must be aware of the potential manipulation within typographic elements. What may initially appear to be a reliable or authoritative source could be a carefully crafted illusion. This incident reminds us of how powerful typography can be in shaping the credibility of information. A seemingly simple typographic choice can turn an unverified claim into something that appears factual and trustworthy. Therefore, understanding the subtle interplay between design and content is

essential to responsibly navigating today's media landscape. As consumers, we are responsible for looking beyond the surface and engaging with media content critically to avoid being misled by deceptive, visually compelling messages.

Visual Typography as an Interpreter of the Role of Background Conveying Intent

The role of cybertext context as a background for conveying intent is proven to be carried out by examining the visual aspect of typography, as seen in Data 3: VTPMK1 below.

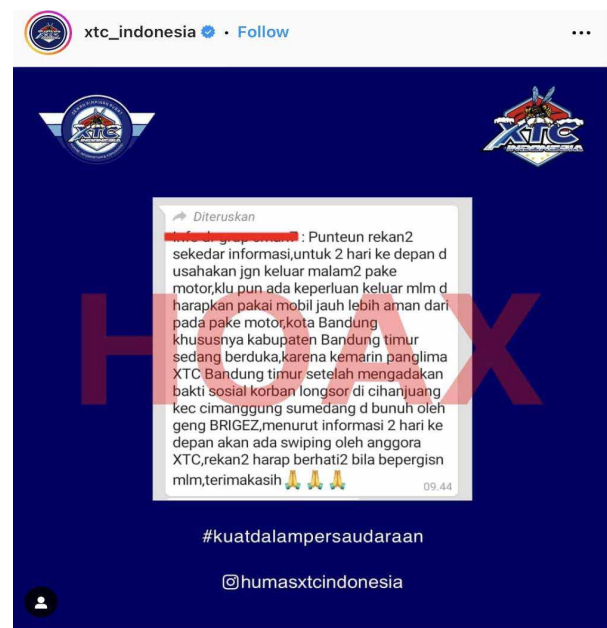


Fig. 3. Data 3/VTPMK: Visual Typography of Background Role Interpreters
(Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/KQMOHll-wEB/?igsh=bm9mMXI2ZWJzdN3>)

The statement exemplifies the integration of typographic elements with linguistic content, “*Sekedar informasi, untuk 2 hari ke depan d usahakan jgn keluar malam2 pake motor; klu pun ada keperluan keluar mlm d hrapkan pakai mobil jauh lebih aman dari pada pake motor, kota Bandung khususnya kabupaten Bandung timur sedang berduka, karena kemarin panglima XTC Bandung timur setelah mengadakan bakti sosial korban longsor di cihanjuang kec cimanggung sumedang d bunuh oleh geng BRIGEZ, menurut informasi 2 hari ke depan akan ada swiping oleh anggota XTC, rekan2 harap berhati2 bila bepergian mlm, terimakasih 🙏🙏🙏*” This amalgamation of typographic and linguistic components serves as an elaborator or decomposer, effectively contextualizing the intended message. The elongated typographic format facilitates immediate comprehension and offers a detailed breakdown of the information, enhancing clarity and understanding. This method of conveying intent proves particularly apt as it elucidates the underlying context, making the

message more transparent. The significance of this typographic aspect in delineating the background of speech intent becomes evident when considering the divergent personal and communal assumptions related to specific intentions.

Variances in individual and collective interpretations can significantly alter the perceived meaning of an intention. Hence, the visual typographic context plays a pivotal role in elucidating and describing the underlying background of speech delivery. As this contextual aspect is unraveled further, its significance and role in shaping interpretation become increasingly apparent. Visual typography manifests in diverse forms, encompassing various shapes, colors, and fonts, strengthening its role within the cybertext context. This observation holds in socio-political and commercial posters on roadsides and in pragmatic discussions, particularly within cyber pragmatics. Indeed, the content of such posters serves as a tangible manifestation of the visual cybertext context, exerting significant influence on the conveyed meaning of speech. In Indonesia's media landscape, this phenomenon is observable in various forms of digital content, ranging from social media posts to online advertisements. The strategic use of visual typography underscores its efficacy in conveying nuanced messages and shaping public discourse. Data 3: VTPMK1 offers further insights into the role and impact of typographic visual elements within the broader context of communication dynamics, emphasizing the continued relevance and importance of understanding visual cues in contemporary media environments.

