

Acorstic Name Poetry in Contemporary Society: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract: This study examines name acrostic poems produced by teachers who are members of the Indonesian Literacy Agents community through the perspective of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The objectives of the study are threefold: (1) to analyze the linguistic features employed in name acrostic poetry, (2) to explain the processes underlying its production in contemporary society, and (3) to explore the relationship between name acrostic poetry and the broader sociocultural context of contemporary communities. Employing a qualitative approach, this study adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional model encompassing textual analysis, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. The participants consisted of 25 teachers from various educational levels selected through purposive sampling from a population of 100 teachers. Data were collected from poetic texts, open-ended questionnaires, and online interviews conducted between July and September 2025. The findings reveal three major insights. First, the linguistic construction of name acrostic poems is characterized by the predominance of highly affective lexical choices and cosmological imagery at the word level, nominal phrase structures emphasizing identity and values at the phrase level, and variations of Relational and Material Processes at the clause level. Figurative devices, including metaphor, simile, personification, and hyperbole, function as ideological vehicles rather than mere aesthetic ornaments. Second, the production of these poems is driven by profound personal motivations, such as trauma reconciliation, identity affirmation, and spiritual expression, while the structural constraints of acrostics stimulate greater linguistic creativity. Third, name acrostic poetry constitutes a social practice that simultaneously serves as a social document, a medium for the reproduction of values and ideologies, an arena for identity formation, a site of symbolic power relations, and an adaptive discourse within the digital era. These findings reinforce the applicability of Fairclough's CDA framework to non-professional community literary genres and provide an empirical foundation for the development of literacy-based pedagogy.

Keywords: Name acrostic poetry, Critical Discourse Analysis, social identity, contemporary society.

Introduction: Language and poetry are an inseparable part of the life of contemporary society. Language as a means of communication reflects the evolving social, cultural, and ideological dynamics. A name acrostic poem is a unique form of poetry that writes each line based on the initial letters of a certain keyword or phrase. Acrostic poetry uses the letters of names as a reference for writing line by line, so that the keywords are arranged vertically to form the "title" of the poem (Harley & Noyes 2009 in Abduh 2018). Thus, acrostic combines linguistic and aesthetic functions: linguistically, a series of poetic words, but its particular structure (the initial letter of each line) produces its own aesthetic value. According to Abrams and Harpham (2012:5), acrostic is: "A composition, usually in verse, in which sets of letters (typically the initial letters of each line) taken in order spell out a word or phrase." The explanation shows that acrostic is a form of poetry or word arrangement that hides a certain word (usually a name) vertically, through the first letter of each line. Furthermore, Preminger (1993:14) states: "An acrostic is a poetic or rhetorical device in which certain letters in each line, often the first, form a word, phrase, or set of words, typically with thematic relevance to the rest of the text. In other words, acrostic is a form of poetry that not only shows the technical prowess of the writer, but is also full of symbolic meaning. Nowadays, acrobatics are produced not only by professional poets, but also by everyday individuals, including teachers, students, and the general public.

Riffaterre (1978:62) views that acrostics can be part of a hidden intertextuality: "Acrostics as a poetic device engage the reader in decoding processes which lead to a secondary, often symbolic, layer of meaning." The above statement shows that acrostic is not just a play on words, but can also be used to convey symbolic messages, values, or even social criticism implicitly. Several previous studies have addressed aspects related to acrostic, although not specifically in the context of critical discourses. Fairclough (2003) in Critical Discourse Analysis emphasizes the importance of critical analysis of simple texts that have ideological implications. The stylistic approach highlights the linguistic features and speech style in literary texts. Jakobson (1960, p. 358) states that "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination." This statement shows that the poetic function emphasizes the equal relations of sound, rhythm, and structure in the language of poetry. It was further explained that the poem "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination". That is, poetry highlights formal elements (such as rhythm, rhyme, alliteration) that establish a symmetrical balance relationship between its elements. Charles Bally emphasized that language has an affective dimension, so that meaning in poetry is not only conceptual, but also emotional. According to Bally, "L'affectivité est la manifestation naturelle et spontanée des formes subjectives de notre pensée" (1952, p. 75), which shows that language expression is closely related to the emotions and subjectivity of the speaker. Joseph (2022, p. 60) summarizes that in Bally's works, "meaning is not purely conceptual or intellectual, but has an affective, emotional dimension."

