

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE NEWS REPORTING ON THE PERTAMINA CORRUPTION SCANDAL IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

Corruption remains one of the most persistent socio-political problems in Indonesia, particularly when it involves state-owned enterprises that play a strategic role in the national economy. One recent case that attracted extensive public and media attention is the alleged corruption involving PT Pertamina, Indonesia's state-owned oil and gas company. Media coverage of this case does not merely report facts but also constructs particular meanings, perspectives, and ideologies through language. Therefore, this study aims to examine how corruption is represented in online news reporting on the Pertamina corruption case by employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This research adopts a qualitative approach using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of Critical Discourse Analysis, which consists of text analysis, discursive practice, and socio-cultural practice. The data of this study are taken from selected online news articles published by national and international media outlets, such as BBC News Indonesia and Reuters, which reported on the Pertamina corruption case during the investigation period. The analysis focuses on linguistic features such as lexical choices, transitivity patterns, modality, and thematic structures to reveal how actors, actions, and responsibilities are represented in the news discourse. The findings show that online news media tend to construct corruption primarily as a legal and economic issue by emphasizing legal procedures, financial losses, and the role of law enforcement institutions. Linguistically, corrupt actors are often represented through passive constructions or nominalizations, which reduce explicit agency and obscure institutional responsibility. Meanwhile, law enforcement agencies are consistently portrayed as active, authoritative, and legitimate actors, reinforcing their positive public image. At the level of discursive practice, the dominance of elite sources, such as government officials and legal authorities, limits the presence of alternative voices, including civil society groups or independent experts. At the socio-cultural level, the discourse reflects broader power relations and ideological tendencies that individualize corruption while marginalizing its structural and systemic causes. This study concludes that online news reporting on the Pertamina corruption case not only informs the public but also plays a significant role in shaping public perception and understanding of corruption in Indonesia. By highlighting certain aspects and downplaying others, media

discourse contributes to the reproduction of dominant ideologies and power structures. The study is expected to contribute to discourse analysis studies, media studies, and anti-corruption discourse by providing deeper insight into how language functions as a tool of power in news reporting.

Keywords : Critical Discourse Analysis, media discourse, corruption, Pertamina, ideology, power

INTRODUCTION

Corruption remains one of the most persistent and complex challenges in Indonesia, despite ongoing legal reforms and anti-corruption campaigns. The issue is particularly alarming when corruption occurs within state-owned enterprises, as these institutions are entrusted with managing public resources and serving national interests. PT Pertamina, as Indonesia's largest state-owned oil and gas company, holds a strategic position in the country's economic and energy sectors. Therefore, corruption allegations involving Pertamina inevitably raise serious concerns regarding transparency, accountability, and governance.

In recent years, the Pertamina corruption case has received widespread media attention, especially following official announcements by the Attorney General's Office regarding alleged financial losses reaching hundreds of trillions of rupiah. Online news media have played a central role in disseminating information about the case to the public. However, news reporting is not merely a neutral transmission of facts. As argued by Fairclough (1995), media discourse is socially and ideologically constructed, reflecting underlying power relations within society.

Previous studies on media discourse and corruption suggest that news media often frame corruption cases in ways that emphasize individual moral failure while obscuring broader systemic issues (Eriyanto, 2001; van Dijk, 2000). Such framing can influence public understanding by directing attention away from institutional accountability. Moreover, the dominance of elite sources, such as government officials and law enforcement agencies, further shapes how corruption is interpreted by audiences.

Although a number of studies have examined corruption discourse in Indonesian media, research focusing specifically on corruption involving state-owned enterprises particularly Pertamina remains limited. This gap is significant given Pertamina's economic importance and symbolic role as a national asset. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how online news media construct the Pertamina corruption case through discourse.

The research addresses the following questions:

1. How do online news media linguistically represent the Pertamina corruption case?
2. What ideologies and power relations are embedded in the news discourse?
3. How does media discourse shape public perceptions of corruption in Indonesia?

