

Stance, Framing, and Indexicality: A Multimodal Discourse Study of the #KaburAjaDulu

Rakhmat Wahyudin Sagala*

Department of English Language Teaching, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Tri Indah Rezeki

Department of English Language Teaching, STKIP Budidaya, Binjai, Indonesia

Amrullah

Department of Information Systems, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

Abstract—The hashtag #KaburAjaDulu has gone viral among Indonesian netizens, functioning both as a light-hearted expression of escapism and as a political vehicle for critiquing governance and socio-economic stress. This study aims to examine how hashtags—particularly #KaburAjaDulu—operate as multimodal semiotic resources that construct meaning through the interaction of text, image, and affect in digital discourse. Rather than treating hashtags as mere metadata, this research conceptualizes them as indexical, stance-taking, and framing devices within multimodal communication. While prior studies have explored hashtags as tools for solidarity and memes as instruments of humor and resistance, their role as semi-productive discursive hubs that fuse linguistic and visual elements for ironic political critique remains underexplored. Methodologically, the study employed a qualitative multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) integrated with corpus-based collocation analysis. A total of 150 public posts on X (formerly Twitter) containing the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu were systematically collected between February and July 2025 through manual screenshot documentation. Each post was examined for textual, visual, and intertextual features, focusing on how multimodal resources co-construct meaning and stance. The findings reveal that hashtags function as discursive synapses, weaving together humor, irony, and critique into polysemous narratives of resistance. #KaburAjaDulu encapsulates both withdrawal and resistance, demonstrating how humor and satire act as forms of political commentary. The study contributes to digital semiotics by showing that hashtags are dynamic multimodal constructs shaping collective identity and political expression in contemporary digital culture.

Index Terms—#KaburAjaDulu, multimodal tweet, stance-taking, framing devices, indexical marker

I. INTRODUCTION

The user-generated discourse of social media is increasingly centered on multimodal signs, where meaning is co-constructed through combinations of text, images, videos, memes, and emojis (Koltsova & Kartashkova, 2022). Among these, hashtags have emerged as distinctive semiotic resources that encapsulate complex communicative functions. They serve not only as metadata markers but also as participatory indicators that shape identity building, online coordination, and affective alignment within digital communities. At the same time, hashtags often convey ambivalent intentions, functioning as sites of critique, irony, humor, or resistance (Cao et al., 2022; Rezeki et al., 2024; Zappavigna, 2015).

One such example is the trending Indonesian hashtag #KaburAjaDulu, which has evolved into a significant discursive practice among Indonesian netizens. While at first glance it may appear as a humorous or self-deprecating reaction to daily struggles, the hashtag also serves as a subtle critique of social and political conditions that prompt young people to imagine opportunities abroad. Rhetorically, its positive interpretations index aspirations for skill acquisition, educational advancement, and social mobility, whereas negative readings evoke questions of national identity, belonging, and loyalty (Austin et al., 2021; Simis-Wilkinson et al., 2018). In this way, the hashtag has become a socially meaningful discourse practice, mediating how belonging and agency are (re)negotiated within precarious national contexts.

Despite the growing scholarly interest in hashtags as communicative and ideological tools, existing research has remained limited in two crucial ways. First, prior studies have largely examined hashtags within static or monomodal media such as print advertising, posters, or cinema (Rossolatos, 2014; Wong, 2019; Zantides, 2016), thereby overlooking how users interact dynamically and multimodally through memes, emojis, and visual text on social media platforms. Second, while social tagging has been explored as an information-organizing practice, its pragmatic and ideological functions in digital discourse—especially in non-Western, multilingual contexts like Indonesia—remain underexplored.

This study addresses these gaps by situating #KaburAjaDulu within the framework of internet linguistics and digital pragmatics (Crystal, 2011). It examines how hashtags operate as indexical, stance-taking, and framing resources in multimodal digital communication, revealing how users construct meanings, negotiate social identities, and express

* Corresponding Author. Email: rakhmatwahyudin@umsu.ac.id

ideological positions. In doing so, this study highlights the semiotic complexity and social significance of hashtags as tools that generate collective imaginaries in Indonesian digital discourse—an area that calls for deeper, context-sensitive investigation in the global study of online communication.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Pragmatics of Escapism, Multimodal Discourse and Social Semiotics*

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) points to the fact that communication in the contemporary world is not confined to written or spoken human language, but involves “the use of other symbolic resources” (Kress & Bezemer, 2023; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). MDA is intended as a mixed approach that encompasses Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), social semiotics, mediated discourse analysis, and conversation analysis. As O’Halloran (2011) illustrates, language and other semiotic modes—such as gesture, image, and layout—operate within SFL to make meaning simultaneously across multiple modes. Halliday’s metafunctions—the ideational, interpersonal, and textual—constitute the central framework through which verbal and visual constructs interact across channels to articulate such multilayered communicative contexts as those found on social media. An interesting case of combining text, emoji, and images is seen in online posts: emojis, in particular, derive their meanings relationally from the words they accompany, thus allowing for more subtle affective expressions than either modality alone would convey (Cappallo et al., 2018; Illendula & Sheth, 2019).

Building on Halliday’s social semiotics, Kress and Bezemer (2023) foreground the creator, rather than any stable code of practice, in a selective, feature-wise combinatory system encompassing all sign systems within it. For them, text, image, and sound are not neutral carriers of information but socially situated opportunities for meaning negotiation. Alongside this, mediated discourse analysis (Scollon et al., 2012) extends its focus to the material and bodily conditions of discourse, demonstrating how objects, spatial arrangements, and physical practices contribute to both textual and visual communication. While conversation analysis provides a micro-analytic perspective on sequential organization and turn-taking, it also offers methodological techniques for exploring the interplay of multimodal resources in real-time spoken interaction—both in face-to-face encounters and through video protocols.

These lines of inquiry have also been advanced by recent contributions to critical multimodal discourse studies, which critically examine the ideological and material dimensions of multimodality. Ledin and Machin (2020) argue that multimodal analysis requires not only a description of metafunctions but also attention to how spatiality, visibility, and embodiment naturalize or counteract power relations. Within the context of social media investigations, this is particularly relevant, as meaning is constructed through multimodal expressions and the performance of identities—claims to affiliation or stances.

Empirically, people on social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram are reported to use combinations of text, hashtags, emojis, and images to generate multilayered multimodal meanings (Chandrasekaran et al., 2021; Jovanovic & van Leeuwen, 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). Unsurprisingly, these semiotic resources are strategically arranged to display attitudes, influence others to participate as the sender does, and achieve communicative aims ranging from self-promotion to activism (Luzón, 2023; Poulsen & Kvåle, 2018). How users deploy hashtags, for instance, is shaped by platform affordances. Conventions of form—such as tag length, capitalization, and searchability—both enable and delimit users’ creative expression within these sociotechnical environments (Highfield, 2017). By using emoticons and affiliative hashtags, users seek support, signal identity, and attract collective attention. Emotional emojis, particularly when associated with positively valenced messages, have been found to enhance engagement and social connection (Alfano et al., 2023; Ko et al., 2022).