Iconic Visuals as Emphasizing the Role of the Background for Conveying Intent

Fake news lately seems to be spreading on various social media platforms. Many people are very fond of pranks that sometimes convey untrue news and can be misleading. Concerning the function of language, such a statement violates the essential function of language. The fact of violation and deviation of the essential function of language is called language functioning. Fake news is a fact of language supervision. Likewise, the spread of hate speech is concrete evidence that human language has been subsided by certain parties in the daily practice of language. Some of these functions are intended, but some are not motivated by specific goals and intentions. In the author's research, the context aspect of iconic visual cybertext has a significant function in conveying the meaning of speech (Rahardi, 2017). The visual aspect of an iconic is an imitation of a certain shape, a certain sound, or maybe other things that have been prevalent before. Thus, it can be affirmed that the context aspect of the iconic visual cybertext falsifies the authenticity of certain facts. An announcement from the management of a particular company or perhaps the board of directors of a particular institution, such as hospital management as in Data 4: VIPMPI1, can be imitated if its aspects resemble the original form for certain purposes.

Forgery typically serves ulterior motives and intentions, often with deceptive aims. Instances such as warnings against fraud, exemplified by statements like "*...hati-hati penipuan yang mengatasnamakan Manajemen dan Direksi*



Fig. 4. Data 4/VIPMPI1: Iconic visuals that reinforce the role of the backdrop
(Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CazXLUcP9Iz/?igsh=OHRzaGtrMXZnMm5q>)

RSUPN (...beware of fraud on behalf of the management and directors of RSUPN...)”, serve as tangible evidence of past instances where both the management and directors of the hospital were implicated in fraudulent activities. Consequently, it becomes apparent that the presence of iconic or icon cybertext elements serves to reinforce the underlying context of conveying intent. The prevalence of counterfeit goods and fraudulent activities underscores the role of iconic visual aspects within the cybertext context. The elements discussed in the statement serve as crucial markers of authenticity in media, as powerful tools for conveying meaning and intent.

When used effectively, these visual markers can significantly shape how information is perceived and whether the audience trusts it. In Indonesia, a country facing challenges related to counterfeit products and fraudulent schemes, the role of these visual cues becomes even more important. They act as mechanisms for distinguishing legitimate content from misleading or deceptive information, essential in an era where misinformation can spread rapidly. Data 4: V IPMP11 offers valuable insights into how iconic visual elements interact with broader communication dynamics, providing a lens through which one can better understand how media content is consumed and interpreted. The analysis of the text snippet reveals how certain visual cues, such as logos, colors, and other design elements, influence the reader’s perception of the message. These elements can either enhance credibility or raise doubts, depending on how they are perceived within Indonesia’s cultural and socio-political context. In this case, the visual components—such as graphic symbols or iconic representations—serve as determining factors in assessing the authenticity and credibility of the message. In a media environment rife with misinformation and manipulation, relying on these visual cues is crucial as part of a broader strategy to evaluate content critically. The presence of iconic cybertext elements in the message acts as both a signal and a safeguard for identifying legitimate information from dubious sources. This phenomenon highlights a broader issue within Indonesia’s media landscape: the need for vigilance and discernment when navigating digital content. In a society where counterfeit products and fake news are rampant, recognizing and understanding the role of visual elements in shaping public

perception becomes essential for information consumers. As digital media continues to grow and evolve, these visual cues will only become more sophisticated, necessitating a more discerning and educated public to navigate the media environment effectively (Handoko et al., 2024).

Illustrative Visual as an Emphasiser of the Role of the Background of Conveying Intent

The illustrative visual cybertext context conveyed in Data 5: VIPMM1 reads, “*Wah ada bendera China Bro..??? Berarti Pemilu 2024 ada intervensi dari Tiongkok ya...???... (Wow, there is a Chinese flag...??? It means that in the 2024 election, there will be Chinese intervention, yes...???)*” The information was accompanied by a photo of the president in the background, accompanied by many people depicting that the Chinese people were behind him.

