

Pertamina Systemic Corruption: Van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis on Indonesia Al-Youm's Reporting

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Abstract

This study investigates how corruption in Indonesia is portrayed in Arabic-language media by analyzing a news article from *Indonesiaalyoum.com* that reports on systemic corruption at Pertamina involving the son of businessman Riza Chalid. The research aims to uncover how media discourse, particularly in international Arabic outlets, constructs and communicates corruption as a deeply entrenched societal issue. The study employs Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, focusing on three structural levels—macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure—to dissect the textual and contextual elements of the news report. The analysis is further enriched by examining aspects of social cognition and situational context, offering insights into how media narratives influence public understanding and shape international perspectives. The study's findings reveal that the article strategically utilizes framing, lexical selection, and narrative organization to expose power relations, elite collusion, and economic injustice. These elements work together to reinforce anti-corruption discourses while highlighting the role of influential figures in perpetuating systemic problems. The study concludes that Arabic-language media serves not only as a platform for information dissemination but also as a critical actor in uncovering ideological undercurrents and influencing global perceptions of national governance. The research contributes to broader discussions on media, power, and transnational discourse on corruption.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; News media; Pertamina corruption; Arabic language

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INTRODUCTION

Corruption is not merely a financial crime but also a social disease that weakens national integrity and obstructs development in Indonesia, where it has become a systemic issue resistant to eradication despite various legal measures (Angela et al., 2023; Mahendra et al., 2023). It extends beyond government officials, involving the private sector and forming intricate power networks. A recent high-profile case involves the alleged participation of Riza Chalid's son in the Pertamina corruption scandal, reported by the Arabic-language media *Indonesiaalyoum.com* in an article titled "الحقائق المهمة حول قضية فساد برترامينا التي كشفتها النيابة العامة، واتهام نجل ريزا خالد (Sari, 2025)

This case emerged due to Pertamina's involvement in crude oil import and export regulation, with state losses estimated at IDR 193.7 trillion. The Attorney General's Office is investigating allegations of unlawful procurement practices, fuel quality manipulation, and collusion between Pertamina executives and private contractors (Pradana, 2025). Initial findings indicate violations of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources Regulation No. 18/2021, which requires Pertamina to prioritize domestic crude supply.

Three top directors are suspected of rejecting domestic crude oil offers, compelling costly imports (Salma, 2025).

In covering this scandal, it is vital to analyze how discourse dimensions shape public perception of corruption as a systemic problem. As Astuti & Musfiroh (2022) note, media does not merely report reality but constructs social understanding through textual framing. News plays a key role in shaping collective awareness, especially regarding the interplay between public and private sectors in large-scale corruption Angela et al., 2023; Fadilah et al., 2025; Husna et al., 2021). Such reporting can either expose or conceal underlying power dynamics (Nahdi & Taufiq, 2023).

The term *wacana* in Indonesian originates from the Sanskrit *vacana* meaning "reading," evolving to mean "speech, word, or utterance" in Modern Indonesian (Julaeha et al., 2021). In Western tradition, discourse, derived from Latin *discursus*, refers to a system of language rules and conventions. It is not just a collection of words or sentences but a unit of meaning formed through relationships within a linguistic structure (Muffidah et al., 2021). Artati (2019) defines discourse as the highest linguistic unit, transcending sentences or clauses. Discourse analysis, including general and critical approaches, focuses on language units above the sentence level that possess coherence and structural unity within a social context (Aliah, 2014; Arifin et al., 2015: 21) It aims to uncover power relations, ideologies, and social realities represented through language.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly Teun A. van Dijk's framework, examines how social power and inequality are enacted and resisted in texts and talks within social and political contexts. Van Dijk (2015) divides discourse into three dimensions: text, social cognition, and social context Eriyanto (2017; 221). The textual dimension includes macrostructure (main theme), superstructure (organization of text), and microstructure (word choice, sentence structure) (Angela et al., 2023; Astuti & Musfiroh, 2022)

CDA emphasizes the relationship between language, power, and social practice, viewing discourse as an arena of meaning struggle. Eriyanto (2017) notes that language in CDA reproduces domination, hegemony, or social injustice, aiming to uncover hidden perspectives, identities, and interests (Julaeha et al., 2021). Angela et al (2023) explain that CDA critiques the socio-political structures behind text production, acting as a tool to challenge or maintain the status quo (Anam & Ghazali, 2022).

