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Improving Students' Discourse Analysis Skills Through Rearch-Based Learning Using Online News Texts: A Classroom Action Research

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Abstract

This study aimed to improve students' discourse analysis skills through the implementation of the Research-Based Learning (RBL) model using online news texts in an Indonesian language course. The research employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design based on the Kemmis and McTaggart model, consisting of two iterative cycles: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were 20 eighth-semester students of the Information Technology Education Study Program at Budi Darma University. Data were collected through classroom observations, discourse analysis skill tests, documentation, and reflective notes. Students' discourse analysis competence was assessed based on four indicators: cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategy, referring to Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework. The findings demonstrated a continuous improvement in students' analytical competence throughout the research cycles. The average score increased from 67 in the pre-action stage to 74 in Cycle I and reached 86 in Cycle II. Similarly, learning mastery improved from 40% in the pre-action stage to 70% in Cycle I and 90% in Cycle II. Classroom observations further indicated increased student engagement, confidence in presenting analytical arguments, and the ability to interpret discourse structures critically using authentic online news texts. The findings suggest that the implementation of Research-Based Learning effectively facilitates the development of students' critical discourse analysis skills by promoting authentic inquiry, collaborative investigation, and reflective learning. The novelty of this study lies in integrating the Research-Based Learning model with Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework within a Classroom Action Research approach, providing an innovative pedagogical strategy for improving discourse analysis competence in higher education.

Keywords: *Classroom action research, Discourse analysis, Online news texts, Research-Based Learning, Undergraduate students*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way information is produced, distributed, and consumed in contemporary society. Online news media have become one of the primary sources through which people obtain information about political, economic, educational, and social issues. Unlike conventional printed media, online news offers immediacy, accessibility, and continuous updates, enabling information to spread rapidly across digital platforms. However, this development also presents significant challenges because online news texts are not merely neutral representations of reality. They are constructed through specific linguistic choices that reflect particular perspectives, ideological positions, and communicative intentions. Consequently, readers are required not only to understand the explicit content of news texts but also to critically examine how language is employed to construct meaning and influence public perception.

From the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), language is viewed as a social practice closely related to power, ideology, and social interaction rather than simply as a communication tool.

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According to van Dijk (2015) discourse is a multidimensional social phenomenon in which textual structures, cognitive processes, and social contexts interact to shape the production and interpretation of meaning. Through this perspective, online news texts can be analyzed by examining their macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure, thereby revealing how linguistic features represent particular viewpoints and ideological interests. Consequently, discourse analysis has become an essential competence for university students because it enables them to critically interpret information, evaluate media messages, and understand the relationship between language and social reality.

In higher education, discourse analysis constitutes an important component of academic literacy. University students are expected not only to comprehend textual information but also to evaluate arguments, identify discourse structures, interpret contextual meanings, and construct evidence-based analyses. Such competencies are increasingly important in the digital era, where the abundance of online information requires individuals to distinguish credible information from misinformation, bias, and ideological manipulation. Therefore, digital literacy should not be understood merely as the ability to access and use digital technology but also as the ability to critically evaluate, interpret, and communicate information in responsible and reflective ways (Buckingham, 2006). Developing these competencies is particularly relevant in language education because discourse analysis encourages students to connect linguistic structures with broader social, cultural, and political contexts.

Despite the growing importance of discourse analysis in higher education, previous classroom observations indicate that many students still experience considerable difficulties in analyzing authentic texts critically. Learning activities remain predominantly lecturer-centered, emphasizing theoretical explanations rather than investigative analysis of real discourse. Consequently, students often understand discourse analysis conceptually but struggle to apply theoretical frameworks when analyzing authentic online news texts. Their analyses generally remain descriptive, focusing on explicit textual information while overlooking deeper discourse structures and ideological meanings. Similar findings have been reported by Anastasya dan Effendi (2023) and Rahayu (2023), who found that students frequently encounter difficulties in identifying cohesion, coherence, discourse organization, and communicative strategies when analyzing media texts. These findings indicate a persistent gap between theoretical knowledge and practical analytical competence in discourse analysis learning.

