

Criticism and Satire in the Comic Strip @komik.grontol on Instagram Related to Indonesian Government Policies (A Pragmatic Semiotic Study)

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ABSTRACT

Comic strips, beyond entertainment, serve as a medium for expressing public aspirations. This study explores criticism and satire of government policies perceived as unfavorable to the people. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research examines linguistic data from the Instagram account @komik.grontol, covering content from December 2024 to February 2025. Data collection was conducted through documentation techniques, and analysis followed the theory of conversational implicature and semiotics. The findings reveal various criticisms, including (a) the 12% VAT increase, (b) the construction of fences and the granting of HGB permits for Laut Tangerang, (c) the appointment of special staff amid budget efficiency efforts, (d) lenient punishments for corrupt officials, (e) the LPG sales policy that burdens the public, (f) the prohibition of students from criticizing meal quality in the MBG program, and (g) the proposal to introduce insects as a protein source in the MBG program. These findings have theoretical implications for the development of pragmatics and visual communication studies, as well as practical implications for the government to be more responsive to public criticism and for creators to convey messages in an ethical and educational manner.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become an inseparable part of everyday life. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok allow users to connect, share information, and interact in real-time without being constrained by space and time. Social media has also evolved into a medium for expressing opinions [1]–[3]. Netizens can

voice their opinions on various social, economic, and political issues. Additionally, social media now serves as a space for aspirations and social criticism [4]–[6]. Aspirations and criticism on social media take various forms, such as opinions, online petitions, social campaigns, and more.

One form of communication used to convey social criticism on social media is

comic strips. A comic strip is a short comic format consisting of several sequential panels that tell a story or deliver a message with an engaging visual style [7]–[9]. This type of comic is often used by content creators on social media as a medium for expressing aspirations and social criticism creatively [10]–[12]. By combining concise images and text, comic strips can capture readers' attention and help them understand complex issues in a lighter and more entertaining way. This makes them an essential instrument in digital communication dynamics.

This study specifically focuses on comic strips uploaded to Instagram for several reasons. Instagram is essentially a visually-oriented platform where image and video content take priority. Its key features, such as the feed and carousel posts that allow a series of images, are ideal for the comic strip format. This sets it apart from other social media platforms that may be more text- or news link-oriented.

Moreover, Instagram has become a primary platform for independent comic strip creators and webtoonists. Many digital artists choose Instagram as their main channel to publish their work and interact directly with their audience. This creates a representative environment for studying how comic strips adapt and evolve in the digital realm, especially in conveying satire and social criticism through a combination of visuals and text.

One Instagram account that focuses on creating comic strips is @komik.grontol. This account primarily produces humorous comic strips based on trending and viral events in Indonesia. The name "grontol" in @komik.grontol is an acronym for the phrase "*gurauan orang tolol*" (foolish jokes). However, aside from humor, some of the comic strips on this account also contain satire and criticism of various government policies, especially those considered controversial and not in favor of the people.

From a pragmatic perspective, comic strips often utilize implicature as a communication strategy. In the context of social criticism, implicature is used in comic strips to deliver sharp messages while

maintaining acceptable communication boundaries. This is crucial because, in many countries, including Indonesia, criticism of the government often faces various forms of repression and censorship. The satire and criticism in @komik.grontol target the policies of Indonesia's new government, now led by Prabowo – Gibran.

This presidential and vice-presidential pair was inaugurated on Sunday, October 20, 2024. Despite having been in office for only a few months, several policies of the new Prabowo – Gibran administration have already drawn significant criticism from various parties [13]. The public perceives that some of these policies are inappropriate and not pro-people. The controversies surrounding these new government policies have become the main backdrop for numerous critical and satirical responses on social media, one of which is in the form of comic strips on the @komik.grontol account. These critiques and satire are delivered creatively while still conveying strong messages. Therefore, analyzing the implicature in these comic strips is crucial to understanding how satire and social criticism are constructed, conveyed, and interpreted by the audience.

