

## SHIFTING PUBLIC PERCEPTION IN THE JESSICA MIRNA CYANIDE-INFUSED COFFEE CASE: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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### Abstrak

This study aims to investigate the impact of social media on changing public perceptions in the Jessica Mirna Cyanide-Infused Coffee Case. The research method employed is descriptive, with the primary data source from TikTok, the official account @Netflix Indonesia, which released a documentary trailer titled 'Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso' in September 2023. The study applies Ruth Wodak's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theory along with other social media theories. The utilization of hashtags, trends, and algorithms on social media significantly impacts the broader dissemination of the case, leading to its resurgence in public discourse. Initially, social media was dominated by the hashtag #JusticeForMirna, which later transitioned to #JusticeForJessica following the release of the aforementioned documentary. This analysis also involves understanding language, framing, comments, and public responses, which influence the shaping of public opinion on the case. The research findings highlight shifts in public perception due to the influence of the aforementioned factors and public distrust in the case's transparency, attributed to insufficient evidence in court and newly revealed facts. This has sparked debates and positioned Jessica in two possibilities, either as the perpetrator or as a victim of the justice system. These factors have proven to be crucial in shaping diverse perspectives and generating opinion shifts among the public. Academically, this study provides in-depth insights into the complexity of social media's role in shaping public opinions on controversial issues. This is important given the rapid development of social media and online interactions, emphasizing the transformative power of discourse, narrative framing, and the dynamic nature of public perception.

**Keywords :** *Shifting; discourse analysis; public perception; social media*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Language plays a significant role in human life to understand communication and provide insights into thoughts, knowledge, culture, and different perspectives. According to (Nugraha in Nabila et al., 2022), language is an essential tool for social communication also serves as a form allowing people to exude their thoughts and feelings. This aligns with Chomsky's in his book "Syntactic Structures 1957" assertion emphasizing the role of language as a tool to express complex thoughts. To reinforce these objectives, Wodak (1989), in critical discourse analysis, combines linguistics elements as a tool to explore how language is used to shape social, political, and identity representations. Linguistics elements encompass its structure, usage, and role in human communication, such as phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. Thus, linguistics becomes a crucial discipline for understanding human interactions in social, cultural, and communicative contexts in both the real and virtual worlds.

In the digital era, human interactions are increasingly occurring in the virtual world, especially through social media. Social media platforms have played a central role and become the primary arena for sharing news, opinions, perspectives, and even intense debates. One of the most interesting aspects of current research is the impact of social media on public perception. One case that has regained attention is the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case, a murder involving cyanide poisoning in a glass of Vietnamese iced coffee that occurred in 2016. Despite being seven years ago, this case has once again become the subject of debate and public attention, even altering some public perceptions. As an example,



@hananswasono3431 • 2 bln lalu

Hakiiiiim kamu tidak akan tenang selama hidupmu sampe Kau MATIL..meemvonis Orang ga BERSALAH...

The transformation of public perception from #JusticeForMirna to #JusticeForJessica, largely influenced by fragments shared on social media, poses an intriguing challenge in communication analysis. Particularly, this case resurfaced after being presented in the Netflix documentary "Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso," directed by Rob Sixsmith and released on September 28, 2023, triggering extensive discussions among netizens in Indonesia and internationally.

Based on the elaborated research background mentioned above, the formulated problem identifications are as follows: 1). What is the impact of social media on changes in public perception in the Jessica Mirna cyanide-infused coffee case? 2). What are the influencing factors behind the changes in public perception in the Jessica Mirnacyanide-infused coffee case?

The study explores how social media platforms can be used to influence, spread propaganda, or reinforce specific ideologies, with the ultimate goal of shaping public perception. The methodological approach used to navigate this complexity is based on discourse analysis, incorporating several theories from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). According to Ruth Wodak, an expert in discourse analysis, changes in public perception on social media can be examined by investigating how language is used in online texts, influencing the construction of social representations, including the understanding of specific narratives or framings that shape public opinion. Focusing on the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case, this research aims to elucidate the role of social media in shaping public opinion and the significance of language in modern

communication, which has grown increasingly intricate in the digital age.