The limited ability to analyze discourse critically is closely associated with students' critical thinking skills in language learning. Critical thinking enables learners to evaluate evidence, formulate arguments, and interpret information from multiple perspectives, all of which are fundamental competencies in discourse analysis. Budiyanto and Ridho (2024) reported that discourse analysis activities conducted through digital media significantly contribute to improving students' critical thinking skills by encouraging reflective interpretation of authentic texts. Likewise, Oktarin and Hastomo (2023) emphasized that integrating critical discourse

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analysis into language learning enhances students' digital literacy by enabling them to examine the relationship between linguistic expressions and social realities critically. Furthermore, Muhammadiah et al., (2023) argued that discourse analysis plays an important role in helping students recognize misinformation, media bias, and ideological manipulation that increasingly characterize contemporary digital communication. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that discourse analysis should be positioned not merely as a linguistic exercise but as an essential component of critical literacy in higher education.

To address these challenges, language learning requires instructional approaches that actively engage students in authentic analytical activities rather than emphasizing passive acquisition of theoretical knowledge. One learning approach that has received increasing attention in higher education is Research-Based Learning (RBL). This approach positions students as active participants in the learning process by involving them in scientific inquiry, beginning with problem identification, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and communication of findings. Instead of simply receiving information from lecturers, students construct knowledge independently through investigation, collaboration, and reflective thinking. Consequently, Research-Based Learning is considered capable of developing higher-order thinking skills while simultaneously strengthening students' academic literacy and problem-solving abilities (Brew, 2013; Brew et al., 2022)

Research-Based Learning is grounded in the constructivist perspective, which views learning as an active process of knowledge construction through meaningful experiences. Within this framework, students are encouraged to investigate authentic problems, formulate research questions, evaluate evidence, and develop conclusions supported by empirical findings. Such learning experiences promote not only conceptual understanding but also analytical reasoning, creativity, communication, and independent learning. In discourse analysis courses, this approach enables students to investigate authentic online news texts, identify discourse structures systematically, interpret contextual meanings, and justify analytical arguments using textual evidence. Therefore, Research-Based Learning provides a learning environment that is more closely aligned with the objectives of discourse analysis than conventional lecture-based instruction.

A growing body of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Research-Based Learning in improving students' higher-order thinking skills. Sukmak and Klinbumrung (2025) reported that the implementation of Research-Based Learning significantly improved university students' critical thinking skills in educational evaluation by encouraging inquiry-based investigation and reflective learning. Similarly, Mawardi and Kusuma (2025) found that students who participated in research-oriented learning activities demonstrated higher levels of critical and creative thinking because they actively constructed knowledge through authentic problem-solving experiences. Furthermore, Yaemkhayai and Piyasatit (2026) concluded that integrating argumentative learning with Research-Based Learning enhanced students' analytical reasoning, collaborative learning, and classroom engagement. These findings

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collectively indicate that Research-Based Learning provides an effective pedagogical strategy for developing analytical competence across different educational contexts.

The effectiveness of Research-Based Learning has also been confirmed in higher education contexts beyond critical thinking. Jensen and Dikilitas (2025) emphasized that integrating research activities into university courses strengthens students' academic engagement because learning becomes more meaningful and relevant to real-world problems. Likewise, Hinzke and Spronken-Smith (2026) argued that inquiry-oriented learning environments encourage students to become independent learners capable of evaluating information critically and communicating scientific arguments effectively. These findings suggest that Research-Based Learning not only improves academic achievement but also develops essential competencies required for lifelong learning in the twenty-first century.

Besides the learning model itself, previous studies have highlighted the importance of utilizing authentic learning materials that connect classroom instruction with contemporary social realities. Online news texts provide contextual and dynamic learning resources because they present real social issues through authentic language use. Unlike textbook examples, online news articles expose students to naturally occurring discourse containing various linguistic strategies, ideological representations, and communicative purposes. Consequently, online news texts offer rich opportunities for developing discourse analysis competence while simultaneously strengthening students' critical literacy and digital literacy.

