
The Semiotic Architecture of Systemic Failure: A Kress and van Leeuwen Multimodal Analysis of a Leadership Evaluation Infographic on Instagram

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the construction of meaning and the semiotic architecture of the infographic “Red Report Card: 1.6 Years of Prabowo’s Leadership,” which was posted by the Instagram account @nasional.insight on May 8, 2026. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using Multimodal Discourse Analysis within the framework of Kress and van Leeuwen’s Visual Grammar, which categorizes visual meaning into three metafunctions: representational, interactional, and compositional. Primary data—consisting of the infographic’s semiotic units and the post’s caption—were collected via screenshots and analyzed through unit inventory, an examination of the three metafunctions, and ideological synthesis. The findings reveal three key points. Representationally, the text is dominated by conceptual processes: a classificatory structure forms a hidden taxonomy that equates nine heterogeneous indicators within a single category of failure; a labeled analytical structure positions the head of state as a “Carrier” dissected by nine possessive attributes; and a symbolic structure operates through the dominance of the color red, chiaroscuro lighting, and the somber silhouette of the palace. Interactionally, the text combines close-ups, medium shots, and eye-level angles—a combination that desacralizes authority while simultaneously creating the irony of spatial proximity without emotional closeness. Compositionally, the center-margin, ideal-real, and given-new layouts—along with tiered salience and disparity framing—construct a discourse of elite alienation amid the crisis. Data-driven political infographics thus function as instruments of social control and ideological framing, while also providing material for the development of critical multimodal literacy in language learning.

Keywords: multimodal discourse analysis; political infographics; critical multimodal literacy; metafunction; visual grammar

A. INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has transformed the communication landscape of contemporary society (Famuji et al., 2026). Media that once operated in print and broadcast formats now run on data, algorithms, and platforms, a shift reaching interpersonal communication (Haidar Afif, 2025) as well as economic and political structures (Suharto et al., 2026), placing society in a global, transparent, interdependent habitat (Hartiwiningsih, 2025) and driving continuous renewal in technology use (Insya Musa, 2015). Within that ecology social media has become a contemporary public sphere: cyberspace has long been a channel for political actors (Andriana, 2013), the internet is inherent in Indonesian social life (Idris & Jamalullail, 2025), and half of

Indonesia's internet users are online more than five hours a day (Kholil, 2023). Instagram in particular conveys political messages through images and concise captions, in line with the declining attention span of audiences (H. D. Putri & Suksmawati, 2025). In Indonesia the freedom to voice criticism is guaranteed in Article 28E paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution (Quillon Nugraha et al., 2026) and operationalized through Law Number 9 of 1998 (Ariany & Perdana, 2025). One salient expression of that right is the emergence of accounts producing critical political content, among them @nasional.insight, whose rise is intertwined with digital criticism grounded in collective awareness as symbolic resistance to policies considered to fall short of social justice (Izzah, 2025).

Framing in digital media is no longer the monopoly of journalists; it is also performed by content creators, influencers, anonymous accounts, buzzer networks, and platform algorithms (Famuji & Khotimah, 2025), whose speed and segmentation make possible a micro-framing offering a different version of reality to each public segment (Suharto et al., 2026). In this setting the infographic becomes a strategic genre, compressing numerical data, typography, iconography, color, and photographic imagery into a single field consumed in seconds, and that density calls for an instrument able to read several semiotic modes at once.

Multimodality answers that need by recognizing that meaning is produced not by a single mode but by the simultaneous interaction of semiotic resources. Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 2021) argue that written text, visual elements, layout, color, sound, and gesture each possess a grammar of their own and carry an ideological load (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), while Multimodal Discourse Analysis combines linguistic analysis with visual semiotics to show how those elements jointly form discourse (O'Halloran, 2011). Visual Grammar supplies a framework parallel to the three metafunctions of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics: the representational, the interactional, and the compositional (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), which concern respectively how images represent experience and the relations among participants, the relation among producer, image, and audience, and the arrangement of elements in visual space (Purbasari, 2021). Representationally, internal relations are distinguished into narrative and conceptual processes, with the vector as the decisive marker (Eka Kusuma & Linda, 2022); conceptual processes divide into classificational, analytical, and symbolic structures, which arrange objects taxonomically, dissect part-whole relations, and attach cultural value (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). The framework has proved operational for reading visual elements and layout as grammatical units (Ghiffary Isman et al., 2021).