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach that examines the relationship between language, power, and ideology in social contexts. According to Fairclough (1995), discourse is not only a form of language use but also a social practice that contributes to the construction of social reality. CDA seeks to uncover hidden power relations and ideological processes embedded in texts, particularly institutional and media discourse.

Fairclough's three-dimensional framework consists of textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. Textual analysis focuses on linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar, and cohesion. Discursive practice examines how texts are produced and consumed, including the role of sources and intertextuality. Social practice situates discourse within broader socio-political contexts.

2.2 Media Discourse and Ideology

Media discourse plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion. Fowler (1991) argues that news language is inherently ideological, as journalists make choices regarding what to include, exclude, and emphasize. These choices influence how events and social actors are represented. Van Dijk (2000) highlights that news discourse often reflects elite ideologies, as media institutions rely heavily on official sources. This reliance results in the reproduction of dominant power relations and the marginalization of alternative voices, such as civil society organizations or ordinary citizens.

2.3 Discourse and Corruption

Corruption discourse is often characterized by moral evaluations and legal framing. Richardson (2007) suggests that media representations of corruption tend to personalize blame, focusing on individual actors rather than institutional structures. This personalization serves to maintain the legitimacy of political systems while condemning specific individuals.

In the Indonesian context, Eriyanto (2001) notes that corruption reporting frequently reinforces state authority by highlighting law enforcement actions, such as arrests and prosecutions, while providing limited critical discussion on systemic reform.

2.3 Linguistic Representation and Social Actors

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1994) emphasizes the importance of transitivity in analyzing how agency and responsibility are represented in texts. Meanwhile, Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach (2001) highlights the importance of historical and social context in interpreting discourse, particularly in politically sensitive issues such as corruption.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its main analytical approach. Qualitative research is appropriate for this study because it aims to explore meanings, interpretations, and ideological constructions embedded in language rather than to measure variables numerically. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of participants and the contexts in which they occur. In the context of this research, the phenomenon under investigation is the representation of corruption in online news discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis is chosen because it enables researchers to examine how language is used to construct social realities and power relations. Fairclough (1995) argues that CDA is particularly suitable for analyzing institutional discourse, such as media texts, because it reveals how discourse contributes to the maintenance or challenge of social power. By applying CDA, this study does not only describe linguistic features but also critically interprets their social and ideological implications.

This research adopts Fairclough's three-dimensional model, which views discourse as a combination of text, discursive practice, and social practice. This model allows for a comprehensive analysis that connects micro-level linguistic features with macro-level socio-political contexts. To strengthen the analysis, the study also integrates Halliday's transitivity system and van Dijk's theory of ideology and power.

3.2 Research Object and Unit of Analysis

The object of this research is online news discourse related to the corruption case involving PT Pertamina. Online news is selected because it has become one of the primary sources of information for the public and allows rapid dissemination of news with wide social impact. Moreover, online news texts are easily accessible and frequently updated, making them a rich source of discourse data.

The unit of analysis in this study is news excerpts in the form of clauses, sentences, and paragraphs that contain significant linguistic features related to the representation of corruption, actors, actions, and consequences. These excerpts are analyzed to identify patterns of language use, such as lexical choice, grammatical structure, modality, and metaphor. By focusing on smaller linguistic units, this study can conduct a detailed and systematic analysis of discourse construction.

3.3 Data Sources

The data for this research were obtained from three major online news media outlets:

1. ANTARA News, as Indonesia's official national news agency, which represents state-oriented media discourse.
2. Kompas.com, one of the most influential private online media platforms in Indonesia, representing mainstream national media.
3. Reuters, an international news agency, which provides a global perspective on the Pertamina corruption case.

These media outlets were selected based on their credibility, readership reach, and influence in shaping public opinion. The inclusion of both national and international media enables comparative insights into how the same corruption case is framed across different journalistic and ideological contexts.

The articles analyzed were published between 2023 and 2024, during the period when the Pertamina corruption case received intensive media coverage. This time frame is considered appropriate because it captures the initial exposure, legal developments, and public reactions to the case.

