

## Research Article

# Finding the Next Successor: Visual Message in Caricature Image

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**Abstract.**

Caricature is a form of visual communication wherein messages are conveyed through exaggerated and often humorous distortions of characters, serving as a critique of societal issues. Caricature often serves to critique various aspects of society, including social, cultural, economic, legal, and political conditions. Similarly, the political landscape surrounding the 2024 general election has intensified, fostering active and diverse discussions through both direct and indirect media channels. Mass media visualizes the very busy pros and cons of the Indonesian future successors. The proponents and the supported people are arguing and the one that can represent them will be the leader of government in 2024-2029. Funny, amusing, and intriguing caricature images in National Mass Media are interesting to study to see how the interpretation on the form of a caricature object is using the meaningful visual signs. This research was limited to caricature images by a cartoonist, Kang Yuyun, that was published in TEMPO National mass media in January-June 2023. The object of illustrative image was limited using a purposive sample that is considered representing the objective of research. The data mining was carried out through observation, interview, document, and literature. Observation was conducted directly in Tempo's Office, Jakarta; interview was conducted online with the cartoonist; document included the caricature images that have been published on Sunday; and literature came from scientific works such as journal, proceeding, and books. All data were collected to be validated using triangulation and then analyzed using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory about denotation, connotation, and myth. The findings reveal that Kang Yuyun's caricature images in TEMPO mass media during the 2024 General Election depict three groups supporting Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, and Anis Bawesdan as potential successors, emphasizing unity in nation-building and promotion.

**Keywords:** caricature, mass media, the successor, semiotics

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**Published:** 9 May 2024

Publishing services provided by  
Knowledge E

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Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICADECS Conference Committee.

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## 1. Introduction

Topic about the national figures around the general election of 2024 becomes news source in many printed and social media. The hot topic is informed in the form of verbal news and visual images leading to Indonesia's Number-One Candidate figure. Information in the form of visual images, particularly caricature, are often present in mass media. Visually, caricature is displayed through face expression, body movement, touch, physical movement, posture, body accessories and hair style [1]. Some studies on caricature have been conducted by academicians, e.g. [2] conducted a study on the interpretation and the mastery of musical score, either notes or song dynamics. The study concluded that the gesture of the conductor serves as cue related to instruction and deep understanding of the song. [3] have analyzed Pat Torpey's musical performance applying the appropriate posture to express the musical message through his body movement, in drumming. [4] State that semiotics in caricature represents critique, chatter, or verbal sign raised by caricatural icons such as men wearing hats and women with fat bodies as emotional messages about Jokowi's reign. [5] scientific work (2015) studying caricature on the cover of the April 11-17 2011 edition of Tempo magazine found caricature images that explicitly prioritized pornographic nudity of large and prominent women's breasts as their persuasive communication.

Some researchers looked more at the aspect of a person or a group's activities in carrying out movements that are visualized in caricatures and caricatures as information media. It is different from caricature gestures, the display of which dramatizes the object through non-verbal (image) communication. Until today, there has been no study on the candidate successor around the general election of 2024 delivered visually through a caricature images like what Yuyun Nurrachman delivered. The messages delivered through caricature image containing praises and showing the strengths of candidates are the phenomenon often embellishing the mass media. The visual message in the caricature image is delivered through its face, property, and style. They are all the visual signs delivered by Cartoonists to the people in the form of support to the figures that have been role models as the nation's successor in 2024 and as the culmination in 2045 to celebrate Indonesia's 100th Independence anniversary.

## 2. Method

Data collection was carried out using observation, interview, document, and literature. The data collected from four sources were intended to screen as much as data to provide