Research on political communication and multimodal discourse on social media is extensive but differently focused. A first group examines visual and verbal framing in government accounts and positions Instagram as the most strategic platform for reaching a young audience (Dwi Rahayu et al., 2025), though its framing studies stay concentrated on news media while strongly visual studies neglect the verbal aspect (Dwi Rahayu et al., 2025). A second applies multimodal analysis to policy discourse, treating the caption as part of a visual practice carrying ideological meaning and power relations (Syukri et al., 2025), and to the representation of social issues in Indonesian social media (Hany et al., 2025). A third works on non-political objects such as advertisements, film posters, and news images, consistently demonstrating the productivity of the three-metafunction framework (Nababan et al., 2025). A fourth concentrates on devices of display: typography and layout as socio-semiotic markers (Gheni & Al-Hindawi, 2024), color and layout in design (Monica, 2010), and visual hierarchy in infographics (Mestry et al., n.d.).

A gap remains. Previous studies have explored the role of social media in shaping opinion and exercising freedom of expression, but rarely dissect in technical terms how semiotic architecture constructs a narrative of systemic failure out of complex economic data. Objects of multimodal study in Indonesia have been dominated by commercial advertisements and official government accounts rather than performance-evaluation infographics produced by

critical citizen accounts, and little research shows how macroeconomic indicators are deconstructed into visual units that guide audiences toward a conclusion of managerial failure, or how such findings may be drawn into language learning. This study fills that gap.

On the basis of the discussion above, this study aims to analyze the construction of meaning and the semiotic architecture of the infographic “Rapor Merah 1,6 Tahun Kepemimpinan Prabowo”, uploaded by the account @nasional.insight. More specifically, the study answers the following three questions.

1. How does the representational metafunction build a taxonomy of failure through the classificational, analytical, and symbolic structures of the infographic?
2. How does the interactional metafunction organize the social relation between the figure of the leader and the audience through *gaze*, social distance, and angle?
3. How does the compositional metafunction orchestrate the spatial layout so that a narrative of elite isolation amid crisis is formed?

Theoretically, the study extends Visual Grammar from advertising and news reporting to data-based political infographics, whose distinctive feature is that statistical figures function as semiotic units. Practically, it gives readers a framework for recognizing visual persuasion in digital political content. Pedagogically, the findings may be developed into teaching material for critical multimodal literacy, since reading texts that combine several modes is now part of literacy competence (Serafini, 2014). The study analyzes how reality is represented in a multimodal text; it does not test the truth of the figures displayed and endorses no political position.

B. METHOD

This study employs a descriptive-interpretive qualitative approach with the method of Multimodal Discourse Analysis framed by the Visual Grammar of Kress and van Leeuwen. The approach is chosen because image, typography, color, numerical data, and layout operate simultaneously, so an analysis restricted to verbal text would miss most of the persuasive work (Hany et al., 2025). The object is the infographic “Rapor Merah 1,6 Tahun Kepemimpinan Prabowo”, uploaded by the Instagram account @nasional.insight on 8 May 2026, selected purposively because it evaluates the highest executive office through quantitative indicators and combines photographic, iconographic, typographic, and statistical modes within one visual field. The portrait of the head of state contained in the infographic could not be traced to a photographic session commissioned for this post and is therefore treated throughout as an appropriated image: a pre-existing photograph selected, cropped, and post-processed by the account rather than taken for it. Accordingly, every reading offered below concerns the meaning potential of the text as encountered by the reader, not the documented intention of a designer or a photographer.

The primary data are the semiotic units of the infographic and the caption: the photograph, the nine indicator blocks with their icons and figures, the title and closing slogan, color, lighting, background, and layout. The secondary data are books and articles on multimodality, visual semiotics, and digital political communication. Data were collected through screenshot documentation at full resolution and non-participant observation, without interaction with the account or its followers. The main instrument is the researcher, assisted by an analytical worksheet organized by the three metafunctions, in which every unit is recorded with its visual marker and potential meaning.