3.4 Data Collection Technique

Data were collected using documentation and textual analysis techniques. The researcher systematically searched for news articles using keywords such as “*Pertamina corruption*,” “*oil governance scandal*,” “*state-owned enterprise corruption*,” and “*Attorney General Pertamina case*.”

After collecting the articles, the researcher conducted an initial screening to ensure their relevance to the research objectives. Articles that only mentioned Pertamina incidentally or lacked substantive discussion of corruption were excluded. From the selected articles, relevant excerpts were highlighted and compiled into a corpus of data. In total, 20 news articles were selected, resulting in approximately 45–60 relevant excerpts for analysis.

3.5 Data Selection Criteria

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data, the following criteria were applied in selecting news excerpts:

1. The article explicitly discusses the Pertamina corruption case.
2. The excerpt contains linguistic features relevant to discourse analysis, such as actor representation, evaluative language, or passive constructions.
3. The article is published by a credible and widely recognized news outlet.
4. The text represents either factual reporting or evaluative commentary related to the case.

These criteria ensure that the selected data are both linguistically rich and contextually relevant to the research questions.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis was conducted in several systematic stages, following the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis:

Stage 1: Textual Analysis

At this stage, the researcher analyzed the linguistic features of the selected news excerpts. This included:

- Lexical choices (e.g., words indicating evaluation or judgment),
- Grammatical structures (active vs. passive voice),
- Modality (expressions of certainty or uncertainty),

- Metaphorical expressions.

Halliday's transitivity system was applied to identify how agency and responsibility were distributed among social actors.

Stage 2: Discursive Practice Analysis

This stage focused on how the news texts were produced and consumed. The researcher examined:

- Sources quoted in the articles (e.g., law enforcement officials, politicians),
- Intertextual references to previous corruption cases,
- Patterns of repetition and emphasis across different media outlets.

Fairclough's concept of discursive practice was used to analyze how institutional voices dominated the discourse and how alternative perspectives were marginalized.

Stage 3: Social Practice Analysis

In this final stage, the findings from textual and discursive analysis were interpreted within the broader socio-political context of corruption in Indonesia. Van Dijk's theory of ideology and power was applied to examine how discourse reproduces power relations and legitimizes certain social groups while delegitimizing others.

This stage allowed the researcher to connect linguistic findings with broader issues such as governance, public trust, and media ideology.

FINDINGS

4.1 Overview of Findings

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of online news discourse concerning the Pertamina corruption case. The analysis follows the methodological framework outlined in Chapter III, employing Fairclough's three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis, complemented by Halliday's transitivity system and van Dijk's theory of ideology and power. The findings are organized thematically based on recurring discourse patterns identified across the data corpus.

Overall, the analysis reveals that online news media construct the Pertamina corruption case through specific linguistic strategies that emphasize state authority, individualize responsibility, and marginalize systemic explanations. These strategies are realized through

lexical choices, grammatical structures, metaphorical expressions, and selective sourcing practices.

4.2 Textual Analysis: Linguistic Representation of Corruption

4.2.1 Lexical Choices and Evaluative Language

One of the most prominent findings at the textual level is the consistent use of evaluative lexical items to describe corruption and its consequences. Words such as “*korupsi*,” “*penyimpangan*,” “*merugikan negara*,” and “*pelanggaran hukum*” frequently appear in the analyzed articles.

Data 1:

“Kejaksaan Agung menetapkan sejumlah pejabat Pertamina sebagai tersangka dalam kasus dugaan korupsi tata kelola minyak mentah yang merugikan keuangan negara.”

The lexical choice “*menetapkan*” implies legal certainty and institutional authority, while “*merugikan keuangan negara*” emphasizes economic damage rather than social or structural harm. According to Fowler (1991), such lexical framing guides readers to interpret corruption primarily as a financial crime, thereby narrowing the scope of public concern.

This lexical pattern aligns with Fairclough’s (1995) argument that evaluative language in news discourse functions ideologically by foregrounding certain meanings while backgrounding others. In this case, the focus on financial loss overshadows discussions of governance failure and institutional accountability.