Van Dijk's text dimension analysis integrates three interrelated and complementary structures, macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure, to examine how discourse strategies highlight certain themes (Aliah, 2014). Macrostructure captures the global meaning of a text by identifying its main theme, typically understood after fully reading the content. Superstructure refers to the organizational framework of a text, encompassing its introduction, body, and conclusion. Microstructure focuses on the smallest textual elements, such as words, sentences, propositions, and rhetoric, to analyze meaning, coherence, and stylistic choices (Eriyanto, 2017). Together, these structures shape the overall discourse, influencing readers' understanding and public opinion.

The social cognition dimension explores how shared knowledge, ideologies, and attitudes of journalists and audiences influence discourse production and interpretation (Anam & Ghazali, 2022), while the social context dimension situates texts within broader systems of power, economy, and culture (Cahyani & Gusfa, 2020). Integrating these dimensions allows Van Dijk's model to reveal embedded ideologies, biases, and domination strategies in texts (Mujianto et al., 2023; Rojudin & Ramdhani, 2022). In media studies, news functions not only as factual reporting (Fajar, 2010: 2) but also as a tool for shaping public perception (Wahjuwibowo, 2015: 44), often structured using the 5W+1H principle (Muffidah et al., 2021). However, from a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, news is not neutral, it frames reality through word choice, narrative

structure, and selective emphasis or omission of facts (Astuti & Musfiroh, 2022; Cahyani & Gusfa, 2020). Thus, CDA is essential for uncovering underlying power dynamics and ideological influences in news.

This study has similarities with several previous works that used Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, particularly in examining text structure, social cognition, and social context. For example, Salma & Chotimah (2025) analyzed Al-Arabiya's reporting on the Israel-Palestine ceasefire, focusing on meanings and rhetorical strategies. Nuraini et al. (2024) explored ideological metaphors in R20 Forum opinion articles in *The Jakarta Post*. Anam & Ghazali (2022) studied religious tolerance in Surah Al-Kafirun. Nahdi & Taufiq (2023) discussed nationalism in Hamzanwadi's speeches using micro and macro analysis. Fadilah et al. (2025) examined patriarchal ideology in the childfree discourse. Angela et al. (2023) analyzed how women are portrayed in corruption news, while Arifeni et al. (2024) looked at reactions to the Ministry of Education's digital policy in *Kompas* newspaper.

What sets this study apart is its focus and research object. Unlike the others, which looked at political, religious, or gender topics, this study specifically analyzes an Arabic-language news article about a national corruption case in Indonesia, an area that is still rarely explored using Van Dijk's CDA framework.

The novelty lies in two aspects: (1) the focus on Arabic media discourse about Indonesian legal affairs; and (2) the integration of Van Dijk's full framework, textual, cognitive, and contextual, to examine how corruption is constructed discursively in international news. By doing so, this research contributes both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it expands CDA's applicability to non-Western media and multilingual contexts. Practically, it promotes critical literacy by helping the public detect hidden ideologies in international news reporting.

Accordingly, this study seeks to explore how the Pertamina corruption case is constructed discursively in the Arabic article through Van Dijk's macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. It also investigates how social cognition and context influence the portrayal of elite collusion, and what ideological meanings are embedded in the text that may shape international perceptions of corruption in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study applies a qualitative descriptive approach using Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. This method is appropriate for interpreting the implicit meanings, ideologies, and power structures embedded in news discourse (Arifeni et al., 2024; Rukajat, 2018: 6). Van Dijk's model was chosen over other CDA frameworks, such as Fairclough and Wodak, because it integrates three key dimensions, text structure, social cognition, and social context, that enable a more comprehensive analysis of how media discourse constructs meaning and reflects social power relations.