Importantly, hashtags function as indexing devices and as emotional and discursive resources. Combined with images and emojis, they create additional semantic layers that increase a message’s level of persuasion and resonance (Alfano et al., 2023; Highfield, 2017; Zhou & Ai, 2022). Since multimodality is crucial to the creation, dissemination, and contestation of meaning on social media platforms, MDA provides a crucial starting point for the investigation of *#KaburAjaDulu*.

In this respect, *#KaburAjaDulu* can be situated within a broader typology of hashtag practices that emphasize its function as a socially significant discourse practice. At the most mundane level, it performs an indexing function—one through which users organize and retrieve conversations around shared experiences of uncertainty or frustration. At the same time, its stance-taking features, indicating ironic resignation or critique, are further intensified through multimodal couplings with emojis or memes. As a framing device, the hashtag condenses complex socio-political phenomena (for example, governmental pathologies or economic uncertainty) into a brief narrative of “escaping” that gratifies users’ affective sensibilities. Its use also expresses the delegitimization of institutions and authorities, as these are perceived to have failed to attend to the public good, thereby fostering in-group solidarity through laughter and shared disappointment. Lastly, *#KaburAjaDulu* serves as an identity and community marker, especially for younger, digitally savvy publics who employ the hashtag as a vernacular expression of generational sentiment. Cross-cutting all of these is how hashtags function less as purely technical tags and more as multimodal semiotic resources, contributing to meaning-making, identity work, and ideological mediation within Indonesia’s densely layered digital ecology.

B. On Hashtag #KaburAjaDulu

Hashtags have become powerful discourse markers in digital communication, performing multiple roles in indexing, affecting attitudes, and forging collective identity. In Indonesia, the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu illustrates how even seemingly mundane linguistic expressions can be redeployed as socially significant discursive practices. Similar to other viral expressions, its meaning lies not only in what it denotes but also in its pragmatic and semiotic flexibility across digital platforms. Corpus-based analyses of hashtags (Page, 2018; Zappavigna, 2011) highlight their high degree of polysemy—the ability to generate diverse meanings in different contexts. The hashtag symbol (#) functions as an indexical marker that not only aggregates discourse but also functions as a semiotic resource with performative potential, enabling the construction of solidarity, resistance, and collective humor.

#KaburAjaDulu encapsulates this dynamic multifunctionality, operating simultaneously as a humorous, critical, and escapist polemic in response to Indonesia's tumultuous social and political circumstances. As Zappavigna (2015) observes, hashtags offer spaces for negotiating meaning within digital publics and contribute to the formation of temporary discourse communities, or what other scholars describe as “campsites”—ephemeral sites of shared sentiment and commentary (Rambukkana, 2015; Scott, 2015). This conceptual model is particularly useful for understanding #KaburAjaDulu as both a communication strategy and a cultural symbol in Indonesia's online environment.

The widening polysemy of #KaburAjaDulu becomes especially evident when viewed through a social semiotic lens. On one hand, the hashtag indexes a literal sense of withdrawal or avoidance, reflecting a pragmatic act of “escaping” from an oppressive or overwhelming reality. On the other hand, it functions as a tunnel of ironic satire, expressing social critique regarding governmental failure, systemic corruption, or broader social crises. Much like formulaic expletives, the meaning of this hashtag is shaped by its co-text (captions, memes, comments) and co-semiotic modalities (grids, GIFs, emojis). In a multimodal environment, its meaning expands: when paired with memes, it frames criticism humorously; when juxtaposed with news screenshots, it conveys disillusionment and despair. Its functional elasticity demonstrates how digital discourse materializes affect, stance-taking, and collective mood within networked publics.

A comparison with #IndonesiaGelap [“Dark Indonesia”] further illustrates this semiotic versatility. Unlike #KaburAjaDulu, which articulates individual withdrawal as collective escapism, #IndonesiaGelap functions as a metadiscursive crisis signal, circulated in response to political scandals or national tragedies. It encapsulates multilayered sociopolitical commentary and foregrounds structural critique, drawing attention to national decline. Both hashtags exemplify how Indonesian digital users mobilize tagging practices not merely for categorization, but for discursive legitimization and delegitimization—legitimizing affective solidarity among users while delegitimizing state institutions or criticized authorities.

From a Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) perspective, hashtags constitute semiotic condensations of discourse strategies into recognizable digital signs (Dawson, 2020; Larionova & Demkina, 2021; Scott, 2015). They operate as linguistic and multimodal short forms, reinforced through typographic variation (capitalization, lengthening), visual juxtaposition with images, and recirculation within networked publics (Calude et al., 2024; Giaxoglou, 2018; Zappavigna, 2015). This hybrid quality positions hashtags as both linguistic objects and discursive practices. The #KaburAjaDulu discourse thus demonstrates that digital expression in Indonesia relies not solely on propositional language but also on the indexical meanings of hashtags as tools for stance-taking, identity construction, and social commentary. In this sense, hashtags are not an “afterthought” but an integral part of the semiotic economy of Indonesia's contemporary digital culture—reflecting its political thumbprint, affective registers, and evolving cultural trajectory.

III. METHOD

The data for the #KaburAjaDulu discourse were collected as systematically documented digital artifacts in the form of screenshots of public posts on Twitter (now X) that used the #KaburAjaDulu hashtag. A total of 150 screenshots were collected between February and July 2025. Each screenshot contained textual as well as multimodal information, consisting of at least one of the following elements: hashtags, caption text, and images or memes.

The methodical use of online screenshots as the primary, rather than secondary, data was justified on the grounds that this approach preserved the multimodal integrity of communication, maintaining the interrelated contributions of text, image, and layout in meaning production (Barthes, 1985; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020). Consistent with the principles of digital ethnography, screenshots were regarded as legitimate “cultural traces” of online behavior and were treated as naturalistic qualitative data (Hine, 2020; Kozinets, 2015). In the context of internet linguistics, digitally documented language has been recognized as a valid corpus source, provided that data collection is systematic and interpretation remains contextual (Crystal, 2011; Paulus et al., 2013).

From an ethical standpoint, this study drew exclusively on publicly available posts, thereby adhering to the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) guidelines, which permit the use of open-source digital material so long as anonymity and confidentiality are maintained when appropriate (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). Consequently, the approach to data capture through screenshots ensured both trustworthiness and ethical responsibility while allowing for a robust multimodal discourse analysis. Although the captured data were screenshots, the textual content within the posts was transcribed to identify key collocations surrounding the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu. The analysis was conducted by applying the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) method and focused on four analytical categories. Specifically, the investigation concentrated on the relationship between text and image across two primary dimensions. First, Anchorage

and Relay (Barthes, 1985) were used to analyze how textual components delineated (anchored) or generated (relayed) interpretative boundaries around accompanying images and memes. Second, Visual Grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020) was employed to examine (1) representational aspects—what or who was represented, (2) interactional aspects—the nature of engagement with the audience, and (3) compositional aspects—the visual organization of elements, including salience and framing.