4.2.2 Transitivity and Representation of Social Actors

Halliday’s transitivity system was applied to examine how agency and responsibility are distributed in the news discourse. The findings indicate a strong tendency to position law enforcement agencies as active actors, while corrupt officials are portrayed as passive recipients of legal actions.

Data 2:

“Kejaksaan Agung memeriksa sejumlah pejabat terkait kasus dugaan korupsi Pertamina.”

In this clause, “*Kejaksaan Agung*” functions as the **Actor**, while “*sejumlah pejabat*” serve as the **Goal**. This transitivity pattern reinforces the dominance of state authority and constructs law enforcement as proactive and legitimate.

Conversely, when referring to the act of corruption itself, agency is often obscured.

Data 3:

“Kerugian negara diperkirakan mencapai ratusan triliun rupiah.”

The passive construction eliminates the explicit actor responsible for the loss. This strategy, as noted by van Dijk (2000), serves to reduce institutional accountability by shifting attention from perpetrators to abstract outcomes.

4.2.3 Modality and Degrees of Certainty

Another significant linguistic feature identified in the data is the use of modality to express degrees of certainty or uncertainty.

Data 4:

“Diduga terjadi penyimpangan dalam proses pengelolaan minyak mentah.”

The modal verb “*diduga*” introduces uncertainty, which legally protects media institutions while simultaneously softening accusations. Fairclough (1995) argues that modality plays a crucial role in managing ideological risk, particularly in sensitive political reporting such as corruption cases.

While modality is necessary for legal caution, its frequent use also contributes to ambiguity regarding responsibility and intentionality.

4.2.4 Metaphorical Expressions

Metaphorical language is frequently employed to frame corruption in moral and emotional terms.

Data 5:

“Kasus ini mencederai kepercayaan publik terhadap pengelolaan energi nasional.”

The metaphor “*mencederai*” conceptualizes corruption as a form of injury, positioning the public as victims. Fowler (1991) notes that metaphors in news discourse function to personalize abstract issues, making them more emotionally accessible to readers.

However, this emotional framing often substitutes structural explanation, directing readers’ attention toward moral outrage rather than systemic reform.

4.3 Discursive Practice: Production and Consumption of News

4.3.1 Source Selection and Quotation Patterns

Analysis of discursive practice reveals a strong reliance on official sources, particularly law enforcement agencies and government officials.

Data 6:

“Menurut keterangan Kejaksaan Agung, kasus ini sedang dalam tahap penyidikan lebih lanjut.”

Such reliance on institutional voices reflects what van Dijk (2000) describes as **elite discourse**, where powerful social actors control the flow of information. Alternative perspectives, such as civil society organizations, academic experts, or affected communities, are notably absent from the discourse.

This pattern reinforces institutional legitimacy while limiting critical debate.

4.3.2 Intertextuality and Recontextualization

Several news articles refer to previous corruption cases involving state-owned enterprises, creating intertextual links that normalize corruption as a recurring phenomenon.

Data 7:

“Kasus Pertamina ini menambah daftar panjang skandal korupsi di BUMN.”

This intertextual strategy situates the case within a broader narrative of corruption, but often without offering deeper structural analysis. According to Fairclough (1995), recontextualization allows media to shape how events are historically understood.

Table Summary of CDA Findings Detailed Textual Analysis of Online News Discourse on the Pertamina Corruption Case:

No	News Excerpt	Linguistic Feature	CDA Framework	Analytical Focus	Interpretation
1	“Kejaksaan Agung menetapkan sejumlah pejabat Pertamina sebagai tersangka.”	Active clause	Halliday (Transitivity)	Actor– Process– Goal	Law enforcement positioned as dominant and authoritative actor
2	“Pejabat Pertamina	Passive voice	Fairclough (Textual)	Agency deletion	Responsibility shifted away