This study is significant as it demonstrates how visual media such as comic strips, particularly those distributed through social media, serve as an alternative means to voice criticism toward government policies. Amid the limited space for critique in mainstream media [14], comic strips offer a light yet sharp form of communication carrying social and political messages. The presence of comic strips as a form of digital cultural expression reflects the dynamics of freedom of expression in Indonesian society.

This study specifically aims to analyze conversational implicature in @komik.grontol comic strips that contain satire and criticism of the new Prabowo–Gibran administration's policies. This study is significant in the field of semiotics and pragmatics, as it shows how media such as comic strips can convey aspirations safely without repression from the regime. Therefore, this research not only contributes

to the development of pragmatic studies, but also to digital communication and discourse analysis studies. Particularly in understanding the role of comic strips as effective tools of social criticism that shape critical awareness in society.

Previous research relevant to this research has been conducted by several parties, including the following. First, Naufalia et al. examined implicatures in the television program "Lapor Pak!" on Trans 7 [15]. The results of this study indicate that the humorous utterances made by the cast contain implicatures related to social criticism, such as government performance, political issues, government characteristics, and official controversies.

Second, Aulia studied implicatures in memes featuring the word "tenggelamkan" (sink) [16]. The findings show that there are three types of implicatures found in these memes: satire, suggestions, and a combination of both.

Third, Azizi et al. analyzed implicatures in memes created by the Instagram account of Arab teenagers, I.Q. Shabab [17]. The results indicate that the implicatures in these memes contain satire and social criticism regarding the impact of modern developments within society.

Fourth, Akbari et al. studied the discourse of dark joke humor by Tretan Coki on the TikTok account @komedi.gelapp [18]. The findings reveal that the humor presented on this account not only aims to entertain but also serves as a satire on social realities and provokes critical thinking.

Fifth, Budiawan et al. studied implicature in the @komik.grontol Instagram account [19]. The results show that there are two types of implicature used on the @komik.grontol account: conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Of all the data analyzed, conversational implicature dominates.

Sixth, Saefudin et al. uncovered hidden messages in @komik.grontol using semiotic analysis [20]. The findings show three levels of meaning: denotatively depicting everyday situations; connotatively criticizing social issues such as injustice and

exploitation; and mythologically challenging ideologies that support systemic inequality.

Based on previous studies, it is evident that research on implicature in popular media has been conducted using various approaches and objects. Some studies highlight the use of implicature in television programs, memes, and social media posts. Research on the @komik.grontol Instagram account has also been carried out by the fifth and sixth researchers, from both the perspective of conversational implicature and semiotic analysis, but they remain limited to separating linguistic and visual aspects.

However, there are still several research gaps that have not been thoroughly explored and serve as opportunities for contribution in this study. First, no study has explicitly and integratively combined the theories of conversational implicature and semiotics to analyze @komik.grontol's content. Second, previous studies have not systematically mapped criticisms of current and relevant government policies. Third, the data corpus analyzed in this study is up-to-date, which is expected to provide a renewed understanding of the practice of social criticism in digital comics. Fourth, this research positions comics as a public discourse space representing the people's aspirations and emphasizes the importance of government responsiveness to public criticism. Thus, this study contributes to broadening insight into the role of visual-verbal media in shaping contemporary social and political discourse.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In analyzing a linguistics phenomenon, a deep understanding of the underlying theory is required. This study focuses on the analysis of hidden meanings in utterances, making pragmatics the relevant field of study. One of the subfields studied in pragmatics is implicature. The following section elaborates on both theories.

2.1 Pragmatics

Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how meaning is interpreted in the context of

communication. According to Yule, pragmatics is the study of meaning communicated by the speaker and how that meaning is interpreted by the listener [21]–[23]. Pragmatics not only examines language structure but also considers external factors such as situational context, shared knowledge between the speaker and listener, and communication goals.

In pragmatics, the meaning of an utterance does not solely depend on its grammatical structure but also on how the utterance is used in a particular situation. Levinson emphasizes that pragmatics is related to the principles governing meaning beyond language structure, such as the speaker's intention, the listener's assumptions, and the implications arising from interaction [24]. Some key aspects of pragmatics studies include deixis, the cooperative principle, the politeness principle, speech acts, and implicature.

