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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Local community numeracy in response to inaccurate wage figures for onion peelers in indonesia's 2026 state address: A Critical discourse analysis

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ABSTRACT
This study examines representations of onion peelers' work and numeracy-related responses to Indonesia's State Address of 14 August 2026. A descriptive qualitative critical discourse analysis compares the supplied official-script extracts, the oral-delivery transcript, and media reports containing workers' accounts, public responses, and institutional statements. Fairclough's textual, discursive-practice, and social-practice dimensions guide the comparison; Grice's maxim of quality provides a supplementary interpretive lens. Source triangulation checks amounts, units, occupational labels, and attributed statements. The script specifies Rp700 per kilogram, whereas the delivery states Rp700,000. Media accounts also contest the occupation assigned to the citizen. Reported market rates and sack weights vary, requiring contextual rather than automatic conversion. Some reproduced calculations are internally inconsistent. Media-documented responses include conditional willingness to take the job, hyperbolic calculations, occupational corrections, and requests to limit the controversy. These are interpreted as situated numeracy-related discourse, not direct measurements of community competence or response prevalence. The study contributes an evidence-sensitive account of how amounts, units, and occupational categories acquire authority and become contestable.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis; community numeracy; local knowledge; numerical accuracy; state address.

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INTRODUCTION

A state address can make numerical claims appear authoritative by placing them within an account of government achievements. In the case examined here, the official-script extract reproduced in the corpus states a wage of 700 rupiah per kilogram, whereas the oral-delivery transcript states Rp700 thousand per kilogram. This is a thousandfold difference in the amount, not a conversion between different weight units. A separate discrepancy concerns the occupation assigned to the citizen: media accounts describe sewing cleaning rags and washing meal containers rather than peeling onions. The numerical and occupational discrepancies must therefore be distinguished before their relationship is interpreted. They concern both the accuracy of a public claim and the representation of a person's work.

Research on political quantification explains why these distinctions matter. Statistics can function as selective and contestable arguments rather than neutral descriptions (Lawson & Lovatt, 2021), while everyday speakers also use quantities to construct and contest public issues (Jarvis, 2023). Numerical misinformation may continue to influence judgments after a correction (Stubenvoll & Matthes, 2022). Appelman (2024), however, shows that perceived errors, including errors readers believe they encountered, matter for evaluations of news and source quality. These studies motivate attention to credibility without establishing how this Indonesian speech affected trust. Driessen et al. (2022) further demonstrate, in a different setting involving misleading graphs, that context can matter for interpretation; that finding cannot be transferred directly into a claim about the effects of this speech.

Here, community numeracy means socially situated practices through which people describe quantities, relate payment to work, compare units, and evaluate numerical claims in shared settings. This working definition follows a social-practice perspective on numeracy, which locates mathematical activity within social, cultural, and political relationships (Yasukawa et al., 2018). It differs from individual mathematical competence, which would require assessment of a person's performance across specified tasks. The present study examines reported practices and their discursive representation, not individual proficiency scores or the competence of an entire community. Its analytical distinctions are calculation, conversion between stated units, contextual reasoning about wages and commodities, and critical evaluation of an authoritative numerical claim. These practices can overlap, but one should not be inferred merely from the presence of a number.

Data-literacy research likewise cautions against reducing engagement with public data to technical operations alone (Vermeire et al., 2025).

The relationship between work terminology and quantification is also linguistic. Names of livelihoods and market commodities can encode local classifications and cultural perspectives (Darajat & Suherman, 2021; Ghufar & Suhandano, 2022). Research on market interaction documents language choices tied to transactions and social relationships (Asis et al., 2026; Jazeri et al., 2019). These findings make occupational labels and locally used measures relevant to discourse analysis, but they do not establish that local measures are always accurate or that standardized measures necessarily erase local knowledge. Geertz's (1983) account of local knowledge provides a reason to examine meanings in context. In this study, a sack is treated as a locally specified container whose weight must be documented before a per-kilogram equivalent is calculated.

Existing discourse research offers complementary starting points. Megawati (2021) examines Prabowo's speeches through Fairclough's and Wodak's approaches; Sobari et al. (2025) apply Fairclough's framework to curriculum reporting; and Hidayah and Sholikhati (2026) connect linguistic representation, media practice, and the social positioning of workers. Suryakusuma et al. (2026), using van Dijk's model, examine representations of vulnerable citizens within political communication. Across genres, Kleut and Drašković (2021) show that policy, news, and user comments can represent poverty differently. Randour et al. (2020) review the wider field of political discourse. The present study develops a focused intersection of these concerns: it compares two versions of one numerical statement, examines the work categories attached to it, and evaluates the numeracy-related responses reproduced by media. Its contribution is the integration of these comparisons within one documented case, rather than a claim that earlier research has never examined script–delivery differences or public numerical criticism.

Fairclough's (1995, 2003) critical discourse analysis is appropriate because the question concerns how a numerical representation moves between a prepared text, a public delivery, and subsequent reporting. Textual analysis identifies amounts, currency and weight units, occupational labels, sentence boundaries, quotation, and approximation markers. Discursive-practice analysis compares how these elements are reproduced, corrected, or reframed across sources; access to internal script production is not assumed. Social-practice analysis interprets the unequal authority available to state institutions, media outlets, and people whose work is represented. The dimensions are connected through the same excerpts: an altered amount is a textual difference, its circulation is a

discursive process, and whose account is treated as authoritative is a social question. Grice's (1975) maxim of quality supplements this approach by distinguishing a claim's observable evidential support from any unobservable intention to mislead.