Analysis proceeded in five stages: inventory and segmentation of the semiotic units; a reading of the representational metafunction, distinguishing narrative from conceptual processes and identifying classificational, analytical, and symbolic structures; a reading of the interactional metafunction through *gaze*, social distance, and angle; a reading of the compositional metafunction through information value, salience, and framing; and ideological

synthesis, integrating the three readings into one discursive conclusion related to the context of digital political communication in Indonesia.

Validity was maintained in five ways: persistence of observation through repeated readings; triangulation of theory across Visual Grammar and multimodal critical discourse analysis; triangulation of sources against previous studies of comparable objects, including work on visual hierarchy in infographic design (Mestry et al., n.d.); an audit trail recording every analytical decision; and peer debriefing among the authors, in which each reading was challenged and had to be defended against the visual evidence before it was retained. No coder external to the research team took part, and this is stated as a boundary on the reliability of the interpretation rather than as a claim of intercoder agreement.

Three limitations follow. The study covers a single infographic and its caption, so its findings are not generalized to the genre. It includes no reception data, so the effects described are potential rather than measured. It does not verify the accuracy of the figures displayed, since its concern is the construction of meaning rather than the truth of content. Finally, it has no access to the production process, so no claim is made about who took which design decision or why; every statement below about the effect of a visual choice is a statement about meaning potential, not about intention.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Description of the Object and Inventory of Semiotic Units

The object is a single-frame infographic uploaded by @nasional.insight on 8 May 2026 under the title “RAPOR MERAH 1,6 TAHUN KEPEMIMPINAN PRABOWO”; the account consistently produces evaluative political content of the kind that has grown alongside digital criticism grounded in collective awareness (Izzah, 2025). It is composed on a square field with a textured black background. At the center stands a medium-shot photograph of the head of state, flanked by nine indicator blocks, four left and five right, each consisting of a red icon, a white issue label, and a statistical figure in large red type. The main title runs above in massive red capitals; below, a rhetorical question and closing slogan are set in capitals, backed by a descending red line and the silhouettes of high-rise buildings, while a dim palace silhouette occupies the upper background.



Figure 1. The infographic examined in this study (Source: post of the Instagram account @nasional.insight, 8 May 2026)

2. The Representational Metafunction

a. Micro Narrative Processes

The representational structure shows no dominance of narrative processes, since no explicit action vector is found in the main participant; narrative elements appear only marginally, as a temporal psychological supplement (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). The first is a non-transactional reaction realized through a gaze directed outside the frame without any clear phenomenon as its object, which shifts the physical narrative into an internal narrative of contemplative burden (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The second is a spatial trend vector, the red fluctuating line in the lower background, moving downward from left to right. Beyond these, the articulation is governed by conceptual processes, in which the design arranges categories and values rather than actions (Ledin & Machin, 2016).

b. Classificational Structure

The classificational structure builds a taxonomic relation between *superordinate* and *subordinate* elements. Visual elements and layout possess a grammar of their own, and representational meaning is read through narrative and conceptual structures (Ghiffary Isman et al., 2021); here layout and typographic hierarchy construct a rigid *covert taxonomy* (Gheni & Al-Hindawi, 2024). The main title holds the superordinate position as the category label subsuming everything below, while the nine indicators are subordinate. Two strategies reinforce their equivalence. The first is symmetrical spatial organization: the nine points are divided into two columns flanking the photograph as the axis of symmetry, so that each issue appears to carry the same weight of urgency (Bateman, 2014). The second is visual parallelism: every data point uses an identical morphology, a red icon, a white label, and a figure in large red type, guiding perception into an automatic classification in which all issues belong to one family of emergency (van Leeuwen, 2011). Because no formal dividing lines separate the data, the taxonomy remains covert: the reader is never told that the nine indicators are commensurable, but the layout asserts it (Machin & Mayr, 2012), equalizing nine heterogeneous measures within a single category of failure.

c. Analytical Structure

Alongside it, the analytical structure builds a rigid part-whole relation (Bi, 2019). A visual analytical process does not represent an action but dissects the functional identity of an object into its attributes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), distributing the roles of *Carrier*, the whole, and *possessive attributes*, the parts (Ly & Jung, 2015). Here the head of state is placed centrally as Carrier, read as an entity made of measurable components rather than an agent (Bouvier & Chen, 2021). The nine statistical comparisons act as possessive attributes, deconstructing the complexity of governmental performance into units that appear empirically measurable (Ledin & Machin, 2019). The type adopted is the *labelled analytical process*: each attribute carries a formal iconographic marker, so that the icons function as labels of crisis organs, and the body of government is dissected as an anatomical object that is ill, guiding the reader to see national leadership as structurally composed of failing policy components (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Table 1 sets out the nine attributes with their markers and potential meanings.