According to Wodak (1989), linguistics is used as a tool to understand how language is employed to shape social, political, and identity representations. It plays a central role in comprehending the complexity of human communication and the structure of language itself. Linguistics is a multidisciplinary field encompassing various subfields. Edward Sapir (1921) defines linguistics as the scientific study of language, covering the internal structure of language and its relationship with human thought and culture. Linguistics also observes language variation, language changes over time, and the social aspects of language use. This indicates that linguistics is a broad and diverse discipline that allows us to grasp the fundamentals of human communication. Linguistics experts investigate the structure and usage of language with the goal of uncovering the basic principles governing the language system.

In this literature review, the researcher explores the field of linguistics more broadly and then focuses on the perspective of a leading expert in discourse analysis by conducting research on influential social media. Van Dijk (1993) describes discourse analysis as an approach used to reveal how written texts or oral conversations reflect and shape power and ideological aspects within society. Discourse analysis should pay attention to elements such as word choice, speech acts, sentence structure, and the broader social context. From another perspective, Ruth Wodak in her books "Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis" and "The Discursive Construction of National Identity" discusses discourse analysis as an interdisciplinary approach used to understand and analyze specific texts in the broader social, political, and cultural

context. Ruth Wodak combines linguistic theory with sociology, psychology, and other social sciences to understand how language and text reflect and shape social reality. Wodak also emphasizes the importance of context in discourse analysis.

In the field of discourse analysis, various approaches and theories are applied or proposed by Ruth Wodak. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this theory focuses on the role of language in creating, maintaining, or changing power relations in society, involving the analysis of texts and discourse to reveal how ideologies, power, and inequality are reflected in language. Referring to the book titled "Methods for Critical Discourse Analysis" by Ruth Wodak, Michael Mayer (2001:55) states that an in-depth analysis of discourse fragments should include several aspects such as context, surface text, rhetorical means, content, and ideological statements. In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), shifts usually refer to changes in discourse or language used to represent and frame a specific issue or topic. These shifts become the primary focus in CDA as they can reveal the dynamics of power, ideology, and meaning construction in discourse. There are several types of shifts in CDA: 1) Semantic shift involves altering the meanings of words or phrases in a specific context. In the context of critical discourse analysis, semantic shift is used to create a narrative or understanding that supports specific objectives, such as influencing public opinion or changing power relations and ideologies in society. 2) Framing shift occurs when framing an issue changes from initially positive to negative or vice versa. Framing controllers may attempt to influence public opinion, either supporting or opposing specific policies. This can be done intentionally and used to affect public perception. 3) Narrative shift is employed to achieve specific goals and may involve

changes in language or descriptions used to depict events or individuals. 4) In critical discourse analysis, this refers to how an issue or event is presented in a text through the use of language styles such as persuasive rhetoric, emotional rhetoric, or figurative language.

Changes or shifts in public perception that occur on social media can be influenced by several complex factors. Some theories from the journals below can be used as supporting theories for the main theory used by Ruth Wodak regarding CDA theory used to study social media. These include Algorithm Theory (Zeynep Tufekci), Virality Theory (Jenkins, Burgess, and Green), Public Response Theory (Brian Massumi), and Filter Bubble Theory (Eli Pariser). The factors that can cause changes in public perception through social media, such as social media content, framing, narrative, power and interests, public comments and responses, trends, and social media algorithms.

Ruth Wodak has developed various approaches to discourse studies, allowing language and text analysis in various social and cultural contexts. In this research investigating the influence of social media on public perception, the author uses the concept of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) developed by Ruth Wodak. The concepts and theories of CDA used to analyze the influence of social media on changes in public perception involve: 1) Framing is used to analyze how issues or information on social media are organized or presented in a particular way, so we can see how framing affects public perception of these issues. In the context of social media, framing can be related to titles, narratives, and hashtags used. 2) Identity Construction is used to analyze how individuals or groups on social media construct someone's identity and how other individuals or groups describe

their own identity, affecting public perception. 3) Power in Discourse is a concept used to understand how social media can be used to control or influence public opinion. Furthermore, this concept can analyze how powerful entities on social media shape narratives that can influence public opinion. 4) Ideology and Ideological Framing are used to explore how specific ideologies are reflected in social media discourse, including how specific values, beliefs, or ideologies are expressed and promoted in social media texts and how this affects public perception. 5) Context Analysis is used to consider the broader social, political, and cultural context when analyzing the influence of social media on public perception. This context can include global events, political developments, or social issues that affect how issues are discussed on social media. With the CDA approach, the author can use these patterns to analyze the influence of social media on changes in public perception of a widely discussed and attention-grabbing event