2.2 *Implicature*

Implicature refers to the implied meaning of an utterance that is not explicitly stated [25]–[27]. In a conversation, every utterance essentially implies something—an intention or proposition that is usually hidden behind the spoken words and not a direct part of the utterance itself.

Grice categorizes implicature into two types: conventional implicature and conversational implicature [28]–[30]. The hidden meaning in conventional implicature can be generally understood even without knowing the context. In contrast, the hidden meaning in conversational implicature can only be understood by individuals who grasp the conversational context [31]–[33]. Based on this, this study employs conversational implicature analysis, as the implicit meanings in the comic strips created by @komik.grontol can only be comprehended within their specific contexts.

2.3 *Semiotics*

Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotic theory is one of the most robust approaches in analyzing signs, whether in the form of text or image. Peirce categorized signs based on the relationship between the sign and its object into three types: icon, index, and symbol [34], [35]. An icon is a sign that resembles its object, such as a caricature of a political figure. An index is a sign that has a causal or close relationship with its object, such as a facial expression indicating emotion. A symbol is a sign whose meaning is determined conventionally by society, such as colors, words, or specific symbols.

In the context of this study, Peirce's semiotic theory is used to examine how digital comics on the Instagram account @komik.grontol combine visual and verbal signs to convey social criticism. By identifying the types of signs and the meaning-making processes that occur in the readers, the researcher can uncover the implicit meanings used by the comic creator to deliver satirical messages and critiques of government policies.

3. METHODS

The research method employs a qualitative descriptive approach as it aims to describe and analyze the implicit meanings in comic strips that contain criticism of government policies. The data in this study consists of linguistic elements, including vocabulary and sentences that convey social criticism of government policies. The data source for this research is comic strips from the Instagram account @komik.grontol, produced between December 2024 – February 2025. Data collection was carried out by downloading relevant comic strips from the Instagram account, selecting those that contain social criticism of government policies, and documenting them in digital archives for further analysis.

This study employed purposive sampling by selecting seven comic strips that

explicitly or implicitly contain criticism of government policies. The selection criteria for the comic strips included: (1) comic strips that clearly express criticism of public or governmental policies, and (2) comic strips that contain linguistic elements suitable for analysis using implicature theory. The collected data were analyzed using Grice's theory of implicature and Peirce's semiotics. The data analysis steps consisted of: (1) identification, which involved classifying vocabulary and sentences in the comic strips that contain social criticism; (2) interpretation, which entailed analyzing the implied meanings in the comic strips based on context and the principles of conversational implicature; and (3) conclusion drawing, which involved concluding how social criticism is conveyed through the comic strips and to what extent implicature and semiotic theories can explain the messages embedded within them.

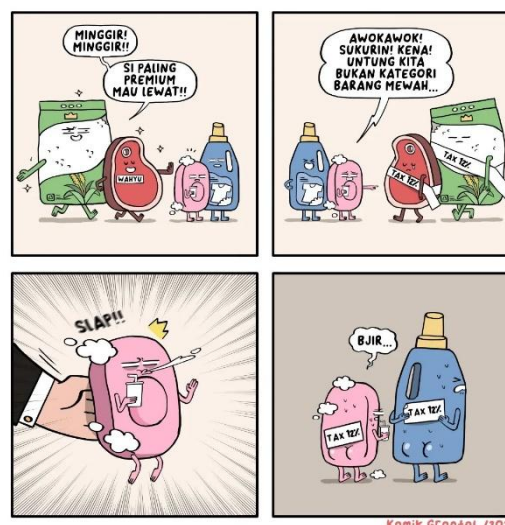
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The comic strip by @komik.grontol is a pictorial story adapted from real-life viral events in Indonesia. These real events are then rewritten by the comic author, enhanced with animated illustrations, and presented in humorous language to engage readers. Some comic strips consist of four panels, while others have six. The primary purpose of these comic strips is entertainment. Readers will find them amusing if they understand the context, which is based on factual events that have occurred in Indonesia. However, some comics also contain critiques of government policies. Below are seven comic strips that include such critiques.