Table 1. The Nine *Possessive Attributes*, Their Iconographic Markers, and Potential Meanings

No	Attribute	Iconographic Marker	Potential Semiotic Meaning
1	Weakening exchange rate (Rp17,400/USD)	A coin bearing the “Rp” symbol with the shadow of a plunging arrow	The circle of the coin, associated with purchasing power, is subdued by a downward vector; it suggests the shrinking of national prosperity
2	Decline of the IHSG (down by almost 20%)	A shortened bar chart with a broken downward arrow	Symbolizes the loss of capital, the collapse of investor confidence, and macroeconomic destabilization
3	Unemployment (7.36 million people)	A half-body pictogram of a worker in a construction helmet	A symbol of the working class and of human productivity; it converts a figure into a message about the loss of livelihood
4	Food and energy inflation (2.44%)	A blazing fire	Carries a destructive resonance and a sense of an uncontrolled situation; it turns an abstract statistic into an everyday burden of living
5	Rice production down (-3.16% YoY)	A stalk of rice	A symbol of agrarian life and food sovereignty; set beside a negative figure it marks a collective anxiety over scarcity
6	State debt (Rp9,658.1 trillion)	A money bag labeled “Rp”	A visual irony: the bag that ordinarily marks wealth is transformed into a burden and an intergenerational obligation
7	State Budget deficit (Rp240 trillion)	A document with a chart and a magnifying glass	Symbolizes the process of audit and inspection; it marks the management of state cash as standing under public scrutiny
8	Debt maturing in 2026 (Rp833.96 trillion)	An hourglass	A representation of time running out; it functions as a symbolic alarm over the threat of fiscal pressure
9	Corruption Perception Index (CPI: 34)	A tilted scale	The archetype of law and justice; the tilt symbolizes the weakening of institutional integrity

Source: the authors’ analysis of the research object

d. Symbolic Structure

The symbolic structure carries the philosophical dimension of the text, since symbolic processes attach cultural value to objects rather than describing them (Serafini, 2010). An attributive symbolic process occurs when the identity of the main participant is determined by surrounding objects carrying cultural values, made conspicuous through color, size, or lighting (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). Three instruments operate. The first is the desemanticization and salience of red, dominating the title, figures, markers, and graph against black; high color intensity detaches an object’s practical function and turns it into a pure symbol (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). In the Indonesian institutional and educational evaluation system red conventionally conveys danger and adverse consequence and triggers strong physiological responses (Daria Aleksandrovna et al., 2024), labelling the entire leadership period a condition of crisis (Machin & Mayr, 2025). The second comprises attributes of authority: clothing is a marker of formal political position rather than covering (Ledin & Machin, 2020), and the black peci, dark suit, red tie, and state pin form a dress code representing the legitimacy of the highest power (Machin & Mayr, 2025), so that the criticism addresses the institution rather than the individual. The third is conceptual iconography, translating abstract economic categories into familiar cultural objects so that statistics acquire immediate sensory value (Serafini, 2010).

The suggestive symbolic process produces meaning instead through a mood radiating from the participant (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), presenting a single participant against an abstracted background (Serafini, 2014). Two elements build it. The first is expression and gaze: the figure is tense and unsmiling, lips closed, forehead furrowed, the eyes set slightly upward

beyond the frame. The absence of eye contact refuses an equal interpersonal relation and positions the figure as an object of contemplation (Jewitt et al., 2016), radiating psychological tension and the burden of leadership (Ledin & Machin, 2020). The second is *chiaroscuro* lighting and the gloomy silhouette of the palace (van Leeuwen, 2011): one-sided low-key lighting leaves half the face in shadow, producing an impression of leadership standing beneath the shadow of its problems; whether that lighting originated in the source photograph or in post-processing cannot be established, and the claim here concerns only its effect on the reading (Serafini, 2014), while the dim, dirty-textured palace deconstructs a symbol of grandeur into a somber landscape (Ledin & Machin, 2020).