This statement shows that the meaning of language is not only conceptual, but also contains affective and emotional dimensions. Leech (1969, p. 57) states that "Foregrounding may be achieved either by a deviation from linguistic norms or by the establishment of patterns of repetition." This shows that poetry tends to deviate from linguistic norms in order to produce artistic and aesthetic effects. The process of producing acrostic poetry by contemporary society, which can be examined using the concept of discursive practice or discursive practice according to Norman Fairclough. Fairclough's approach divides discourse into three dimensions, namely text, discourse practice (production and consumption), and interrelated social practice. The product of the name acrostic poem needs to be seen as part of a broader discourse practice. Researchers are compelled to choose this topic for several key reasons. First, the phenomenon of acrostic poetry is relatively new in linguistic studies, especially in the perspective of discourse analysis. With a focus on the stylistics and Fairclough's critical discourse approach, this research is expected to fill in the gaps in the literature. The formulation of the problem in this article is How is the use of language in the acrostic poetry of names?, with the aim of Research Classifying and Analyzing the use of language in the acrostic poetry of names.

Literature Riview

The acrostic use of names in contemporary society has undergone development and adaptation in a variety of contexts, including education, social media, politics, and personal communication. Therefore, the understanding of the acrostic of names needs to be studied through the perspective of critical discourse to uncover hidden meanings and their impact on the construction of individual and group identities. Rahayu (2015) in his dissertation entitled *Representation of Arab Muslims in Hollywood Films: An Analysis of Critical Discourse of Muslim Other in Hollywood Cinema* examines the representation of Arab Muslim identity in three Hollywood films, namely *The Siege* (1998), *Kingdom of Heaven* (2005), and. This study uses Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach which divides analysis into three dimensions, namely the micro dimension (analysis of verbal and visual texts), the mezo dimension (the practice of production and consumption of discourse), and the macro dimension (social and cultural context). Saadah (2022), in a thesis entitled "Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis of Aurat Discourse in Tafsir Amaly" This study analyzes the aurat discourse in Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach to uncover the ideological dimension behind the religious text. By examining three main dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The results of the study show that the use of acrostic techniques is able to improve students' poetry writing skills, as seen from the increase in the average writing results from 57.61% in the first cycle to 80.44% in the second cycle, as well as the increase in the percentage of completeness from 46.87% to 77.41%, thus exceeding the success indicator by 75% and stating that this research was successful. Through the dimensions of Fairclough's analysis, namely text,

discourse practice, and social practice, research on the acrostic poetry of names can reveal how language is used to build identity, convey values, and represent social realities in contemporary society.

Theoretical Framework

This research focuses on three main dimensions of analysis, namely the use of language in the name acrostic poem, the production and reproduction process of the poetry text, and the relationship between the name acrostic poem and the social context of contemporary society. In contemporary society, poetry is no longer just a recreative language game, but has evolved into a medium of expression of identity, social recognition, and even an instrument of symbolic power. This phenomenon makes acrostic poetry worthy of study through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as developed by Norman Fairclough (1995). Fairclough (1995) proposed a three-dimensional model in analyzing discourse: text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. These three dimensions are the main axis in unraveling the complexity of the name acrostic poetry, not only at the linguistic level, but also in the dimensions of its production and its socio-cultural implications. This framework of thought orchestrates various supporting theories from the fields of literature, stylistics, sociology, and cultural studies to construct a comprehensive analysis. The main foundation of this research is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model developed by Norman Fairclough (1995) in his work *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. Fairclough views language as not just a neutral means of communication, but a social practice that is inseparable from power structures, ideologies, and social reproduction. In Fairclough's view, every text, including poetry, is produced, distributed, and consumed in a particular social context that shapes and is shaped by power relations.