Public trust is used here as an interpretive concern about expectations of reliable and accountable institutional communication, informed by the reliability and openness dimensions discussed by OECD (2024). It is not an outcome variable or a measured attitude in this study. Observable corrections, questions, and humorous responses can indicate contestation of a statement's credibility, but cannot establish a decline in public trust. Accordingly, this study asks: How do the script and delivery represent the amount, payment unit, and occupation? How do media-reported work accounts compare with those representations, and what numeracy-related practices or inconsistencies do they document? What response forms are reproduced in the media, how are they linguistically supported, and what potential implications for institutional credibility can reasonably be discussed? Answering these questions connects numerical accuracy with the language of work and the circulation of official claims, while maintaining the limits of documentary evidence.

METHOD

This descriptive qualitative study uses Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, supplemented by Grice's maxim of quality. It is a documentary case study of a single speech event and its subsequent media coverage, not an ethnographic investigation of market communities, an interview study, or a survey of public attitudes. The analytical material comprises the script extracts and oral-delivery transcript reproduced in the corpus and the media excerpts cited in the manuscript. Fairclough's framework links textual comparison to the circulation of representations and their institutional context (Fairclough, 1995, 2003). The study examines how numeracy-related practices are represented in these materials; it does not equate mediated quotations with direct observation of competence.

Three source types are distinguished in Table 1: the official-script extracts (NR), the transcript of recorded oral delivery (TR), and media reports (BR). Institutional clarifications, workers' accounts, family statements, and public reactions are nested within the media material; they are not additional interviews conducted by the researchers. Social-media responses are included only where reproduced by an identified media source. No independent social-media sample was collected, and no estimate of response frequencies or population prevalence is made. Market accounts concern Pasar Legi in Solo, Pasar Induk

Kramat Jati in Jakarta, and Pasar Pa'baeng-baeng in Makassar. These locations identify the contexts reported in the corpus, not a representative sample of Indonesian workers.

Code	Data type	Source
NR01-NR06	Official speech script	Script version attributed to the Ministry of State Secretariat, 14 August 2026; NR extracts reproduced in this study
TR01-TR04	Transcript of oral delivery	Transcript of recorded delivery; TR01–TR03 are displayed in the comparisons below
BR01-BR23	News reports	Media excerpts dated 15–19 August 2026, plus the contextual commentary identified in BR23; BR codes identify excerpts, not independent reports

Tabel 1. Research Data Codes and Sources

Data collection used documentation and transcription. In the source manuscript, the official script was identified as downloaded from the Ministry of State Secretariat website, the selected delivery segments as checked through repeated listening, and news reports as archived with access dates. For analysis, each excerpt retains its NR, TR, or BR identifier and source attribution. The script version must be distinguished from a post-delivery web transcript, which may reproduce the spoken wording rather than the prepared wording. Media quotations are retained in Indonesian, including nonstandard forms and numerical inconsistencies. Square brackets identify explanatory material already present in the supplied excerpts; they are not treated as independently recorded participant speech. The unit of analysis is an attributed statement or a script–delivery segment containing an amount, unit, occupational description, or response to the contested claim.

Analysis proceeds through comparison and thematic interpretation, adapting data reduction, display, and conclusion checking from Miles and Huberman (1984). First, script and delivery segments are aligned to identify exact changes in amounts, units, labels, and sentence structure. Second, reported work accounts are compared by occupation, place, stated rate, sack weight, and daily earnings; conversions are calculated only when the denominator is supplied. Third, calculations, conversions, contextual comparisons, and evaluations are distinguished so that arithmetic consistency can be checked separately from discursive function. Fourth, response forms are interpreted from observable wording, with competing readings and evidential limits stated. Finally, these comparisons are related to institutional credibility through Fairclough's three dimensions. Source triangulation checks agreements and discrepancies across documents, recordings, and media accounts. The source manuscript also reports peer debriefing with a linguistics expert; this is treated as an interpretive check, not statistical intercoder reliability. Different media reports may share sources, so agreement across outlets is not automatically independent corroboration.

Negative or inconsistent cases, are retained rather than discarded. No interview protocol, numeracy test, or trust instrument was administered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are organized around the research questions. The first group separates script–delivery differences from occupational representation and media-reported work conditions. The second examines numeracy-related calculations and response forms before discussing institutional credibility. Throughout, the term reported identifies information mediated by a news source; it does not imply independent field verification by the researchers.

Script and Delivery Representations in Relation to Reported Work Practices

The comparison distinguishes three analytical objects: the wording of the numerical claim, the occupation assigned to the citizen, and the wage arrangements reported by market sources. These objects are related, but an error in one does not by itself prove an error in all three.

Numerical Discrepancy between Script and Delivery

The primary data in this section concern statements about a citizen introduced in the speech, appearing in two forms: the written official script and the recorded oral delivery. Both texts are presented in Table 2.