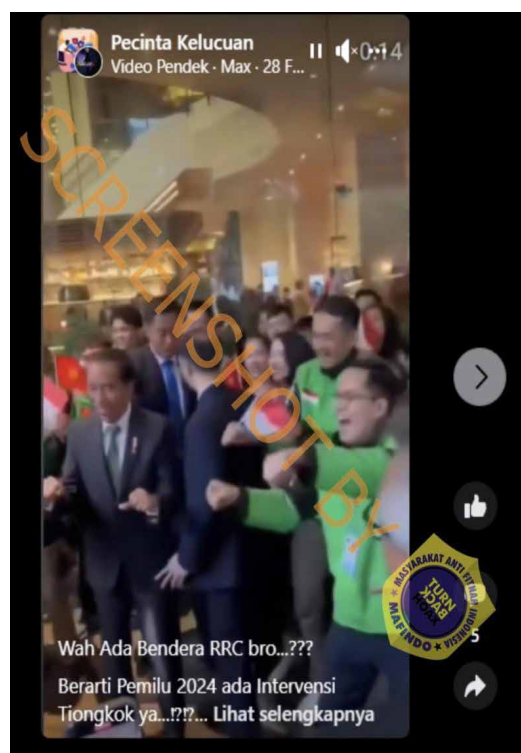


Fig. 5. Data 5/VIPMM1: Illustrative Visuals Emphasizing the Role of Background
(Source: <https://www.facebook.com/reel/729210065667883>)

The unfolding narrative surrounding the circulation of the video on Facebook, depicting President Jokowi dancing to the ‘Oke Gas’ campaign song associated with Prabowo-Gibran’s campaign, illustrates a powerful intersection of visual and textual communication in the digital age. The video, with the provocative inclusion of a Chinese flag,

ignites speculation about the potential involvement of China in Indonesia's 2024 election. This visual element—the Chinese flag is a symbolic cue that reinforces certain political narratives and invokes specific interpretations despite the lack of direct evidence of such intervention. It highlights how visual illustrations within digital content can affirm or challenge the intended message, influencing how the viewer interprets the underlying meaning. In this case, the visual illustration does more than add aesthetic value; it reinforces the message conveyed by the video, guiding the viewer toward a particular interpretation. Visual elements in this context play an essential role in shaping the viewer's perception and response, especially within the framework of Indonesia's media landscape, where visual cues frequently influence political discourse. The power of illustrations, images, and symbols is particularly pronounced in Indonesia's political environment, where posters and other graphic materials adorn urban and rural areas, underscoring the potency of visual communication. In many instances, such illustrations take precedence over purely typographic or linguistic elements, highlighting the multifaceted nature of communication in the digital age.

As multimodal communication practices become more prominent, language itself is often complemented or even overshadowed by visual elements that communicate meaning and intent. Using visuals such as the Chinese flag in the video exemplifies how images and symbols can carry political weight, becoming integral to the narrative construction and manipulation of public opinion. In an era where information is shared and consumed rapidly through social media, these visual cues often form the backbone of political messaging, evoking strong emotional responses or reinforcing specific ideologies. Further analysis of **Data 5: VIPMM1** reveals the deeper dynamics between visual illustrations and the broader communication process. When examining the content, it becomes clear that visual elements are crucial in constructing and framing political narratives. They play an instrumental role in attracting attention and shaping the public's interpretation of political events and figures. In political discourse and electoral campaigns, these visual tools are used strategically to evoke certain emotions, reinforce political alliances, and sway public opinion.

IV. DISCUSSION

Diverse Interpretations of Visual Multimodal Texts: Influence of Age, Education, Cultural Background, and Digital Media Familiarity

Understanding how diverse audiences interpret visual multimodal texts requires a careful and thoughtful approach, especially considering factors like age, education level, cultural background, and digital media literacy. These elements all play a crucial role in shaping how different groups perceive and respond to visual communication, especially in cybertexts, where the intent is often to influence public opinion or behavior. How these visual elements are interpreted can vary greatly, and this variance highlights the importance of ethical and strategic design when crafting messages for a wide audience. Age is a critical factor in determining how individuals interpret visual texts. Younger audiences who have grown up in the digital age often have a higher exposure to digital media and are accustomed to the nuanced multimodal communication on social media platforms. They are generally more attuned to visual cues such as emoticons, color contrasts, and specific font styles, all of which can convey layers of meaning. For example, emojis or playful visuals can communicate sarcasm, irony, or hidden emotions that may not immediately appear in the text. These audiences are often able to decode these cues intuitively, responding to the embedded nuances without much difficulty.

