

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Political communication is a vital component in sustaining democratic governance at both national and local levels. Elections not only serve as mechanisms for the peaceful transfer of power but also as strategic arenas where political actors construct public images, articulate policy agendas, and influence voter perceptions (McNair, 2017). Effective political communication engages the electorate on both rational and emotional levels, thereby fostering public trust and reinforcing democratic legitimacy (Street, 2004).

Among the various tools employed in political messaging, campaign slogans hold significant importance due to their ability to condense complex ideological messages into brief, memorable phrases. Benoit (2007) explains that slogans encapsulate a candidate's core identity and values, facilitating voter recall and connection. The strategic use of rhetorical devices such as metaphor, repetition, and antithesis enhances the emotional impact and cognitive resonance of slogans, allowing candidates to effectively distinguish themselves in competitive electoral contexts.

From the perspective of political branding, slogans serve as cognitive anchors linking the campaign message directly to the candidate's public image (Anholt, 2007). This function is especially relevant in diverse societies such as Indonesia, where the integration of local languages, cultural symbols, and indigenous

expressions can increase a slogan's authenticity and emotional appeal. These culturally grounded elements contribute to the strengthening of voter affiliation and identification with candidates.

Furthermore, the stylistic characteristics of political slogans are instrumental in their persuasive power. Charteris-Black (2005) emphasizes that rhetorical figures like metaphors clarify abstract political ideas while fostering emotional engagement with the electorate. Complementing this, Utomo and Suprajitno (2018) demonstrate how idiomatic expressions, vivid imagery, and rhythmic patterns in advertising slogans enhance memorability and persuasive effect—principles that extend effectively to political communication. Their comparative study of Indonesian and American slogans highlights the role of stylistic devices in evoking emotional responses and reinforcing ideological alignment, which are critical for voter mobilization.

Kupang City, situated in East Nusa Tenggara Province, presents a distinctive setting for the study of political slogans in local elections due to its rich linguistic diversity and cultural plurality. These sociocultural characteristics provide opportunities for candidates to craft linguistically nuanced and symbolically potent slogans that resonate with local identities and values. Despite the significance of such contexts, academic investigations into the linguistic and semiotic aspects of political slogans in Indonesian regional elections remain limited.

This study focuses on analyzing the linguistic styles and symbolic meanings embedded in campaign slogans used in the 2024 regional head election in Kupang

City. Utilizing a combined framework of semiotic theory and stylistic analysis, the research examines how linguistic choices and symbolic elements are systematically employed to construct candidate images, elicit emotional engagement, and foster voter identification and participation. Understanding these dynamics contributes to a deeper comprehension of political slogans not merely as communication tools but also as cultural artifacts reflecting and shaping local political discourse within Indonesia's multicultural landscape.

1.2 Research Problems

1. What are the language styles used in the regional election campaigns in Kupang City 2024?
2. What are the symbolic meanings of the slogans used in the 2024 Kupang City Election?

1.3 Aims of Study

1. To analyze the language styles employed in the regional election campaigns in Kupang City 2024.
2. To analyze the symbolic meanings embedded in the slogans used in the 2024 Kupang City Election.

1.4 Significance of Study

1.4.1 Implication

The implications of this research on the slogans of the 2024 local elections in Kupang emphasize that language style plays a central role in constructing effective political messages. Drawing from the works of Fairclough (2000), Louw (2001), and Chilton (2004), political slogans that utilize stylistic elements such as

acronym, emotional appeal, figurative language, contrast, and repetition are more likely to resonate with voters. In the Kupang context, slogans that are concise yet emotionally rich—such as those invoking unity, hope, or struggle—can create a sense of familiarity and collective belonging. These language choices reduce cognitive barriers, enhance message memorability, and trigger affective responses, which are critical in influencing voter behavior. The strategic use of rhetorical devices not only enhances the persuasive power of the slogans but also reflects the candidate’s understanding of the socio-cultural dynamics of the region, thereby fostering stronger connections with local constituents.

In addition, the symbolic meaning embedded in political slogans must be viewed through a semiotic and cultural lens, as suggested by theorists such as Geertz (1973), Lakoff (2004), and Edelman (1964). In the multi-ethnic and culturally rich society of Kupang, slogans that incorporate local symbols, shared values, and ideological narratives serve not merely as campaign tools but as cultural texts that convey collective identity and political intention. For instance, the use of words like “*rakyat*,” “*kebangkitan*,” or “*untuk semua*” operate as ideological and emotional symbols that reflect community struggles and aspirations. These symbols, when culturally grounded, have the power to mobilize support and create emotional solidarity. Hence, slogans that are both stylistically compelling and symbolically meaningful function as powerful instruments of political communication, reinforcing the candidate’s image while simultaneously shaping public discourse and participation in the local democratic process.

1.4.2 Application

findings from this research have the potential to contribute to several key stakeholders:

1. **Government and Political Parties:** This research provides valuable insights into the language and specific messaging strategies that resonate with voters in Kupang City. These insights can be used by political parties to design their campaign strategies, ensuring they effectively address the concerns and aspirations of the local community. By understanding the implications of slogan use, parties can connect more deeply with constituents, thereby increasing their electoral success.
2. **Campaign Managers and Strategists:** For campaign managers, this research serves as an important evaluative tool to inform their approach in delivering political messages. The findings can guide the creation of impactful slogans by effectively utilizing language, thereby strengthening a deeper emotional connection with potential voters. By tailoring messages to reflect local culture and values, campaign managers can enhance voter engagement and motivation to participate in the electoral process.
3. **Community Members and Voters:** This research also aims to empower voters by raising awareness about the language used in political advertising. By educating community members about the importance of slogans and their implications in campaigns, voters can develop a more critical perspective toward the messages they encounter. This increased awareness can encourage more informed voting decisions, ultimately strengthening the democratic process in Kupang City.
4. **Future Researchers:** This research also opens opportunities for future researchers to explore the use of slogans in broader contexts, both in other

regions and across different types of political campaigns. Future researchers can conduct comparative studies to analyze differences in slogan usage between urban and rural campaigns, or explore how slogans may evolve over time and how voters respond to them. Further research in this area can enrich our understanding of local political dynamics and effective communication strategies.

By focusing on the use of slogans in political campaigns, this research aims to reveal the complex relationship between language, identity, and political engagement in the local context, thereby providing a deeper understanding of political communication in the area.