The lower zone works as a *semiotic anchor* locking interpretation into a single discursive conclusion (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). Three elements operate there. First, capital typography and color polarization: the rhetorical question and the closing slogan are set entirely in capitals, raising visual loudness to underline urgency (Gheni & Al-Hindawi, 2024), and within the slogan “KINERJA BUKAN NARASI” is white as an emblem of clarity while “RAKYAT BUTUH BUKTI” is deep red (van Leeuwen, 2011), repositioning red from a marker of statistics into a collective demand. Second, a geometric vector of degradation, the red fluctuation line plunging beneath the inflation and employment data, correlating the macroeconomic curve with life at the grassroots (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Third, a dystopian skyline: the megapolitan landscape, conventionally a symbol of progress (Bateman, 2014), is deconstructed into a dead and smoking cityscape (Ledin & Machin, 2020).

3. The Interactional Metafunction

The interactional metafunction concerns how a visual text organizes the social relation and emotional engagement between represented and interactive participants (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021), an interaction constructed through visual choices that guide the cognitive position of the audience (Jewitt et al., 2016) and traced here through gaze, social distance, and angle (Islam et al., 2023).

a. Gaze: The Construction of the Offer Image and of Contemplative Distance

Gaze distinguishes the *demand image*, in which the participant looks directly at the viewer, from the *offer image*, in which the participant is presented as an object of contemplation (Purbasari, 2021). The central figure is presented with a rigid look, the eyes slightly narrowed and directed above the reader’s line of sight, so the image belongs to the offer type (Ledin & Machin, 2019). This *out-of-frame gaze* touches no concrete object inside the image, since the background in its direction is only the dark palace silhouette; the figure acts as Reactor while the Phenomenon triggering his reaction lies beyond the reader’s reach (Tseng, 2013). The impact runs in two directions: an aura of alienation, the viewer placed as a third party peering into the leader’s inner silence, and a metaphor of failure to respond, since the upward gaze reads as a turning away from the nine indicators and the accusatory sentence below (Zhao, 2024).

b. Social Distance: The Medium Shot and an Ironic Proximity

Social distance is simulated through framing size (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). The figure is executed as a *medium shot* from the chest and shoulders to the tip of the peci, which by convention represents a social-personal distance of one to two meters (Bateman, 2014). At that distance the reader observes the affective anatomy of the figure, the furrows on the forehead and the tense folds beneath the eyes (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Yet the closeness radiates no warmth: it is cancelled by the offer structure, since the gaze refuses to interact, and by the nine data boxes acting as framing attributes that isolate the figure in his central box (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Ideologically the contradictory scaling is satirical: the audience is brought closer not to build empathy but to underline the psychological distance between the elite and

the reality faced by society (Machin & Mayr, 2025), so the reader shares the personal space of the head of state while sensing him cut off from the demand written below (Zhao, 2024).

c. Angle: The Desacralization of Authority and Ideological Involvement

Angle distributes *power relations* and dictates the viewer's subjective involvement (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021); it is not a neutral record of geometry but an ideological act constructing how a political subject is defined before the audience (Serafini, 2010). On the vertical axis the figure is photographed level with the reader's line of sight, and an *eye-level* position conventionally constructs a neutral, equal relation that removes the asymmetry of power (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). In political imaging, however, a president is generally photographed from below to produce grandeur and institutional superiority (Machin & Mayr, 2025); in the absence of that low angle the cultural degree of the leader is lowered within the reading the text makes available, so that he stands without a symbolic shield before the reader's judgement (Ledin & Machin, 2020). On the horizontal axis the body is frontal, maximizing involvement, yet it is combined with an out-of-frame gaze, so involvement is offered by the posture and withdrawn by the eyes (Zhao, 2024).

4. The Compositional Metafunction

The compositional metafunction parallels the textual metafunction in Systemic Functional Linguistics: it integrates representational and interactional meanings into a coherent whole through information value, salience, and framing, the level at which the semiotic potential of each mode is finally organized (Jusslin & Heila-Ylikallio, 2020).

a. Information Value

Information value analyzes how the placement of a component within a zone of the visual field assigns it a status (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2021). On the *center-margin* axis the photograph occupies the center as the nucleus of meaning while the nine indicators sit at the margins as elements that qualify it, making the leader the point to which every figure is referred. On the *ideal-real* axis the upper zone holds the title as the generalized essence of the message, while the lower zone holds the rhetorical question and slogan as its practical and evidentiary consequence (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). On the *given-new* axis the given zone holds the indicators most familiar to the public, the exchange rate, the stock index, and unemployment, while the new zone holds rice production, state debt, the budget deficit, the maturity profile, and the corruption index. Table 2 summarizes the distribution.