This study was grounded in Halliday’s social semiotic framework (Halliday, 2014), within which the analysis was carried out in a multimodal setting by considering the three metafunctions of language: the ideational, interpersonal, and textual. These metafunctions were used to interpret how meanings were constructed and interwoven across textual and visual modes in the #KaburAjaDulu discourse.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result

The multimodal X screenshot featuring the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu (see Figure 1) illustrates the intricate relationship between lexical choices, discursive call structures, and the visual representation of collective action.

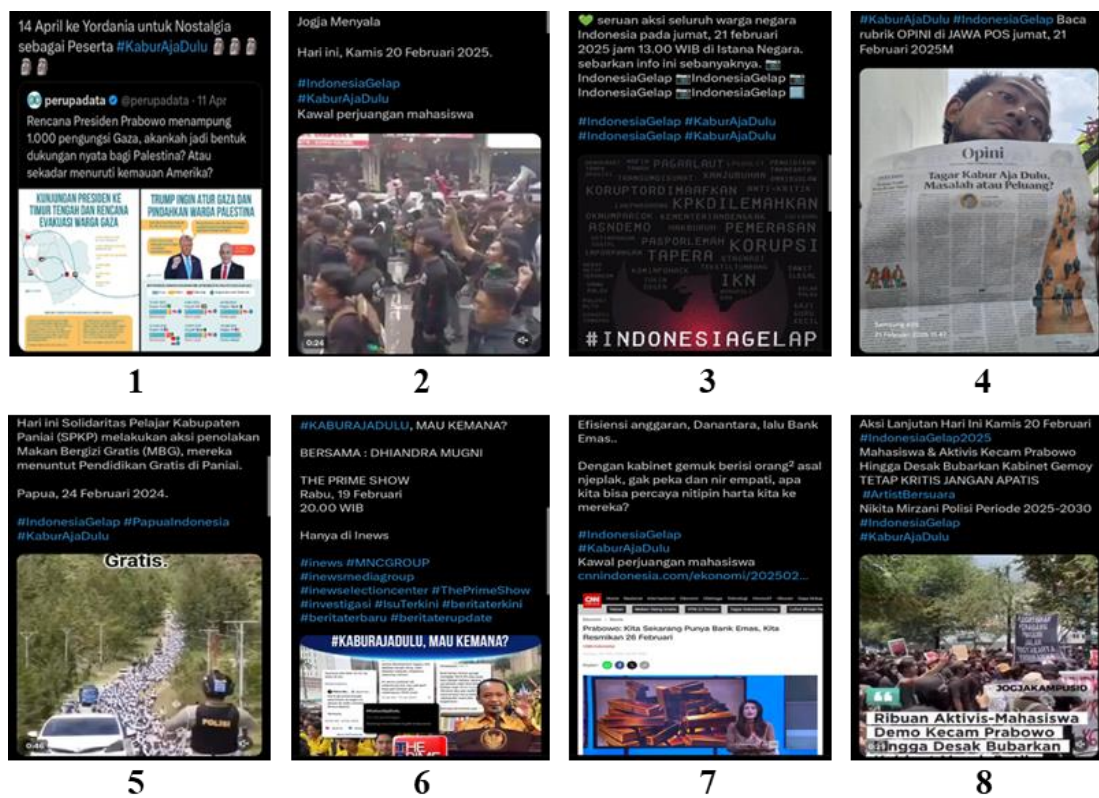


Figure 1. Social Functions Form Affective Communities That Share Satire and Fantasies of Mobility

In Figure 1.2, the collocation “*Jogja Menyala*” (“Yogyakarta Lights Up”) employs light as a metaphorical resource for constructing a narrative of resistance against socio-political crisis. This metaphor is further intensified through its reversal in the counter-hashtag #IndonesiaGelap (“Dark Indonesia”), which establishes a binary opposition between light and darkness. Such polarization produces a stratified semiotic configuration: the nation is depicted as being engulfed in darkness, while students emerge as the illuminating force—a metonymic embodiment of hope and agency. At the ideational level, this representation positions students as transformative social actors who challenge hegemonic structures through symbolic struggles of good versus evil, thereby reaffirming their agency in socio-political transformation.

Conversely, the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu introduces a layer of multimodal irony. Literally meaning “just run away first”, it evokes an act of withdrawal or retreat. Yet, in the multimodal configuration, the textual and visual elements resignify this literal meaning: rather than depicting disengagement, the posts portray students actively gathering, speaking up, and reclaiming their collective voice. This ironic inversion destabilizes both the literal and ideological logic of resistance, producing a humorous yet subversive stance toward institutional authority. Through humor, satire, and discursive playfulness, the multimodal text enacts a subtle critique of power, transforming protest into an affective space where dissent is articulated through wit rather than confrontation. On a personal and interpersonal level, this irony fosters emotional proximity between authors and audiences—it creates a sense of shared laughter, reflective camaraderie, and collective understanding, enabling participants to “laugh together” while critically engaging with political realities.

Another salient discourse layer appears in the collocation “*Kawal perjuangan mahasiswa*” (“Stand for students’ struggle”). This phrase functions as a lexical gesture of solidarity, positioning the audience not merely as passive observers but as active participants in the broader activist cause. The visual representation of massed student crowds reinforces this alignment by embodying the collective presence of protest, which text and image mutually anchor and relay (Barthes, 1985). From a social semiotic perspective, the findings reveal the dynamic interplay of the three metafunctions within the digital artifact. The ideational metafunction is realized through the metaphor of light and darkness, symbolizing the moral and political dimensions of national struggle. The interpersonal metafunction is enacted through appeals to solidarity, affective irony, and collective humour, which strengthen communal bonds and shared emotions among viewers. Meanwhile, the textual metafunction is achieved through the strategic integration of hashtags, slogans, and visual layout—anchoring coherence, sequencing meaning, and framing protest as both a moral and enduring social action. This multimodal case demonstrates how digital communicative practices orchestrate lexical selection, visual composition, and semiotic affordances to articulate layered political meanings. Through irony, metaphor, and affective participation, *#KaburAjaDulu* transforms online discourse into a performative act of socio-political commentary, where protest, play, and affect converge in the construction of collective voice (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
CALL TO ESCAPE WITH VISUAL INSISTENCE ON RESISTANCE

Fig	Collocation	Multimodal Discourse Analysis	Social Semiotic Metafunctions
2	<i>Jogja Menyala</i>	A rallying text accompanied by visuals of student crowds: The metaphor of light (“ <i>menyala</i> ”) is anchored in concrete acts of protest.	Ideational: Students are represented as agents of change, with light functioning as a symbol of resistance. Interpersonal: The collective chant constructs solidarity and a shared movement identity. Textual: The phrase connects the narrative of the city (Jogja) to a broader national movement.
3	<i>#IndonesiaGelap</i>	A negative-evaluative hashtag: In contrast to “ <i>menyala</i> ”, it reinforces the binary opposition of light versus darkness.	Ideational: The nation is personified as “dark”, symbolizing moral or political crisis. Interpersonal: Readers are invited to adopt a critical evaluative stance. Textual: It functions as a moral discourse anchor that frames the protest action.
1-8	<i>#KaburAjaDulu</i>	A multimodal irony: While the text calls for escape, the visual simultaneously depicts collective resistance.	Ideational: A productive contradiction emerges between “escape” and “resist”. Interpersonal: The satirical effect reinforces resistance against authority. Textual: Humor and irony are interwoven with serious representations of demonstration.
7	<i>Kawal perjuangan mahasiswa</i>	A direct call-to-action text, reinforced by visuals of collective bodies, emphasizing audience engagement.	Ideational: Student struggles are positioned as shared struggles. Interpersonal: The text establishes solidarity and urgency as a collective stance. Textual: It anchors a temporal action (20 February 2025) within a larger movement narrative.

