

From Tweets to Tension: How Language Shape Hoaxes and Hatred in the Twitterverse

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
History Accept: 30 March 2025 Revised: 24 April 2025 Approved: 03 May 2025 Keywords <i>Hoax, language, social media, Twitter</i>	Language is a primary tool for human communication, and influencing the thoughts and behaviors of others. In the context of social media platforms such as Twitter, language plays a highly strategic role, not only as a medium for personal expression but also as a powerful channel for the wide dissemination of information. One of the most concerning misuses of language in this sphere is the spread of hoaxes false or misleading information that is deliberately constructed to appear truthful, often with specific intentions such as deception, provocation, or incitement of division. This article examines how language is employed to construct and reinforce the narratives of hoaxes and hate speech on Twitter, focusing on lexical choices, rhetorical style, and the emotional appeals embedded in the language. often provocative, manipulative, and designed to elicit strong emotional reactions from audiences. It reveals that hoaxes and hate speech on social media frequently utilize linguistic techniques such as excessive generalizations and inflammatory diction to create tension and sow division within society. The impact of such phenomena extends beyond the digital realm, potentially triggering real-world social conflicts. Through a linguistic and media studies approach, this article aims to uncover the patterns of language used in the dissemination of disinformation and hate, while encouraging readers to adopt a more critical, mindful, and responsible attitude toward language use on social media platforms.



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1. Introduction

Language is both the most fundamental and the most complex tool of human communication. In the digital context, language is not only used to convey information but also to construct meaning, shape opinion, and create specific social realities (Subroto, 2018). Language used in online is often not neutral. It usually has a purpose and is used with a plan, especially when talking about social or political topics. Social media shows that language can be a strong tool to influence others, build unity, or even start conflict. Twitter, as one of the leading social media platforms characterized by its short message format, because it allows quick information and often direct or provocative style of communication. In many cases, content that conveys strong emotions such as anger to go viral more easily (Putri & Suyanto, 2020). Twitter has increasingly infused itself into daily life regardless of one's geographical location. Just ask the estimated 554.7 million people around the globe who

actively use the service and post a collective 58 million "tweets" each day. Alternatively, perhaps query one of the 135,000 new users joining the network daily. This makes Twitter a fertile ground for the spread of hoaxes and hate speech, as its linguistic features enable the delivery of persuasive messages that trigger immediate public reactions.

Hoaxes represent one of the most frequent forms of misinformation on social media. According to Rahadi (2019), a hoax is false information Purposely distributed with specific objectives, such as deception, shaping false opinions, or creating division. The language used in hoaxes is typically crafted to appear credible, often employing convincing narratives, emotionally charged diction, and references of ambiguous but apparently credible sources. The spread of hoaxes is not solely driven by, but harmful purpose also by users' lack of digital literacy and the emotional resonance in the language. In addition to hoaxes, hate speech also poses a significant challenge in digital communication. Hate speech refers to expressions that demean or attack specific individuals or groups based on social identities such as religion, ethnicity, race, or gender. Research by Ramadhani & Sari (2022) reveals that hate speech on Twitter frequently utilizes harsh vocabulary, negative labeling, and stereotypes that reinforce prejudices against particular groups. The language of hate speech is dangerous not only because it causes harm but also because it strength sentiments of hatred and can provoke real-world consequences beyond the virtual realm.

These phenomena illustrate that language on social media is no longer a neutral means of communication; rather, it has become a tool for influencing, and even manipulating, public opinion. As Lestari (2020) argues, the power of language in shaping narratives plays a critical role in directing public perception of contemporary issues. Understanding how language is used in particular contexts allows us to see that every word chosen in a tweet can have significant social implications both directly and indirectly. Awareness of the power of language in social media is essential for building digital literacy that goes beyond technical skills to encompass critical competencies. Digital literacy is not merely the ability to use media, but also the capacity to interpret messages reflectively and understand their broader social impacts (Siregar, 2017). With this awareness, users are expected to engage more wisely in digital communication not only as consumers of information but also as responsible participants accountable for the content they share.

2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative research with critical discourse analysis to examine the use of language in hoaxes and hate speech on the Twitter platform. This method is chosen because it is suitable for understanding the hidden meanings behind texts and how language is used to shape social reality and influence public opinion. Data is collected through documentation of tweets containing elements of hoaxes and hate speech, selected based on specific keywords and from accounts that are active or have gone viral in sharing sensitive content, such as political, religious, and identity-related issues. The

researcher analyzes the data using Norman Fairclough's model of discourse analysis, which includes three dimensions: text, discourse practice, and social practice. The analysis focuses on word choice, sentence structure, language style, and the social context behind the tweets. This study does not aim to generalize, but rather to gain a deep understanding of how language is used to create manipulative narratives that may lead to social tension in digital spaces. As explained by Moleong (2017), qualitative research is descriptive and tends to use analysis that emphasizes meaning, context, and depth of data, making it highly relevant for exploring complex and nuanced language phenomena on social media.