Table 2. The Distribution of Information Value across the Layout Zones of the Infographic

Axis of Polarity	Zone	Visual Content	Ideological Value Formed
Center-Margin	Center	Half-body portrait of the head of state together with state attributes	The single axis of causation and of responsibility
Center-Margin	Margin	Nine pairs of indicator icons and figures	An encirclement of crisis surrounding the center of power
Top-Bottom	Ideal (top)	The title "RAPOR MERAH 1,6 TAHUN KEPEMIMPINAN PRABOWO"	An abstract conceptual umbrella and an evaluative generalization
Top-Bottom	Real (bottom)	Interpellating sentence, closing slogan, plunging graph, city silhouette	A basis of proof and the real consequences for society
Left-Right	Given (left)	Exchange rate, IHSG, unemployment, food and energy inflation	Surface crises already recognized by the public
Left-Right	New (right)	Rice production, state debt, State Budget deficit, maturing debt, CPI	New information in the form of structural fiscal and institutional detail

Source: the authors' analysis of the research object

b. Salience

Salience measures the power of an element to draw the eye first, and is produced by size, color contrast, sharpness, and position (Apyunita, 2025). Three levels are graded. The first is the title “RAPOR MERAH”, whose massive size, bold sans-serif face, glaring red against black, and topmost position make it a cognitive entry point locking the frame of thinking into a negative evaluative register from the first second (Veale et al., 2017). The second is the face, made prominent by one-sided lighting that renders it sharp while half the body is obscured, so the face becomes a visual magnet demanding interpersonal reflection (Darel Abdal Dzaki, 2025). The third is distributed across the nine statistical figures, enlarged far beyond their labels and saturated in red, leading the eye to skip the descriptions and stop at the numbers, strengthening the impression of data that are objectively valid and frightening at once (Monica, 2010).

c. Framing

Framing governs how elements are connected or separated (Sharma & Monahan, 2019). Two directions operate. The first is *disparity framing*, separating the leader at the center from the nine indicators: depth of field, lighting, and surrounding empty space detach the photograph from the very data describing his performance, and that detachment is the compositional realization of elite isolation, since the central figure is at once the referent of the indicators and the element most insulated from them. The second is *connectivity framing* among the nine indicators, which share an identical morphology, equal spacing, and unbroken alignment; the absence of any separating line binds them into one continuous block, so the reader receives nine heterogeneous measures as a single undifferentiated field of failure.

Discussion

The three metafunctions do not work separately. Representationally, conceptual processes and a covert taxonomy equalize nine heterogeneous indicators within one category of failure; interactionally, the offer image, medium shot, and eye-level angle desacralize authority and make it non-transactional; compositionally, the center-margin, ideal-real, and given-new arrangement, with graded salience and disparity framing, places the center of power in visual isolation. The same design choices therefore produce, at three levels at once, a discourse in which failure appears systemic and the leader appears both responsible for it and detached from it.

These findings reinforce and extend previous research: Instagram is an arena of multimodal political communication in which visual and verbal elements collaborate and the caption carries ideological meaning (Dwi Rahayu et al., 2025), and the three-metafunction framework is productive for reading persuasive texts (Nababan et al., 2025). Two matters are not underlined in that literature. First, in data-based political infographics, statistical figures work as full semiotic units: their size, color, and position determine the weight of their meaning, so a figure works as an icon works. Second, perceived validity is built not by any demonstration of sources but by parallelism of format, saturation of color, and enlargement of numerical typography, so a critical reading cannot stop at verifying figures but must read how they are displayed.

At the discursive level, such infographics belong within the function of social control: openness of information enables mutual control and helps society assess state administrators against prevailing values (Rahimallah & Ricky, 2023). In Indonesia that freedom is constitutionally guaranteed and operationalized in Law Number 9 of 1998 (Ariany & Perdana, 2025), while digital space is regulated by Law Number 1 of 2024 on the Second Amendment to the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (Sirait & Sendias, 2025). Provisions on content attacking honor mark the boundary, and the use of measurable indicators rather than

personal judgement distinguishes policy criticism from personal attack (Pranata, 2025), a distinction the analysis above shows performed visually: the state attributes shift the target from individual to institution.