Several previous studies have confirmed the educational value of authentic texts in language learning. Chairat (2025) demonstrated that multimodal critical discourse analysis enhances students' ability to interpret meaning across various forms of digital communication by integrating textual and visual analysis. Similarly, Rachid and Sakale (2023) emphasized that critical pedagogy encourages learners to question assumptions, evaluate ideological perspectives, and construct reflective interpretations of authentic discourse. Furthermore, Shume (2023) showed that critical discourse analysis enables students to uncover ideological representations embedded within educational texts, while Rajendram (2023) argued that active participation in discourse-based learning promotes deeper understanding of language as a socially situated practice. Collectively, these studies reinforce the importance of integrating authentic discourse analysis into language learning to foster critical literacy and analytical reasoning.

The integration of authentic texts with Research-Based Learning is particularly relevant for discourse analysis instruction because students are required to examine linguistic structures within real communicative contexts. Through investigative learning activities, students not only identify discourse components but also explore how language functions to construct social meanings, represent ideological positions, and influence readers' perceptions. Consequently, Research-Based Learning provides an effective instructional framework for transforming discourse analysis learning from theoretical knowledge acquisition into authentic analytical practice. Although

previous studies have demonstrated the positive contribution of Research-Based Learning (RBL) to improving students' critical thinking, academic engagement, and independent learning, its application in discourse analysis instruction remains relatively limited. Existing research has predominantly focused on the effectiveness of RBL in enhancing general higher-order thinking skills or developing research competencies across various disciplines. Likewise, studies on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) have generally emphasized theoretical perspectives, ideological interpretation, or discourse representation in media and educational texts without integrating inquiry-based learning into the instructional process. Consequently, limited attention has been given to investigating how Research-Based Learning can be integrated with Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework to improve students' discourse analysis competence through authentic classroom learning activities.

Recent studies have begun to explore the implementation of Research-Based Learning in language education. Yermekbayeva et al. (2024) reported that Research-Based Learning increased academic engagement among pre-service teachers by encouraging active participation in inquiry-oriented learning. Similarly, Yuhdi et al. (2024) demonstrated that research-based instructional materials promoted students' independent learning in Indonesian language education. Furthermore, Lestari et al. (2025) found that Research-Based Learning effectively improved students' computational thinking skills through problem-based investigation. Although these studies confirm the educational benefits of Research-Based Learning, they primarily focus on the development of learning models or higher-order thinking skills in general. None specifically investigate the integration of Research-Based Learning with Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework for teaching discourse analysis using authentic online news texts within a Classroom Action Research (CAR) context.

From the perspective of discourse analysis, previous research has generally examined students' ability to analyze discourse structures or interpret ideological meanings separately from instructional innovation. Consequently, empirical evidence regarding how inquiry-oriented learning activities facilitate students' acquisition of discourse analysis competence remains limited. In addition, relatively few studies have investigated how students progressively develop analytical competence across multiple learning cycles through authentic research experiences. This limitation indicates the need for a pedagogical approach that simultaneously develops students' analytical reasoning, critical literacy, and practical experience in applying discourse analysis theories to authentic digital texts.

Therefore, the present study addresses this research gap by integrating Research-Based Learning with Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework within a Classroom Action Research design. Through authentic investigative activities using online news texts, students are encouraged to formulate analytical questions, identify discourse structures systematically, interpret ideological meanings based on textual evidence, and communicate their findings collaboratively. This instructional approach is expected to transform discourse analysis learning from a predominantly theoretical

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activity into an inquiry-oriented learning process that actively engages students in constructing knowledge through authentic research experiences.

Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Research-Based Learning in improving students' discourse analysis skills through the analysis of online news texts. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the improvement of students' ability to identify and interpret cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies based on Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework during the implementation of two Classroom Action Research cycles. In addition, the study explores changes in students' learning participation and analytical behaviour throughout the inquiry-based learning process.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the study enriches the literature on language education by demonstrating how Research-Based Learning can be integrated with Critical Discourse Analysis to promote analytical competence and critical literacy in higher education. Practically, the findings provide lecturers with an alternative instructional strategy for designing discourse analysis learning that is more student-centred, inquiry-oriented, and based on authentic digital texts. Such an approach is expected to create meaningful learning experiences that encourage students to become critical readers, independent learners, and evidence-based thinkers.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of Research-Based Learning with Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework through a Classroom Action Research approach using authentic online news texts. Unlike previous studies that examined these approaches separately, this research combines inquiry-based learning with systematic discourse analysis, enabling students not only to understand discourse analysis concepts but also to apply them through authentic investigative activities. This integration provides an innovative pedagogical framework for improving discourse analysis competence, strengthening critical literacy, and promoting reflective learning in Indonesian language education at the university level.

METHOD

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design using the Kemmis and McTaggart model, which consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection conducted through two research cycles. The study aimed to improve students' discourse analysis skills through the implementation of the Research-Based Learning (RBL) model in analyzing online news texts. Prior to the intervention, a pre-action stage was conducted through classroom observation and a preliminary test to identify students' initial discourse analysis competence.

The participants were 20 eighth-semester students of the Information Technology Education Study Program at Budi Darma University enrolled in the Indonesian Language course. During the learning process, students investigated authentic online news texts by identifying cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies based on Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework, while the lecturer acted as a facilitator throughout the inquiry activities.

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The research instruments included student activity observation sheets, discourse analysis skills tests, reflection notes, and learning documentation. The instruments were reviewed by peer lecturers to ensure their relevance to the research objectives and assessment indicators. Data were collected through observation, testing, and documentation, and analyzed using descriptive quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative analysis was used to calculate students' mean scores and learning mastery across the pre-action stage, Cycle I, and Cycle II, while qualitative analysis was conducted by interpreting classroom observations, students' written analyses, and reflection results to examine changes in students' analytical competence and learning participation.

The research was considered successful when at least 75% of the students achieved a minimum score of 75 and demonstrated active participation during the learning process. Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining institutional approval before the study was conducted. The research instruments were reviewed by peer colleagues, students were informed about the objectives of the study, and all collected data were reported anonymously to maintain participants' confidentiality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This classroom action research was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of the Research-Based Learning (RBL) model in improving students' discourse analysis skills through the analysis of online news texts. The study was implemented in two action cycles following the Kemmis and McTaggart model, each consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection. Prior to the intervention, a pre-action stage was conducted to identify students' initial competence in discourse analysis and to establish baseline data for measuring learning improvement throughout the implementation of the RBL model.

Pre-Action

The pre-action stage was conducted through classroom observations and a preliminary test to examine students' initial ability to analyze online news texts. The observations indicated that the learning process remained predominantly lecturer-centered, with students receiving theoretical explanations regarding discourse analysis but having limited opportunities to analyze authentic news texts independently. Classroom discussions were generally passive, and students tended to reproduce explicit information presented in the texts rather than critically examining discourse structures or interpreting the ideological meanings embedded within the news. Most students also experienced difficulties in identifying cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies, indicating that their discourse analysis competence had not yet reached the expected level.

The results of the preliminary test supported these observations. As presented in Table 1, the overall mean score obtained by the students was 67, while only 40% of the students achieved the predetermined mastery criterion. The lowest average score was obtained in the cohesion aspect (65), followed by coherence (66), rhetorical strategy (68), and text structure (69). These findings indicate that students were generally capable of identifying the main topic of an online news article but still experienced considerable difficulty in explaining relationships among discourse elements and interpreting how

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linguistic features contributed to the construction of meaning within the text.