In this study, the researcher acts directly as the primary instrument (human instrument), which aligns with the characteristics of qualitative research, where the researcher not only collects data but also determines the study's focus, selects informants as data sources, gathers and evaluates data, and conducts analysis, interpretation, and conclusion drawing from the research findings (Sugiyono, 2015).

The main data source is an Arabic-language news article titled "Al-Haqā'iq Al-Muhibim Hawla Qadiyyat Fassād Burtamīna Al-Latī Kasyafathā Al-Niyābah Al-āmmah, Qa itihām Najl Rizā Khālid", published by *Indonesiaalyoum.com* on 28 February 2025. This article was selected purposively because it covers a high-profile corruption case involving Pertamina and reflects how systemic corruption in Indonesia is framed in Arabic international media. The article's relevance, political neutrality, audience reach, and

linguistic framing made it a representative case for analysis. Secondary data consists of relevant literature that supports the interpretation of the discourse and deepens the socio-political context.

Data were collected through documentation techniques involving repeated close reading, translation, and interpretation of the news article. The researcher used note-taking to identify parts of the text corresponding to Van Dijk's three textual dimensions: macrostructure (main theme), superstructure (organizational structure), and microstructure (linguistic choices) (Aska et al., 2022). The implied meanings were explored by situating the article within broader contexts and comparing it with findings from related studies (Kirana, 2023).

Data analysis followed the model of Miles and Huberman, consisting of three stages: (1) data reduction, in which the researcher selected relevant parts of the text based on Van Dijk's discourse elements; (2) data display, where these selections were organized and interpreted in line with CDA categories such as thematic focus, lexical patterns, and syntactic emphasis; and (3) conclusion drawing, where the researcher synthesized findings, linked them to social cognition and context, and compared them with other media discourses (Angela et al., 2023; Arifeni et al., 2024). Reflexivity was applied throughout the process to minimize bias and ensure that the analysis reflected both textual evidence and broader ideological dynamics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

In this critical discourse analysis study of the news article from *Indonesia Alyoum* entitled "Al-Ḥaqā'iq Al-Muḥimah Hawla Qadiyyat Fassād Burtamīna Al-Latī Kasyafathā Al-Niyābah Al-‘āmmah, Qa itihām Najl Rizā Khālid" (Important facts about the Pertamina corruption case revealed by the Attorney General's Office, and the accusation against Riza Khalid's son), the research findings and discussions are analyzed using Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis model. The analysis focuses on the three main dimensions of discourse: text structure, social cognition, and social context. The findings are summarized in the following table (1):

Table 1. Summary of Data Analysis

No.	Structure of Analysis	Element	Summary of Data Description
1	Macrostructure (Thematic)	Theme	The discourse reveals systemic corruption within Pertamina's crude oil management, involving public-private collusion, leading to state losses of IDR 193.7 trillion. The theme is highlighted in: "قضية فساد تتعلق بـ إدارة النفط الخام ومنتجات المصافي في شركة برتamina".
2	Superstructure (Schematic)	Title	الحقائق المهمة حول قضية فساد برتamina التي كشفتها النيابة العامة، واتهام "نجل ريزا خالد" emphasizes the criticality of the case and the involvement of an elite figure's son.
		Lead	استناداً إلى أدلة كافية، فقد قرر فريق التحقيق تصنيف سبعة أشخاص "كمشتبه بهم في هذه القضية" legitimizes the investigation's findings.
		Situation	Describes corruption methods from 2018-2023, manipulation of domestic oil production, and inflated imports leading to state losses.