The phenomenon may also be read through the public sphere, which emphasizes communication enabling society to participate in decision making, so that legitimacy depends on public discourse (Zakiyah et al., 2024). New media expand that space, so the people are no longer objects of policy but actors influencing its formulation (Andriana, 2013). Where a critical narrative mobilizes involvement at scale, cyber solidarity forms; new social movements center on identity and quality of life and act as civil society's self-defense against injustice (A. K. Putri, 2023). Participation drives responsiveness, responsiveness shapes opinion, and digital ethics acts as a limiting factor (Tamba & Kholikin, 2025). Through its indicators, its caption, and its closing slogan, the text positions itself as an act of public oversight rather than as a withdrawal of legitimacy. Whether audiences, institutions, or courts accept that self-positioning is an empirical and legal question that this study neither settles nor takes a position on.

Three counter-readings were considered in the course of the analysis and are reported here rather than set aside. The first concerns colour: red may be the standing palette of the account rather than an evaluative choice specific to this post, in which case its meaning would be conventional branding and not an ideological marker. The reading proposed above survives that objection only because red is distributed across functionally different units the title, the nine figures, the descending line, and the second half of the slogan so that it carries structural work inside the text rather than merely identifying its producer. The second concerns the photograph: the chiaroscuro lighting and the out-of-frame gaze may be properties inherited from an appropriated press image rather than effects produced for this post. The analysis therefore claims only that the selection and central placement of that photograph make those effects available to the reader. The third concerns layout: the symmetrical two-column arrangement of the nine indicators may follow from the constraints of the square Instagram frame rather than from any taxonomic design, and what is asserted here is the effect of commensurability on the reader, which holds whatever its origin. In each case the reading proposed was retained not because it was the only one available but because the three metafunctions converge on it and the caption anchors it verbally; where that convergence is absent, the weaker reading should be preferred.

Two boundaries must be stated. First, the study does not assess the truth of the figures. The indicators are of types released periodically by statistical agencies, monetary authorities, and anti-corruption monitors, so the infographic works with accountable categories; correspondence in category, however, is not correspondence in figures. Second, the analysis rests on one object without reception data, so the effects described are semiotic potentials rather than measured responses. Research combining multimodal analysis with source verification and reception study would close both gaps.

The pedagogical implication is direct. Reading texts that combine several modes is part of literacy competence, and meaning in students' multimodal texts is formed through the semiotic potential of each mode (Jusslin & Heila-Ylikallio, 2020). Political infographics can serve as material for critical multimodal literacy following the procedure used here: students inventory the semiotic units, distinguish data from judgements about data, explain how color, size, and position shape impressions, and formulate the verification questions for each figure. The sequence trains reading visual grammar and withholding conclusions guided by display (Serafini, 2014), and gives teachers of Indonesian an authentic context for teaching the difference between fact, opinion, and framing.

D. CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that the meaning of the infographic “Rapor Merah 1,6 Tahun Kepemimpinan Prabowo” is built by a coordinated semiotic architecture rather than by its numbers alone. Representationally, the text is governed by conceptual processes: a classificational structure forms a covert taxonomy equalizing nine heterogeneous indicators within one category of failure, a labelled analytical structure positions the head of state as a Carrier dissected by nine possessive attributes, and a symbolic structure works through red, chiaroscuro lighting, and the gloomy palace silhouette to fix the period as a condition of crisis.

Interactionally, the offer image, the medium shot, and the eye-level angle desacralize authority while producing the irony of spatial proximity without emotional closeness. Compositionally, the center-margin, ideal-real, and given-new arrangement, with graded salience and disparity framing, constructs a discourse of elite isolation amid crisis. Together they show that such an infographic works as an instrument of social control and ideological framing, in which perceived validity is produced by display as much as by data. Three recommendations follow. Data-based political infographics deserve treatment as a distinct genre in which statistical figures operate as semiotic units; the object and procedure used here can be developed into teaching material for critical multimodal literacy; and a critical reading of digital political content must extend beyond verifying figures to examining the visual devices that make them appear valid.

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