	ditetapkan sebagai tersangka kasus korupsi.”				from institutional structure
3	“Kasus ini merugikan keuangan negara hingga ratusan triliun rupiah.”	Quantification	Fowler (Lexical choice)	Economic emphasis	Corruption framed primarily as financial loss
4	“Diduga terjadi penyimpangan dalam tata kelola minyak mentah.”	Modality (“duga”)	Fairclough (Modality)	Degree of certainty	Legal caution reduces strength of accusation
5	“Kasus ini mencederai kepercayaan publik.”	Metaphor	Fowler (Metaphor)	Moral evaluation	Corruption conceptualized as social injury
6	“Pengelolaan energi nasional kembali disorot.”	Nominalization	Halliday	Process abstraction	Action transformed into abstract concept
7	“Kerugian negara diperkirakan mencapai...”	Epistemic modality	Fairclough	Uncertainty	Lack of precise accountability
8	“Sejumlah pihak menilai kasus ini serius.”	Vague actor	van Dijk	Actor suppression	Source ambiguity limits accountability

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter IV by interpreting them through the theoretical frameworks outlined in Chapter II. Rather than merely restating the results, this discussion aims to explain the significance of the findings, relate them to existing studies, and explore their broader implications in the context of media discourse and corruption in Indonesia. The discussion is organized according to the main analytical dimensions of

Critical Discourse Analysis, namely linguistic representation, discursive practices, and socio-ideological functions.

5.1 Linguistic Construction of Corruption in Online News Discourse

One of the central findings of this study is that corruption in the Pertamina case is primarily constructed through legalistic and economic language. Lexical choices such as “*menetapkan tersangka*,” “*penyidikan*,” and “*kerugian negara*” dominate the discourse, positioning corruption as a violation of law and a threat to state finances. This linguistic construction aligns with Fowler’s (1991) argument that news discourse tends to prioritize institutional definitions of events, particularly when reporting on issues involving the state.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, this focus on legal and financial aspects narrows the interpretative space available to readers. While such framing emphasizes the seriousness of the crime, it simultaneously limits discussion on deeper structural causes, such as governance failures, organizational culture, and regulatory weaknesses within state-owned enterprises. As Fairclough (1995) notes, discourse has the power to foreground certain realities while backgrounding others. In this case, linguistic emphasis on legality and financial loss overshadows broader socio-political dimensions of corruption.

5.2 Agency, Responsibility, and the Individualization of Corruption

The transitivity analysis conducted in this study reveals a consistent pattern in which law enforcement institutions are positioned as active agents, while corrupt officials are represented as passive recipients of legal actions. This finding supports Halliday’s (1994) view that grammatical choices are not neutral but ideologically motivated. By assigning agency primarily to institutions such as the Attorney General’s Office, news discourse reinforces the legitimacy and authority of the state.

At the same time, the frequent use of passive constructions and agent deletion in describing the corrupt acts themselves obscures institutional responsibility. Phrases such as “*kerugian negara diperkirakan mencapai...*” remove explicit reference to who caused the damage. According to van Dijk (2000), such linguistic strategies function ideologically by minimizing accountability at the institutional level.

This pattern contributes to what many scholars describe as the **individualization of corruption**. Rather than presenting corruption as a systemic issue rooted in organizational

structures, media discourse frames it as the result of individual moral failure. This finding is consistent with previous studies on corruption discourse in Indonesian media (Eriyanto, 2001), which argue that focusing on individual perpetrators serves to protect broader institutional legitimacy.

5.3 Modality, Uncertainty, and Legal Caution

Another significant aspect of the findings concerns the use of modality to express uncertainty. Modal expressions such as “*diduga*,” “*diperkirakan*,” and “*berpotensi*” appear frequently across the analyzed news articles. From a journalistic perspective, such language reflects legal caution and adherence to the presumption of innocence. However, from a CDA perspective, modality also plays an ideological role.

Fairclough (1995) argues that modality allows speakers and writers to position themselves in relation to the truth of a proposition. In the context of corruption reporting, modality softens accusations and distances media institutions from full responsibility for claims made. While this practice is legally justified, it also contributes to ambiguity regarding responsibility and intentionality. As a result, readers may perceive corruption as vague or abstract, rather than as a concrete and systemic problem requiring structural solutions.