Multimodal collocations thus illustrate and highlight the interrelations between text, image, and symbolism in meaning construction. Using a metafunctional framework, this study demonstrated how student movements expose and utilize semiotic resources to sustain resistance. *Jogja Menyala* represents light as a metaphor for hope and agency, juxtaposed against *#IndonesiaGelap*, which constructs darkness as a symbol of moral and political crisis. The ironic tension in *#KaburAjaDulu* juxtaposes a textual call to “escape” with a visual insistence on “resistance,” thereby amplifying its satirical force. *Kawal Perjuangan Mahasiswa* positions its audience within a shared struggle—rooted in the immediacy of the moment yet extending across a broader activist timeline. These patterns demonstrate the orchestration of image, language, and metaphor in conveying solidarity, critique, and political identity within protest discourse.

In Figure 2, Twitter posts are organized according to indexical indicators of youth identity, migratory aspiration, and socio-political critique.

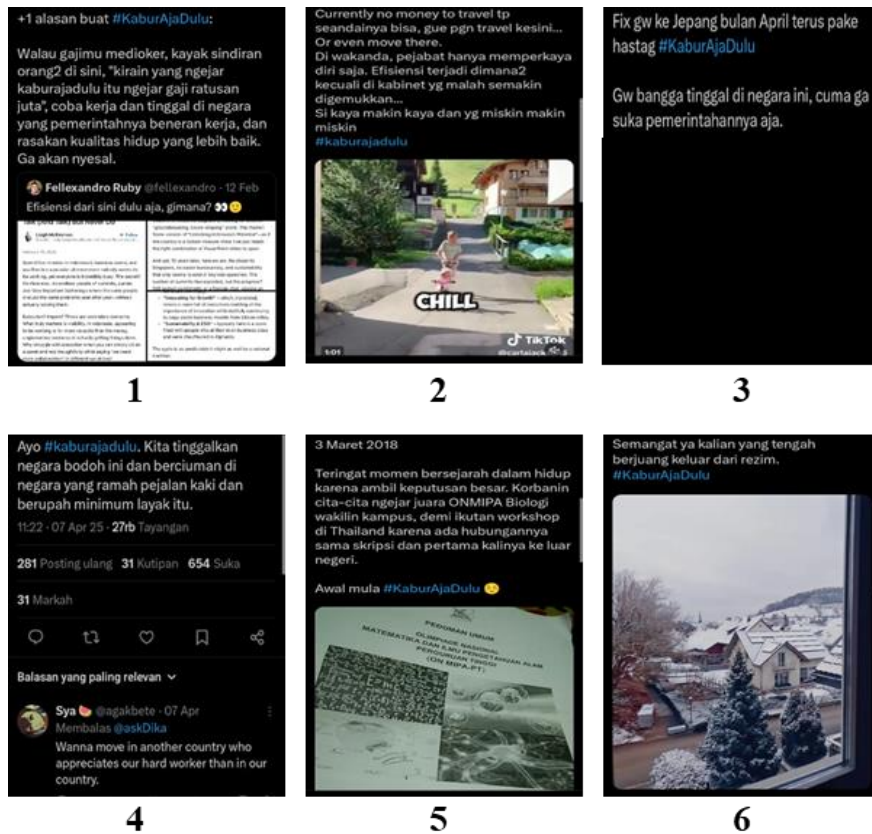


Figure 2. #KaburAjaDulu as Indexical Marker

The multimodal collocation surrounding the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu demonstrates how digital discourse constructs migration both as critique and aspiration. In Figure 2.1, the phrases “gaji, medioker, ratusan juta, tinggal di negara pemerintahnya beneran kerja” (“salary, mediocre, hundreds of millions, living in a country where the government actually works”) are presented through a sarcastic tone, employing words such as “mediocre” and the conditional comment “try working in a country that...”. The hashtag #KaburAjaDulu serves as a stance marker, indexing dissatisfaction with domestic realities. The ironic juxtaposition of “salary” and “government that actually works” epitomizes frustration toward home governance, where sarcasm operates as a relational tool to build alignment among users. Similarly, the phrases “negara bodoh, minimum layak, negara ramah pejalan kaki” (“stupid country, minimum standard, pedestrian-friendly country”) in Figure 2.4 present migration as a collective imperative through the clause “Ayo #KaburAjaDulu” (“Let’s escape for now”), embedding a dichotomy between a “stupid country” and a “pedestrian-friendly country.” Here, stance-taking occurs through both evaluative labeling and the mobilization of audience participation.

Figure 2.5 features the collocation “bersejarah – cita-cita – ONMIPA – luar negeri” (“historic – aspiration – ONMIPA – abroad”), articulated through a retrospective personal narrative recalling “the beginning of #KaburAjaDulu.” The discourse is primarily textually anchored, supported by a visual of an exam handbook that symbolizes academic pursuit. Ideationally, it frames migration as an academic achievement; interpersonally, it constructs personal credibility through ethos; and textually, it situates the hashtag as an interpretive frame. Figure 2.5 therefore recontextualizes the hashtag within a personal academic trajectory, where the multimodal combination of text and exam-related visuals presents migration as the culmination of intellectual struggle. This pattern echoes Figure 2.6, where the depiction of a “struggle to escape” reframes migration not merely as physical movement but as symbolic resistance to authoritarian control. Collectively, these co-occurrences center on three overarching dimensions of meaning: (1) destination (abroad, global mobility), (2) cause (economic injustice, low quality of life, authoritarian repression), and (3) identity performance (personal ethos, collective resistance, ironic stance). Within the Hallidayan metafunctional framework, these discursive practices demonstrate how protest hashtags function as multimodal semiotic assemblages that integrate irony, critique, and aspiration into coherent digital narratives.

Table 2 illustrates multiple mechanisms through which collocations operate in the #KaburAjaDulu discourse to express identity negotiation, hope, and critique. Texts often serve as points of departure that link economic realities (Figure 2.1) with political criticism or highlight the contradictory relationship between international mobility and corrupt domestic politics (Figure 2.2). Relay visuals, by contrast—such as documents and landscapes—broaden the interpretive scope by presenting idealized alternatives or visual evidence that reinforce such critiques (Figures 2.1 to 2.6).