3. Results and Discussion

A hoax is false information that is intentionally spread with the aim of misleading, influencing opinions, or creating public anxiety. In the digital world, a hoax is not simply a mistake in delivering information, but a form of communication that uses language strategically to appear believable and to trigger emotional reactions. According to Rahadi (2019), hoaxes often use persuasive word choices and emotionally charged narratives to make them more easily accepted and shared. Hoaxes can take many forms, including fake news, manipulated data, or twisted narratives that fit certain agendas.

Twitter, as a short-text-based social media platform, has become fertile ground for the spread of hoaxes. Its fast-paced, concise, and public nature allows information to spread widely in just minutes. This study finds that many viral hoaxes on Twitter use highly strategic language such as capital letters, exclamation marks, and provocative word choices designed to attract attention and provoke emotion. This is made worse by Twitter's algorithm, which increases the visibility of content based on interaction rather than accuracy, giving controversial hoax tweets a greater chance of being widely circulated.

The phenomenon of a hoax is not only a reflection of human creativity but also a tool for manipulation, often exploiting trust and spreading false information. Its prevalence in various settings shows how easily lies can spread and the complexity of modern communication, highlighting the impact of deception in different forms. A hoax can take the form of fake news, misleading images, or fabricated events designed to deceive the public. Hoaxes are often used to influence opinions, create fear, or manipulate beliefs. The existence of hoaxes shows how vulnerable individuals and communities are to false information, making it essential to approach shared knowledge with skepticism and critical thinking. Based on our research on Twitter's social media, the researchers found a lot of hoax used by Twitter users. Below are just a few of the many hoaxes that we found.



There are several claims that require clarification. The primary hoax involves misidentifying a dance performance as a **"Yahudi dance."** The image reveals that the dance in question is actually the **"Jetka Lenkka Dance"** originating from Finland, not a Yahudi dance as claimed in the first tweet. The main deception lies in the deliberate misidentification and mislabeling of a traditional Finnish dance as Yahudi, which was eventually used to construct a misleading narrative.



The image contains multiple elements of hoax and disinformation that are concerning and misleading. Firstly, the claim that Rp 38.5 trillion of Hajj funds were used without informing the pilgrims is not supported by any valid or verifiable evidence, making it a baseless accusation. The statement **"He will be killed by his own people"** is a clear example of hate speech and provocation, which can incite anger and violence among the public. The repeated use of the hashtag **#JokowiBikinRakyatMuak** (Jokowi Makes People Fed Up) further reflects a deliberate attempt to manipulate public opinion and spread negative sentiment through propaganda. The source cited in the post, **beritaislam.org**, lacks credibility and cannot be independently

verified, indicating that the information may have been constructed to serve a specific agenda. This type of content falls under the category of disinformation and misleading content.