## **B. METHOD**

This study adopts a descriptive approach by Prof. Dr. Sugiyono (2018) as its main methodology, explaining observed phenomena without excessive intervention. The research process begins with systematic steps aimed at achieving the research objectives, involving the identification of relevant research topics related to the impact of social media on changes in public perception surrounding the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case. Data collection involves various sources, including social media, online news platforms, and discussion forums related to the case. The collected data encompasses various types, such as text, images, videos, comments, and news related to the case. The collected data is analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as proposed by Ruth Wodak. This method involves content


analysis, framing analysis, narrative change analysis, and so forth. The analysis helps identify changes in public perception of the case following the primary data source from TikTok, the official account @Netflix Indonesia, which released a documentary trailer titled 'Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso' in September 2023. And additional data was gathered from past public comments on the case during the trial, obtained from the CNN Indonesia YouTube channel with the title "*Sidang Vonis Jessica, ...*" uploaded on October 27, 2017


The results of this analysis are interpreted to provide an in-depth understanding of how changes in discourse and understanding affect public perception, as well as to identify the factors triggering these changes. Thus, this research makes a significant contribution to understanding how social media influences public views on controversial issues, as observed in this case.


### C. RESULT

#### Public Perception

The researcher gathered data from public comments on the official account @Netflix Indonesia, which released a documentary trailer titled 'Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso' in September 2023.

 @miranovita-lc7ru • 1 bln lalu :  
Dari awal kasus ini emng sy merasa bukan jesika lah pembunuhnya , dia hanya d jadikan kambing hitam . Sempat berdebat juga sama keluarga dan tmn2 sy dulu , ternyata Allah maha baik , Allah yg buka kembali kasus ini , Allah yg akan tunjukan kuasanya , derajat mu akan d angkat jesika , insyaallah ...

 @helloworld0061 • 2 bln lalu :  
kalo ternyata akhjrnya dia gak bersalah, apa yang bisa negara gantikan untuk menggantikan waktunya dia yang sudah kalian rampas wahai para penegak keadilan ?

 @oghedecoration6333 • 2 bln lalu :  
Inilah wajah2 hakim yg menghukum hanya krn keyakinan mereka...tanpa bukti2 akurat yg pasti..ngeri ini negri.....

(The data obtained through the CNN Indonesia YouTube channel with the title "*Sidang Vonis Jessica, ...*" uploaded on October 27, 2017.)

As reported from various sources, after 7 years, the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case resurfaced when Netflix released a documentary titled "Ice Cold: Murder, Coffee, and Jessica Wongso" on Thursday, September 28, 2023. This documentary, directed by Rob Sixsmith and with a duration of 86 minutes, captured the attention of a significant portion of the Indonesian population, becoming a widely discussed topic on the internet. The film highlights various unanswered questions surrounding Jessica Wongso's trial. After the video clips from this documentary went viral on social media, the CNN Indonesia YouTube channel received new comments. Despite it being 7 years since this content was uploaded, many Indonesian netizens once again expressed their views and perceptions of the case. However, unlike in the past, after this content was widely discussed again, many people expressed sympathy and, therefore, had different views on the case.

Public perception during the judge's verdict reading can be seen from several comments representing the dominant public perception at that time.





@rayriekkifne • 7 thn lalu

Alhamdulillah ,masih Allah Kasih ke kita  
Hakim yg Mulia yg hatinya mengikuti  
keyakinan hati Nurani tidak ada  
keragu-raguan sama sekali walau jalan lurus  
itu amat sangat terjal & penuh  
plintiran-plintiran dusta. Amiin. (perasaan  
terlindungi bagi masyarakat luas)



@soniafebbbyollashow9719 • 7 thn lalu

PEMBUNUH HARUS DIHUKUM YG SEBERAT  
BERAT NYA !!! «HUKUM MATI» !!!