TABLE 2
#KABURAJADULU ARTICULATE CRITIQUE, ASPIRATION, AND IDENTITY NEGOTIATION

Fig	Collocation	Multimodal Discourse Analysis	Social Semiotic Metafunctions
1	<i>gaji – ratusan juta; tinggal di negara pemerintahnya beneran kerja</i>	The text functions as anchorage, foregrounding economic injustice, while the visual of official documents reinforces the legitimacy of critique.	Ideational: Representing economic inequality. Interpersonal: Employing irony and sarcasm to invite audience alignment. Textual: Operating as a discourse anchor.
2	<i>travel – no money – pejabat memperkaya diri</i>	As a relay, the image of a “chill scene” draws a distinction between political reality and idealistic mobility.	Ideational: Creating a desire for worldwide movement. Interpersonal: Showing support for audiences that are irritated. Textual: Using the hashtag to connect political assessment with storytelling.
3	<i>bangga tinggal – suka pemerintahan</i>	The text serves as anchorage contextualizing a photo of Japan, while the visual affirms a temporary migratory decision.	Ideational: Distinguishing between nationhood and governance. Interpersonal: Negotiating a nationalist–critical stance. Textual: Using the hashtag as a stamp of critique.
4	<i>negara bodoh – minimum layak – negara ramah pejalan kaki</i>	The text acts as anchorage through the imperative “Let’s #KaburAjaDulu,” while reply comments serve as social validation.	Ideational: Creates a dichotomy stupid country versus pedestrian-friendly country. Interpersonal: Frames a collective invitation. Textual: Using the replies to reinforce argumentative force.
5	<i>bersejarah – cita-cita – ONMIPA – luar negeri</i>	The content serves as the primary anchor, while the image of the exam handbook symbolizes academic perseverance.	Ideational: Encouraging migration as a means to succeed academically. Interpersonal: Creating ethos and believability. Textual: Using the hashtag as mode of interpretation.
6	<i>berjuang keluar – rezim</i>	The use of a distant winter forest image symbolizes the idealized “elsewhere”.	Ideational: Distinguishing between peaceful human nature and repressive politics. Interpersonal: Promoting empathy and solidarity. Textual: Using the hashtag to support the opposition.

Three semiotic dimensions interact within Halliday’s metafunctional framework. First, the ideational function highlights systemic inequalities and oppositional dichotomies (e.g., “stupid country” vs. “pedestrian-friendly country”), framing migration as both an economic necessity and an aspirational pursuit. Second, the interpersonal function strategically employs irony, sarcasm, and collective appeals to align audiences affectively with the stance of critique. Third, hashtags operate within the textual function as anchoring devices that not only secure interpretive coherence but also circulate solidarity across digital publics.

The key collocations in Figure 3.1 include “*riset mandiri*” (independent research), “*S2 duluan*” (get a master’s degree), and “*kerja sambil kuliah*” (working while studying). These lexical choices construct an academic discourse entangled with the economic precarity of education, articulated through the hashtag #KaburAjaDulu. From a multimodal discursive perspective, the reflective SpongeBob visual acts as a relay that reinforces the post’s introspective tone. In social semiotic terms, the ideational metafunction mirrors students’ financial instability, particularly the risk of layoffs following COVID-19. The interpersonal metafunction is realized through emojis and playful phrasing to foster audience solidarity and empathy, while the textual metafunction manifests in the hashtag’s role as a semiotic mechanism embedding “escape” within the broader social discourse.

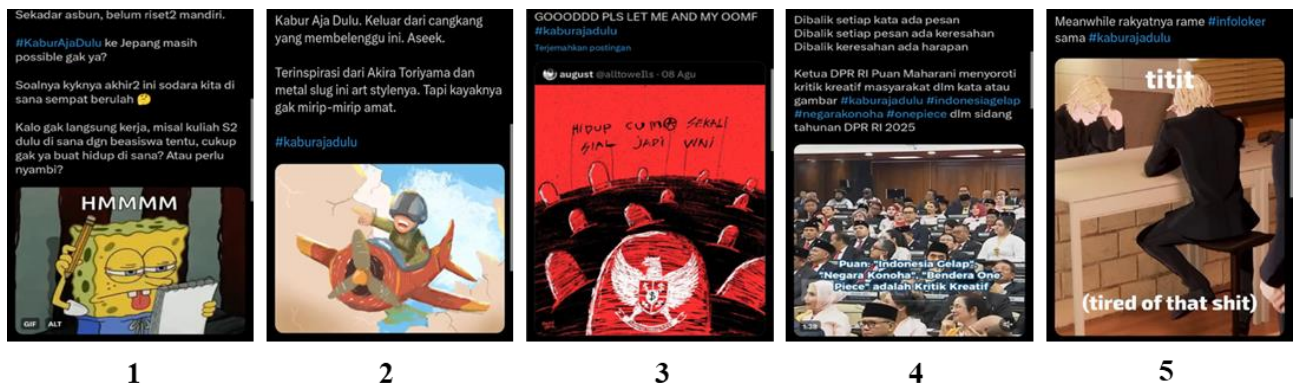


Figure 3. Discursive Repertoire and Structural Problem

In Figure 3.2, the collocation “*keluar dari cangkang*” (coming out of the shell) signifies maturity and personal growth, while references to “Metal Slug” and “inspiration from Akira Toriyama” demonstrate a blend of pop culture discourse and metaphors of freedom. From an MDA perspective, the animated visual of a flying character serves as anchorage that reinforces the notion of “escape”. The hashtag #KaburAjaDulu consolidates this as a subtle articulation of resistance to socio-political confinement. Social semiotically, the ideational metafunction represents “escape” as an alternative mode of resistance, the interpersonal metafunction emerges through humor and nostalgic pop culture cues inviting solidarity,

and the textual metafunction materializes through the hashtag's function in bridging political discourse with digital popular culture.

Figure 3.3 features a tweet juxtaposed with a red poster reading "*Hidup cuma sekali sial jadi WNI*" (You only live once, damn it, as an Indonesian citizen). The central collocation "*hidup cuma sekali*" (you only live once), combined with national emblems and a red-dominant palette, constructs urgency and defiance. From an MDA lens, the text functions as anchorage, focusing existential immediacy into social critique. The red color serves as a semiotic code of intensity, resistance, and danger. Social semiotically, the ideational metafunction articulates political critique through a life-and-death metaphor; the interpersonal metafunction adopts a poetic and emotionally charged tone that invokes affective tension (semantic gravity); and the textual metafunction emerges through the interplay of linguistic text, visual codes, and hashtags that collectively perform critical protest narratives.

Linguistic elements blend formal political rhetoric with popular idioms in Figure 3.4, where key collocations such as "*Indonesia gelap*" (Dark Indonesia) and "*Bendera One Piece Adalah Kritik Kreatif*" (The One Piece flag is a creative critique) appear. From an MDA perspective, the extended text anchors a visualized parliamentary session video, while on-screen netizen comments amplify alternative discourses. Social semiotically, the ideational metafunction highlights public dissent toward elite authority, the interpersonal metafunction operates through political humor to express collective discontent, and the textual metafunction unfolds through phrase repetition and hashtags such as *#IndonesiaGelap* and *#NegaraKonoha* as digital framing devices.