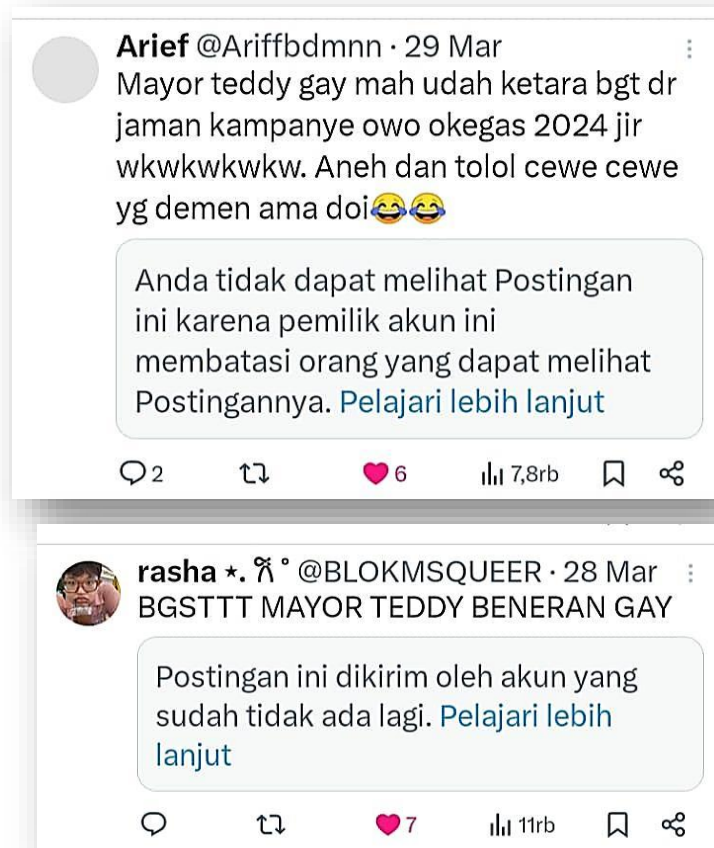


A post from the Twitter account "Zay3456" on Tuesday (April 5, 2025) circulated an image showing a screenshot of an article with the title, **"President Prabowo Angry at the People: Rice Is Expensive? There's Still Cassava, Sago, and Wheat to Eat. Stop Worrying the Government!"** The actual title of the original article is **"Prabowo Subianto Prioritizes People-Centered Economy for Golden Indonesia 2045."** This post contains a manipulated content, as it falsely changes the original headline to convey a different, more provocative message. The photo and visual layout in the post closely resemble an article from this media outlet, whose original title is "Prabowo Subianto Prioritizes a People-Centered Economy for Golden Indonesia 2045." This similarity suggests that the manipulated content was designed to look like the original article in order to mislead readers.



The image above contains a potentially hoax claim related to a statement attributed to Erick Thohir, suggesting that he asked the public to

donate for the sake of Indonesia's progress. First, there is no official or credible source that supports this claim, which indicates that the information may be fabricated or part of a hoax. This article has been edited. The original title was **"Erick Thohir Speaks Out on Fahri Hamzah Becoming a BTN Commissioner"**, not about gold donations.



The images present claims about **Mayor Teddy being identified as gay**, which may be misleading. First, this information lacks credible sources or clear evidence, making it difficult to verify its accuracy. The use of derogatory language and jokes regarding sexual orientation can be seen as a form of misinformation and character attack, which not only misleads the public but can also harm the individual's reputation. In a political campaign context, spreading such information may be intended to discredit political opponents without a solid foundation. That comments below the images indicate that many people doubt the authenticity of this information, especially since the original post is no longer available. This raises suspicion that the circulating information may be fabricated or taken out of context. In today's information age, it is essential for individuals to verify facts before sharing or believing any claims. Educating oneself on how to recognize hoaxes and misinformation can help prevent the spread of harmful information and maintain the integrity of public discourse.

Language is a powerful tool that shapes our perceptions and influences our thoughts. In the realm of social media, particularly on platforms like Twitter, the choice of words in tweets can significantly affect how readers

interpret information. When encountering a tweet that contains hoax content, the specific language used can evoke emotional responses, leading to altered perceptions of reality. The structure of the language used in these tweets also plays a crucial role. Tweets that present information in a clear, concise manner tend to be more persuasive than those that are convoluted or filled with jargon. The use of rhetorical devices, such as metaphors or hyperbole, can further enhance the impact of the message, making it more memorable and engaging. This stylistic approach may lead readers to internalize false narratives more readily, as the emotional weight of the words can overshadow their logical assessment of the content.

The framing of the information within the tweet can guide readers' interpretations. For example, a tweet that frames a situation as a "crisis" versus a "minor issue" will invoke different responses from the audience. This framing can create a sense of urgency or importance, compelling readers to react emotionally rather than rationally. As a result, individuals may find themselves adopting viewpoints that align with the misleading narrative presented, further entrenching the hoax in their belief systems. The way words are arranged and the specific terminology used in tweets can profoundly influence how individuals think and perceive information. Understanding the mechanisms behind language and its effects on cognition is essential for combating misinformation on social media platforms. By fostering critical thinking and awareness of linguistic strategies, readers can become more discerning consumers of information, ultimately reducing the impact of hoaxes in their online interactions.

4. Conclusion

This study highlights the significant role that language plays in the dissemination of hoaxes and hate speech on social media platforms like Twitter. It underscores how strategic word choices, rhetorical styles, and emotional appeals can manipulate public perception and foster division within society. The findings indicate that hoaxes are not merely accidental misinformation but are crafted to appear credible, often exploiting emotional resonance to provoke strong reactions from audiences. The framing of information greatly influences how readers interpret messages, which can lead to the entrenchment of false narratives in their belief systems. As such, it is crucial for individuals to develop critical digital literacy skills that go beyond mere consumption of information. To understand the linguistic strategies employed in misleading content, users can become more discerning and responsible participants in digital communication. The implications of this study extend beyond the virtual realm, as the effects of language can trigger real-world social tensions and conflicts, making it imperative that we approach information shared on social media with skepticism and a commitment to verifying facts.

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