No.	Structure of Analysis	Element	Summary of Data Description
		Comment	Judicial statements like: "المشتبه بهم تلاعبوا بنتائج المجتمعات ... تحسين قطاع المصافي" evaluate the suspects' deliberate misconduct.
3	Microstructure (Textual Features)	Background	Focuses on the Attorney General's investigation into Pertamina officials and private brokers.
		Detail	Lists seven suspects with names and affiliations, including Muhammad Kerry Adrianto Riza.
		Purpose	Highlights illegal profits through price inflations: "حصل على أرباح غير مشروعة من خلال تضخيم أسعار عقود النقل".
		Presupposition	Frames rejection of domestic oil as compliance: "تم رفض النفط الخام المحلي بحجة عدم توافقه مع المعايير".
		Nominalization	Uses terms like "خسائر الدولة" to focus on economic impact rather than individuals.
		Sentence Form	Active for authorities: "كشفت النيابة العامة...", passive for suspects: "تم اتهام ثلاثة وسبعين...".
		Coherence	Uses connectors like "ما أدى إلى" (causality) and "المقابل" (contrast).
		Pronoun	Pronouns like "هم" center on suspects, distancing agencies.
		Lexicon	Employs accusatory terms: "مشتبه بهم", "فساد", "تلاعب".
		Graphic	Highlights suspects with typographical cues (e.g., //RS//, //MKAR//).
4	Social Cognition Dimension	Metaphor	Uses: "رفع الأسعار الأساسية التي تستخدم لحساب مؤشر أسعار سوق الوقود" to depict economic ripple effects.
		Expression	Expressions like "ما أجر البلاد على الاستيراد" show indirect criticism of policy outcomes.
5	Social Context Dimension	Perception & Ideology	The article shapes public perception of corruption as systemic, not incidental. Framing corrupt actors as immoral, it simplifies complex collusions and reinforces the belief in the necessity of accountability. The inclusion of high-profile figures (نجل ريزا خالد) links individual wrongdoing to oligarchic networks, influencing how the audience perceives political-business elites.
		Societal Impact & Power Dynamics	The discourse reflects corruption's impact on societal structures: economic injustice, elite collusion, and public demand for transparency. Statements like "كشف مدير التحقيقات أن هذه الجرائم تسببت في خسائر للدولة تقدر بنحو 193.7 تريليون روبية" depict corruption as a societal burden. Coverage of legal actions (search of Riza Khalid's residence) aligns with public aspirations for justice and systemic reform.

Macrostructure (Thematic)

The central theme of the news article is systemic corruption in Indonesia's oil sector, specifically within Pertamina and its affiliates, as revealed by the Indonesian Attorney General's Office. The text emphasizes a pattern of coordinated corruption, involving state-owned enterprise officials and private contractors, marked by procurement manipulation, fraudulent imports, and inflated pricing, resulting in state losses of IDR 193.7 trillion. This theme is clearly introduced in the opening line:

كشفت النيابة العامة في إندونيسيا قضية فساد تتعلق بإدارة النفط الخام ومنتجات المصافي في شركة "برتamina"

This framing signals that the corruption is structural and prolonged, implicating key elites, including the son of oil tycoon Muhammad Riza Chalid. Further, the inclusion of formal judicial statements such as:

"استناداً إلى أدلة كافية، فقد قرر فريق التحقيق تصنيف سبعة أشخاص كمشتبه بهم"

reinforces the legitimacy and seriousness of the case, presenting it not as isolated misconduct but as part of a broader pattern of elite collusion. Overall, the theme builds a narrative of strategic corruption entangled with political power and corporate influence.

Superstructure (Schematic)

The superstructure of the news follows a clear and conventional journalistic structure, consisting of four key elements: title, lead, situation, and comment. Each part contributes to building a persuasive and authoritative narrative.

Title

الحقائق المهمة حول قضية فساد برترامينا التي كشفتها النيابة العامة، واتهام نجل ريزا "خالد" The title, "الحقائق المهمة حول قضية فساد برترامينا التي كشفتها النيابة العامة، واتهام نجل ريزا "خالد", functions both informatively and ideologically. It highlights the Attorney General's role in exposing corruption while naming the son of oil tycoon Riza Chalid, creating framing effects that suggest elite complicity. The phrase "الحقائق المهمة" ("important facts") elevates the news as credible, urgent, and nationally relevant.

Lead

The lead paragraph presents a formal legal statement:

"استناداً إلى أدلة كافية، فقد قرر فريق التحقيق تصنيف سبعة أشخاص كمشتبه بهم"

Quoted from spokesperson Harli Siregar, the phrasing emphasizes procedural legitimacy, framing the report as fact-based rather than speculative. This opening legitimizes the news narrative and sets a serious, investigative tone rooted in institutional authority.