Finally, Figure 3.5 employs informal English to project a global yet sarcastic tone. The image of an anime character bending in resignation serves as anchorage, foregrounding fatigue amid job insecurity and economic instability. Social semiotically, the ideational metafunction depicts systemic disappointment over limited opportunities, the interpersonal metafunction manifests through humor-inflected cynicism that elicits empathy, and the textual metafunction coheres through hashtags that interlink individual frustration with collective narratives of migration and escapism.

TABLE 3
POLITICAL DISILLUSIONMENT AND ARTICULATING TRANSLOCAL IMAGINARIES

Fig	Collocation	Multimodal Discourse Analysis	Social Semiotic Metafunctions
1	<i>#KaburAjaDulu ke Jepang masih possible gak ya?</i>	The visual of SpongeBob thinking seriously functions as a relay, emphasizing the dilemma of educational costs; the accompanying text and hashtag anchor the narrative to a collective stance.	Ideational: Representing the crisis of educational expenses. Interpersonal: Using humor and emoticons to build intimacy with the audience. Textual: Using the hashtag as a node of coherence.
2	<i>keluar dari cangkang, Metal Slug, inspirasi Akira Toriyama, #kaburajadulu</i>	The anime or illustrated image of a flying character serves as anchorage for the metaphor of freedom; pop culture elements extend the discourse's appeal.	Ideational: Representing "escape" as resistance. Interpersonal: Using pop culture nostalgia to invite solidarity. Textual: Using the hashtag to bridge political issues with popular culture.
3	<i>hidup cuma sekali, sial jadi WNI, #kaburajadulu</i>	The dominant red color codes power and protest; the text functions as existential anchorage, while the national emblem reinforces the message of resistance.	Ideational: Constructing a political life-and-death metaphor. Interpersonal: Using poetic-emotional style to create urgency. Textual: Using the integration of text, visual, and hashtag to construct protest narrative.
4	<i>Indonesia gelap, kritik kreatif, Negara Konoha, #kaburajadulu</i>	The parliamentary video is anchored by extended text, while irony is reinforced through netizen comments and the inclusion of a popular culture image (One Piece).	Ideational: Representing public opposition to the ruling elite. Interpersonal: Collective grievances are channelled through political humour. Textual: Collective framing is provided by hashtags and phrase repetition.
5	<i>rame infoloker, tired of that shit, #kaburajadulu</i>	Structural exhaustion is anchored by the anime visual of resignation, while the ironic tone is extended to a global register through informal English.	Ideational: Reflecting disillusionment with the economic conditions. Interpersonal: Employing humorous-cynical tone to evoke empathy. Textual: Using the hashtags to interconnect personal experiences to form a shared narrative.
6	<i>#KaburAjaDulu ke Jepang masih possible gak ya?</i>	SpongeBob's serious expression serves as a relay, highlighting the burden of educational expenses; the text and hashtags ground the narrative in a shared perspective.	Ideational: Standing for the financial problem in education. Interpersonal: Fostering closeness with the audience through emotional cues and humour. Textual: Using the hashtag as a coherence node.

Throughout Table 3, the ideational function foregrounds crises related to education, the economy, and governance; the interpersonal function strategically employs humor, sarcasm, and pop culture to foster affective solidarity; and the textual function consistently positions the hashtag as a discourse anchor, weaving together fragmented individual expressions into a coherent narrative of resistance. In this sense, *#KaburAjaDulu* operates not merely as a digital slogan but as a multimodal repertoire that articulates collective disillusionment with political realities while constructing translocal imaginaries of hope, critique, and mobility.



Figure 4. Economic, Political, and Ecological Struggles

The discursive constellation surrounding the hashtag *#KaburAjaDulu* syncretizes the text, imagery, and socio-political context through expressions such as “the highest salary”, “a suitable planet”, “a historical figure”, “escaping only to be returned”, and “tropical fish migrating”. These linguistic and visual motifs transform humor, hyperbole, and irony—along with reification—into compositional strategies for articulating social critique. Across Figures 4.1 to 4.5, the interplay of text and image demonstrates how escapist discourse is re-signified through diverse semiotic maneuvers. The absurdity of economic insecurity is visualized through juxtapositions of menial labor and aspirational fantasies of achieving prosperity elsewhere (Figure 4.1), while exaggerated imagery—such as cosmic “escapes”—signals the magnitude of imagined departure from oppressive realities (Figure 4.2). By framing escape as a historically embedded mode of resistance, this discourse simultaneously reveals its containment: the release of migratory energy that fuels exile also exposes the state and its ruling structures as caricatured forms of authority. The narrative culminates in the ecological dimension (Figure 4.5), where climate crisis and species migration become metaphors for human displacement and adaptation within the semantics of “escape”. Collectively, these multimodal configurations illustrate how *#KaburAjaDulu* transforms private fantasies of flight into public acts of critique, employing satire, irony, and intertextuality to weave together economic, political, and ecological struggles into a shared digital rhetoric of resistance.

B. Discussion

The findings reveal that the hashtag *#KaburAjaDulu* embodies a complex discursive meaning. Rather than emerging as a spontaneous expression, it operates as an orchestrated discursive strategy that channels political resistance through the semiotics of escapism. The recurring lexical collocations demonstrate linguistic innovation, showing how the hashtag integrates humor, critique, and social commentary into a shared space of meaning-making. Accordingly, the results affirm that hashtags function as discursive anchors, bridging visual and verbal modalities to construct coherent digital narratives.

Moreover, the multimodal discourse analysis (MDA) confirms that Halliday’s metafunctions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—work dynamically in the evolution of the hashtag. Conceptually, the hashtag *#KaburAjaDulu* encapsulates disaffection and disenchantment with everyday political and social realities. Interpersonally, it communicates through irony and satire, creating spaces of affective alignment and symbolic reconciliation. Textually, the hashtag establishes multimodal continuity by connecting captions, imagery, and intertextual references—from historical figures to scientific facts—into a unified message. These findings underscore that digital discourse is inherently multimodal, assembling diverse semiotic resources to craft a collective story of critique and resistance (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020; Machin, 2013).

From this perspective, a key contribution of the study lies in demonstrating how hashtags—often treated as trivial or colloquial digital practices—constitute a new form of online political vernacular. The hashtag *#KaburAjaDulu* simultaneously deploys humor as a coping mechanism and as a discursive tool for critical reflection on migration, exile, and state critique. This dual function extends the definition of hashtags beyond mere tools for categorizing content; they emerge as rhetorical media that generate counter-narratives and alternative publics in the digital sphere.

These insights are consistent with previous research emphasizing hashtags’ role in fostering affective solidarity (Zappavigna, 2011) and collective identity formation. However, this study adds a distinctive perspective: beyond

solidarity, *#KaburAjaDulu* privileges satire and irony as means of transforming “escape” into a mode of political critique. While earlier scholarship on political memes has recognized the subversive power of humor (Milner, 2018; Shifman, 2014), this study extends that argument by illustrating that hashtags—particularly when integrated with captions and visuals—serve as more flexible discursive hubs than memes, enabling layered and multimodal political expression.