Research Methodology

The research approaches, methods, and techniques in this study are prepared systematically and argumentatively to obtain and analyze data relevant to the three formulations of the research problem. This study examines the acrostic poetry of names in contemporary society through the perspective of Norman Fairclough in *Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)* (1995), which views language as a social practice that is closely related to power relations, identity construction, and ideology. Thus, the research methodology is directed to be able to uncover the complexity of linguistic aspects as well as the sociocultural dimension behind the phenomenon of acrostic poetry. The methodological description in this study includes data sources, research subjects and objects, research paradigms and approaches, research design, populations and samples, data collection techniques, research instruments, data analysis techniques, and data validity assurance procedures. This study uses primary data as the main data source. Primary data was obtained directly from the research subjects, namely teachers who actively wrote acrostic poems in the context of the national literacy movement.

According to Lofland and Lofland (1984), the main sources of data in qualitative research are words and actions, while the rest are additional data such as documents and statistical data. In line with this view, the primary data in this study is in the form of acrostic poetry texts produced by the research subjects, which are collected through online-based data collection instruments. In addition to primary data in the form of poetry texts, this study also utilizes secondary data in the form of contextual information about the background of poetry production, which was obtained through open questionnaires and short online interviews. This secondary data is important to understand the production process and sociocultural context of each acrostic poem whose name is used as a corpus of analysis, so that critical discourse analysis can be carried out contextually and in-depth. Data collection was carried out online for three months, from July to September 2025. The selection of the online method is based on the consideration that the research subjects are spread across various regions in Indonesia, so that the technology-based approach is the most efficient and effective choice. The data collection platforms used include Google Forms for the distribution of poetry collection instruments and questionnaires, as well as WhatsApp and Zoom for clarification and follow-up interviews.

This research is not tied to one specific geographical location, considering that data collection is carried out entirely through online platforms. The research subjects are spread across various regions in Indonesia, reflecting the geographical distribution of the Indonesian Literacy Agent community which is national. The research was carried out for three months, from July to September 2025, with the following time distribution: July 2025 for the instrument preparation stage, sample determination, and distribution of participation invitations; August 2025 for the data collection stage in the form of poetry texts and filling out questionnaires; and September 2025 for the data verification stage, clarification through online interviews, and checking the completeness of the corpus. The selection of this period was considered because it coincided with the active school year, where teachers were relatively active in literacy community activities. Methodologically, this study adopts the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method developed by Norman Fairclough (1995). CDA was chosen because of its ability to integrate microlinguistic analysis (at the text level) with macro social analysis (at the sociocultural context level), so that it can answer all three problem formulations holistically and in layers.

Result and Discussion

These three dimensions become an operational framework that structures the presentation of analysis results in a systematic and hierarchical manner, from the micro-linguistic level to the macro-sociocultural context. Thus, this analysis does not simply describe the linguistic features found in the corpus, but rather interprets and explains the social and ideological meanings behind these linguistic choices.

The presentation of the results of the analysis was organized following formulations of research problems. First, the use of language in the acrostic poetry of names is described

which includes the analysis of diction at the level of words, phrases, and clauses, as well as the identification and interpretation of the dominant language styles in the corpus. The Use of Language in Name Acrostic Poetry.

Word Level Diction

Sumarni

The universe stops spinning when your name is pronounced

Your string of letters splashes light beyond a million suns

Splitting the darkness of the earth, your radiance pierces the walls of time

How miraculous you are, the gift of the friendship of two hearts

The womb of the earth seemed to sing when you first cried

The first breath shook the sky, making the stars look down in amazement

The memory of you will be eternal, for you shine without ever being extinguished

Pasarwajo, July 21, 2025

Akrostic Poem Name Karya Sumarni, S.Pd., M.Pd

Table 1. Diction of the Kata Levels of Sumarni's Work

Selected Words/Lexicons	Word Class	Meaning of Denotation (Dictionary)	Affective Value / Connotation of taste
Universe	Noun (Noun)	The entire universe; all over the world.	It gives the impression of grandeur, incredible majesty, and colossal (very vast) scale.
Pronounced	Verb (Verb)	Pronounced; expressed by the sound of language.	It felt sacred, full of reverence, as if the name had magical power when pronounced.