Data 1

Context: In December 2024, the Indonesian government implemented a policy to increase the Value Added Tax (VAT) to 12%, effective from January 1, 2025. This tax hike was initially planned to target luxury goods but later extended to items consumed by the public, including electronic devices, motor vehicle spare parts, digital platforms, bath soap, and detergent.

Illustration:



Data 1 contains conversational implicature that satirically comments on the 12% VAT increase in Indonesia. The comic illustrates how the policy, which was initially intended only for luxury goods, eventually affected daily necessities as well.

In the first panel, characters representing luxury goods, such as premium rice and meat, appear arrogant and superior. They say, "*Minggir! Minggir! Si paling premium mau lewat!*" (Move aside! Move aside! The most premium is coming through!). This reflects how luxury items are often perceived as exclusive and prestigious.

In the second panel, characters symbolizing everyday essentials, like soap and detergent, laugh at the luxury items being taxed. They say, "*Awokawok! Sukurin! Kena! Untung kita bukan kategori barang mewah.*" (Awokawok! Serves you right! Got taxed! Good thing we're not in the luxury category). This indicates that they feel safe, assuming the tax only applies to certain goods.

However, in the third panel, the soap character, which previously felt secure, gets slapped hard. This represents how the tax policy suddenly extended to daily necessities. The fourth panel shows soap and detergent characters in shock, resignation, and disappointment. This is evident from the soap character exclaiming, "Bjir...", a slang word derived from an expletive commonly used to express frustration or anger.

The comic strip employs conversational implicature by presenting

dialogue that does not explicitly mention the VAT policy. However, through the characters expressions and storyline, readers can grasp the critique of a policy change perceived as inconsistent and surprising to the public.

Overall, the comic highlights how a tax policy initially claimed to apply only to luxury goods eventually impacted daily consumables, causing public concern. The critique in the comic aligns with protests from various groups who argue that the 12% VAT increase could burden citizens, especially amid economic struggles [36]. Due to widespread criticism, the government later decided that the 12% VAT increase would only apply to luxury goods. This demonstrates that public criticism can influence government policy changes.

Data 2

Context: In early 2025, reports surfaced that a 3-kilometer fence was built around the Tangerang Sea. Upon investigation, it was revealed that the sea had been granted *Hak Guna Bangunan* (HGB) or Building Use Rights. However, according to Indonesian law, seas should not be eligible for HGB. Additionally, in Javanese mythology, the South Sea is believed to be inhabited by a mystical entity named Nyi Roro Kidul, often associated with mystical and dangerous phenomena.

Illustration:



This comic strip contains conversational implicature criticizing the granting of HGB in maritime areas, which

should be legally prohibited. In the first panel, the sea ruler character, known in Javanese mythology as Nyi Roro Kidul, asserts her dominance over the southern seas. This is evident from the statement, "The southern seas are my domain." This line represents the mythological belief that the southern sea is controlled by a mystical entity. Then, Nyi Roro Kidul demonstrates her ability to transform from having a tail into having legs like a human. This signifies her extraordinary supernatural powers.

However, in response, a fisherman in the story reacts skeptically and says, "*Di darat ada yang lebih ajaib. Bisa mengubah kawasan laut jadi Hak Guna Bangunan.*" (There's something even more magical on land. They can turn the sea into land with HGB rights).

The conversational implicature in this comic strip emerges when the fisherman implies that the real magic is not supernatural, but rather the legal ability to convert a maritime area into land with HGB rights. This statement indirectly criticizes policies that allow sea areas to be turned into private property, which is logically and legally impossible. It highlights how bureaucracy and economic power can achieve something even more astonishing than magic—converting the sea into an area that can be owned and developed.

