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HOAX TEXT STRUCTURE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

By

A. Yusdianti Tenriawali<sup>1</sup>, Saidna Zulfiqar Bin Tahir<sup>2</sup>, Mansyur Nawawi<sup>3</sup>, Belinda Sam<sup>4</sup>,  
Hamiru Hamiru<sup>5</sup>, Muhamad Chairul Basrun Umanailo<sup>6</sup>, La Eko Lapandewa<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup>Universitas Iqra Buru

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>[tenriawali@gmail.com](mailto:tenriawali@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[saidnazulfiqar@gmail.com](mailto:saidnazulfiqar@gmail.com),  
<sup>3</sup>[mansyurnawawi.uniqbu@gmail.com](mailto:mansyurnawawi.uniqbu@gmail.com), <sup>4</sup>[belindauniqbu@gmail.com](mailto:belindauniqbu@gmail.com),  
<sup>5</sup>[hamiru67.uniqbu@gmail.com](mailto:hamiru67.uniqbu@gmail.com), <sup>6</sup>[chairulbasrun@gmail.com](mailto:chairulbasrun@gmail.com), <sup>7</sup>[ekolapandewa@gmail.com](mailto:ekolapandewa@gmail.com)

**Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the text of the online hoax news 'Consumption of Yellow Pumpkin Brings Benefits to Cure Covid-19' on Indonesian social media. The analysis in this study consists of an analysis of the form and meaning of texts that are believed to contain hoax information. In addition, this research also contains information about the impact that hoaxes can have. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, which is critical, with data collection techniques in the form of documentation techniques, notes, and literature study. This study's data are news texts believed to contain false information. Data analysis techniques in this study consisted of data identification, classification, data analysis, and the conclusion of data analysis results. The study results show that the text's structure consists of contrast discourse strategies, exaggeration, and enumeration and climaxes with linguistic markers in the form of words and sentences. The meaning found is to influence and convince the reader. Apart from that, the online news texts analyzed also show the characteristics of hoax texts because there are unclear characteristics of news sources, and there are suggestions for disseminating this information. Based on the literature study, information was also found that until now, there has been no research on specific foods that can help cure Covid-19. Therefore it can be concluded the information in the news text 'Consumption of Yellow Pumpkin Brings Benefits to Cure Covid-19', which is analyzed, contains hoax information.

**Keywords: Hoax, Text, Indonesian Social Media**

**PENDAHULUAN**

Fake news (hoaxes) can threaten the majority of our society's regulatory, social, and economic systems and individuals' well-being and prosperity. Nowadays, with so much information, it is difficult for people to determine whether the information is true or not or can be trusted. However, the important thing to underline about this hoax news is its ability to influence individuals or society to make decisions.

The problem, however, is not fake news. People are usually careful about the information they get. Examine the statements and information obtained to see if the information

contains false data. For example, most of us can quickly classify information that regards onions as a powerful treatment against Covid-19 as a joke or fake news. Each individual has doubtful assumptions and views on the information they just got, and then that person measures the reliability of the source or individual who created the statement.

The trend of spreading hoaxes has increased during the rapidly spreading Covid 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. New insights into the pandemic are becoming public worldwide and spreading concern via social media. Among these social media, the web is the dominant media read by the general public during the



COVID-19 pandemic (Pérez-Escolar et al., 2021). The impact of emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has led to a drastic increase in searches related to COVID-19, and the most searched keywords on Google to date are the side effects of COVID-19, self-isolation, and the social impact of Covid-19 (Springer et al., 2020). Likewise, hashtags related to COVID-19 on Twitter are constantly growing (Petratos, 2021).

Meanwhile, the data accuracy related to COVID-19 on YouTube is of particular concern. Videos that contain information about Covid-19 are distributed by good sources, such as legislative associations and experts, selected and distributed by non-official sources. However, the number of recordings and perspectives from authentic sources is substantially lower than those from unofficial sources. Based on research conducted by Low (Low et al., 2022), the detectable level of falsification of Covid-19 information videos is around 27.5% on YouTube. In the United States, an internet-based review that examined people's stress levels showed that more than 66% of people expressed stress over COVID-19, especially fears of being contaminated with COVID-19 and the absence of clinical resources if needed. In addition, more than 95% of people change their way of life, such as cleaning their homes and environment more regularly, avoiding gatherings with large crowds, and providing daily necessities to protect themselves from the COVID-19 pandemic (Ho et al., 2020).