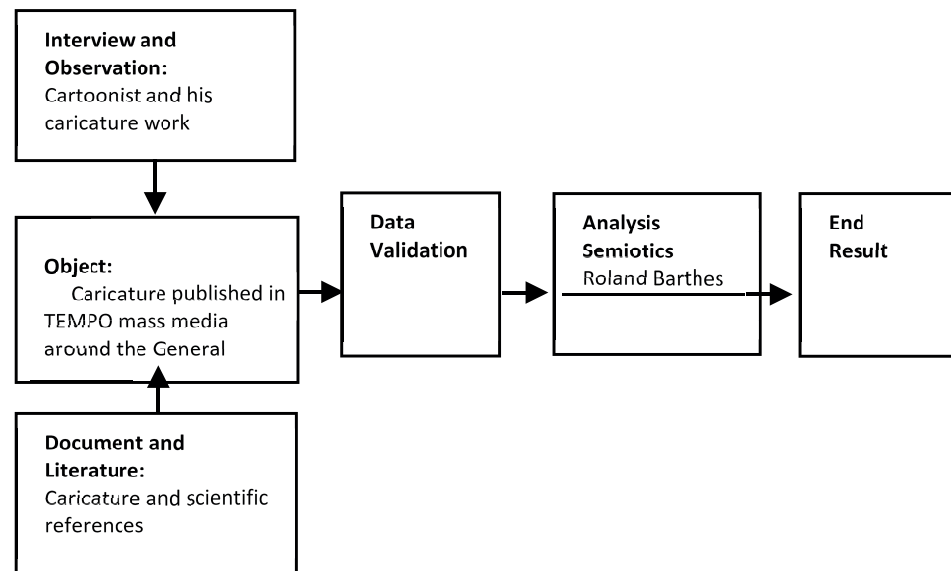
valid data. Observation of the visual message contained in caricature image around the general election of 2024, and secondary data was obtained from interview with Kang Yuyun as the cartoonist in TEMPO mass media, while document and literature were used to get data of caricature object and reference about caricature. Those data were analyzed in three stages: (1) data reduction involving field note obtained and selected for data summarizing, coding, theme formulation, and data grouping made in written form; (2) data display is construction and reconstruction of data information through the data reduction process as the basis of interpretation to result in synopsis; (3) conclusion drawing and verification in the interpretation process to provide meaning to the data displayed [6].

Analysis was conducted using Roland Barthes's semiotics theory developing two signs providing two meanings: denotation and connotation levels [7]. The "first level" indicates the relation between signifier and signified in its referent sign in external reality. Barthes states the signifier order in denotation. The connotative signifier functions to explain the function of sign on the "second" level. Connotation represents the interaction occurring when a sign meets the feeling towards its cultural values. It occurs when meaning moves toward subjective or at least intersubjective points through myth. To Barthes, myth is a culture's way of thinking that is conceptualized through phenomena occurring in the society [8].

The study on the caricatures by Yuyun Nurrachman published in TEMPO mass media around the General Election of 2024 was conducted gradually through, among others, data mining, data validation, and data analysis to result in finding, as shown in the Figure 1.

### 3. Result and Discussion

This research focuses on the caricature images by Yuyun Nurrachman as a cartoonist of TEMPO mass media, based in Palmerah Barat Street No.8, South Jakarta. Yuyun Nurrachman, loving to be called Kang Yuyun, is a credible, creative, productive cartoonist. Based on the data of document in TEMPO cartoonist content, 24 caricature works have been published every Monday by TEMPO mass media in the period of January-to-June 2023. Kang Yuyun stated that he has produced the large number of caricature images spontaneously based on the hot issues arising in the society. Because of so many caricature images created, the author limited his study to three worked selected based on purposive sample distributed between January-June adjusted with the title and objective of research, finding the candidate successor of the nation's leader to



**Figure 1:** Research Procedure (Source: Author).

develop and advance the nation. To strengthen the visual image, according to Kang Yuyun, caricature should be supported with visual elements such as property displayed in illustrative image, like the three images being the sample: (1) Caricature entitled “Bersatu (Being United)” published on Sunday, May 2, 2023; and (3) Caricature entitled (SBY’s Dream or Mimpi SBY) Satu Gerbong Beda Tujuan (One Carriage with Different Destinations”) published on Sunday, June 25, 2023, as shown in figures 2a, and b.

Yuyun Nurrachman drew caricature entitled “Bersatu (being united)” published in TEMPO Mass Media on Sunday, May 2, 2023 (Figure 2) featuring the great figure expected to be the President in 2024, witnessed by some figures leading big parties and the current President. The three presidential candidates, Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, and Anis Baswedan, were hand in hand and placed in the center of the plane. On the top, there is a red plane on which the slogan “Being United makes us strong” is written, while on the left there are Muhamad Mardiono, Airlangga Hartarto, and Joko Widodo and on the right there are Zulkifli Hasan, Muhaimin Iskandar, Megawati Soekarnoputeri. Then, the message of caricature is ended with verbal language using the following sentence “For Sustainable Development”. Closely observed, the caricature image contains some messages written using denotative, connotative signs, and myth.