With the backdrop of news about the Tangerang Sea being granted HGB rights, this comic not only satirizes the phenomenon but also emphasizes the absurdity of a situation that contradicts both regulations and common sense. The use of humor and comparison with the South Sea myth further reinforces the critique that capitalism's influence in Indonesia is even more powerful than mythical forces.

Data 3

Context: President Prabowo Subianto has instructed budget efficiency measures amounting to IDR 306.69 trillion in the 2025 State Budget (APBN) and Regional Budget (APBD). This efficiency target is outlined in Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 1 of 2025, which mandates ministries and institutions to cut non-essential spending and prioritize

public services. Although the government assured that budget efficiency would not impact contract workers in ministries/agencies, field reports indicate that some regions have terminated contract workers due to budget constraints. Additionally, some ministries were exempt from budget cuts, including the defense sector. Furthermore, on February 11, 2025, Deddy Corbuzier was appointed as a special staff member in the Ministry of Defense, responsible for social and public communication, despite being merely a content creator with no military background.

Illustration:



This comic strip critiques the government's budget efficiency policy, particularly concerning the defense sector. In panels 1–2, the comic strip depicts the Grim Reaper personifying budget cuts in various sectors, symbolized by bloodstained doors. This implies that many sectors have been impacted by efficiency measures. However, in panels 3–4, when the Grim Reaper knocks on the *Sektor Pertahanan* (Defense Sector) door, instead of facing budget cuts, a celebration occurs with the appointment of a special staff member in the Ministry of Defense. This implicitly criticizes the fact that this sector continues receiving substantial funding despite overall budget reductions.

Conversational implicature in this comic becomes even clearer in panels 5–6, where a miniature soldier in a defense simulation faces a much larger, intimidating

figure—the newly appointed special staff member. Instead of military weapons, which should be the core of national defense, the special staff relies on physical threats, saying, “*Lu mau nyerang negara gue?? Gue tabok!!!*” (You wanna attack my country? I’ll slap you!!!). This statement implies the inefficacy of defense policies that prioritize appointing special staff over actual military preparedness. Moreover, it suggests that the appointed staff lacks the necessary competence, reinforcing the social critique that the selection was not based on expertise.

The comic uses implicature to convey criticism that while other sectors faced drastic budget cuts—leading to contract worker layoffs—the defense sector remained unaffected and instead allocated funds for special staff. By incorporating satire through the contrast between the Grim Reaper slashing budgets in various sectors and then witnessing a party in the defense sector, this comic highlights the discrepancy between budget efficiency policies and real-world implementation. The entire narrative of the comic strip forms a pragmatics critique of government decisions that are seen as inconsistent and favoring certain interests.

Data 4

Context: Harvey Moeis was named a suspect by the Attorney General's Office on March 27, 2024. The husband of actress Sandra Dewi was implicated in a corruption case involving the tin commodity trading system in the Mining Business License (IUP) area of PT Timah Tbk from 2015 to 2022. This case caused state losses amounting to Rp300 trillion. After a series of trials, Harvey Moeis was finally sentenced to 6 years and 6 months in prison. This sentence was lighter than the demands of the Public Prosecutor. In addition, the restitution that Harvey Moeis had to pay was increased from Rp210 billion to Rp420 billion. This verdict is considered very lenient compared to other criminal sentences such as theft and others. It is very different from the punishment imposed by foreign governments on corrupt officials.

Illustration:

This comic strip uses conversational implicature to criticize the judicial system in Indonesian corruption cases. By making comparisons with other countries, the comic builds meaning that is not explicitly stated but can be understood by the reader. In the first panel, it is depicted that in China, a corrupt official is sentenced to death, implying that the country has a very strict policy against corruption crimes. The second panel presents Japan, where corrupt officials choose to commit harakiri (suicide as a form of responsibility and honor). This shows that in Japan, the sense of shame and moral responsibility for one's actions is very high.