Most disinformation, especially on social media, has one of the characteristics above. Therefore, analysis of text pattern/specificity is very important because it is based on the consideration that web-based media is the main source of information for a growing number of young people and is a vessel where disinformation spreads. This is supported by the Edelman hypothesis (2020), which shows that 54% of young people consider information from their environment as their main source

when looking for data about Covid. The new era of today's youth places their trust in friends and organizations or groups in their environment (Darius & Urquhart, 2021). As a result, the data obtained makes these young people helpless against false information about Covid, especially against disinformation, which is mostly spread on web-based networks. In the mass relational influence hypothesis (MIP), Fogg (2008) states that communities or groups of people can influence individuals to change behaviour, mentality, and perceptions on a large scale (Tchakounté et al., 2020). Based on the background above, this study aims to discuss the hoax phenomenon, especially the phenomenon and structure of hoax texts in Indonesia. This research is important considering the impact that can be generated from hoaxes is a real threat to future generations, so by knowing the forms and characteristics of hoax texts, it is hoped that in the future, this research can become a reference as teaching material on how to identify hoaxes from a text perspective.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Mass Media is a tool used to convey messages from sources to audiences using mechanical devices such as radio, newspapers, television, films. Mass Communication is the production and distribution based on technology and institutions from the continuous flow of messages that are most widely shared by people in industrial societies (Rakhmat, 2003). The mass media present themselves with the expected role, the dynamics of society will be formed, where the media is the message. The type of mass media is media that is oriented towards the following aspects:

1. Sight for example print media
2. Hearing for example radio and recorder type
3. Sight and Hearing, for example television, films, videos that are verbal visual vocal (Liliweri, 2001)



Mass Media are tools in communication that can spread messages simultaneously, quickly to a broad and heterogeneous audience. The advantage of the mass media compared to other types of communication is that it can overcome the barriers of space and time (Nurdin, 2007). The mass media provides information about changes in how it works and the results achieved or the results to be achieved. The main function of the mass media is to provide information on a wide range of interests and advertise products. The characteristics of the mass media are that they are not determined by personal contact, they are easy to find, the content is general and it is one-way communication. The main role that is expected to be associated with change is as first knowledge. The mass media is a type of information that is respected by farmers in the stages of awareness and interest in the innovation adoption process.

One form of communication is mass communication. In line with the development of communication technology, mass communication media are also increasingly sophisticated and complex and have more power than before, especially in terms of reaching communicants. The existence of modern media allows millions of people around the world to communicate to almost all corners of the world.

The process of mass communication is essentially a process of transmitting meaningful symbols, which are carried out through channels, which are usually known as the media. In this case what is meant by the media is a tool used to reach the masses. From the description above, it can be explained that mass communication is a process that describes how communicators use mass media technology proportionally to spread their messages beyond distance to influence consumers in large numbers.

Mass communication is a message communicated through mass media to a large number of people (Ardianto, Elvinaro, &

Lukiati, 2007). Mass communication is a form of communication that uses channels (media) to connect communicators and communicants en masse, in large numbers, living far away (scattered), very heterogeneous and leaving certain effects (Liliweri, 2001). Another definition of mass communication was expressed by Gebner (Ardianto, Elvinaro, & Lukiati, 2007), who said that: "mass communication is technologically and institutionally based production and distribution of the most broadly shared continuous flow of messages in industrial societies". Meletze also expressed his opinion that mass communication is a form of communication that conveys statements openly through the media of technical dissemination indirectly and in one direction to a dispersed public. The dissemination media can be done through newspapers, both through print and electronic media (Ardianto, Elvinaro, & Lukiati, 2007).

The function of mass communication in outline is as follows:

1. Interpretation, the function of this interpretation is in the form of comments and opinions directed at consumers, as well as equipped with a perspective (point of view) on the news or broadcasts presented, so as to form a relationship based on the same interests and interests about something.
2. The spread of values (Transmission of Values), by watching, hearing, and reading the mass media. The mass media shows us how they act and what is expected of them.
3. Entertainment (Entertainment), serves as an entertainer with no other purpose is to reduce the tension of the minds of consumers.
4. Information function, the mass media functions as a disseminator of information for readers, listeners or viewers.



