

## Bobby Nasution : The Image of His Politics in The Second Round of Debate, Pilkada North Sumatera Province Using Multimodal Theory

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### Abstrak

#### Kata Kunci:

Debat, Komunikasi, Bahasa, Citra, Teori Multimodal, Bobby Nasution

Penelitian ini membahas tentang strategi komunikasi yang digunakan Bobby Nasution dalam debat pemilihan kepala daerah di Sumatera Utara. Fokus penelitian adalah pada penggunaan bahasa verbal dan nonverbal dalam membentuk citra politiknya. Bobby Nasution dikenal menggunakan bahasa yang sederhana dan empatik untuk menjalin kedekatan dengan masyarakat. Selain itu, ekspresi wajah dan gestur yang ia tunjukkan selama debat memperkuat pesan yang ingin disampaikan. Alhasil, perpaduan kedua unsur tersebut berhasil menciptakan citra Bobby sebagai pemimpin muda yang peduli dan tanggap terhadap isu-isu masyarakat. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya komunikasi yang efektif dalam konteks politik dan memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana strategi komunikasi dapat memengaruhi persepsi publik. Temuan penelitian ini dapat menjadi referensi bagi calon pemimpin lainnya dalam merancang strategi komunikasi yang lebih baik. Dengan memahami cara berkomunikasi yang tepat, mereka dapat membangun hubungan yang lebih kuat dengan pemilih. Ke depannya, diperlukan penelitian lebih lanjut untuk menggali lebih dalam tentang dampak komunikasi multimodal dalam konteks politik lainnya.

### Abstract

#### Key Words:

Debate, Communication, Language, Image, Multimodal Theory, Bobby Nasution

This research discusses the communication strategies used by Bobby Nasution in the regional head election debate in North Sumatra. The focus of the research is on the use of verbal and nonverbal language in shaping his political image. Bobby Nasution is known to use simple and empathetic language to establish closeness with the community. In addition, the facial expressions and gestures he shows during the debate reinforce the message he wants to convey. As a result, the combination of these two elements succeeded in creating Bobby's image as a young leader who cares and is responsive to community issues. This research highlights the importance of effective communication in a political context and provides insight into how communication strategies can influence public perception. The findings can serve as a reference for other aspiring leaders in designing better communication strategies. By understanding how to communicate appropriately, they can build stronger relationships with voters. In the future, further research is needed to dig deeper into the impact of multimodal communication in other political contexts.

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## INTRODUCTION

Human being mostly understand language is the tool of communication. In daily activity language has important role for the society in creating the social life. When we buy or sell something in a business situation, a teacher teaches the students, mother advices their children, in entertainment like music, film reality show. All those people who take the role of in that situation using language.

When we use language to communicate, there will be something needed to be announced or discuss to the society although it just something funny like a joke or something serious like business and discussion. According to Karl Marx (1818-1893) language is not just become the tool communication but also become the tool of social control. This theory is proven by the political figure who use language in the social control in the strategy of campaign to win the election and reign for taking the position in the parliamentary or government.

The Debate for regional election is a strategic symbolic battleground for candidates to build their image and influence the public. In this context, interaction, as an integral part of multimodality (Noris 2004), plays a

key role in shaping public perception of Bobby Nasution. Multimodal theory emphasizes the importance of analyzing various semiotic modes, including verbal language, body language, and visual, in creating meaning. Halliday (1994) Analysis of Bobby Nasution's discourse in the North Sumatra Regional election debate, therefore, requires careful observation of how his language and act interacts with other modes to produce certain persuasive effects. This includes the choice of diction, voice intonation, body gestures, and even the use of visual attributes such as clothing and background.

From the explanation above, the multimodal analysis of Bobby Nasution's discourse in the North Sumatra Pilkada debate shows how language, in complex interactions with other semiotic modes, functions as an effective tool of social control in building political imagery. By understanding how verbal and nonverbal language are used strategically to influence public perception, we can uncover the mechanisms of opinion formation and political persuasion in the context of the Pilkada. Further research can be conducted by analyzing in more detail certain multimodal modes and their impact on voter perceptions of Bobby Nasution.

Bobby Nasution's strategic use of language in the debate can be seen as an attempt at social control. He may use polite and diplomatic language to build an image as a friendly and approachable figure. Conversely, he may also use assertive and straightforward language to demonstrate his leadership capacity. The choice of diction and certain rhetorical strategies, such as the use of metaphors, analogies, or narratives, can influence public perception and assessment of his political programs and visions. Thus, language is not just a means of communication, but a powerful tool for shaping opinions and directing political choices.

In addition to verbal language, nonverbal aspects also play an important role in Bobby Nasution's political image. His body language, such as facial expressions, hand gestures, and eye contact, can strengthen or present messages conveyed through verbal language. For example, a calm and friendly facial expression can create an impression of confidence and credibility, while controlled gestures can show professionalism and seriousness. The layout of the debate stage and the use of visual attributes can also influence public perception. Sitting position, distance from the debate opponent, and use of visual properties all contribute to creating the desired image.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Data and Sources**

This research uses primary and secondary data. Primary data comes from video recordings of the North Sumatra regional election debate in which Bobby Nasution participated. Secondary data was obtained from supporting literature such as books, scientific journals, and relevant articles, including works such as "Multimodal analysis and digital technology" by K. O'Halloran (2013) and "Multimodality Elements in Cartoon Works" by N. I. Abdullah (2020).