Theoretically, this research contributes to multimodal discourse studies by demonstrating that hashtags themselves operate as a mode of meaning-making, linking linguistic and visual signs. Methodologically, it showcases the value of combining corpus-based collocation analysis with screenshot-driven MDA to capture the ephemerality of online texts. This approach validates visual documentation as empirical evidence for examining epigrammatic practices on social media (Marwick & Boyd, 2014; Tagg et al., 2017). The study thus contributes both conceptually and methodologically—advancing theoretical awareness of digital semiotics and offering practical strategies for multimodal corpus research.

Nevertheless, the limited dataset of twenty-five screenshots constrains the generalizability of these findings. Future studies could build upon this work by conducting large-scale quantitative analyses that map hashtag dynamics across time and platforms. Integrating social media APIs (e.g., Twitter, Instagram) and Python-based scripts would enable researchers to capture broader data on user interaction, temporal flow, and networked meaning circulation (Bruns & Burgess, 2015; Lomborg & Bechmann, 2014). Such a computationally assisted multimodal approach would not only enhance analytical precision but also deepen understanding of how digital discourse operates as a socio-semiotic system linking language, image, and ideology.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has developed the concept of hashtag migration discourse as a multimodal semiotic phenomenon, with *#KaburAjaDulu* serving as a paradigmatic case. Through the analysis of digital expressions across platforms, the research demonstrates that the hashtag embodies multiple, intersecting layers of meaning, where linguistic play, humor, irony, and visual semiotics converge to construct a polysemous narrative of critique and aspiration. The collocational patterns surrounding *#KaburAjaDulu* reveal not only discontent with domestic political and economic realities, but also a symbolic projection of global mobility as an imagined alternative to local disillusionment. Despite their diverse forms, these multimodal expressions converge toward a shared communicative purpose: to articulate dissatisfaction with the sociopolitical order while simultaneously imagining or parodying the fantasy of “escape”.

The findings therefore have broader implications for understanding the semiotic dynamics of irony, humor, and critique in migration-related hashtags. The recurring characteristics of *#KaburAjaDulu*—its reliance on humorous framing, ironic detachment, and multimodal layering—illustrate how digital discourse can embed social and political critique within playful or parodic forms. These features are not determined by any fixed linguistic pattern; rather, they emerge through the affordances of digital platforms and are sustained by the participatory practices of online communities that continuously remix and reinterpret shared cultural signs.

Importantly, the study demonstrates that humorous and ironic discourse functions as a legitimate mode of public critique, enabling users to engage politically without the risks associated with overt dissent. The fluidity of hashtags, with their capacity for recycling, parody, and recontextualization, allows participants to negotiate meaning creatively and collectively. In doing so, users open a discursive space for subtle resistance and reflective engagement, transforming humor into a social strategy of critique and solidarity.

A key theoretical contribution of this research lies in showing that the semiotic functions of digital hashtags—including critique, humor, solidarity, and identity negotiation—resonate with, yet reconfigure, traditional theories of multimodal communication. In digital environments, these functions take on new complexity as text, image, and cultural citation interact fluidly within a single message. This intermingling enables users to express frustration, irony, and belonging simultaneously, generating hybrid rhetorical practices that transform digital spaces into arenas of cultural and political negotiation. Humor and irony thus operate not as mere entertainment but as discursive strategies through which collective identities and critiques are articulated—redefining what constitutes resistance in the contemporary digital age.

In conclusion, the examination of *#KaburAjaDulu* as a pragmatic meaning-maker in networked communication makes a substantive contribution to the study of digital semiotics and multimodal discourse. It provides empirical evidence that meaning in online environments is contextual, fluid, and multimodal, emerging from the interplay between linguistic creativity, platform affordances, and participatory culture. Ultimately, this study underscores how younger generations, through hashtags like *#KaburAjaDulu*, are reshaping communicative norms, using the resources of the digital sphere to express critique, humor, and solidarity—and, in doing so, redefine the modes through which political voice and cultural identity are articulated in a mediated, multimodal world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Directorate of Research, Technology, and Community Service (DRTPM) for funding this research through the 2025 fiscal year grant under Contract No. 122/C3/DT.05.00/PL/2025.

REFERENCES

- [1] Alfano, M., Reimann, R., Quintana, I. O., Chan, A., Cheong, M., & Klein, C. (2023). The affiliative use of emoji and hashtags