Memercik	Verb (Verb)	Emitting or spraying water/fire dots around.	Describe active, dynamic, and bright life energy instantly.
Sun	Noun (Noun)	The star, which is the center of the solar system, emits heat and light.	The symbol of the source of life, warmth, glory, and infinite hope.
Splitting	Verb (Verb)	Divide into two parts; Cut.	Showing extraordinary strength or sharpness in breaking through obstacles (darkness).
Dark	Adjectives (Adjectives)	There is no light; dark.	It represents ignorance, sadness, or difficult times that the character has managed to penetrate.
The magic	Adjectives (Adjectives)	Odd; unusual; full of miracles.	Bringing a deep sense of admiration, amazement, and a high appreciation for a person's existence.
Prizes	Noun (Noun)	Gifts (mementos, awards).	It feels valuable, brings happiness, and is considered a blessing or gift to be thankful for.
Singing	Verb (Verb)	Emitting a pitched sound (melody).	Exudes an atmosphere of joy, warm welcome, and poetic joy from nature.

Overall, the choice of lexicon in this acrostic poem is dominated by words of high affective value, majesty, and admiration (hyperbolic & exaggerated). The poet often uses images of light (sun, light, shine) and the cosmos (universe, earth, sky, stars) as metaphors to illustrate that the figure of "SUMARNI" is an individual who brings great influence, inspires, and his presence is very grateful like an eternal gift.

Clause Stage Diction Herna

The presence of this name was born from two worlds of meaning

English and Arabic Join in One Prayer

A series of letters becomes a precious hope

A name for a princess who will be as strong as a coral in the ocean

A girl who is possessed, strong, soft, and full of love

East Luwu, September 6, 2025

Table 2. Diction of the Clause Stage by Herna

Lines / Clauses	Transitivity Analysis (Halliday)	Modalities	Theme Structure - Rema
Clause 1 (h): <i>The presence of this name was born from two worlds of meaning</i>	* Process: Material (born) * Participant: Actor (Presence of this name) * Circumstance: Origin/Source (from two worlds of meaning)	Objective-Declarative (Stating the fact of origin without doubt).	* Theme: <i>The presence of this name</i> (Topical/Idesional Theme) * Rema: <i>Born From Two Worlds Meaning</i>
Clause 2 (E): <i>(the) English and Arabic Join in One Prayer</i>	* Process: Material/Relational Process (blended) * Participants: Actors/Tokens (English and Arabic)	Objective-Declarative (Declaring the unification of language identities).	* Theme: <i>English and Arabic</i> (Topical Theme) * Rema: <i>united in one prayer</i>
Clause 2 (E): <i>(the) English and Arabic Join in One Prayer</i>	* Process: Material/Relational Process (blended)	Objective-Declarative (Declaring the unification of	* Theme: <i>English and Arabic</i> (Topical Theme) * Rema: <i>united in one prayer</i>