However, in the third and fourth panels, which depict Indonesia as a "Negara Nam-Dua," there is a drastic change in the treatment of corrupt officials. A corrupt individual who causes massive state losses still receives a lenient sentence due to subjective reasons such as politeness and family responsibilities. The comic strip illustrates that the legal system in Indonesia is perceived as not strict enough in handling corruption cases, unlike other countries that impose severe punishments or demand greater moral accountability.

In the context of Harvey Moeis case, this comic strip indirectly critiques how his sentence —6 years and 6 months— is considered too lenient compared to the Rp300 trillion in state losses. The criticism in the comic suggests that justice in Indonesia tends to favor those with power or influence,

whereas in other countries, corruption crimes receive far harsher punishments. Eventually, due to public criticism of Harvey Moeis light sentence, the Jakarta High Court increased his prison term to 20 years [37].

Pragmatically, this comic strip uses the principle of conversational implicature to convey public dissatisfaction with Indonesia's legal system. The dialogue in the comic strip does not explicitly mention any specific case, but with the existing context, readers can easily connect it to the current reality.

Data 5

Context: The Indonesian government has introduced a new policy regarding the sale of 3-kg LPG gas, effective February 1, 2025. This regulation prohibits the sale of subsidized "melon" LPG at the retail level. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) announced that the distribution scheme for 3-kg LPG, which was previously available through retailers, will now only be accessible through official Pertamina outlets. Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources, Bahlil Lahadalia, stated that this policy was implemented due to rampant price manipulation by small retailers. On another note, before the new government was formed, Prabowo (who was still a presidential candidate at the time) composed a campaign song titled "Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas."

Illustration:

This comic strip contains conversational implicature that criticizes the new government policy regarding the sale of 3-kg LPG gas. In the first panel, a character reports that some retailers are selling subsidized gas at excessively high prices. This statement implies a problem in distribution and weak price control, making affordable gas more expensive due to retailer markups. The second panel features an official who confidently announces the prohibition of retailers selling subsidized gas. In his mind, he believes his policy is a brilliant solution, as indicated by the sentence "*Ubur-ubur ikan lele, pinter kali aku, Le!*" This expression implies that the official thinks he is extremely smart, although the effectiveness of his policy is questionable.

In the fourth panel, the consequences of the policy become apparent. Two people cheer with the phrase "*Oke Gas! Oke Gas...*", referencing Prabowo–Gibran's campaign song "*Oke Gas.*" The implicature here is that the government's policy contradicts the expectations or promises made during the campaign. In the final panel, the public is seen queuing at the gas station because the new policy has eliminated retail sales. The phrase "*Mari kita antre gas!*" (let's queue for gas) spoken cheerfully, is ironic, implying that the reality on the ground is far from what the government envisioned.

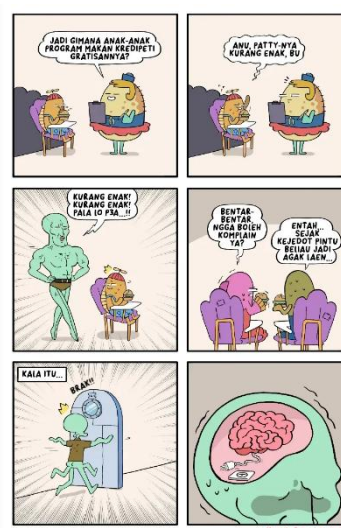
Overall, this comic strip criticizes the new policy using ironic conversational implicature. On one hand, the policy aims to regulate prices, but on the other, it creates new problems for the public, such as long queues and restricted access to gas. Additionally, the use of the phrase "*Oke Gas,*" associated with the Prabowo–Gibran campaign, implies disappointment over a policy that does not align with public expectations.