The subject of this research is Bobby Nasution, through his speech from the video "DEBAT PUBLIK KEDUA PASLON GUBERNUR DAN WAKIL GUBERNUR SUMATERA UTARA TAHUN 2024" published by KPU PROVINSI SUMUT on 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2024  
Link :[https://www.youtube.com/live/IUisL3sMdFg?si=RvVDPGT0G20P\\_plQ](https://www.youtube.com/live/IUisL3sMdFg?si=RvVDPGT0G20P_plQ)

### **Data Collection Tools**

The data collection method was carried out through literature study and observation of debate recordings. The literature study aims to support the analysis with theories related to multimodality, such as those developed by Halliday (1994) and Norris (2004). Observations were made by examining the verbal (language) and non-verbal (body language, visual expressions) elements of the debate recordings.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative approach. The steps of analysis included Identification of Semiotic Modes namely Identifying verbal elements such as choice of diction, intonation, and rhetoric, as well as non-verbal elements such as gestures, facial expressions, and visual attributes. Then Semiotic Mode Correlation: Analyzing how verbal and non-verbal elements interact with each other to form Bobby Nasution's political image. Then Interpretation and Conclusion: Connecting the findings of the analysis with multimodality theory to understand the influence strategy used by Bobby Nasution in building public perception. With this approach, the research aims to reveal how verbal and non-verbal language is used as a

tool of social control and opinion formation in political debates. (Abdullah, 2020) (O'Halloran, 2013) (Cindy, 2021) (Irawan) (Ayu)

## DISCUSSION AND FINDING

In 2024, Indonesia will hold elections in North Sumatra, one of which is the election of the governor and deputy governor.

Therefore, to find out the leadership quality of the candidates for governor and vice governor, a live debate was held. The second debate between gubernatorial candidates Bobby Nasution and Edy Rahmayadi became an important event to show the quality of their leadership through verbal and non-verbal language. In a political context, language is not just a matter of spoken words, but also a communication style that includes how the message is conveyed (verbal) and how body language interacts with the message (non-verbal). Both of these elements play a huge role in creating a candidate's self-image in the eyes of voters.

In this debate not only shows their communication style, but also provides a clearer picture of the leadership image they want to present to the public. The two gubernatorial candidates used verbal and non-verbal language in this debate, from there the people could find out which candidate they should vote for.

The use of speech and words in communication is known as verbal language. The primary means of communicating directly with the audience during political debates is verbal language. A candidate's character, authority, and leadership can be inferred from their word choice, phrase construction, and pronunciation. Conversely, non-verbal language encompasses any type of communication that relies on posture, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures rather than words. Each of these components has a significant impact on how well or poorly the message is communicated orally.

In this second discussion, Bobby Nasution demonstrated his image as a young, open, and approachable leader through both verbal and nonverbal communication. As a young gubernatorial candidate who has the challenge of displaying political credibility, Bobby Nasution chooses to speak in a friendlier, straight to the point, empathetic and inclusive style.

### Verbal Language

1. Bobby's use of simple language is one of its most noticeable features. Sentences like "I understand how difficult it is to find work here, and I will work hard to open up jobs" are typically avoided by him. This speech pattern seeks to convey the idea that Bobby is a modest leader who values the opinions of the people in addition to using power. Bobby uses this speech pattern to highlight his reputation as a leader who cultivates intimate and trustworthy bonds with the populace in addition to using authority. Excessively technical terms and favors simpler, more understandable ones. Bobby frequently uses phrases like "we will work for the people" and "we will bring about change together" in debates to highlight his message of cooperation and community service. Despite its simplicity at times, Bobby's vocabulary conveys emotional intimacy and understanding. He wishes to demonstrate that, in his capacity as a leader, he will pay attention to what the people have to say and make an effort to understand their emotions. For instance, Bobby addressed the problem of unemployment in North Sumatra by adopting.
2. The tone of speech and words used by Bobby Nasution When responding to insinuations from debate opponents, Bobby still shows calmness and wisdom, keeping emotions under control, even when facing criticism related to the policies and decisions he has made. He responds with polite sentences, such as when responding to the big hall and electric bus issues, which shows that he prefers constructive dialogue over confrontation. For example, when opposing insinuations about debate opponents who said that Bobby Nasution was presumptuous in not submitting the electric bus to be ratified together with the Governor, he started with the word apologise such as 'I'm sorry sir, the electric bus is not from the centre but it is the result of our cooperation with the private sector' then Bobby Nasution also often uses the word 'Sorry, please' to start each sentence in debating, 'I'm sorry sir, the electric bus is not from the centre but it is the result of our cooperation with the private sector'.
3. The Bobby Nasution team provides a long-term perspective by linking waste management with sustainable development, this can be seen when Tim Bobby said 'the waste problem must be handled wisely and wisely, we offer to collaborate with the city district government to always build integrated waste treatment before being disposed of in water disposal sites, and we will make regional water disposal sites'. This shows that the Bobby Nasution Team is a candidate for leaders who care and think about the long term.