Official script	Oral delivery
(NR01) Hari ini hadir bersama kita, Ibu Susanah dari Kabupaten Bogor. Ia bekerja sebagai buruh harian. Mengupas bawang dengan upah 700 rupiah per kilogram. Program Keluarga Harapan dan Program Sembako membantu menjaga pendidikan anak-anaknya. *(Naskah resmi pidato, hlm. 59)*	**(TR01)** Hari ini hadir bersama kita Ibu Susana dari Kabupaten Bogor. Ia bekerja sebagai buruh harian, mengupas bawang dengan upah Rp700 ribu per kilogram. Program Keluarga Harapan dan Program Sembako membantu menjaga pendidikan anak-anaknya. *(Transkrip tuturan)*

Tabel 2. Statements about Onion Peelers' Pages

The amount changes from Rp700 to Rp700,000 per kilogram, a thousandfold increase. The multiplier ribu ('thousand') changes the amount, while the denominator remains one kilogram. The script divides the occupational statement and wage description into two sentences; the transcript presents them together. Punctuation in a transcript is an editorial representation of speech, so the sentence-boundary comparison cannot establish the speaker's intention. The spelling difference between Susanah and Susana is not used as substantive evidence because a written transcript alone cannot establish a meaningful difference in the spoken name.

NR01 also places buruh harian ('daily worker') beside a rate expressed per kilogram. This juxtaposition leaves the relationship between employment arrangement and payment basis unexplained. It is not necessarily a logical contradiction: in ordinary usage, a person

may work on a daily or casual basis while remuneration depends on output. Without employment records or direct questioning, this study cannot determine the contractual category or classify the wording as proof of incompatible wage systems. The defensible textual observation is therefore underspecification of the payment arrangement, distinct from the demonstrable change in amount.

The two-sentence script and the more integrated transcript both preserve that underspecification. Their structure can affect how easily a reader notices the relationship between the label and the rate, but the evidence does not show that the script was designed to conceal it. This distinction matters analytically: identifying a lexical or numerical feature is different from assigning a communicative motive to its producer.

Nearby passages provide a limited comparison of numerical delivery. They can show whether the reproduced amounts match in these selected segments, but cannot test fatigue, cognitive processing, or the effects of speech length.

TABLE 3. COMPARISON WITH PRECEDING STATEMENTS

Official script	Oral delivery
(NR02) Per hari ini digitalisasi pendaftaran bantuan sosial untuk program PKH telah berjalan di 153 kabupaten dan kota pada 38 provinsi. Lebih dari 3 juta keluarga telah terdaftar menuju target 49 juta keluarga pendaftar atau lebih dari 50% keluarga Indonesia pada saat implementasi nasional. (Naskah resmi pidato, hlm. 58)	**(TR02)** Telah berjalan di 153 kabupaten dan kota, pada 38 provinsi. Lebih dari 3 juta keluarga telah terdaftar menuju target 49 juta keluarga pendaftar. Atau lebih dari 50% keluarga Indonesia pada saat implementasi nasional. *(Transkrip tuturan)*
(NR03) Sebelumnya, keluarga tidak mampu harus mengeluarkan 150.000 rupiah untuk perjalanan, dokumen, fotokopi, dan waktu kerja yang hilang. *(Naskah resmi pidato, hlm. 58)*	**(TR03)** Sebelumnya, keluarga tidak mampu harus mengeluarkan Rp150.000 untuk perjalanan, dokumen, fotokopi, dan waktu kerja yang hilang. *(Transkrip tuturan)*

Tabel 3. Comparison with Preceding Statements

NR02 and TR02 contain five matching quantities: 153, 38, 3 million, 49 million, and 50 percent. NR03 and TR03 contain a further matching amount, Rp150,000. Table 3 therefore displays six quantities that remain stable across these selected segments. This local comparison places the wage discrepancy in context; it neither rules out an isolated slip nor establishes a pattern across the entire speech. Claims about ten surrounding figures or the cause of the altered wage are not supported by the displayed comparison.

Within Fairclough's (1995, 2003) textual dimension, this result concerns how a small lexical addition transforms a quantitative representation. A correction of the amount alone would restore agreement with NR01 but would not resolve the occupational discrepancy examined next. Script comparison is therefore useful for locating differences between textual versions, while evidence about a person's work requires a different source. Table 4 summarizes the observed linguistic features without attributing intention.

Aspect	Official script	Oral delivery
Wage amount	700 rupiah per kilogram	Rp700 thousand per kilogram
Form of numerical expression	Written out, with the currency unit following the amount	Spoken amount includes ribu ('thousand')
Sentence structure	Two written sentences; second clause lacks an explicit subject	Integrated in the reproduced transcript
Employment label and payment basis	Buruh harian; rate per kilogram; arrangement unspecified	Same label and denominator; arrangement unspecified
Type of work	Peeling onions	Same as the script
Approximation marker	None	None

Table 4. Comparison of The Official Script and Oral Delivery

Occupational Representation and Its Documentary Limits

The numerical discrepancy should be separated from the identity and work assigned to the citizen. The following media excerpts attribute occupational corrections to her husband and a neighborhood official. They are reported accounts of local knowledge, not interviews conducted for this study.