1. Figure 2 contains a message delivered using denotative signs: (a) three persons wearing black uniforms and tie hand in hand put on the center; (b) on the left there are three persons: two persons wearing dark green and yellow shirt while raising their thumbs, and a person wearing white shirt and clapping; (c) on the right there are three persons: two men wearing blue, bright green shirt while raising their



**Figure 2:** Caricature by Kang Yuyun. (Source: Nurrachman, 2023).

thumbs and a woman wearing red cloth and clapping; and (d) on the top there is a red plane one which the slogan “Being United makes us strong” is written in white color; and (e) on the bottom, there is word balloon reading “For the Sustainable Development”.

2. At connotative level, there are some signs delivering message to the public: (a) three persons, constituting the national figures, wearing black suit uniform and chatting with each other: Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, and Anis Baswedan who are very well-known in this country, moreover around the General Election of 2024; (b) on the left there are three persons: a man wearing dark green shirt (Muhamad Mardiono) and a man wearing yellow shirt (Airlangga Hartarto) agreeing that the three figures seem to be harmonious, and on the lower left corner, there is a man wearing white shirt (Joko Widodo) witnessing it while clapping; (c) on the right, there are three political figures witnessing: Zulkifli Hasan, Muhaimin Iskandar and a lady put on the lower right corner (Megawati Soekarnoputeri)

witnessing happily the three harmonious and compact presidential candidates; (d) the transverse plane like banner reads “Being united we will be strong” as verbal message to confirm the visual message from the three figures being the presidential candidates in 2024. The red-white banner is the entity of Indonesia’s flag color, as the spirit of united Indonesia; and (e) word balloon reading “For the sustainable development” constituting the dream and hope of all party leaders, particularly the current president, that the development can be continued later to make the country more developed and better.

3. At myth level, the messages delivered by the cartoonist are, among others: (a) Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, and Anis Baswedan are great figures, national figures predicted by their proponents to be the number-one or president. People expect that the three presidential candidate will always be united and maintain eternity and praising and supporting each other’s program; (b) the intimacy of the three presidential candidates is witnessed by the head heads of two big parties: Head of the United Development Party (Indonesian: Partai Persatuan Pembangunan) (Muhamad Mardiono) and Head of Functional Group Party (Indonesian: Partai Golkar) (Airlangga Hartarto) agreeing that the three national figures are harmonious and compact, and Joko Widodo is very happy as well. The three figures are happy and agree that Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, and Anis Baswedan seem to be harmonious and compact; (c) as the general chairperson of National Mandate Party (Indonesian: Partai Amanat Nasional), Muhaimin Iskandar as general chairperson of the National Awakening Party (Indonesian: Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa), and Megawati Soekarnoputeri as the general chairperson of Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (Indonesian: Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan) is very glad and agree if the three presidential candidates (Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, and Anis Baswedan) remain to maintain close relation and be united to support their program; (d) the sentence “Being United We Will Be Strong” on the banner is a message delivered to important guest like welcoming the guest or the official who comes to a region, and so whoever will be the President of 2024, whether Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, or Anis Baswedan, will be welcome and praised; and (e) the sentence contained in the word balloon constitutes an important note for Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, or Anis Baswedan to continue the program and the development that have been made by the previous President (Joko Widodo) when they become the President in 2024 to achieve the goal in 2045 or in the 100th Independence Anniversary.

In conclusion, the message delivered in Figure 2a shows three actors becoming the hot topic for the public and the mass media around the general election of 2024, Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto, or Anis Baswedan. The three actors, the figures always embellishing various mass media, are sometimes controversial in relation to what they say and do. The current government worries that Indonesia will not be led by the one who can continue and develop this state's program; therefore, the three actors predicted to be the president of 2024 should be friends rather than enemies.

## 4. Conclusion

Around 2024 as the year of democracy and regional leader and presidential election becoming the hot topic to the public and mass media, many mass media have written verbally the hot news and displayed it visually using caricature images. Since January 2023, Indonesia's political situation is hot and hot, particularly for Indonesia's number-one person candidate ready for the presidential candidate and the proponents of certain party groups. The candidates and their proponents have begun to map the names to be assigned and proposed to be the presidential and vice presidential candidate. The rulers and the parties will of course prioritize their groups' interest, and this is different from the people's hope that whoever is elected to be the president should obligatorily make the people prosperous and improve their economy. All classes and elements of society should be united to encourage the stakeholders to keep prioritizing the unitary state and to make this country developed and respected by other countries.

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