Situation

The situation section outlines key facts and context, including the modus operandi, timeline (2018–2023), and institutional actors involved. The article reports that Pertamina officials and private contractors deliberately manipulated production data to reduce local refinery output, creating false dependence on imported crude oil despite domestic availability. This is reflected in the quote:

"المشتبه بهم تلاعبوا بنتائج اجتماعات تحسين قطاع المصافي... مما أجبر البلاد على الاستيراد"

This framing establishes a cause-effect narrative linking corrupt actions to macroeconomic consequences, notably increased state spending on fuel imports. Specific details such as suspect identities and affiliations add credibility and emphasize the scale of the conspiracy.

Comment

The comment segment offers evaluative closure, highlighting the consequences of corruption. A statement from Agung Abdul Qohar reveals the cost disparity between imported and domestic oil:

تم المبالغة في تسعير النفط المستورد بشكل ملحوظ

This underscores the irrationality and injustice of corruption-driven economic decisions. The article also mentions ongoing searches at Riza Chalid's residence and office, suggesting a deepening investigation and framing the case as a broader threat to institutional integrity.

In sum, the superstructure flows from factual opening to context and concludes with critical reflection, constructing a persuasive narrative of systemic abuse and elite-driven resource mismanagement.

Microstructure

Microstructure examines discourse through various dimensions, which include: 1) semantics, covering elements like background, detail, intention, presupposition, and nominalization; 2) syntax, which involves sentence structure, coherence, and the use of pronouns; 3) stylistic features, focusing on the choice of vocabulary; and 4) rhetoric, which includes the use of graphics, metaphors, and expressions (Salma & Chotimah, 2025).

Background

كشفت النيابة العامة في إندونيسيا قضية فساد تتعلق بإدارة النفط الخام ومنتجات المصافي في شركة "برتamina، والشركات التابعة لها، ومقاولي عقود التعاون للفترة 2018-2023"

The news explains the investigation process initiated by the Attorney General's Office into the Pertamina subsidiary officials and private oil brokers. The investigation focuses on uncovering corrupt practices in the oil sector, particularly within the management of crude oil and refinery products in Pertamina. This includes fraudulent oil import transactions, price manipulations, and procurement irregularities that led to significant financial losses for Indonesia.

Detail

قائمة المتهمين في قضية فساد برترامينا تضم سبعة أشخاص من إدارات الشركات الفرعية لبرترامينا // والقطاع الخاص. من جانب برترامينا، تشمل قائمة المتهمين كلاً من ريفا سياهان // ...، الرئيس التنفيذي لشركة برترامينا باترا نياجا // (RS) / Riva Siahaan

The names and positions of the seven suspects are clearly outlined. These include both high-ranking Pertamina officials and private businessmen involved in the corrupt practices. Notably, Muhammad Kerry Adrianto Riza (son of a prominent oil tycoon) is among the suspects. His role is significant due to his involvement in the manipulation of shipping contracts and oil pricing.

Purpose

... حصل على أرباح غير مشروعة من خلال تضخيم أسعار عقود النقل

This direct quote highlights the illegal profits made by Muhammad Kerry Adrianto Riza, emphasizing his role in the financial manipulation.

The primary aim of the suspects was to generate illegal profits through the manipulation of oil prices and the importation policies that favored inflated pricing and unnecessary imports. By inflating the prices of crude oil and refinery products, they created artificial financial burdens for the Indonesian government.

Presupposition

"تم رفض النفط الخام المحلي بحجة عدم توافقه مع المعايير"

This sentence presupposes that the local crude oil did not meet the required standards, implying a technical rationale for its rejection, which is later exposed as a tactic to favor imported oil, thus benefiting certain stakeholders in the private sector.

In this news discourse, the presupposition involves the framing of the rejection of domestic crude oil as a technical compliance issue. The text implicitly assumes that the reasons for rejecting local oil are based on legitimate technical standards, without highlighting the underlying manipulation. This creates an assumption that the rejection is grounded in genuine concerns about quality or standards, while the investigation later reveals a more strategic agenda behind these decisions. This presupposition sets the stage for justifying the subsequent actions, particularly the increased dependency on imported oil.