5. Educational Function, one of the ways the mass media provides education is through teaching ethics, values, and rules that apply to readers or viewers.
6. Influence function, implicitly contained in the header/editorial, features, advertisements, articles and so on.
7. Function of Mental Development Process. The mass media is closely related to the behavior and experience of human consciousness.
8. Environmental Adaptation Function, namely adaptation to the environment. Consumers can adapt to their environment with the help of the mass media, so that one can get to know their environment better.
9. The function of manipulating the environment, seeks to influence communication which is used as the main means of control and regulation of the environment.
10. Convincing Function (To Persuade), namely confirming or strengthening one's attitudes, beliefs or values. Changing a person's attitudes, beliefs, or values. Move someone to do something (Effendy, 2003).

Based on the elaboration of the theory above, it can be concluded that news, especially hoax news, has a specific purpose. Controversial issues in the form of news circulating in society contain certain goals or ideologies that can have certain impacts.

## METHOD

This research is a qualitative descriptive study. Qualitative research uses descriptive methods based on Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis theory. The description describes the language as it is (Sudaryanto, 2015). The research method is a way to gain knowledge about exclusive objects and, therefore, must be in sync with the nature of the object's existence (Faruk, 2012). Therefore, the qualitative descriptive method is a method that is carried

out by describing material objects that will be examined qualitatively, then followed by analysis (Tenriawali, 2019). The data source in this study is online news media, while the type of data in this study is written data, namely text that is believed to contain hoaxes with health themes in online news media.

The method used in the data collection process in this study is the see method. The listening method obtains data by listening to language (Mahsun, 2017). The text on online media news is listened to by reading. As for the data collection techniques used to complement the see method, namely, documentation techniques, note-taking techniques, and literature studies regarding information related to the research topic. At the data analysis stage, the data that has been grouped is then analyzed using critical discourse analysis techniques. Data analysis techniques were adapted based on research needs. Data analysis conducted in this study consisted of; data identification, classification, data analysis, and conclusion of data analysis results.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### A. Hoaxes and Disinformation

As the first step in understanding hoaxes, it is important to characterize and explain what fake news, disinformation, and fake news mean. The Oxford English Dictionary (2020) classifies fake news as "distorted or misleading information. Fake news is closely related to the nature of 'falsehood.' The expression "falsehood" first appeared in the sixteenth century, and it tends to be said that 'falsehood' is one of the characteristics disinformation (Oxford English Dictionary, 2020) is characterized as: 'The intentional dissemination of false data created, especially when provided by an unknown source to the media, to influence the judgment of the individual reading it (Pérez-Escolar et al., 2021).

The United Nations (UN) states that disinformation is a coordinated effort to mislead or control individuals by conveying



exploitative data to them. By aggregating false and intentionally created and disseminated data to influence individuals, groups, associations, or nations. The meaning of disinformation by the European Commission (2018) is "false, false or misdirected data of all kinds". It characterizes disinformation as "the creation, display, and dissemination of data that is demonstrably false or deceptive for fraudulent reasons or deliberately misleads the people in general and can cause public harm" (European Court of Auditors, 2020). Disinformation "is generally characterized as the intentional dissemination of false data that is planned to deceive or harm" (Glasdam & Stjernswärd, 2020).

Hoaxes are related to prejudice/prejudice. According to Van Dijk (1984), the tactics used by the speaker to talk about his prejudice include rhetorical operations (rhetorical devices) and the expression of prejudice (expression of prejudice). The expression of prejudice consists of; the designation of minorities, mention of origin, use of the term emotional distance, paternalistic diminutive, and use of the term 'different' (difference). The rhetorical operations consist of; contrasts, generalizations, exaggerated statements, litotes, repetitions, mentions one by one, climax, and comparisons (Tenriawali, 2019). The twelve types of Van Dijk's discourse strategies can be used to analyze texts that contain hoaxes to reveal the purpose and ideology of the text.

### **B. The Impact of Hoaxes on Society**

The spread of fake news/hoaxes online is generally based on personal interests for political purposes or manipulation. It aims to manipulate the lower classes of society to spread fraud. On a larger scale, the intentional dissemination and formation of false data are potentially dangerous because it directly affects the community, indirectly affects the socio-economic sector, and ultimately damages the community system. This fundamental danger is the basis that disinformation can create impacts that, regardless of whether small at a basic

level, can affect larger scales on a large scale. While deliberate attempts to control public judgment through disinformation are common worldwide (Bradshaw and Howard, 2018), there is little evidence about the limits of online disinformation to controlling behaviour in person and covertly. While fraud and disinformation pertain to the wrong kind of data, disinformation includes the aim of deception (Reisach, 2021). Fake news is a particularly intense vessel for disinformation – masquerading as editorial articles and, in doing so, usurping the validity of news broadcasts, the ideality of content, and the capacity to encourage articles on sensitive themes that include important issues (Nayoga et al., 2021).