Table 1. Results of Students' Discourse Analysis Skills in Pre-Action

Aspect	Average Assessment
Cohesion	65
Coherence	66
Text Structure	69
Rhetorical Strategy	68
Overall Average	**67**

The quantitative findings demonstrate that students initially possessed only a basic understanding of discourse analysis. Their written responses primarily focused on describing explicit information contained in the online news texts without providing systematic explanations of discourse organization or linguistic features. Most students were unable to distinguish the macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure of the discourse based on Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework. Consequently, their analyses remained descriptive and failed to reveal how discourse structures represented particular social meanings or ideological perspectives.

Classroom observations further confirmed these findings. Students rarely expressed analytical arguments during discussions and tended to rely on lecturers' explanations when interpreting the news texts. They also experienced difficulty connecting textual evidence with broader social contexts, indicating that their critical literacy skills had not yet developed optimally. These findings suggest that the conventional learning approach emphasized theoretical understanding rather than investigative learning experiences capable of fostering higher-order analytical competence.

Overall, the findings obtained during the pre-action stage clearly demonstrate the need for an instructional approach that actively engages students in authentic investigation and critical interpretation of discourse. Therefore, the Research-Based Learning (RBL) model was implemented in Cycle I to encourage students to investigate online news texts collaboratively, construct evidence-based interpretations, and gradually develop critical discourse analysis skills through systematic inquiry.

Cycle I

Cycle I begins with the planning stage, followed by implementation, observation, and finally, the results of the Cycle I test are obtained, and finally, reflection is concluded. During the planning stage, researchers developed learning tools based on Research-Based Learning, prepared online news texts for analysis, developed observation instruments, and prepared a test of students' discourse analysis skills. During the implementation of the Cycle I action, students were guided through group investigations of online news texts. Students were guided to identify elements of cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies within the online news texts. Students then discussed their analysis results and presented them to the class.

Observations indicated that students were actively engaged in the learning process. Some students were able to identify discourse elements within online news texts and began actively discussing them within their groups. However, several students still struggled to connect the text content to the social context and convey their analysis argumentatively. The Cycle I test results indicated an improvement in students' discourse analysis skills compared to the pre-action stage. The average student score increased to 74, with a learning completion rate of 70%.

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Table 2. Results of Students' Discourse Analysis Skills in Cycle I

Average Assessment	Aspect
Cohesion	73
Coherence	74
Text Structure	76
Rhetorical Strategy	72
Overall Average	74

The improvement in student skills in Cycle I indicated that the implementation of Research-Based Learning was beginning to have a positive impact on students' discourse analysis skills. However, the results still fell short of the research success indicators, necessitating further action in Cycle II. Based on reflections on Cycle I, several obstacles were identified during the learning process. These included students' lack of familiarity with conducting investigative-based analysis, some students' lack of confidence in presenting their analysis results, and their ability to interpret the social context in online news texts still needed improvement. Therefore, improvements were made in Cycle II by increasing guidance during the investigation process, providing more structured analysis examples, and strengthening group discussion activities.

Cycle II

The steps taken in Cycle II were the same as those in Cycle I. In the planning stage of Cycle II, researchers refined the learning tools based on the results of reflections in Cycle I. They also prepared more contextual online news texts and provided students with more systematic analysis guidance. The actions in Cycle II were implemented through more in-depth investigation and analysis of online news texts. Students were guided to interpret the relationship between language and social context in the texts. Furthermore, students were given broader opportunities to discuss and present their analysis results argumentatively.

Observations showed a significant increase in student engagement. Students appeared more active in discussions, more confident in conveying their analysis, and more systematic in interpreting the content of online news texts. Students also began to connect language use to the social context underlying a discourse. Test results in Cycle II demonstrated a significant improvement in students' discourse analysis skills. The average student score increased to 86, with a learning completion rate of 90%.