In contrast, older audiences may approach the same visuals more literally. Due to their potentially lower exposure to the rapid evolution of digital communication, they might not pick up on subtle cues such as irony or playful undertones embedded in visual elements. This demographic may interpret visual texts more straightforwardly, missing the implied meanings that younger viewers would quickly grasp. A message that resonates well with a younger audience could result in confusion or unintended interpretations among older viewers. This underscores the need for age-sensitive design in digital communication—visuals should be clear and appropriately tailored to ensure broad comprehension.

Education level plays an equally significant role in visual interpretation. Audiences with formal training in media studies, communication, or critical theory are more likely to be aware of the persuasive

and manipulative tactics often embedded in visual texts. These individuals can quickly recognize strategies like color psychology, font choices, and the layout of images—all elements designed to evoke specific emotional responses or influence perceptions. They are more likely to question overly simplistic or manipulative visuals, and they may actively deconstruct the design elements to understand the underlying message. On the other hand, audiences without formal education in media or critical analysis may interpret visuals at face value. They might focus primarily on the content, missing out on the persuasive or manipulative aspects embedded in the design. This discrepancy in interpretive ability highlights the importance of transparent and accessible design in digital communication. Visual elements should be straightforward and clear for those without advanced media literacy to ensure that the message is not lost or misunderstood.

The cultural background profoundly influences how individuals interpret visual, multimodal texts. Visual symbols, colors, and imagery often carry culturally specific meanings that may resonate differently with local versus global audiences (Rodrigues dos Santos, 2024). For example, certain colors in Indonesia might evoke national pride or signify particular political affiliations. Red and white, for instance, are deeply associated with Indonesian identity, often invoking feelings of patriotism and unity. Conversely, the same colors might carry different connotations in other cultural contexts, where they may symbolize something entirely unrelated to national identity. This cultural variance underscores the importance of culturally sensitive design in visual communication. Designers must carefully consider the symbolic meanings of different visual elements and ensure they resonate with the target audience. What may seem like a simple color choice or image in one cultural context could be deeply loaded with meaning in another, potentially altering the message's impact. For global or multicultural campaigns, incorporating culturally relevant elements can foster a stronger connection with local audiences while mitigating the risk of misinterpretation among international viewers.

Finally, familiarity with digital media platforms plays a crucial role in interpreting visual multimodal texts. Frequent digital and social media users have developed an intuitive understanding

of how information is presented online. They are adept at recognizing rhetorical strategies, such as framing, juxtaposition, and selective emphasis, influencing how a message is perceived. These individuals are more likely to detect underlying agendas or implied meanings within visual texts and can navigate complex messages more critically. In contrast, less experienced digital users may approach visuals more literally, focusing primarily on surface-level content. They might overlook the subtlety of visual rhetoric or fail to recognize the layered meanings conveyed through design. This gap in digital literacy highlights the importance of designing visuals that are easily interpretable by digital natives and those less familiar with online communication norms (Satriyo, 2023). A well-designed visual message should be accessible and engaging for a wide audience, regardless of their digital literacy.

Ethical Implications of Visual Manipulation in Cybertext

The ethical implications of using visual elements in cybertext, particularly in political messaging, are centered around the potential for manipulation and greater transparency in design choices. Visual elements—such as color schemes, typography, and iconography, can deeply influence how a message is perceived. In the political sphere, these choices are often strategically used to evoke strong emotional responses, align viewers with particular ideologies, or create a sense of unity around a political candidate or movement. While such tactics can be highly engaging and effective in fostering audience connection, they also risk blurring the line between genuine information and propaganda, potentially fostering the spread of misinformation. For instance, color schemes designed to invoke national pride or typography that emphasizes urgency can subconsciously encourage viewers to identify with a particular viewpoint or political stance. These visual cues can subtly nudge the audience into a certain way of thinking without realizing it. A particularly concerning aspect of visual manipulation involves using emoticons or subtle typographic choices that suggest irony or sarcasm. Such elements can mislead viewers, prompting some to perceive a message as light-hearted or satirical while others may interpret it as serious or genuine. This ambiguity creates an environment ripe for polarized interpretations,

especially in places like Indonesia, where media literacy varies significantly across different demographics. The result is that the public may form opinions based on skewed perceptions of a message rather than on objective facts, making the need for ethical design and clarity in visual communication all the more urgent.