What is the effect of hoaxes on society, especially Covid-19 hoaxes, and is there anything that can be done to overcome these hoaxes? To answer this question, several studies on hoaxes are still quite related to the question above. The first research on information about the COVID-19 pandemic: A thematic analysis of different ways of understanding true and false information was researched by Glasdam et al. (Glasdam & Stjernswärd, 2020). The research aims to explore the different articulation/delivery of public understanding, information handling and evaluation (correct), misinformation, and disinformation in general and specifically on social media related to the COVID-19 pandemic to find out the complexity of correct information construction thematic analysis of qualitative data from an international web-based survey on COVID-19 and social media was conducted. The analysis yielded five themes indicating participants' understanding and judgment of what constitutes (true) information, misinformation, and disinformation. What is understood as (correct) information, misinformation or disinformation depends on the point of view of the consumer of information and the potential influences on their perspective. Social media can support one's point of view, whether or not it aligns with





the dominant medico-political discourse on COVID-19.

Subsequent research from Pythagoras et al. (2021) on misinformation, disinformation, and fake news. Research results show that misleading information can have a big impact on business. Researchers analyze different types of misleading information, identify associated risks, and explore their impact on health care, media, financial markets, and electoral and geopolitical risks. Subsequent research discussing social media and Covid-19 came from Sayeed (Al-Zaman, 2021), who researched social media and COVID-19 misinformation. The results showed that the majority of users believed wrong information (60.88%), and fewer could deny (16.15%) or doubt (13.30%) claims based on proper reasons. Acceptance of religious misinformation (94.72%) surpassed other types of misinformation. Most users react happily (34.50%) to misinformation: users who receive misinformation are mostly happy (55.02%) because it meets their expectations, and users who do not believe misinformation are mostly angry (44.05%) thought this could cause harm to the community (Petraos, 2021).

From the research of Glasdam et al. (2020), Pythagoras et al. (2021), and Sayeed (2021), it appears that misinformation has a certain impact on society. Bastick's research (2021) also supports this, which examines the unconscious effects of disinformation. The study was a laboratory-based randomized controlled trial with 233 undergraduate students to investigate the behavioural effects of fake news. The results show that even brief (under 5 minutes) exposure to fake news can significantly change an individual's unconscious behaviour. Furthermore, Hsing et al. (2020) examined the impact of various sources of information related to COVID-19 on the public concern: Online surveys via social media (Ho et al., 2020). The results showed that the most common sources of information related to COVID-19 were internet media

(80.52%), traditional media (52.62%), family members (24.36%), colleagues (23.57%), friends (21.08%), academic courses (20.18%), and medical staff (19.03%). Researchers found that information related to COVID-19 from traditional media, internet media, and friends was associated with deeper concern; therefore, to overcome the impact of spreading hoaxes on social media, Franklin et al. (2020) offer a smart contract logic solution or detects hoax activity by characterizing the nature of the message and detecting the origin of the message to reduce the spread of hoaxes on social media. In addition, Escolar et al. (2021) also offer solutions for distinguishing true and false information through the development of fact-checking skills and project-based learning about infodemics and disinformation (Pérez-Escolar et al., 2021).

### **C. The Outward Structure and Inner Structure of Hoax Texts on Indonesian Social Media**

The following section will elaborate on hoax texts' external and internal structure on Indonesian social media. As an initial introduction, what is meant by the structure of the text is the form of language that composes the text. This form can be in the form of language style, intrinsic elements, or linguistic tools, which are a marker that the text being analyzed contains the meaning of fake news. The inner structure of the hoax text referred to in this paper is the meaning of the text being analyzed. The meaning referred to in this paper can also be interpreted as the information that supports that the text analyzed in this paper is a text that contains hoax information.