@elvinaalfisyahrin3793 • 2 thn lalu

Saya seratus persen mendukung pk Nuh ahli  
digital.... Semoga Alloh selalu melindungi  
beliau

From the above data, it can be concluded that there has been a change in perception among a significant portion of the public regarding the case, shifting from believing Jessica as the murderer to seeing Jessica as a victim of justice because the evidence presented in the trial still sparks debates. The content of the text found on social media reveals how changes in language use and narrative impact public perception. Data collected from TikTok @Netflix Indonesia, uploaded on August 31, 2023, as a trailer for the Netflix documentary film, successfully captured significant public attention.



miss.Jimin Park

gw mikirnya ini tu bukan kasus  
pembunuhan, bisa aja kan emang mirna  
mati karna sakit, nyatanya ga ada racun  
yg ditemuin, trs ada orang yg manfaatin

10-02 Balas

♡ 2069



adittt

nah benar dan ad 3 orang mencoba  
kopi mirna, bila dituang sianida secra  
logikan 3 orang itu pasti kena dmpk  
sianid tersbut

10-08 Balas

♡ 14



fine022 ▶ feyyy's

kta dr jaja di poadcast nya dr **richard**  
**le**<sup>q</sup> dia kena mag kronis

10-07 Balas

♡ 1



The perceptions of some netizens above may be influenced by several scripts in the documentary film, in which the film mentions that:

Otto Hasibuan (40:32-40:45) said “Kemampuan apa yang dimiliki seorang hakim bisa mengatakan itu mati karena sianida? Ya kalo mati karena alami tidak bisa ada criminal, dong. Mereka Mulai melihat ada keanehan di dalam kasus ini.” (42:56-43:10) Ketika Mirna diperiksa dalam waktu 70 menit setelah dia meninggal ternyata di dalam lambungnya itu negatif sianida, loh kalau 70 menit setelah dia meninggal negatif sianida, itu berarti tidak ada sianida di dalam tubuhnya”

This is consistent with the information presented by expert witnesses in the documentary film, as elaborated by dr. Djaja Surya Atmadja (Forensic Pathologist at RSCM and the First DNA Doctor in Indonesia),

dr. Djaja Surya Atmadja (42:09-42:37) “Kalau tidak diperiksa seluruh organ, Anda tidak bisa tahu sebab matinya. Dan itu dogma di forensik, pak. Kalau tidak diperiksa otaknya, kita tidak tahu apakah di otaknya ada stroke atau tidak, misalnya. Parunya ada penyakit tertentu atau tidak? Di jantungnya ada yang semuanya berpotensi untuk bisa membikin mati”(43:15-43:17) “matinya bukan karena sianida pak”.

Several other comments can also be used to support this analysis, as expressed by the account



negative, or neutral views regarding the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case.

It should be noted that social media does not always provide an objective or complete picture of legal cases. In some instances, public opinion pressure through social media can create situations where legal decisions are influenced by external factors unrelated to legal facts and justice. By comparison, in analyzing the role of comments and public responses, the author compares the Jessica case, which received less attention in 2016 and resulted in a court decision without significant public influence, especially when social media was not as developed as it is now.

In the case of Barada Elizer, the influence of social media might also play a role in shaping public perception and supporting demands for fair punishment. This case garnered significant responses and attention from the public, allowing people to follow every step of the legal process. At that time, there were many data manipulations, manipulated CCTV recordings, power struggles, and disruptions in the reconstruction process. However, as the Indonesian public followed every detail and provided crucial feedback in the legal process, the data gradually became more transparent, and a suspect, Fredi Sambo, was finally identified as the mastermind behind the planned murder.

Although social media can influence public perception, the legal process must still continue according to the principles of justice and objectivity. In comparing the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case and the Barada Elizer case, there are some similarities and differences in their influence on public perception. One significant similarity is the strong influence of social media in both cases.