5.4 Discursive Practice and the Dominance of Elite Voices

At the level of discursive practice, this study finds a strong dominance of elite sources in online news reporting on the Pertamina corruption case. Statements from law enforcement officials, government representatives, and political elites are repeatedly cited, while alternative voices are largely absent. This pattern reflects van Dijk’s (2000) concept of **elite discourse**, in which powerful social actors control access to public discourse.

The marginalization of non-elite voices, such as civil society organizations, independent experts, and affected communities, limits the diversity of perspectives presented to the public. As a result, news discourse becomes aligned with official narratives and institutional interests. Fairclough (1995) emphasizes that discursive practices are shaped by power relations, and the findings of this study illustrate how media institutions participate in the reproduction of these relations by privileging elite perspectives.

5.5 Ideological Polarization and Moral Framing

The application of van Dijk's ideological square reveals a clear pattern of ideological polarization in the news discourse. Law enforcement institutions are consistently portrayed in positive terms, associated with action, control, and moral authority. In contrast, corrupt officials are framed negatively, often associated with greed, betrayal, and moral deviation.

This polarization simplifies complex socio-political realities into a binary opposition between "good" and "bad" actors. While such framing may facilitate public understanding and moral judgment, it also discourages critical reflection on systemic issues. According to van Dijk (2000), ideological polarization is a common strategy in political discourse, as it reinforces group identity and legitimizes existing power structures.

5.6 Media Discourse and Public Perception of Corruption

The findings of this study suggest that media discourse plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of corruption. By emphasizing legal action and individual wrongdoing, news reporting may strengthen public trust in law enforcement institutions. However, it may also limit public awareness of the structural dimensions of corruption.

This dual effect highlights the ambivalent role of media in democratic societies. On one hand, media function as watchdogs by exposing corruption. On the other hand, they may inadvertently reproduce dominant ideologies by framing corruption in ways that align with institutional interests. This tension has been widely discussed in media studies (Richardson, 2007), and the findings of this study provide empirical support for these theoretical arguments.

5.7 Relation to Previous Studies

The findings of this study are largely consistent with previous research on media discourse and corruption. Studies by Eriyanto (2001) and van Dijk (2000) similarly found that media discourse tends to emphasize elite perspectives and individual blame. However, this study extends existing research by focusing specifically on a major state-owned enterprise and by incorporating international media coverage through Reuters.

The inclusion of international media highlights how global discourse also aligns with institutional narratives, albeit with different stylistic and linguistic features. This comparative dimension adds depth to the analysis and demonstrates the transnational relevance of CDA in corruption studies.

5.8 Implications of the Findings

The discussion has several important implications. Academically, this study demonstrates the effectiveness of Critical Discourse Analysis in examining media representations of corruption. Socially, it highlights the need for more critical media literacy among readers, enabling them to recognize ideological framing in news discourse. Practically, the findings suggest that journalists should consider incorporating more diverse perspectives and addressing structural issues in corruption reporting.

5.9 Summary of the Discussion

In summary, this discussion has interpreted the findings of the study within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The analysis reveals that online news discourse on the Pertamina corruption case is shaped by linguistic, discursive, and ideological strategies that emphasize state authority, individualize blame, and marginalize systemic critique. These findings underscore the powerful role of media discourse in shaping public understanding of corruption in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to critically examine how online news media construct and represent the corruption case involving PT Pertamina through discourse. By employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main analytical framework, this research aimed to uncover the linguistic strategies, ideological positioning, and power relations embedded in online news reporting on corruption in Indonesia. Specifically, this study sought to answer three research questions concerning linguistic representation, ideological construction, and the influence of media discourse on public perception.

Using a qualitative research design, this study analyzed twenty online news articles published by ANTARA News, Kompas.com, and Reuters. The analysis was conducted through Fairclough's three-dimensional model, encompassing textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice. To strengthen the analysis, Halliday's transitivity system was applied to examine agency and responsibility, while van Dijk's theory of ideology and power was used to interpret patterns of inclusion, exclusion, and polarization in news discourse.

