

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consist of five subchapter, namely: background of the study, research question, the objectives of the study, significant of the study, and scope and limitations of the study. They are important to be explained because they describe this study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The representation of historical and political figures in biographical and historical texts is never fully neutral, because it is shaped by the writer's selection of events, narrative focus, and specific lexical choices. Language does not only function to deliver information, but also plays an important role in shaping how a figure is understood, evaluated, and remembered by readers. Through framing strategies, certain aspects of a person's life can be emphasized, while others may be minimized or left out, which makes framing a crucial tool in guiding interpretation. As explained by Eriyanto (2002), texts often contain implicit framing that directs readers toward particular meanings and judgments through carefully chosen words and expressions. This shows that writing is not simply about recording reality, but also about constructing it through language.

Framing strategy refers to the way information is selected, emphasized, and organized in a text to shape how readers understand a particular issue or figure. According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicative text in order to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, or treatment recommendation. This means that framing is not only about what information is presented, but also about how it is structured and highlighted. Through framing strategies, some elements of reality are emphasized while others are minimized or excluded, which can influence how audiences interpret events and evaluate political leaders. In political and biographical narratives, framing strategies often operate by stressing positive traits such as heroism, morality, or

leadership strength, or by foregrounding negative attributes such as failure or controversy. As a result, framing does not merely describe reality in a neutral way, but actively constructs meaning and directs readers toward specific interpretations. Therefore, the image of a political figure, including their moral representation, can be significantly shaped through strategic language choices and narrative emphasis

Framing strategy is important to study because it helps reveal how meaning and moral judgment are constructed within a text, especially in political and historical narratives. This is particularly relevant in biographical writing, where the life story of a public figure is not presented as a neutral record of facts, but as a structured narrative shaped by selection, emphasis, and evaluative language. According to Entman (1993), framing involves selecting certain aspects of reality and making them more salient in order to promote specific interpretations and moral evaluations. In the context of biography, this means that the author may highlight particular achievements, decisions, or controversies while downplaying others, which ultimately shapes how readers perceive the character and legacy of the figure being discussed. The biography of Soeharto is chosen in this study because he is one of the most influential and controversial figures in Indonesian history, whose leadership and legacy continue to generate debate. The complexity of his public image, where he is portrayed both as a stabilizing national leader and as a figure associated with political issues, makes his biography a rich site for examining how framing strategies operate.

Existing literature on Indonesian political discourse shows that researchers have explored how media and historical narratives construct the public image of national leaders, revealing a consistent reliance on framing strategies to influence perception. This scholarly pattern is important because it demonstrates that political figures are rarely represented neutrally; rather, their images are shaped through selective emphasis, evaluative language, and ideological positioning. Researchers, such as Eriyanto (2002), Adi (2011), Titscher et al. (2002), Borah. (2011) and Rambe, Sahlaya, & Andini, (2024) provide evidence that Indonesian political texts frequently employ moral evaluations and legitimizing vocabulary to portray leaders as authoritative, patriotic, or morally upright. These findings

confirm that the representation of political figures is deeply connected to framing mechanisms, thereby establishing a strong academic precedent that supports further investigation into how Soeharto's image is constructed through specific lexical and moral framing choices.

Previous studies on political discourse in Indonesia have examined media framing, ideological representation, and lexical choices used to construct the public images of national leaders. Scholars such as Adi (2011), Eriyanto (2002), Semetko and Valkenburg (2000), De Vreese (2005) and Chong & Druckman (2007) emphasize that media texts frequently rely on framing devices to shape public understanding of political figures. Internationally, framing has been conceptualized as a strategic process in which certain aspects of reality are selected and emphasized to promote particular interpretations (Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Reese, 2007). While these works provide information about how political actors are represented across different media contexts, they tend to focus on broad portrayals of leadership or analyses of contemporary political figures rather than historical ones.

Previous studies have discussed further reinforces the importance of framing and lexical choices in shaping political meaning and moral evaluations. Van Dijk (1998, 2006) establishes that political discourse is never neutral but ideologically driven, constructed through selective linguistic strategies that guide public interpretation. Fairclough (1995) and Wodak (2001) similarly argue that media texts actively reshape social realities, demonstrating how discourse serves as a tool of power in political communication. This is refer to support previous studies echoed by Benford, Snow (2000) and van Dijk (1998), who show that ideological positioning often emerges through evaluative vocabulary and subtle semantic cues. From a framing perspective, Charteris Black (2011) emphasizes that political actors rely on conceptual frames to influence public cognition, while Reisigl (2001) notes that such framing is strategically used in public communication to build or contest authority. Empirical linguistic studies also highlight the role of evaluation in political narratives, as seen in Hart (2014) analysis of Functional and Cognitive Perspectives, O'Halloran's (2011) corpus-informed work on evaluation, and D'Angelo (2002) study on news framing as a

multiparadigmatic. Complementing these insights, Beard (2000) demonstrates that language is fundamental to constructing political credibility and legitimacy