Nominalization

The phrase "خسائر الدولة تقترب من 200 تريليون روبيه" ("state losses approaching 200 trillion rupiahs") reflects effective use of nominalization, transforming acts of corruption into an abstract economic impact. This shifts the focus from individual perpetrators to the systemic consequences, framing the issue as a matter of national concern. By omitting agency, the text emphasizes the magnitude of harm over specific accountability, reinforcing corruption as a structural, not merely personal, problem.

Sentence Form

كشفت النيابة "..." ("The Attorney General's Office uncovered the corruption case"), emphasizing clear agency and legitimacy in the investigation. Conversely, passive voice is used in "تم اتهام ثلاثة وسطاء" ("Three intermediaries were accused"), which obscures who made the accusations. This dual use of sentence form strategically separates official action from individual blame, reinforcing focus on the events and consequences rather than personalizing the corruption.

Coherence

The article maintains coherence primarily through causal and contrastive conjunctions, which structure the narrative flow. Causal links like "مما أدى إلى" ("which led to") connect actions to outcomes, as in:

"المشتبه بهم تلاعبوا... مما أدى إلى تقليل الإنتاج... مما أجبَرَ البلاد على الاستيراد"

This shows a direct chain of causality, portraying how manipulation led to national dependence on imports.

Contrastive conjunctions such as "في المقابل" ("in contrast") are used to highlight inconsistencies, e.g.,

"في المقابل، تم استيراد النفط من الخارج بأسعار أعلى"

This contrast emphasizes the illogical and exploitative choices, reinforcing the narrative of corruption-driven economic harm.

Pronoun

Pronoun use in the article helps assign clear agency. The verb "تلاعبوا" ("they manipulated") retains the pronoun "هم" ("they"), directly pointing to the suspects and reinforcing their involvement. For example:

"...وهم محمد كيري أديريانتا ريزا"

Here, "هم" collectively identifies private actors like Muhammad Kerry Adrianto Riza, highlighting personal responsibility without implicating state institutions directly.

By consistently using third-person plural pronouns for the accused, the article maintains a judgmental but formal tone, keeping focus on the suspects while preserving the objectivity and neutrality of the institutional voice.

Lexicon

The article's lexicon is marked by legal and accusatory vocabulary that reinforces its judgmental tone. Terms like "تلاعب" (manipulation), "فساد" (corruption), and "مشتبه بهم" (suspects) are strategically used to emphasize wrongdoing and illegality, framing the case as both criminal and systemic.

For instance, "تلاعب" conveys deliberate, unethical manipulation for personal gain, language typical of legal-political discourse. The term "فساد" situates the incident within a broader structural crisis, while "مشتبه بهم" offers a legally neutral yet pointed reference to those implicated, balancing objectivity with clarity.

Through such choices, the lexicon underscores the severity, intentionality, and public relevance of the corruption, while maintaining a tone that is both critical and formally restrained.

Graphic

In the news text, the typographical use of suspect names and companies, such as //RS//, //MKAR//, //SDS//, //DW//, and others, effectively highlights their institutional roles. This is important for the reader, as it draws attention to the significance of these individuals in the corruption case. The use of these abbreviations or highlighted forms serves to differentiate the key actors in the case and provides a visual cue that emphasizes their involvement in the story. This formatting choice makes the roles of these individuals more prominent, helping to focus on the accused's affiliations and their responsibilities within their respective companies.

Metaphor

Metaphors in the article highlight the systemic reach of corruption. The phrase "رفع الأسعار الأساسية التي تُستخدم لحساب مؤشر أسعار سوق الوقود" illustrates how price manipulation disrupts broader economic systems, particularly fuel subsidies, implying a ripple effect that burdens public policy and national resources. Similarly, "الخام المحلي بحجة عدم توافقه مع المعايير" uses the rejection of local oil as a metaphor for resource control, suggesting a strategic pretext to justify costly imports, symbolizing deeper manipulation within national infrastructure.