Data 6

Context: The Indonesian government has launched the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) program on January 6, 2025, at 190 SPPG locations across 26 provinces in Indonesia. This program is part of the government's efforts to improve human resource quality by ensuring good and nutritious food for school

children. As the MBG program progresses, students have expressed that the food tastes bad. Several viral videos show students not finishing their free nutritious meals, allegedly due to poor taste and lack of menu variety. According to news sources such as Suara.com [38], one student revealed that the school prohibited students from sharing photos of their lunch on social media. This was evidenced by a screenshot uploaded via the X account @tanyarlfe on January 6, 2025. One student tweeted: "*Halo kak, hari ini sekolahku dapet makan gratis. Tapi tadi, guruku buat pengumuman untuk dilarang menyebarkan fotonya ke sosmed karena kalau kelihatan 'buruk' sekolahku terancam dan siswa yang menyebarkan fotonya akan dicari serta dapat sanksi sosial.*" (Hello, today my school received free meals. But earlier, my teacher announced that we were not allowed to share photos of it on social media because if it looked 'bad,' my school would be at risk, and the student who posted the photo would be tracked down and face social sanctions. This post quickly gained attention from other X users, revealing that many had experienced similar situations.

Illustration:



The comic strip contains criticism of the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) policy through satirical conversational implicatures. In the first panel, a character asks the children about their opinions on the free meal program. This question implicitly assumes that the provided food should be of good

quality and satisfying. However, in the second panel, a child hesitantly states that the patty in the meal does not taste good. The hesitation in delivering this statement implies fear or discomfort in directly criticizing the food.

The third panel shows an exaggerated reaction from another character who yells angrily upon hearing the criticism. The statement "*Kurang enak. Kurang enak. Pala lo pea...!!*" (Not tasty? Not tasty? You fool...!!) indicates that the character has lost emotional control, seemingly unable to accept criticism of the provided food. This excessive reaction implies pressure or prohibition against criticizing the MBG program, aligning with the context where some schools forbid students from sharing meal photos on social media.

In the next panel, two other characters begin questioning the situation. One of them asks, "*Bentar-bentar, nggak boleh komplain ya?*" (Wait, wait, we can't complain?) which implicitly suggests that criticism of food quality should be allowed, especially if the meals are subpar. This panel implies strict control over public opinions regarding the program.

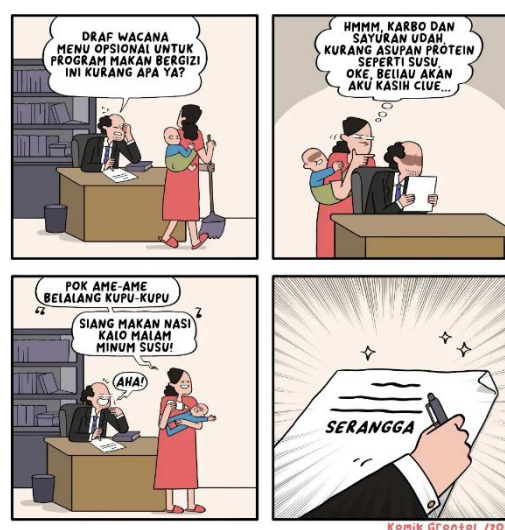
The fifth and sixth panels present a satirical explanation of the character who previously exploded emotionally. He is seen crashing into a door, followed by an image of his head revealing a small brain with a large empty space around it. The implicature of this scene is that stubbornness and resistance to criticism stem from irrational or dogmatic thinking. This reflects how some parties react defensively to criticisms of the MBG program rather than considering necessary improvements.

Overall, this comic strip contains conversational implicatures that satirize the MBG policy, particularly regarding the prohibition against students expressing dissatisfaction. The comic strip criticizes how responses to complaints focus more on silencing criticism rather than improving food quality, potentially hindering the program's primary goal of providing truly nutritious and adequate meals for students.

Data 7

Context: Regarding the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) program implemented by the Indonesian government, the Head of the National Nutrition Agency (BGN), Dadan Hindayana, proposed certain insects as a side dish because some regions in Indonesia are accustomed to consuming insects. He even opened the possibility of including insects and sago worms as part of the MBG menu in specific areas. "*Sebagian masyarakat Gunung Kidul biasa mengkonsumsi belalang. Masyarakat Papua biasa makan ulat sago,*" (Some people in Gunung Kidul commonly eat grasshoppers. People in Papua regularly consume sago worms), said Dadan on Saturday (January 25, 2025), as quoted from DetikNews. Dadan stated that some types of insects are fit for consumption, such as crickets, which are now commercially available.