4. Bobby Nasution's team revealed that 'agrarian conflicts cannot be resolved independently and egocentrically, the resolution of agrarian conflicts will be resolved with agrarian reform so that the resolution process is right on target.' This statement shows that they are prospective leaders who care about giving an idea that the process of resolving agrarian conflicts will be carried out in a planned, clear, and focused way to achieve fair goals that prioritise cooperation over a unilateral or individualist approach.

### **Non-Verbal Language**

1. Empathic and cordial facial expressions Bobby frequently displays warm and sympathetic facial expressions during arguments. In addition to using words, he conveys care and concern for the issues that individuals confront through his facial expressions. When listening to an opponent, a slight smile or head nod indicates that he wishes to engage With the community directly in addition to speaking.
2. Hand motions that encourage involvement Bobby emphasizes his points by making hand motions as well. His free hand gestures frequently convey the idea that he is a transparent person who keeps nothing from the public. Warmth and openness are conveyed by this expressive hand gesture, which seems to be encouraging the listener to join the ongoing discussion.
3. Firm and intimate eye contact Bobby frequently maintains direct eye contact with both the audience and his debate opponents. This conveys the idea that he is a self-assured leader who is prepared to take on obstacles. Bobby and the audience feel more connected when he maintains constant eye contact, which conveys that he is sensitive to their emotions.
4. A way of standing that is upright but not tense In debating, Bobby Nasution displays a calm body position, so that the way Bobby Nasution stands upright displays the impression of not being awkward and confident that a leader must have.

Both Bobby Nasution and Edy Rahmayadi's self-images were greatly influenced by their verbal and nonverbal communication during the second discussion. Edy Rahmayadi set himself apart as a firm and authoritative leader using formal language and steady body language, whereas Bobby Nasution was able to convey the image of a young leader who is popular and cares about the people with straightforward and emotive language. Verbal and nonverbal communication are two components that complement one another and significantly impact how audiences view their leadership.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that Bobby Nasution used verbal and nonverbal communication strategies effectively in building his political image as a young leader who is friendly, inclusive, and visionary during the North Sumatra Pilkada debate. Based on the multimodality theory approach, language is understood not only as a communication tool, but also as a significant social control tool, especially in the political context. Bobby uses simple, straightforward, and easy-to-understand verbal language, which not only shows his empathy for the needs of the community, but also emphasizes his sense of closeness and care. His use of rhetoric that emphasizes long-term solutions, such as waste management and agrarian reform, reflects his strategic thinking as a forward-looking leader.

At the same time, nonverbal communication is an important element in reinforcing the messages conveyed. Friendly facial expressions, open hand gestures, consistent eye contact, and a firm but relaxed postures give the impression of a confident, professional, and transparent leader. The combination of verbal and nonverbal elements has succeeded in creating an image that Bobby is a young leader who not only understands local issues, but also has a commitment to provide real solutions that favor the community. With this approach, Bobby Nasution is able to utilize communication strategically to influence public opinion and build a positive image in the eyes of the community.

### **SUGGESTION**

Improving Bobby Nasution's communication requires a multifaceted approach extending beyond simple debate practice. He needs intensive training with communication experts, moving beyond formal debates to encompass diverse scenarios, including challenging questions and unexpected criticisms. This training should

involve crafting clear, concise messaging tailored to various audiences and contexts, anticipating counterarguments, and preparing strong rebuttals. Media training is also crucial, covering press conferences, interviews, and social media engagement, focusing on handling difficult questions while projecting confidence. Post-debate reviews using video recordings are essential for detailed feedback and identifying areas for improvement.

Beyond verbal skills, Bobby should work closely with a body language expert. This isn't just about gestures; it's about mastering posture, facial expressions, eye contact, and overall stage presence to project credibility and build rapport. The expert should teach techniques for subtly mirroring audience body language to foster connection and trust, ensuring authenticity remains central to his communication style.

Visual media is key. A strategic plan should create targeted content—infographics explaining complex policies, short videos highlighting achievements, and social media posts addressing key issues—using a multi-platform approach tailored to different audiences and the nuances of each platform. These visuals should effectively use data visualization and compelling storytelling to engage audiences emotionally and intellectually.

Community engagement must be structured, moving beyond random visits to planned outreach programs with clear goals and measurable outcomes. This includes town hall meetings, focus groups, and informal gatherings, emphasizing active listening and empathy to build trust. Clear feedback mechanisms—online surveys, suggestion boxes, dedicated email addresses—are essential for gathering input and addressing concerns effectively.

Finally, continuous improvement is vital. Regular feedback sessions with the communication team, body language expert, and community representatives should review progress, address challenges, and adapt strategies. Tracking key metrics—social media engagement, survey responses, community feedback—allows for data-driven decision-making and adjustments. Maintaining transparency and accountability by openly addressing concerns builds trust and strengthens relationships. This comprehensive approach will significantly enhance Bobby Nasution's communication, leading to increased public trust and more effective leadership.

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