Expression

Phrases like "ما أجبر البلد على الاستيراد" subtly condemn corrupt practices by emphasizing coercive outcomes, showing how fabricated scarcity forced reliance on imports. Likewise, "ما أدى إلى زيادة تعويضات الوقود المدعوم من الميزانية العامة" highlights the fiscal consequences, linking corruption to increased state spending. These expressions convey the economic and moral cost of elite collusion, indirectly criticizing the misuse of public funds and national assets.

Social Cognition Dimension: The Influence of News Reporting in Shaping Public Perception

The social cognition dimension in Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model explores how news texts shape public perceptions of social issues. In the

article about the Pertamina corruption scandal, it frames corruption as a systemic problem involving both public and private sectors, not just individual misconduct. By highlighting the 193.7 trillion rupiah loss and the roles of key individuals, the article simplifies the issue for readers, helping them grasp its scale.

The article uses negative framing to depict the perpetrators as immoral, emphasizing their unethical actions and evoking moral outrage, especially regarding the neglect of local oil production in favor of costly imports. It reinforces the need for accountability by detailing the investigation and suggesting that punishment serves as a deterrent. The mention of Riza Chalid's son ties the scandal to deeper, systemic political-business networks in Indonesia.

Overall, the article shapes readers' understanding of corruption as a widespread problem that requires urgent corrective action and fosters critical views of the political-business elite, emphasizing the need for meaningful change.

Social Context Dimension: Analysis of the Relationship Between Discourse and Society

The social context dimension in Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) examines how discourse reflects societal values, norms, and practices. In the case of the Pertamina corruption article, the discourse presents corruption as a social issue that deeply affects the community, shaping societal structures and values.

The article highlights economic injustice caused by corruption, emphasizing the 193.7 trillion rupiah loss and the resulting inflation of fuel subsidies and dependency on imports. This misallocation of public resources undermines the community's welfare for personal gain.

It also reveals power dynamics and elite collusion, showing how political and business elites manipulate systems for personal benefit, reinforcing corruption and inequality. The article further portrays public resistance to corruption, with mentions of an investigation into Riza Chalid's residence, illustrating society's demand for transparency and accountability.

Overall, the article positions Pertamina's corruption as not just a legal issue but a societal one, reflecting public concerns about economic injustice, elite collusion, and the need for a fair anti-corruption process.

Discussion

This study applies Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model to examine how an Arabic-language news article constructs a discourse around the Pertamina corruption case. By analyzing the macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure of the text, along with the social cognition and social context dimensions, this study reveals how discourse strategies are used to shape public perception, construct ideological framing, and direct attention toward systemic failures in governance and accountability.

At the macrostructural level, the article establishes corruption in Pertamina as a systemic issue, not merely the result of individual actors. The consistent reference to *193.7 trillion rupiahs in losses*, coupled with long-term collusion (2018–2023), presents corruption as a chronic and structural problem within Indonesian state-private sector dynamics. This aligns with Van Dijk's (2001) assertion that macrostructures guide interpretation by providing thematic coherence that reflects ideological schemas. It also confirms Angela et al. (2023), who note that corruption in Indonesia thrives through institutional complicity and elite protectionism.

The superstructure follows a conventional journalistic format, title, lead, situation, comment, but the arrangement is strategically persuasive. The title foregrounds "النفطية" (the oil company).

"نجل ريزا خالد" (Riza Chalid's son), invoking state authority and elite figures to immediately capture public attention. This reflects Van Dijk's (2015) insight into how text organization encodes ideological bias. As Seid (2025) argues, "discourses are not merely mirrors of society, but creative forces that guide social action." By focusing on institutional responses and elite exposure, the article participates in constructing public demand for accountability. Moreover, the lead uses a direct legal citation to enhance legitimacy ("...استناداً إلى أدلة كافية"), reinforcing public trust in institutional investigation (Salma, 2025).