This research is based on the idea that biographical and political texts do not always present history in a purely neutral way. Instead, they often shape the image of national leaders through particular word choices and ways of telling the story. Rather than simply recording events, these texts can influence how readers see a leader's character and moral position by focusing on certain qualities and downplaying others. In many cases, moral judgment becomes more dominant than factual description in guiding the reader's interpretation of the figure being discussed, including Soeharto. In this context, lexical choices are seen as important tools in building a specific representation of a political leader. The way problems are described, causes are explained, and values are attached through language can affect how moral authority is constructed in a biography. This study looks at the connection between lexical patterns, framing functions, and the moral image that emerges in Soeharto's biography. From this perspective, Soeharto's moral image is not only shaped by historical events, but also by how the text presents and frames those events. Therefore, instead of focusing only on his political timeline, this study pays attention to the language and framing strategies that contribute to the construction of his moral representation.

This study aims to address the conceptual and empirical gaps in political discourse research by critically examining how framing and lexical choice contribute to the construction of moral authority in biographical narratives. Its primary objective is to explain the relationship between framing strategies as the independent analytical focus and the emergence of Soeharto's moral representation as the dependent interpretive outcome. Specifically, the study traces how evaluative lexical items replace purely historical or institutional indicators of leadership credibility, ultimately shaping who is perceived as morally legitimate within Indonesia's political memory. In addition, this research investigates how narrative and lexical framing produce a selectively curated portrayal of Soeharto one that may obscure complexity, minimize controversy, or elevate certain virtues to dominant interpretive positions. By employing a qualitative approach and a case study of a widely circulated biography, this work contributes a deeper

understanding of the intersection between language, political representation, and moral discourse. Through this analysis, the study highlights the structural role of linguistic framing in shaping how national leaders are morally constructed in contemporary historiographical narratives.

1.2 Statements of Research Problem

1. What are the types of framing strategies found in the Biography of Soeharto.
2. What are the functions of framing strategies found in the Biography of Soeharto.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To explain the types of framing strategies that found in the Biography of Soeharto.
2. To describe the functions of framing strategies that found in the Biography of Soeharto.

1.4 Significant of the Study

Theoretically, this study adds to existing discussions on framing analysis and lexical choice in political discourse by focusing on how language is used to shape the moral image of a leader. By analyzing the way Soeharto is presented in the biography, this research helps show how evaluative words and expressions can influence the way readers understand his character and moral position. Instead of seeing language as merely descriptive, this study highlights its role as a strategic element in constructing meaning. In this way, the research can support and enrich further studies that deal with similar topics, especially those that explore the relationship between language, power, and representation in political or historical texts.

Practically, the findings of this research hold relevance for young people, the general public, and media consumers who interact with political narratives in everyday life. For teenagers and students, the study encourages critical thinking by showing how language can subtly influence perceptions of historical leaders, thus promoting greater media and discourse literacy. For society

at large, the research highlights the importance of recognizing linguistic framing as a tool that shapes collective memory and public opinion. The practical insights generated from this study can help readers become more aware of evaluative language found in news articles, documentaries, or historical accounts, enabling them to interpret political messages more responsibly. Ultimately, the research offers practical applications that support a more informed, critical, and reflective engagement with political communication in Indonesia.

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The scope of this study focuses on the linguistic analysis of framing strategies in the biography *Soeharto: The Life and Legacy of Indonesia's Second President*. This study is conducted from the perspective of Applied Linguistics by employing a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to examine how language constructs the representation of Soeharto throughout the biography. Specifically, the study investigates the types of framing strategies, namely hero, villain, victim, and moral leader frames based on Tankard's (2001) theory, as well as the functions of framing, including defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral evaluations, and suggesting remedies based on Entman's (1993) framing theory. The analysis focuses on linguistic features, such as lexical choices, evaluative expressions, and discursive patterns, that contribute to the construction of Soeharto's moral representation. Through this linguistic perspective, the study examines how language is strategically employed to shape the portrayal of Soeharto's character and leadership within the biography.

This study has several limitations that may influence the results and interpretation. First, the analysis is based on a single data source, selected sections of the PDF biography *Soeharto: The Life and Legacy of Indonesia's Second President*, particularly from pages 22–49, which are chosen because they contain detailed narrative descriptions, evaluative expressions, and historical accounts that clearly illustrate how Soeharto's leadership and moral character are represented through language. These sections are considered relevant since they highlight important phases of Soeharto's political journey, including his rise to power, leadership during national challenges, and contributions to political stability,

which provide sufficient framing elements and lexical patterns for analysis. Additionally, the study relies solely on textual data and does not involve audience responses, meaning it cannot explain how framing strategies are interpreted by readers or the public. As this research is conducted within the scope of an undergraduate thesis, limited time and research scale also restrict the researcher from analyzing the entire biography or comparing it with other historical or biographical texts. Therefore, the findings should be understood as context-specific interpretations focused on selected narrative sections, and future research is encouraged to expand data sources, incorporate audience perspectives, or conduct comparative framing analysis for broader insights.