> **(BR03)** Susanah sehari-hari bekerja sebagai pencuci ompreng program Makan Bergizi Gratis (MBG) dan penjahit kain lap majun. *(Kompas.com, 18 Agustus 2026, keterangan Didim, suami)*
>
> **(BR04)** Tugasnya ngejahit aja, (mesin) punya bosnya semua dari bosnya. Baru jalan 3 bulanan lah, sebelumnya juga sama (jahit kain lap majun) tapi sekarang beda bos. [Dari pekerjaan tersebut, istrinya mendapatkan upah sekitar Rp 700 per kilogram.] *(Kompas.com, 18 Agustus 2026, keterangan Didim)*

BR03 describes work washing meal containers for the Free Nutritious Meals program and sewing majun cleaning rags, rather than peeling onions. BR04 associates approximately Rp700 per kilogram with sewing those rags. These accounts challenge the combination of occupation and wage in the speech. Their evidential status remains that of attributed media reports; the researchers did not inspect employment or payment records.

> **(BR05)** Di sini pada heran, kenapa Susanah di sono jadi ngupas bawang? *(Kompas.com, 18 Agustus 2026, keterangan Atin, ketua rukun warga)*
>
> **(BR06)** Pada bengong di sini juga, pada kaget. *(Kompas.com, 18 Agustus 2026, keterangan Atin)*

BR05 and BR06 add a neighborhood official's expressed surprise at the occupational description. The husband's account and the neighborhood account converge within the reporting, but convergence does not establish how information entered the prepared text. The data support a discrepancy between represented occupation and locally attributed accounts, not a reconstruction of an undocumented administrative decision.

The evidence distinguishes three demonstrable problems: a mismatch between the amount in the script and delivery, a mismatch between the represented occupation and the reported work accounts, and the association of a wage figure with different work contexts. The daily-worker label adds an unresolved ambiguity rather than a proven fourth error. Rp700 per kilogram is reported for rag sewing and is numerically compatible with some

market wage ranges, but neither similarity establishes that the figure was transferred during script production. Occupational attribution and numerical plausibility require separate checks.

Other citizens' descriptions show that numerical information can characterize experience, output, workload, or age. They help identify the different referents to which numbers are attached, without explaining why the wage passage became inaccurate.

> **(NR04)** Pak Joko telah 20 tahun bertani. Dengan air teknologi dan pupuk yang telah disediakan oleh pemerintah, ia sekarang mampu panen tiga kali setahun. Dengan produktivitas sampai 9 ton padi per hektar. *(Naskah resmi pidato, hlm. 20)*
>
> **(NR05)** Risky pernah mengayuh sepeda puluhan kilometer sambil membawa sekitar 30 kilogram ikan untuk dijual. *(Naskah resmi pidato, hlm. 47)*
>
> **(NR06)** Hadir pula Ibu Margaritha Rohi dari Kupang, Nusa Tenggara Timur. Sejak kecil ia hidup dalam kesulitan dan tidak pernah mengenyam pendidikan. Pada usia 38 tahun ia masih berdagang serta merawat tantenya yang sudah berusia 80 tahun. *(Naskah resmi pidato, hlm. 60)*

NR04 includes years of experience, harvest frequency, and output per hectare; NR05 describes distance and fish weight; NR06 includes the ages 38 and 80. Thus, NR06 cannot be classified as a description without numbers. The important distinction is what each quantity denotes. A wage per kilogram requires the task, commodity, and payment basis to be specified, whereas an age does not. The available excerpts illustrate this semantic difference; they do not support a count of all named citizens or a claim that only three citizens were described numerically.

A further media excerpt provides limited information about the documentation process before the address.

> **(BR07)** Kegiatan liputan mengenai kegiatan kehidupan keluarga Ibu Susanah yang dilakukan bersama Bakom RI selama kurang lebih 3 hari dimulai dari hari Senin tanggal 3, 4 Agustus dan tanggal 11 Agustus 2026. *(Kompas.com, 18 Agustus 2026, keterangan Kepala Dinas Sosial Kabupaten Bogor)*

BR07 reports coverage of the family on 3, 4, and 11 August 2026. This indicates that documentation preceded the address, but does not disclose what was recorded, which occupational description was used at each stage, or who prepared and checked the script. It therefore cannot establish that an inaccurate description passed unchanged through three institutional stages. In Fairclough's discursive-practice dimension, the production pathway remains partly inaccessible; the study can analyze the published representations but not assign responsibility for their internal preparation.

Suryakusuma et al. (2026) examine how political communication represents vulnerable people, while Kleut and Drašković (2021) show that representations can vary across policy and news genres. This case contributes a narrower observation: the occupational description in the speech is contested by accounts attributed to people close to the citizen. The contrast concerns whose description can serve as a corrective reference. It

does not demonstrate a deliberate replacement of the citizen's identity or establish the institutional motive for the discrepancy.

Reported Wage Arrangements and Local Units

The market accounts reproduced in news reports vary in place, rate, unit, and work context. These differences must be retained when comparing them with the speech. They are not measurements obtained through a common fieldwork instrument, and the reported prices should not be treated as a national wage distribution.