The microstructure further reveals the article's ideological stance through lexical choices like "فساد" (corruption), "تلعب" (manipulation), and "مشتبه بهم" (suspects), which create a judgmental tone that condemns the acts described. This echoes findings from Astuti & Musfiroh (2022) and González (2021), who observed that media use evaluative vocabulary to signal moral positioning and reinforce audience engagement. The use of nominalization, as in "حسائر الدولة", abstracts agency and shifts focus to economic consequences, presenting corruption as a national crisis rather than personal deviance. This aligns with how Evagorou-Vassiliou (2024) emphasize the role of nominal structures in depersonalizing agency and refocusing attention on outcomes.

Syntactically, the article alternates between active voice (e.g., for the Attorney General's Office) to highlight legitimacy, and passive voice (e.g., "...تم اتهام ثلاثة وسطاء") to diffuse direct blame. This division reflects Van Dijk's micro-level observation on sentence form and its role in framing responsibility. Pronouns like "هم" maintain reference to the suspects while allowing a degree of distancing, avoiding overt personalization while retaining clear accusation.

Cohesion and coherence are built through causal connectors ("مما أدى إلى") and contrastive transitions ("وفي المقابل"), linking the manipulation of domestic oil production to inflated imports and subsidy burdens. These relations support logical progression and, as Van Dijk (2015) notes, reinforce the ideological perspective embedded in text coherence. The article's use of metaphor, such as "رفع الأسعار الأساسية...", conveys the ripple effects of corruption, showing how small manipulations reshape economic policies. Similarly, expressions like "مما أجبَ البلد على الاستيراد" subtly assign moral blame while describing systemic coercion, techniques observed by Acosta González (2021) in media narratives that highlight elite exploitation.

Through social cognition, the article builds on shared public skepticism toward elite actors and SOEs, framing corruption as a normalized injustice, a collective perception also identified by Angela et al (2023) in Indonesian discourse. This cognitive dimension enables the audience to interpret corruption not as an anomaly but as embedded in daily governance. Moreover, the social context, an international Arabic-language platform discussing Indonesian corruption, suggests the story is designed not only for domestic scrutiny but also to signal Indonesia's transparency to external observers. This reflects Seid (2025) argument that discourse operates within sociocultural imaginaries, especially when media crosses linguistic and national boundaries.

Compared to domestic media, which may present more restrained or politicized coverage, this article demonstrates a bolder framing, enabled by editorial distance and foreign language reporting. As (Arifeni et al (2024) argue, different platforms generate different ideologies based on audience orientation and political risk. Here, the article actively constructs anti-elite framing while maintaining legal neutrality.

In sum, the article's discourse structure, lexical style, and ideological positioning show how language is used not only to report facts but to shape public perception, legitimize institutional responses, and contest elite control over national resources. It

affirms Van Dijk's CDA as an effective model for unpacking the interplay between power, ideology, and media representation, and reinforces CDA's critical function in confronting discourse that normalizes inequality or obscures structural injustice.

CONCLUSION

This study employs Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model to analyze an Arabic-language article published by Indonesia Al-Youm on the Pertamina corruption case involving the son of Riza Chalid. By examining the macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure of the article, this research demonstrates how the text shapes public perception of corruption in Indonesia. The article portrays corruption as a systemic issue involving both public and private sector actors, resulting in state losses amounting to 193.7 trillion rupiah. It not only presents facts but also constructs a narrative that corruption is a structural problem requiring systemic reform, rather than mere individual punishment.

From a social cognition perspective, the article influences public views by depicting the perpetrators as immoral actors and reinforcing demands for accountability. At the level of social context, the article reveals power dynamics and elite collusion that undermine national development. Overall, this study highlights the significant role of media discourse in shaping societal understanding of social issues and its influence on perceptions of accountability and governance.

As a recommendation, the findings of this study can be used to enhance public critical literacy in reading international news, and serve as a basis for more transparent and responsible media policies. Further research could compare similar reporting in local and global media to deepen understanding of corruption framing. Limitations of this study include its focus on a single article and reliance solely on Van Dijk's framework without incorporating multimodal approaches or audience perception analysis. Nevertheless, this study contributes both theoretically and practically to understanding how international media shape public opinion on corruption in Indonesia.

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