Table 3. Results of Students' Discourse Analysis Skills in Cycle II

Average Assessment	Aspect
Cohesion	85
Coherence	86
Text Structure	88
Rhetorical Strategy	84
Overall Average	86

The results of cycle II indicate that the research's success indicators have been achieved. Most students were able to analyze cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies in online news texts more systematically and argumentatively. The improvement in students' discourse analysis skills in each research cycle can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. Summary of Improvements in Students' Discourse Analysis Skills

Stage	Average	Completeness	Category
Pre-action	67	40%	Sufficient
Cycle I	74	70%	Good
Cycle II	86	90%	Very Good

The research results show that the application of the Research-Based Learning model gradually improved students' discourse analysis skills throughout each research cycle. This improvement was evident not only in the results of the discourse analysis skills test, but

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also in student engagement throughout the learning process. Students became more active in systematically investigating, discussing, interpreting texts, and presenting arguments regarding online news texts.

Discourse analysis instruction in higher education fundamentally aims not only to improve students' understanding of language structure but also to develop critical, interpretive, and argumentative thinking skills in comprehending a text. In the context of Indonesian language learning, discourse analysis skills are crucial because students are required to understand the relationship between language use and the social context underlying a discourse. However, based on the preliminary findings of this study, the discourse analysis learning process still tends to be lecturer-centered, resulting in students receiving more theoretical explanations than directly engaging in text analysis practice. This situation results in students experiencing difficulties in identifying cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies in online news texts.

Pre-action results indicate that students' discourse analysis skills are still in the adequate category, with an average score of 67 and a learning completion rate of 40%. This low level of student ability is particularly evident in the aspects of cohesion and coherence. Students still experience difficulty connecting the relationships between ideas in the text and are unable to understand the relationship between language structure and the social context underlying a news story. This situation indicates that learning that focuses solely on conveying theory has not been able to optimally develop students' interpretive skills. These findings align with Teun A. van Dijk's opinion that discourse analysis not only studies text structure but also the relationships between text, social cognition, and social context within a discourse.

These issues highlight the need for a learning model that actively engages students in the process of investigating and analyzing texts. Therefore, this study implemented the Research-Based Learning (RBL) model as an effort to improve students' discourse analysis skills. Research-Based Learning positions students as active subjects in learning through investigation, data exploration, discussion, and scientific reflection. Through these activities, students not only gained theoretical understanding of concepts but also gained hands-on experience in analyzing online news texts contextually.

The results of the research in Cycle I showed that the implementation of Research-Based Learning began to have a positive impact on students' discourse analysis skills. The average student score increased from 67 in the pre-action phase to 74 in Cycle I, with a learning completion rate of 70%. This improvement indicates that students are beginning to be able to identify elements of cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies in online news texts more systematically. Furthermore, students began to actively discuss and investigate the texts they analyzed.

The improvement in student skills in Cycle I demonstrates that research-based learning can encourage a shift in learning patterns from teacher-centered to student-centered learning. Students no longer merely act as recipients of information but begin to actively participate in the learning process through exploration and group discussions. Investigative activities on online news texts

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help students understand the relationships between ideas in the texts more deeply, making the learning process more contextual and meaningful. This situation aligns with international research on Research-Based Learning, which states that research-based learning can increase students' cognitive engagement through authentic and investigative learning experiences.

However, the results in Cycle I still did not fully meet the research success indicators. Some students still experienced difficulty interpreting the relationship between language and social context in online news texts. Furthermore, some students lacked confidence in presenting their analysis argumentatively in front of the class. This situation indicates that students are still in the adaptation stage to research-based learning, which demands active investigative and argumentative skills. At this stage, students still need guidance in developing interpretations based on data. linguistic elements found in the text.

Based on the results of reflections in Cycle I, several improvements were made in Cycle II. These included lecturers providing more structured examples of discourse analysis, increasing guidance during the investigation process, strengthening group discussion activities, and providing direct feedback on students' analysis results. These improvements were made to help students better understand the stages of discourse analysis and become more active in developing arguments based on linguistic data. Furthermore, students were given broader opportunities to discuss the relationship between language use and social context in online news texts.