> **(BR08)** Upahnya Rp 600 per kilogram. Satu karung ya Rp 10.000. Satu karung itu 20 kilogram. *(Kompas.com, 19 Agustus 2026, keterangan Sukinem, Pasar Legi Solo)*
>
> **(BR11)** Sekilonya Rp 3.000, berangkat pagi, kadang pulang sore, kadang pulang malam. *(Kompas.com, 17 Agustus 2026, keterangan Sulastri, Pasar Induk Kramat Jati)*
>
> **(BR12)** Kalau misalnya pekerjaannya sedikit ya paling tiga karung. [Upahnya sekitar Rp 15.000 per karung.] *(Kompas.com, 17 Agustus 2026, keterangan Sarmi, Pasar Induk Kramat Jati)*
>
> **(BR15)** Dalam satu karung itu, kalau bawangnya besar-besar (biaya yang dikeluarkan) Rp 100 ribu dalam 50 kilo. Kalau (bawangnya) kecil, boleh ditambah Rp 120 ribu untuk 50 kilo. *(Kompas.com, 16 Agustus 2026, keterangan Najamuddin, pemilik usaha penggilingan rempah)*

Source of information	Wage per kilogram	Wage per sack	Daily earnings
Official speech script	Rp700	-	-
Oral delivery	Rp700.000	-	-
Worker account, Pasar Legi, Solo (BR08)	Rp600 stated; Rp500 implied by the sack figures	Rp10.000 (20 kg)	Rp30.000-50.000
Separate worker accounts, Kramat Jati (BR11–BR12)	Rp3.000	Rp15,000; sack weight unspecified	Rp50.000-75.000
Trader, Pasar Pa'baeng-baeng, Makassar	Rp2,500 stated; Rp4,000 implied by Rp100,000/25 kg (BR14)	-	Variable
Service-user account, Makassar (BR15)	Rp2,000–2,400, calculated	Rp100.000-120.000 (50 kg)	-

Table 5. Onion Peelers' Wages According to Field Reports from Three Markets

Table 5 preserves stated rates and identifies conversions that can be checked. In BR08, Rp10,000 divided by 20 kilograms equals Rp500 per kilogram, which differs from the stated Rp600. In BR15, Rp100,000–120,000 divided by 50 kilograms equals Rp2,000–2,400 per kilogram. BR11 and BR12 concern different workers; the Rp3,000-per-kilogram rate cannot be used to infer the weight of the sack paid at Rp15,000. Where a sack weight is absent, no conversion is made.

The reported per-kilogram figures and calculable equivalents are in the hundreds or low thousands of rupiah. The inconsistency in BR08 prevents treating all the quoted values as an internally coherent schedule. Different locations and work conditions can explain variation, but an arithmetic mismatch within one account requires separate attention.

Rp700 in NR01 is not implausible solely because it differs from a market rate; the stronger objections concern the spoken Rp700,000 and the occupation attached to the citizen. No pooled minimum, maximum, or average is estimated from these heterogeneous reports.

The stated sack weights also differ: 20 kilograms in BR08 and 50 kilograms in BR15. A shared container label therefore does not guarantee a shared denominator. The analysis must retain the locally stated weight instead of assuming that a sack is a uniform unit. This is consistent with examining quantities in their social setting (Yasukawa et al., 2018) and with Geertz's (1983) attention to contextual meaning. Local usage and standard conversion can be complementary; neither is automatically more accurate in every account.

Work-related expressions further specify task, workload, and employment relationships. Their meanings are inferred only to the extent supported by the reproduced utterances.

> **(BR09)** Bayarannya ya kadang kadang murah, kadang enggak. Ya dapat Rp 30.000, Rp 40.000 sudah banyak itu. Seringnya Rp 35.000, Rp 40.000. Kan namanya borongan, ya tinggal tangannya. Kadang sedikit, kadang banyak gitu toh. *(Kompas.com, 19 Agustus 2026, keterangan Sukinem)*
>
> **(BR13)** Saya ini, sambil menjual sambil kupas-kupas bawang. Kalau ada saya disuruh, saya kupaskan, jadi nyambi begitu. *(Kompas.com, 16 Agustus 2026, keterangan Nurliah, Pasar Pa'baeng-baeng Makassar)*
>
> **(BR10)** Kalau kesulitannya ya kalau ini kulitnya ada yang tebal. Dibelah begini enggak bisa, itu sulit. Nanti kalau bawangnya remuk itu ya dimarahi sama bos. Dijual enggak laku kalau remuk. *(Kompas.com, 19 Agustus 2026, keterangan Tari, Pasar Legi Solo)*

BR09 uses borongan to relate earnings to completed work and manual pace. BR13 uses nyambi to describe onion peeling alongside selling; makkupas appears in BR14, rather than BR13. BR10 uses bos for a person who evaluates the peeled product, but does not establish whether the employment arrangement is informal, repeated, or based on a written contract. Majun and ompreng in BR03–BR04 identify work materials and objects. The excerpts show relevant distinctions in describing work; they do not prove that these expressions have no administrative equivalents.

A single wage figure communicates only part of this information. A more informative account identifies the task, payment basis, quantity, and conditions attached to the rate. The issue is not that per-kilogram measurement necessarily excludes local knowledge, but that a numerical statement can appear specific while leaving its occupational referent insufficiently checked. The mismatch in this case illustrates the need to verify classification and amount together.

Studies of occupational naming, market commodities, and transactional language provide a basis for attending to such distinctions (Darajat & Suherman, 2021; Ghufar & Suhandano, 2022; Jazeri et al., 2019). Their relevance here is interpretive: work terminology helps explain what a number refers to. The present documentary evidence cannot establish

the loss of a language variety or the erasure of community knowledge. It instead shows how a compressed official description can omit distinctions that become visible when local accounts are compared.

Media-Documented Numeracy Responses and Potential Trust Implications

This group separates calculations in the reports from the researchers' plausibility checks, then distinguishes observable response wording from proposed discursive functions. Institutional credibility is discussed after these evidential limits are established.