	* Participants: Actors/Tokens (<i>English and Arabic</i>) * Circumstance: Abstract place/container (<i>in one prayer</i>)	language identities).	
Clause 3 (R): <i>A series of letters becomes a precious hope</i>	* Process: Relational Intensive (<i>so</i>) * Participants: Token (<i>String</i>), Value (<i>valuable hope</i>) * Circumstance: -	Epistemic (Belief) (The poet believes the name has a big meaning).	* Theme: <i>String of letters</i> (Topical Theme) * Rema: <i>be a precious hope</i>
Clause 4 (N): <i>A name for a princess who will be as strong as a coral in the ocean</i>	* Process: Attributive Relational (Process <i>is/is implied</i>) * Participants: Carrier (<i>Name for daughter</i>), Attribute (<i>hardcore</i>) * Circumstance: Comparison (<i>such as coral</i>), Place (<i>in the ocean</i>).	Dynamic / Later (Futurit) (Contains future modalities that refer to future potential).	* Theme: <i>Names for daughters</i> (Topical Theme), <i>future ones</i> (Textual/Structural themes) * Rema: <i>tough as a coral in the ocean</i>
Clause 5(A): <i>A girl who is possessed, strong, soft, and full of love</i>	* Process: Relational Attributive & Mental/Ownership (owned, strong, soft, full) * Participants: Carrier (<i>Girl</i>), Attribute (<i>strong, soft, full of love light</i>) * Circumstance: -	Axiological (Expectation/Value) (Contains prayer and the ideal qualities of a child).	* Theme: <i>Girls</i> (Topical Theme), <i>yang</i> (Textual Theme) * Rema: <i>possessed, strong, soft, and full of light love</i>

Transitivity: This poem is dominated by Relational Processes (identification and attributes) and Material Processes. This suggests that poetry focuses on *defining the identity, essence, and character* of the name "HERNA" itself, rather than on dynamic physical acts.

Modality: Dominated by Declarative and Futurit modalities (*later*). The poet is not just telling a story, but is instilling prayers, hopes, and strong future projections for the owner of the name.

Theme-Rema: The structure of the theme always begins with the subject or concept that builds tname (*The presence of this name, English and Arabic, String of letters, Name, Girl*).

The Use of Language in Name Acrostic Poetry

The analysis of the use of language in the acrostic poem of names produced by teachers who are members of the Indonesian Literacy Agency community focuses on three linguistic levels, namely diction at the level of words, phrases, and clauses, and the use of language styles. The findings of this study are directed to answer the formulation of the first problem, namely how to use language in the acrostic poetry of names. The discussion was carried out by integrating corpus data and stylistic theory frameworks as well as *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA) from Norman Fairclough (1995).

Diction of Word Levels

Analysis of diction at the word level in the acrostic poems of the names SUMARNI, reveals a very consistent lexicon pattern: the dominance of words with high affective value, exalitative, and loaded with cosmological and natural imagery. This finding is in line with Reeves' (1959) view that diction in poetry is economical but rich, where each word bears a much greater burden of meaning than its use in everyday language.

In Sumarni's poems, the choice of lexicons such as the universe, the sun, splitting, shaking, and eternal form a cosmological semantic field that gives the impression of infinite splendor and majesty. The word universe as a noun does not simply mean 'the entire universe' denotatively, but connotatively gives the affective value of extraordinary splendor and majesty. This is in line with Charles Bally's concept of the affective dimension of language, that meaning in poetry is not only conceptual but also emotional. Leech (1969) calls this phenomenon *foregrounding*, which is a deviation from linguistic norms to produce artistic and aesthetic effects. The poet chooses words that are unusual in the context of everyday conversation, such as splitting the dark and shaking the sky, to accentuate a dramatic effect that reflects how significant the presence of the dechromatic subject is.

Overall, the analysis of diction at the word level revealed two dominant patterns. First, poets consistently choose words with a positive affective value (*melioratif*), avoiding a lexicon with negative or neutral meanings. It reflects the social function of the name's acrostic poetry as an act of affirmation and glorification of the subject, rather than criticism or analysis. This shows that the poet utilizes large-scale conceptual metaphors to construct monumental and enduring representations of identity, in keeping with the spirit of the name's acrostic poetry as a medium of personal appreciation.

Clause Stage Diction

The analysis of diction at the level of clauses in acrostic poetry uses the transitivity framework of Halliday (1985) which views clauses as functional units that perform three metafunctional functions simultaneously: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. This analysis reveals how acrostic poetry constructs the representation of the subject, the relationship between the poet and the subject, and the organization of information in the text.