The results of the research in Cycle II showed a significant increase in students' discourse analysis skills, with an average score of 86 and a learning completion rate of 90%. This improvement indicates that students are beginning to be able to conduct more in-depth analyses of cohesion, coherence, text structure, and rhetorical strategies in online news texts. Students also appeared more active in discussions, more confident in conveying their analysis results, and more systematic in interpreting text content.

The improvement in students' abilities in aspects of cohesion and coherence indicates that the investigation and discussion activities in Research-Based Learning help them understand the relationships between ideas in the text in a more structured manner. Students not only mechanically identified linguistic elements but were also able to explain the meaningful relationships between parts of the text. Furthermore, improvements in rhetorical strategies indicated that students were beginning to understand how language use in online news texts can shape a particular perspective on an event.

These findings reinforce Teun A. van Dijk's view that discourse is not only understood as a linguistic structure but also as a representation of social reality. In this study, students began to connect language use in online news texts with the social context underlying the news. Students also began to understand that the choice of diction, sentence structure, and organization of information in news texts can influence how readers understand an event.

The results of this study also indicate that using online news texts as authentic teaching materials can help students understand discourse analysis more contextually. Online news texts that are

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current and close to students' lives make the learning process more relevant and engaging. Students not only learn to understand discourse analysis theory but also are able to apply that theory to analyze social phenomena represented through language.

These research findings align with those of Sholeh et al. (2025) stated that Research-Based Learning can improve students' critical thinking and analytical skills through investigative activities and scientific argumentation. Furthermore, the results of this study are also relevant to the research of Novitasari, Charisma, and Ameliawati (2025), which showed that learning that actively involves students can significantly improve engagement and learning outcomes. Although Novitasari et al.'s research was conducted on mathematics learning using the interactive Polypad media, the learning principle that positions students as active subjects has proven relevant to the application of Research-Based Learning in discourse analysis learning.

The novelty of this research lies in the application of Research-Based Learning in online news text-based discourse analysis learning through a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. This research not only focuses on improving student learning outcomes in general but also demonstrates that research-based learning can improve students' investigative, interpretative, and argumentative skills in analyzing online news texts contextually using van Dijk's discourse analysis approach. Furthermore, the use of online news texts as authentic teaching materials provides a learning experience more closely connected to social reality, enabling students to understand the relationship between language, meaning, and social context more critically.

Thus, the application of the Research-Based Learning model has been proven to gradually improve students' discourse analysis skills throughout each research cycle. In addition to improving learning outcomes, this learning model also enhances student engagement, critical thinking, investigative skills, and argumentative abilities in analyzing online news texts systematically and contextually.

CONCLUSION

This classroom action research demonstrates that the implementation of the Research-Based Learning (RBL) model effectively improved students' discourse analysis skills in analyzing online news texts. The improvement was consistently reflected in students' achievement across the two research cycles, as evidenced by the increase in the mean score from 67 during the pre-action stage to 74 in Cycle I and 86 in Cycle II, accompanied by an increase in learning mastery from 40% to 90%. Beyond the quantitative improvement, students also demonstrated better competence in identifying and interpreting discourse structures, including macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure, as well as semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical elements based on Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework. These findings indicate that engaging students in authentic research activities enables them to develop deeper analytical reasoning, critical literacy, and evidence-based interpretation of online news discourse.

The study contributes both theoretically and practically to language education. Theoretically, it extends previous studies by

integrating Research-Based Learning with Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis framework within a Classroom Action Research design, providing an innovative pedagogical approach for teaching discourse analysis in higher education. Practically, the findings suggest that lecturers can adopt Research-Based Learning to create more student-centered, inquiry-oriented, and authentic learning environments that foster critical thinking and discourse analysis competence. Future studies are recommended to involve broader participant populations, longer intervention periods, and comparative experimental designs to further validate the effectiveness of this instructional approach across different educational contexts.

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