Calculation, Conversion, and Contextual Evaluation

BR16 supplies commodity prices for a contextual comparison. BR14 explicitly attempts a conversion from a total payment and workload to a rate. They provide different kinds of evidence: reported prices can support a researcher's calculation, whereas an attributed conversion shows a numerical operation within the media account.

> **(BR16)** Bawang merah yang belum dikupas dijual sekitar Rp 35.000 per kilogram. Setelah dikupas, harganya menjadi Rp 40.000 per kilogram. *(Kompas.com, 16 Agustus 2026, keterangan Nurliah)*
>
> **(BR14)** Waktu saya dulu makkupas, Rp 100 ribu untuk 25 kilo. Jadi kalau satu kilo berarti Rp 2.500. *(Kompas.com, 16 Agustus 2026, keterangan Nurliah)*

BR16 reports approximately Rp35,000 per kilogram before peeling and Rp40,000 after peeling, a difference of Rp5,000. This is a price spread, not a direct measure of the worker's wage or net value added: losses, transport, margins, and other costs are not reported. In BR14, the quoted conversion is arithmetically inconsistent. Rp100,000 divided by 25 kilograms equals Rp4,000 per kilogram, not Rp2,500. The quotation is retained unchanged because silently correcting it would alter the evidence. The discrepancy could originate in the utterance, transcription, or reporting; the available material cannot locate its source.

Using BR16 as a contextual benchmark, Rp700,000 is 17.5 times the quoted price of peeled onions and 140 times the quoted price spread. These calculations are performed for the present analysis and are not attributed to workers or the public. They make the spoken rate difficult to reconcile with the reported market context, but do not establish a universal economic impossibility or explain the speaker's error. Table 6 states the denominators explicitly so that the comparisons can be reproduced.

Comparison	Result
Rp700,000 / quoted peeled-onion price (Rp40,000/kg)	17.5 times
Rp700,000 / quoted price spread (Rp5,000/kg); spread is not a measured wage	140 times
Rp700,000 / rate implied by BR14 (Rp4,000/kg)	175 times
Rp700,000 / stated BR08 rate (Rp600/kg); sack conversion differs	Approximately 1,166.7 times

Comparison	Result
Rp700,000 / reported daily earnings (Rp30,000–75,000/day)	Approximately 9.3–23.3 days' reported earnings; not a productivity estimate
Rp700/kg compared with the heterogeneous market accounts	Not implausible by amount alone; occupation still requires verification

Table 6. Researcher Calculations Using The Reported Context

The distinction between operations is important. BR14 attempts unit conversion, BR16 provides a contextual price comparison, and BR18 below multiplies a claimed rate to make a critical point. These are numeracy-related features of the documented discourse. They do not show how consistently any participant performs such operations across situations. A social-practice perspective directs attention to how quantities are used, while broader data literacy includes interpretation and evaluation beyond computation (Vermeire et al., 2025; Yasukawa et al., 2018).

BR14 is also a negative case for an overly celebratory reading of local numeracy. An attempted conversion can be socially meaningful and arithmetically wrong at the same time. Likewise, the mismatch in BR08 shows that local detail does not eliminate the need to check consistency. Conversely, a standardized kilogram does not verify the occupation to which a rate is attached. The contribution is therefore an account of situated evaluation and its limitations, not a ranking of community knowledge above institutional knowledge in all circumstances.

BR17 offers a further mediated account of checking a public claim against reported earnings.

> **(BR17)** Berdasar penelusuran warganet di pasar, pernyataan presiden itu jauh dari realita. Biasanya pengupas bawang dibayar per karung dengan upah Rp 10 ribu. Sehari bisa menyelesaikan 3 karung sehingga bayaran yang diterima sekitar Rp 30 ribu. *(Mata Hukum, 16 Agustus 2026)*

BR17 relates three sacks at Rp10,000 each to Rp30,000 in daily earnings. This multiplication is internally consistent, although no sack weight is given. It supports a comparison of reported daily remuneration, not a per-kilogram estimate. The account resembles the sack payment in BR08, but BR12 gives a different payment of Rp15,000. These differences prevent treating the reports as a single corroborated wage schedule. Because the original online posts and their selection process are unavailable in the supplied corpus, the study analyzes the media's representation of checking practices rather than verifying the extent of collective fact-checking.

Public Responses to the Numerical Error

The relevant news excerpts document various responses to the stated onion-peeling wage. The following examples illustrate public responses to the numerical error.

> **(BR18)** Kalau 10 kilo dapat 7 juta, kalau 1 ton wah tukang kupas besi beli gedung DPR. (Mata Hukum, 16 Agustus 2026, mengutip seorang pembuat konten)
>
> **(BR19)** Dimana? Kalau ada, saya juga mau. (Kompas.com, 16 Agustus 2026, keterangan Nurliah)

BR18 correctly multiplies ten kilograms by Rp700,000 to produce Rp7 million, then moves to the unsupported hyperbolic suggestion of purchasing the parliament building. Its critical effect depends on the contrast between ordinary wage expectations and an extraordinary implied income; it is not evidence about the building's value. BR19 asks where such work exists and expresses conditional willingness to take it. This wording is compatible with an ironic challenge to plausibility, but could also express literal interest. Without prosody or the full interaction, irony remains an interpretation rather than a verified speaker intention.