In the poem *HERNA* by Herna, S.Pd., transitivity analysis shows the dominance of Relational Processes, both intensive and attributive. Clauses such as *A string of letters becomes a precious hope* (Intensive Relational Process) and *Daughters owned, strong, soft, and full of love* (Attributive Relational Process) focus on defining and attributing quality, not on descriptions of actions. Halliday (1985) explained that the Relational Process functions to define the identity, essence, and relationship between entities. The dominance of this process in *HERNA*'s poetry reflects the orientation of acrostic poetry as an act of redefining the meaning of names.

Research Findings and Theoretical Implications

Based on the analysis that has been presented, this study produces several main findings that have important implications for the development of linguistic, stylistic, and critical discourse analysis studies in Indonesia.

The first finding is that the acrostic poetry of the name is a genre of discourse that has distinctive linguistic characteristics and can be systematically analyzed. At the word level, this genre is characterized by the dominance of lexicons with high affective value, exaggeration, and full of natural-cosmological imagery. At the phrasing level, nominal phrases dominate, reflecting an orientation on identity and the possession of value rather than action. At the clause level, there is a variation between the Relational Process (defining identity) and the Material Process (describing action) that reflects two different strategies of representation of the subject. In terms of language style, metaphors, similes, personifications, and hyperboles are not simply ornamental, but serve as ideological vehicles that glorify the subject and reproduce social values.

The second and most important finding is confirmation that the name acrostic poem is a social practice in Fairclough's true sense. These poems simultaneously: (a) record and reflect on social reality (institution of birth, family structure, geographical mobility); (b) reproduce social values and ideologies (resilience, primordialism, patriarchy, multiculturalism); (c) build complex and layered social identities; (d) operate symbolic power relations through the mechanisms of naming, interpellation, and inheritance of values; and (e) adapt effectively to the demands of contemporary society as a medium of affective expression and identity affirmation in the digital landscape.

The theoretical implications of these findings are significant. This research reinforces the relevance of CDA Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model for analysing short literary genres such as the name acrostic poem, showing that even very short and 'simple' texts are sites where linguistic, discourse, and sociocultural dimensions interact complexly. This research also extends

the application of stylistic theory (Leech & Short, Verdonk, Simpson) to analyze literary texts produced not by professional poets, but by educator communities in the context of informal literacy. These findings suggest that linguistic creativity and stylistic richness are not limited to canonical literary works, but are also present in people's daily literacy practices.

Conclusion:

Based on the results of data analysis and discussion of the name acrostic poem produced by teachers who are members of the Indonesian Literacy Agent community, this study produces the following conclusions. This study found that the use of language in the acrostic poetry of names has distinctive and systematic linguistic characteristics at four stages. First, at the level of word diction, the acrostic poetry of names is consistently dominated by lexicons with high affective value, exaltation, and loaded with cosmological and natural imagery. The choice of words such as universe, amanah, and padi not only functions denotatively, but contains a density of connotative, cultural, and ideological meanings that far exceed their literal meaning.

This pattern reflects the social function of the acrostic poem of the name as an act of affirmation and glorification of the subject, rather than criticism or analysis. Second, at the level of phrase diction, nominal phrases dominate the construction of the acrostic poetry of names, reflecting the orientation of this genre on identity, existence, and the possession of value rather than action or process. Phrases such as the womb of love, the ink of the sky, and the roots of the Moronene tribe serve as a unit of ideological meaning that transcends its constituent components, constructing a simultaneous representation of cultural, ethnic, and religious identity. Third, at the level of clause diction, there is a variation between the dominance of the Relational Process which functions to define and identify the essence of

the subject and the material process that represents the subject as an active and dynamic agent.

Theoretically, this research reinforces the relevance of the three-dimensional model of the Fairclough CDA: textual dimensions, discourse practices, and social practices to analyze the short literary genres produced by the nonprofessional community. Practically, this research provides an empirical basis for the development of the pedagogy of acrostic poetry as an integrated learning instrument that combines linguistic competence, identity development, and strengthening social values in the Indonesian educational environment.

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