Tatang Adhiwidharta wrote the news text above on the SARIAGRI.ID website, Friday, 9 July 2021, at 13:50 WIB with the title The Story of the Family of Bude Dini Affected by Covid-19, Consumption of Yellow Pumpkin Brings Benefits, is news written based on the message Whatsapp that goes viral about the experiences of several people who claim to have recovered from Covid-19 after consuming pumpkin regularly. Regarding the initial source of the



circulation of the Whatsapp message about the pumpkin, it was not stated clearly in the news; only the place where the message was circulated was mentioned as initially circulating on the Whatsapp platform. The news text above is an experience story from Bude Dini, who stated that eating pumpkin can relieve and even cure Covid-19. Bude Dini's experience was spread on the Whatsapp platform and boomed in July 2021.

The narrative of Bude Dini's experience claims that pumpkin has properties that can relieve symptoms of Covid-19 disease and even cure Covid-19 disease. Bude Dini said that the information he spread was based on his experience watching his family all recover from Covid-19 due to consuming steamed pumpkin regularly. Even Bude Dini claimed that his older brother, who was critical because of Covid-19, could gradually recover after diligently consuming pumpkin. Steam every day. The recovery of Bude Dini's brother, family, and neighbours from Covid-19 is proof from Bude Dini that pumpkin can cure Covid-19. At the end of the news text, the benefits of pumpkin for health are also explained. Evidence of Bude Dini's recovery and the benefits of pumpkin that are known to the general public made the news writer write a narrative that supports and believes that pumpkin can cure Covid-19. So the assumption that pumpkins can cure Covid-19 is not a hoax but a fact.

Based on Van Dijk's theory of discourse strategy on the expression of prejudice and rhetorical operations, there is a discourse strategy on rhetorical operations in the news text above. The data showing the discourse strategy of rhetorical operations is contained in the following table:

Strategi wacana	Teks	Penanda Linguistik
Kontras	"Mohon maaf saya mau sharing berbagai pengalaman di sini ada yang lebih tahu soal kesehatan, tapi ini pengalaman yang dialami kakak saya sekeluarga yang semuanya positif"	Perbandingan 'saya' dan 'yang lebih tahu soal kesehatan'
Exaggeration	"Mas Bagus kakak saya nomor 2 dari keluarga Witoyo selama 18 hari telah di rumah sakit sampai nggak kuat dan kritis tapi atas izin Allah disertai dengan doa akhirnya kakak saya sembuh dan benar-benar sembuh dengan sering dikirkan obat oleh istrinya yaitu ibu kuning yang kita lupakan buat omelan"	akhirnya kakak saya sembuh dan benar-benar sembuh
	"Begini juga komaren ada tetangga kakak begitu positif makan labu kuning hangat. alhamdulillah 3 hari sehat, langsung diwabah hari ke 4 sudah negatif juga"	makan labu kuning hangat. alhamdulillah 3 hari sehat.
Enumeration & klimaks	"Istir kakak saya awalnya juga merasakan bersin-bersin benar capek ngos-ngosan, kerangut dengan setelah kena covid, tapi setelah konsumsi labu kuning komaren ikut amin vaksin dan jalan jauh tidak capek dan sehat"	Enumeration : Istir Kakak saya awalnya. Klimaks : tapi setelah konsumsi labu kuning.

In the table above, it can be seen that there are three types of discourse strategies used in the news text being analyzed. The discourse strategies are in the form of contrast, exaggeration, enumeration, and climax strategies. In the contrast discourse strategy, the linguistic marker is the word 'I' which is compared to '(people) who know more about health.' The purpose of using the contrast discourse strategy in the news text aims to influence the reader that the opinion of the subject 'I,' even though it is classified as an ordinary person, is true because the opinion of the subject 'I' is based on real experience. So the opinion of the subject 'I' is considered correct even though it is not the direct opinion of '(people) who know more about health.'

In the exaggeration discourse strategy, the linguistic markers in example 1 are the words 'heal' and 'healed.' This word aims to convince the reader that people affected by Covid-19 can recover quickly by consuming pumpkins. In the second example, the linguistic marker that becomes a marker of the exaggeration discourse strategy is the sentence 'already negative too' because this sentence is a statement that serves as evidence that consuming pumpkin causes recovery from Covid-19 and has the effect of making a negative swab test result. Similar to the first, the second, which uses the exaggeration discourse strategy, aims to convince the reader that the author's experience that pumpkin cures Covid-19 is true. As for the enumeration and climax, discourse strategies are marked with linguistic markers 'in the beginning' and 'but after'. In this



example, the author wants to influence the reader by presenting that 'initially' there were patients who were affected by Covid-19, 'but after' consuming the pumpkin, they became healthy again. Therefore, the form of structure that emerges in the online news text above consists of discourse strategies of contrast, exaggeration, and enumeration and climax with linguistic markers in the form of words and sentences, and the meaning found is to influence and convince the reader. Apart from that, the online news above also shows the characteristics of a hoax text because there is an unclear source of verita characteristics. After all, it is a text originating from a Whatsapp status which cannot be verified, as well as suggestions for spreading the news, which refers to Cunningham's theory. et al. (Cunningham & Marcason, 2001), then the news text above shows the characteristics of hoax text.