Research on Indonesian online satire documents irony and exaggeration as resources for social criticism (Hadana et al., 2026; Muntaha & Arianto, 2024). Those studies support considering a satirical reading, not assigning the same intention to every response in this corpus. Here, the evidence is the numerical multiplication and exaggerated consequence in BR18 and the conditional question in BR19. Neither response demonstrates that criticism was socially safe, that all listeners performed the calculation, or that irony was the most frequent public reaction. The study has no sampling frame or frequency denominator for such claims.

BR05 and BR06 instead contest the occupation through expressed surprise. The spatial expression di sono ('over there') in BR05 contrasts the neighborhood account with the description associated with the public event. A defensible interpretation is that locally attributed knowledge challenges an official representation. The wording does not establish that the resident knew how the speech was produced or intended to accuse a particular institution of deception.

BR20 illustrates a different response: an expressed wish for the controversy not to continue.

> **(BR20)** Awalnya dari tetangga. Enggak apa-apa, gimana tuh ya kalau udah begini (viral) mah enggak bisa diapa-apain. Mudah-mudahan aja jangan berlanjut. *(Kompas.com, 18 Agustus 2026, keterangan Didim)*

BR20 explicitly expresses the hope that the issue will not continue. This supports a category of reluctance to prolong the controversy. Fear, political coercion, or strategic avoidance are possible explanations, but none can be established from this quotation alone.

Table 7 therefore distinguishes observable characteristics from possible discourse functions. It groups illustrative forms without ranking their frequency or treating all sources as equivalent: workers, relatives, officials, and media commentators occupy different speaking positions.

Form of response	Characteristics	Possible discursive function and evidential limit
Hyperbole; possible irony (BR18–BR19)	Rate multiplication and exaggerated consequence; conditional question about taking the job	Challenges plausibility; intention and prevalence are not established
Media-reported checking (BR08–BR17)	Attributed work accounts; wages, quantities, and prices compared	Supplies contextual benchmarks; source dependence and inconsistencies remain
Occupational correction through surprise (BR05–BR06)	Questions why a known person is described as an onion peeler	Contests the occupational label; does not identify the origin of the error
Reluctance to prolong controversy (BR20)	Expresses hope that discussion will not continue	Limits engagement; fear or strategic avoidance cannot be inferred
Postponement and reframing (BR21–BR23)	Promises checking; foregrounds the broader speech; proposes a slip-of-the-tongue explanation	Defers or narrows the issue; no measured audience effect or verified intent

Table 7. Forms and Functions of Public Responses

Institutional Reframing and Potential Implications for Public Trust

The final comparison concerns how responses delimit the problem. In the selected media material, workers' accounts supply wage benchmarks and family or neighborhood accounts contest the occupation. BR21 and BR22 attribute statements to officials, whereas BR23 is media commentary. They should not all be treated as direct institutional statements or as evidence of a coordinated official strategy.

> **(BR21)** Nanti kita cek ya. *(Mata Hukum, 16 Agustus 2026, keterangan Menteri Sekretaris Negara)*
>
> **(BR22)** Penasihat Khusus Presiden Bidang Komunikasi Hasan Nasbi meminta publik tidak terpaku pada satu atau dua pernyataan Presiden Prabowo Subianto dalam pidato kenegaraan. Menurut dia, masyarakat perlu melihat substansi dan gagasan besar yang disampaikan kepala negara secara keseluruhan. *(Investor.id, 17 Agustus 2026)*
>
> **(BR23)** Situasi tersebut membuka kemungkinan terjadinya salah ucap atau keseleo lidah ketika menyebut nominal. Karena itu, angka yang terdengar dalam potongan video perlu dibandingkan dengan teks resmi pidato sebelum kesimpulan dibuat. [...] Dalam konteks tersebut, perdebatan mengenai satu angka dalam potongan pidato sebaiknya tidak menenggelamkan pesan yang lebih besar. *(Berita Nasional Update, 2026)*

BR21 promises a subsequent check without giving a verified rate. BR22 asks readers to focus on the wider substance of the address. BR23 proposes a possible delivery error and directs comparison with the official text. These are observable differences in how the issue is framed. Postponement and broad-message reframing may reduce the prominence of a

specific discrepancy, but the excerpts do not establish the intended reputational strategy or whether audiences accepted it.

Comparing the script with the delivery answers which amount differs; comparing the occupational description with BR03–BR06 answers a separate question. A return to NR01 therefore cannot by itself settle the occupational discrepancy. This is a substantive limit of the proposed correction, rather than proof that an institution intentionally closed down debate. In Fairclough's (2003) terms, the case illustrates how the choice of comparison text shapes what counts as the problem. An accidental lexical addition remains compatible with the numerical evidence, while inaccurate occupational attribution requires its own verification. The documentary record does not identify how either discrepancy arose.

Grice's (1975) maxim of quality helps frame the expectation that assertions should be adequately supported. NR01 and TR01 present an unqualified occupational and wage description, while the reported accounts contest parts of that description. This establishes an evidential tension in the discourse. It does not demonstrate that the speaker believed the statement to be false, knowingly lacked evidence, or intentionally violated a maxim. Apparent inaccuracy and deliberate deception are different analytical claims. The study therefore uses quality as a supplementary lens for evaluating the support available to an assertion, not as a diagnosis of the speaker's mental state.