In this digital era, social media provides a platform for people to share information,

comments, and opinions about these legal cases. Social media platforms enable narratives and content to evolve rapidly, influencing how the public views these cases. The visual representation of events in the form of images, videos, and emotional aspects also plays a crucial role in influencing public perception in both cases. In both the Jessica Cyanide Coffee and Barada Elizer cases, images and videos provide powerful visual evidence that can impact public views. Additionally, the emotional aspects in both cases influence the level of sympathy or empathy the public has toward individuals or events involved in these cases. Although there are similarities in the influence of social media and visualization in both cases, there are also significant differences. First, comparisons with similar cases play a role in shaping public perception of the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case. There are elements resembling murder cases in this situation, and this comparison affects how the public views the case.

Overall, the comparison between the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case and the Barada Elizer case reveals the complexity of factors influencing changes in public perception of legal cases. Factors such as social media, visualization, emotions, comparisons with similar cases, legal decisions, and the role of documentary films have different impacts on how the public views these cases. This illustrates the dynamic nature of the media and public environment in shaping perceptions of complex legal issues.

The impact of social media trends on the changing public perception of a case, such as the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case, reflects the complexity of information and opinion developments in the digital world. Analyzing these trends involves a deep understanding of the changes in discussion focus, public opinions, and narratives over time. Firstly, social media trends create intensity in public



conversations. When the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case becomes a trend, discussions on social media become more active and involve various segments of society. Changes in trending topics reflect the evolution of how people discuss and understand the case. Secondly, the role of social media, including the use of hashtags, trends, and interactions on platforms, plays a crucial role in shaping public perception. Hashtags like #JusticeForJessica can create an identity for an online movement or campaign that leads to changes in public perception of the case. These trends can reflect a shift in the focus of discussion, moving from dramatic or sensational aspects to more profound legal and justice issues.

At the time the data was collected, #JusticeForJessica had been used in 520.1 million views, followed by #SaveJessica with 125.3 million views. Concrete examples of the early use of the #JusticeForJessica hashtag can serve as evidence of how social media trends can initiate or represent a particular movement or opinion among the public. Screenshots from various posts using the hashtag, statistical data on how often and in what context the hashtag is used on social media platforms, show changes in social media trends that can create a domino effect. When many people engage in discussions or debates, it can influence public awareness and accelerate changes in public perception of the case.

The influence of social media algorithms in shaping public perception can be a significant factor in the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case. Social media platform algorithms play a key role in determining the content presented to users, influencing what they see and access. If someone tends to see content that supports their initial views on the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case, social media algorithms can reinforce that perception by continuously displaying

content that aligns with those views. Conversely, exposure to different or opposing content can make the algorithm influence changes in perception by introducing different perspectives.

The significance of these algorithms in forming information bubbles and enhancing confirmation bias on social media cannot be ignored. Algorithms designed to provide content tailored to user preferences can create a closed loop where individuals are more inclined to accept information confirming their own views. Over time, this can lead to deeper divisions and differing perceptions among the public.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, this analysis delves into the complex dynamics of social media's deeper influence on the shifting public perception in the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case. The study emphasizes the crucial role of theoretical elements such as framing, discourse, and the impact of documentary films in shaping narratives to present new perspectives or support existing ones. This serves as a catalyst to change public understanding and construct Jessica Wongso's identity as either a murder suspect or a victim of injustice in the case.

Currently, social media, with its extensive reach, significantly contributes to disseminating evolving narratives in the case. The analysis highlights the role and influence of hashtags and trends in shaping public discourse, along with the impact of algorithms that can reinforce existing opinions or introduce perspectives, sparking discussions among many social media users. To date, public perception of the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case continues to spark debates. However, there has been a shift in public perception of Jessica, who was previously convicted as Mirna's murderer. With the

evidence presented in court deemed insufficient, public perception now views her as a victim of the judicial system, leading to calls for the case to be reopened to demonstrate that the judge may have wrongly sentenced Jessica.

This discourse analysis ultimately provides valuable insights into the ever-changing landscape of public opinion in the digital era. It explains the complex interaction between information dissemination, narrative framing, and the transformative power of discourse, emphasizing the critical need to critically evaluate the impact of social media on public perception, particularly in complex legal cases like the Jessica Cyanide Coffee case.

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