After analyzing the news text above based on its form and meaning, to be more certain that the news text is a hoax, a search was done for other sources that examined the benefits of pumpkin. Research on the benefits of pumpkin in curing Covid-19 has also not been found by researchers in international journal articles. Currently, based on research conducted by Cobre, et al. (2021), who examined the effect of food and nutrition on recovery from Covid-19 in 170 countries. This research is a retrospective study conducted using the Kaggle database, which linked the consumption of various foods to recovery from COVID-19 in 170 countries, using multivariate analysis based on a generalized linear model. The results show that certain foods positively affect recovery from COVID-19: eggs, fish and seafood, fruits, meat, dairy, stimulants, plant products, nuts, vegetable oils, and vegetables (Cobre et al., 2021). In general, higher protein and lipid consumption positively affects recovery from Covid-19, while high consumption of alcoholic beverages has a negative effect.

Nature et al. (2021) examined the prospects for nutrition interventions in the care of Covid-19 patients. The main focus of this research is the relationship between a balanced diet and adaptive immunity, specifically how a poor diet can lead to compromised immunity, resulting in susceptibility to viral infections (Alam et al., 2021). In addition, the study also discusses how nutrients (vitamins, minerals) can be used as tools to modulate the immune response and thereby inhibit viral infections. The research results suggest that a balanced diet or nutritional therapy can effectively combat Covid-19. Han et al. (2020) conducted a similar study that examined the use of functional food in increasing the immunity of Covid-19 sufferers. The study results show that to increase the immunity of sufferers of Covid-19, functional food must still be supported by a healthy lifestyle (Han & Hoang, 2020). In addition, a study conducted by ALkharashi (2021) examined the consumption of supplements and herbal products for the prevention and treatment of Covid-19 infection among Saudi residents in Riyadh, using a cross-sectional study method involving 1460 participants aged between 12 and 86 years conducted in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, between 01 October 2020, and 30 October 2020, via an online survey using a questionnaire. The survey instrument includes 30 questions, including sociodemographic characteristics and use of nutritional supplements and herbal products (ALkharashi, 2021). The results showed that the intake of nutritional supplements and herbal products increased among the Saudi Arabian population during the Covid-19 pandemic period to protect them from disease. In addition, the intake of nutritional supplements and herbal products must be evidence-based to ensure patient safety.

Of the four studies above that examined foods that can increase immunity for the recovery process of Covid-19 patients, it shows that until now, there are no specific foods that can help cure Covid-19. Based on the research





above, it can be seen that consuming higher levels of protein and lipids has a positive effect in helping to recover from Covid-19. In addition, consuming vitamins, nutritional supplements, herbal products, and a healthy lifestyle can help prevent us from contracting Covid-19. However, based on the various studies above, until now, there has not been found a special food that can cure Covid-19, so the discourse that consuming pumpkins can cure Covid-19 is not scientifically proven. Therefore, the news includes hoaxes or fake news.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the online news hoax text analysis above, it can be seen that the text structure consists of contrast discourse strategies, exaggeration, and enumeration and climax with linguistic markers in the form of words and sentences. The meaning found is to influence and convince the reader. Apart from that, the online news above also shows the characteristics of hoax text because there are characteristics of unclear news sources and suggestions for spreading this information. Fake news/hoaxes in the short term rarely do any harm. Fraud has many facets, from lies on fake news, misleading statements, improbable predictions, or pseudo-scientific articulations to unsubstantiated judgments and seriously made statements and directions. Fake news/hoaxes create questions in our social fabric. Reliable people and sources are no longer seen as reliable and skilled. Hoaxes can trigger questions that can divide the social order and prevent us from carrying out socially-based coordinated surveillance. Therefore we need a hoax text analysis model that can be used as teaching material to educate future generations who know how to distinguish true information critically.

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