The comparison of approximation markers provides another example of how reported wording can change the presentation of a claim.

> **(BR01)** Prabowo memperkenalkan Susanah kepada ratusan anggota DPR RI sebagai buruh harian pengupas bawang yang disebut mendapatkan upah sebesar Rp700 ribu per kilogram. *(Kompas TV, 15 Agustus 2026)*
>
> **(BR02)** Hadir bersama kita Ibu Susana dari Kabupaten Bogor. Ia bekerja sebagai buruh harian mengupas bawang dengan upah sekitar Rp 700 ribu perkilogram. *(Mata Hukum, 16 Agustus 2026)*

BR01 retains the stated amount, whereas BR02 adds sekitar ('approximately'), which is absent from the reproduced NR01 and TR01. The observable result is a less categorical numerical formulation in this media excerpt. It may reflect paraphrase or editorial mediation; no evidence establishes deliberate softening. The amount remains implausibly high relative to the reported context even with that marker. This illustrates discursive recontextualization: reporting can alter the qualification of a claim while preserving its magnitude. Hidayah and Sholikhati (2026) likewise demonstrate the relevance of media mediation, although their subject and corpus differ from this case.

Community accounts consequently function as a corrective resource within the published record, without becoming unproblematic evidence in every respect. Family and neighborhood descriptions contest occupational attribution; workers and traders provide

contextual quantities; and the numerical inconsistencies require further checking. Kleut and Drašković (2021) identify differences in representations of poverty across genres. The present case adds a comparison in which those represented are quoted as challenging an official description, but does not establish whether their corrections changed policy, official practice, or audience trust.

For public trust, the strongest supported conclusion concerns a potential mechanism, not a measured outcome. A numerical claim acquires authority in an official setting, becomes questionable through contextual comparison, and encounters responses that offer different degrees of verification. Expectations of reliable and open communication provide a basis for interpreting why this process might matter for institutional credibility (OECD, 2024). Experimental findings about anchoring and perceived source quality explain why correction and accuracy deserve attention (Appelman, 2024; Stubenvoll & Matthes, 2022). They do not establish the size, direction, duration, or cause of any change in Indonesian public trust. Humorous criticism can coexist with unchanged institutional trust; neither criticism nor continued trust was measured here as an attitude.

The study's contribution is to connect the amount, denominator, occupational referent, and circulation of a claim while keeping calculations separate from interpretations of intention. Lawson and Lovatt's (2021) account of political quantification helps explain why a figure can serve as an argument; this case shows that checking such an argument also requires checking what work it represents. For language education, the findings motivate exercises in identifying units, distinguishing quotation from commentary, checking arithmetic, and comparing source versions. These are proposed applications, not learning outcomes tested in this research. For public communication, checking an amount against a script should be accompanied by checking the occupation with the person concerned. The same scrutiny should be applied to community and media accounts when their figures are internally inconsistent.

CONCLUSION

The script–delivery comparison identifies a thousandfold change from Rp700 to Rp700,000 per kilogram, while the reproduced media accounts separately contest the citizen's occupational description. The label buruh harian alongside a per-kilogram rate is insufficiently specified, not proof that two wage systems cannot coexist. Reported work arrangements vary in task, place, rate, and sack weight, so comparisons require explicit denominators and contextual information. Numeracy-related responses documented by

media include rate calculations, attempted conversions, plausibility challenges, occupational corrections, and reluctance to prolong the controversy. BR08 and BR14 also contain internal numerical inconsistencies, limiting any claim that local knowledge is uniformly accurate. These findings answer the research questions by distinguishing numerical discrepancy, occupational representation, and mediated evaluation rather than collapsing them into a single error.

The contribution to community numeracy is an account of situated quantitative practices as represented in discourse; the contribution to critical discourse analysis is a linked comparison of amounts, units, work categories, and their circulation. Neither individual numeracy competence, the prevalence of irony, deliberate deception, nor a change in public trust is established. Trust remains a potential implication of the gap between authoritative assertion and available verification. The study is limited by media selection and editing, possible dependence between reports, the three reported market contexts, and the absence of access to internal script preparation. Future research should compare archived script versions with timestamped recordings, examine original media and social-media materials, and conduct consent-based observation or interviews about local payment practices. Any claim about trust change would require a dedicated survey, interviews, or longitudinal design. These steps would distinguish how an error was produced, how numerical criticism was expressed, and how audiences evaluated the institution.

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DECLARATIONS

Ethical considerations

This documentary study uses publicly available texts and recordings and involved no interviews, surveys, or direct recruitment of participants. Names attached to quoted workers, relatives, and officials follow the source reports and were not collected as private research data. Public availability is not treated as consent for additional contact or unrestricted reuse of personal information; only details relevant to the discourse analysis are reproduced. No ethics approval number or exemption determination is claimed. The

analysis addresses public representations and avoids attributing unverified intentions to the citizen, quoted individuals, or the speaker.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI)

The authors report that claude.ai assisted with data organization and language editing in preparing the earlier manuscript. ChatGPT assisted with the present editorial revision, consistency checks, and reference checking. The authors are responsible for verifying all quotations, source versions, calculations, references, and interpretations and for approving the final manuscript. No interviews, survey responses, or other empirical observations were generated by these tools.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest of any kind with any party in the preparation of this article.

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