To address these ethical concerns, transparency in visual design becomes a critical consideration, especially when dealing with politically charged content. Content creators and media practitioners must prioritize clarifying their intentions and avoid design choices that may mislead or bias their audience. One practical approach is clearly labeling opinion pieces and political advertisements, distinguishing them from objective reporting. Additionally, creators should minimize using visuals that imply unwarranted authority or authenticity, which can give a misleading impression of credibility or objectivity. By adopting ethical media practices, content producers can foster an environment that encourages informed decision-making and enhances public trust. However, transparency alone is insufficient—promoting media literacy is equally crucial in combating visual manipulation. As digital engagement continues to grow, it is essential to equip audiences with the tools to assess the intent behind visual elements in digital media critically. Media literacy initiatives that educate consumers on the persuasive power of visual design and encourage critical thinking can help individuals discern manipulation from factual reporting. In an increasingly complex media landscape, such awareness enables consumers to navigate digital content more discerningly, ultimately contributing to a more ethically conscious and resilient society. By fostering both transparency in content creation and critical media literacy among consumers, we can mitigate the risks of manipulation and promote a fairer and more responsible public discourse.

V. CONCLUSION

While the research provides valuable insights into the role of visual elements in cybertexts, the study's conclusions could be strengthened through a more critical reflection on its chosen methodology's inherent biases and limitations. Specifically, the reliance on free-flowing listening and note-taking techniques introduces a level of subjectivity that the article does not adequately address. While these

methods can capture spontaneous and nuanced insights, they also run the risk of selective attention or the omission of key details. This is particularly true when a researcher's personal perspectives or preconceptions influence their interpretation of the data. In qualitative research, such biases are often unavoidable, but they can compromise the objectivity of the findings and limit their broader applicability. In the context of this research, where the visual elements of cybertext are being analyzed, the subjective nature of free-flowing listening and note-taking becomes especially significant. Visual multimodal elements, such as color schemes, typography, and graphic design, require a high level of interpretive skill and careful attention to detail. Without a more systematic and structured approach to data collection, the research risks overemphasizing certain visual elements while potentially downplaying others that may be equally crucial in shaping the message's intended meaning. Additionally, individual interpretation of visuals is highly dependent on the researcher's own background, experiences, and biases, making it essential to implement methods that account for these variations and ensure a more objective analysis.

Moreover, the study's limited dataset further exacerbates the potential for bias. A more expansive and diverse dataset would improve the robustness of the findings and provide a more accurate and representative understanding of how visual elements in cybertexts are interpreted across different contexts. The article acknowledges this limitation but does not offer a detailed strategy for addressing it. Broadening the scope of the data set, for example, by incorporating visual content from various digital platforms, different types of visual formats, and a wider range of audience demographics, would help mitigate these biases and lead to more comprehensive conclusions. This would allow for a fuller exploration of how visual communication in cybertexts is understood by different groups, potentially revealing how cultural, social, and political factors influence the interpretation of visual elements. Expanding the dataset this way would also enhance the study's generalizability, providing a clearer understanding of the dynamics in the broader digital communication landscape. Thus, while the research offers valuable contributions to the field, a more critical approach to methodology and a broader data sample could

significantly improve the depth and validity of the study's conclusions. Lastly, while the study encourages collaboration among researchers with similar interests, it would benefit from a deeper exploration of how collaborative methodologies could address the biases introduced by individual researchers. Combining the expertise of linguists, media analysts, and digital communication specialists, interdisciplinary approaches could offer more rigorous and balanced interpretations of visual multimodal texts. By refining the methodology to minimize subjective influences, the research would enhance the reliability of its conclusions and contribute more meaningfully to the evolving field of cyber pragmatics and visual communication.

ETHICS STATEMENT

We stated that informed consent was obtained from social media, like a participants or that participant data has been fully anonymized, and b) the platform(s)' data redistribution policies were

complied with.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

R. Kunjana Rahardi: conceptualisation, literature review, methodologies, data collection, writing, reviewing and editing. **Wahyudi Rahmat:** literature review, methodologies, data collection and writing. **Teh Yuliana Setyaningsih:** literature review, methodologies, data collection and writing. **Handoko:** data extraction, data analysis and writing, visualisation, reviewing and editing.

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DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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