Illustration:



The comic strip contains conversational implicatures that satirically criticize the idea of incorporating insects into the Free Nutritious Meal (MBG) program menu. In the first panel, an official is drafting optional menus for the MBG program and asks if anything is missing. This suggests that the menu is still in the planning stage and open to input.

In the second panel, a janitor carrying a baby thinks that the menu already includes carbohydrates and vegetables but lacks protein intake, such as milk. She tries to give an indirect hint by singing a children's song,

"Pok ame-ame belalang kupu-kupu. Siang makan nasi, kalo malam minum susu" (Pok ame-ame butterfly grasshopper. Eat rice at noon, drink milk at night) in the third panel. This song implicitly suggests that after eating rice, one should drink milk. Thus, she intends to suggest adding milk to the MBG menu as a protein source.

However, in the fourth panel, the official misinterprets the hint. The word "belalang" (grasshopper) in the song lyrics catches his attention more than the phrase "minum susu" (drink milk). As a result, he concludes that insects should be added to the MBG menu instead of milk, as the janitor had intended. This misinterpretation highlights how decision-making can occur without fully understanding the actual message being conveyed.

In the context of the ongoing discourse regarding insect consumption as part of the MBG program, this comic strip conveys criticism of the decision-making process, which appears to overlook nutritional needs that are more widely accepted by the public. The conversational implicature in this comic strip criticizes a decision made based on a misinterpretation of a message, resulting in a policy that may not align with the expectations or needs of the broader society.

The findings of this study align with previous research conducted by Budiawan et al. [19] and Saefudin et al. [20], which also examined the @komik.grontol account from pragmatic and semiotic perspectives. However, unlike Budiawan et al., which merely identified the forms and functions of implicature, this study not only reveals the types of conversational implicature but also integrates them with Pierce's semiotic analysis to provide a more comprehensive view of both visual and verbal meanings in the context of criticism toward government policies.

Similarly, the study by Saefudin et al. [20], which explored the layers of meaning (denotative, connotative, and mythological) in the @komik.grontol comic strips, demonstrated how the medium symbolically voices social criticism. This study extends that

work by linking such criticism and satire more specifically to current and viral government policies (e.g., the insect consumption proposal in the MBG program and the appointment of special staff).

Furthermore, compared to previous research that generally focused on themes of social criticism in media ([15]–[18]), this study centers on the visual-verbal interplay on the Instagram platform, which is more popular and contextually relevant. It highlights how humor in comic strips is used to convey critical opinions on government decisions through a concise, satirical, and visual narrative style.

5. CONCLUSION

The stories in the comic strips by @komik.grontol are inspired by real-life events that went viral in Indonesia and are structured into 4–6 image panels. Although their primary purpose is entertainment, some comic strips are also created to criticize and satirize government policies. This is evident from the analysis using conversational implicature, accompanied by contextual understanding. The criticism and satire include (a) the 12% VAT increase, (b) the construction of fences and the granting of Building Use Rights (HGB) permits for Laut Tangerang, (c) the appointment of special staff amid budget efficiency efforts, (d) lenient punishments for corrupt officials, (e) the LPG sales policy that burdens the public, (f) the prohibition of students from criticizing the taste and menu of meals in the Free Nutritious Meals (MBG) program, and (g) the proposal to include insects as a protein source in the MBG program.

This study shows that comic strips function not only as a form of entertainment but also as an effective medium of social criticism to voice public aspirations regarding government policies. Through humor and visual illustrations, the conveyed criticisms become more easily accepted and can raise awareness of controversial issues. These findings expand the application of conversational implicature theory and visual semiotics in digital media, while emphasizing

the importance of government responsiveness to public voices expressed through creative media. In addition, this research encourages creators to produce works that are not only

entertaining but also educational and ethical, and it opens opportunities for further studies on the impact of social criticism in comics on public opinion and government policy.

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