The findings of this study demonstrate that online news reporting on the Pertamina corruption case is far from neutral. At the textual level, the analysis reveals that specific

linguistic features play a crucial role in shaping the representation of corruption. Lexical choices such as “*menetapkan tersangka*,” “*merugikan keuangan negara*,” and “*penyimpangan*” frame corruption primarily as a legal and economic issue. Active constructions frequently position law enforcement agencies, particularly the Attorney General’s Office, as dominant and authoritative actors, while corrupt officials are often represented as passive recipients of legal actions. Moreover, the frequent use of passive voice, modality, and nominalization obscures institutional responsibility and shifts attention away from broader governance structures. Metaphorical expressions such as “*mencederai kepercayaan publik*” further frame corruption in moral and emotional terms, encouraging public condemnation while simplifying the complexity of systemic corruption.

At the level of discursive practice, the findings indicate a strong dominance of elite and institutional voices in news production. The majority of quotations and references originate from law enforcement officials, government representatives, or political elites. This reliance on official sources reinforces institutional legitimacy and aligns news discourse with state perspectives. Alternative voices, such as civil society organizations, independent experts, or affected communities, are notably marginalized or absent. Intertextual references to previous corruption cases involving state-owned enterprises also function to normalize corruption as a recurring phenomenon, while providing limited critical discussion on structural reform. These discursive practices reflect what Fairclough describes as the institutionalization of discourse, where media texts are shaped by and contribute to existing power relations.

At the level of social practice, the analysis highlights the ideological functions of media discourse in maintaining and reproducing power structures. Applying van Dijk’s ideological square, the study reveals a clear polarization between “us” and “them.” Law enforcement agencies and the state are consistently represented in a positive light as protectors of public interest, while corrupt officials are framed as morally deviant individuals. This ideological polarization individualizes corruption and diverts attention from systemic issues such as weak governance, regulatory failure, and institutional culture. As a result, corruption is presented as an exception caused by individual misconduct rather than as a structural problem embedded within state institutions.

Taken together, these findings suggest that online news discourse on the Pertamina corruption case functions not only as a medium of information but also as a powerful ideological tool. By emphasizing legal actions and individual blame, media discourse

reinforces public trust in state institutions while limiting critical engagement with deeper structural causes of corruption. This pattern aligns with previous CDA studies on media and corruption, which argue that news discourse often serves to preserve institutional stability and legitimacy.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to Critical Discourse Analysis by demonstrating the relevance of integrating multiple CDA frameworks in analyzing media discourse in the Indonesian context. The combination of Fairclough's model, Halliday's transitivity system, and van Dijk's ideological approach provides a comprehensive analytical lens for examining the interplay between language, power, and ideology. This study also extends existing literature by focusing specifically on corruption discourse involving a major state-owned enterprise, an area that has received limited scholarly attention.

In practical terms, the findings of this study have important implications for media practitioners, policymakers, and educators. For journalists and media institutions, this study highlights the need for more critical and balanced reporting that goes beyond official narratives and includes diverse perspectives. For policymakers, the findings underscore the importance of transparency and institutional reform in addressing corruption, rather than relying solely on legal enforcement. For educators, particularly in English and discourse studies, this research provides authentic and relevant materials for teaching critical reading and media literacy.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis is limited to a selected number of online news articles and focuses on a specific corruption case. Therefore, the findings may not be fully generalizable to all forms of media or corruption cases in Indonesia. Future research could expand the scope of analysis by including other media platforms, such as television news or social media, or by conducting comparative studies across different countries. Further studies could also explore audience reception to better understand how media discourse influences public interpretation of corruption.

In conclusion, this study confirms that media discourse plays a central role in shaping public understanding of corruption in Indonesia. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, this research reveals how linguistic choices, discursive practices, and ideological structures work together to construct meaning and power in news reporting on the Pertamina corruption case. By critically examining these processes, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the role of language in media, governance, and society.

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