- in the black lives matter movement in Twitter. *Social Science Computer Review*, 41(6), 2145–2160. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393221131928>
- [2] Austin, A. B., Costabile, K. A., & Smith, L. (2021). Social judgments, social media, and self-deprecation: Role of information source and valence on trait and favorability judgments. *Journal of Media Psychology*, 34(3), 127–138. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1027/1864-1105/a000299>
- [3] Barthes, R. (1985). *Semiotics: An introductory anthology*. Indiana University Press.
- [4] Bruns, A., & Burgess, J. (2015). Twitter hashtags from ad hoc to calculated publics. *Hashtag Publics: The Power and Politics of Discursive Networks*, 103, 13–28.
- [5] Calude, A. S., Long, M., & Burnette, J. (2024). #AreHashtagsWords? Structure, position, and syntactic integration of hashtags in (English) tweets. *Linguistics Vanguard*, 10(1), 105–114. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lingvan-2023-0044>
- [6] Cao, Y., Zhou, Z., Chakraborty, C., Wang, M., Wu, Q. M. J., Sun, X., & Yu, K. (2022). Generative steganography based on long readable text generation. *IEEE Transactions on Computational Social Systems*, 99, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TCSS.2022.3174013>
- [7] Cappallo, S., Svetlichnaya, S., Garrigues, P., Mensink, T., & Snoek, C. G. M. (2018). New modality: Emoji challenges in prediction, anticipation, and retrieval. *IEEE Transactions on Multimedia*, 21(2), 402–415. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TMM.2018.2862363>
- [8] Chandrasekaran, G., Nguyen, T. N., & Hemanth D, J. (2021). Multimodal sentimental analysis for social media applications: A comprehensive review. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery*, 11(5), e1415, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1002/widm.1415>
- [9] Crystal, D. (2011). *Internet linguistics: A student guide*. Routledge.
- [10] Dawson, P. (2020). Hashtag narrative: Emergent storytelling and affective publics in the digital age. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(6), 968–983. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920921417>
- [11] Giaxoglou, K. (2018). #JeSuisCharlie? Hashtags as narrative resources in contexts of ecstatic sharing. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 22, 13–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2017.07.006>
- [12] Halliday, M. A. K. (2014). Language as social semiotic. In J. Angermuller, D. Maingueneau, & R. Wodak (Eds.), *The discourse studies reader: Main currents in theory and analysis* (pp. 263–272). John Benjamins.
- [13] Highfield, T. (2017). *Social media and everyday politics*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [14] Hine, C. (2020). *Ethnography for the internet: Embedded, embodied and everyday*. Routledge.
- [15] Illendula, A., & Sheth, A. (2019). Multimodal emotion classification. *Companion Proceedings of the 2019 World Wide Web Conference*, 439–449. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3308560.3316549>
- [16] Jovanovic, D., & van Leeuwen, T. (2018). Multimodal dialogue on social media. *Social Semiotics*, 28(5), 683–699. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2018.1504732>
- [17] Ko, E. E., Kim, D., & Kim, G. (2022). Influence of emojis on user engagement in brand-related user generated content. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 136, 107387. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107387>
- [18] Koltsova, E. A., & Kartashkova, F. I. (2022). Digital communication and multimodal features: Functioning of emoji in interpersonal communication. *RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics*, 13(3), 769–783. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2299-2022-13-3-769-783>
- [19] Kozinets, R. V. (2015). *Netnography: Redefined*. Sage.
- [20] Kress, G., & Bezemer, J. (2023). Multimodal discourse analysis. In M. Handford & J. P. Gee (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 139–155). Routledge.
- [21] Kress, G. R., & van Leeuwen, T. (2001). *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. Arnold Publishers.
- [22] Kress, G., & van Leeuwen, T. (2020). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. Routledge.
- [23] Larionova, M. V., & Demkina, A. V. (2021). Hashtag as a linguocognitive unit of Spanish political discourse. *RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics*, 12(3), 774–788. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2299-2021-12-3-774-788>
- [24] Ledin, P., & Machin, D. (2020). *Introduction to multimodal analysis*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- [25] Lomborg, S., & Bechmann, A. (2014). Using APIs for data collection on social media. *The Information Society*, 30(4), 256–265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01972243.2014.915276>
- [26] Luzón, M.-J. (2023). Multimodal practices of research groups in Twitter: An analysis of stance and engagement. *English for Specific Purposes*, 70, 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2022.10.006>
- [27] Machin, D. (2013). What is multimodal critical discourse studies? *Critical Discourse Studies*, 10(4), 347–355. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2013.813770>
- [28] Markham, A., & Buchanan, E. (2012). *Ethical decision-making and internet research: Recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee (Version 2.0)*. <https://www.aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf>
- [29] Marwick, A. E., & Boyd, D. (2014). Networked privacy: How teenagers negotiate context in social media. *New Media & Society*, 16(7), 1051–1067. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444814543995>
- [30] Milner, R. M. (2018). *The world made meme: Public conversations and participatory media*. MIT Press.
- [31] O'Halloran, K. L. (2011). Multimodal discourse analysis. In K. Hyland, B. Paltridge, & L. Wong (Eds.), *The Bloomsbury handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 249–282). Bloomsbury Publishing.
- [32] Page, R. (2018). *Narratives online: Shared stories in social media*. Cambridge University Press.
- [33] Papacharissi, Z. (2015). *Affective publics: Sentiment, technology, and politics*. Oxford University Press.
- [34] Paulus, T., Lester, J., & Dempster, P. (2013). *Digital tools for qualitative research*. Sage.
- [35] Poulsen, S. V., & Kvåle, G. (2018). Studying social media as semiotic technology: a social semiotic multimodal framework. *Social Semiotics*, 28(5), 700–717. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2018.1505689>
- [36] Rambukkana, N. (2015). *Hashtag publics: The power and politics of discursive networks (digital formations)*. Peter Lang.
- [37] Rezeki, T. I., Wahyudin Sagala, R., & Rabukit, R. (2024). From Humour to Impact: Internet Memes in Political Discourse through (de)legitimization. *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture (ESIC)*, 8(1), 746–762. <https://doi.org/10.70082/esic/8.1.062>

- [38] Rossolatos, G. (2014). Exploring the rhetorical semiotic brand image structure of ad films with multivariate mapping techniques. *Semiotica*, 2014(200), 335–358. <https://doi.org/10.1515/sem-2014-0012>
- [39] Scollon, R., Scollon, S. W., & Jones, R. H. (2012). *Intercultural communication: A discourse approach*. John Wiley & Sons.
- [40] Scott, K. (2015). The pragmatics of hashtags: Inference and conversational style on Twitter. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 81, 8–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2015.03.015>
- [41] Shifman, L. (2014). The cultural logic of photo-based meme genres. *Journal of Visual Culture*, 13(3), 340–358. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412914546577>
- [42] Tagg, C., Lyons, A., Hu, R., & Rock, F. (2017). The ethics of digital ethnography in a team project. *Applied Linguistics Review*, 8(2–3), 271–292. <https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2016-1040>
- [43] Van Leeuwen, T. (2001). Semiotics and iconography. In T. Van Leeuwen & C. Jewitt (Eds.), *Handbook of visual analysis* (pp. 92–118). Sage.
- [44] Zappavigna, M. (2011). Ambient affiliation: A linguistic perspective on Twitter. *New Media & Society*, 13(5), 788–806. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810385097>
- [45] Zappavigna, M. (2015). Searchable talk: The linguistic functions of hashtags. *Social Semiotics*, 25(3), 274–291. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2014.996948>
- [46] Zappavigna, M. (2021). Discourse and social media. In K. Hyland, B. Paltridge, & L. Wong (Eds.), *The Bloomsbury handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 295–309). Bloomsbury Academic.
- [47] Zhang, H., Cai, Y., Ren, H., & Li, Q. (2022). Multimodal topic modeling by exploring characteristics of short text social media. *IEEE Transactions on Multimedia*, 25, 2430–2445. <https://doi.org/10.1109/TMM.2022.3147064>
- [48] Zhou, Y., & Ai, W. (2022). #Emoji: A Study on the Association between Emojis and Hashtags on Twitter. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, 16, 1169–1180. <https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v16i1.19367>



Rakhmat Wahyudin Sagala earned his Bachelor of Arts in English Education from Universitas Negeri Medan, Medan, Indonesia, in 2010. He then received his Master of Arts in English Applied Linguistics from the same institution in 2013, followed by a Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Applied Linguistics, also from Universitas Negeri Medan, in 2023. He is currently a lecturer in the English Language Education Study Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia. He has been actively involved in teaching, research, and academic service, with contributions as a guest reviewer, including for the *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education (JARHE)*. His research focuses on applied linguistics, multimodal discourse, and digital communication studies. Email: rakhmatwahyudin@umsu.ac.id ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9653-4389>



Tri Indah Rezeki is a lecturer in the English Department at STKIP Budidaya Binjai. She earned her bachelor's degree in English Education and a master's degree in English Applied Linguistics from Universitas Negeri Medan, and Doctorate in Linguistics at Universitas Sumatera Utara. Her academic interests include language acquisition, semantics, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and multimodal analysis. She has actively contributed to scholarly research through publications in national and international journals, with her work focusing on the relationship between language, meaning, and social context, particularly how discourse and visual modes shape understanding and ideology in educational and media settings.



Amrullah, born in Medan in 1986, is a lecturer in Computer Science at the Department of Information Systems, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. He earned a Diploma in Informatics Management from STMIK Triguna Dharma Medan in 2014, a Bachelor's degree in Information Systems from Triguna Dharma Medan in 2016, and a Master of Computer Science in Informatics Engineering with a concentration in Information Systems from UPI YPTK Padang in 2019. As a lecturer, he actively publishes in national and international journals. Beyond academia, he is also a creative writer and designer, contributing to international digital asset platforms such as *MyFonts.com* and distributing works across national marketplaces including Envato and Creative Market. He can be contacted at amrullah@umsu.ac.id