

Bias and Representation: a Value Analysis in Republika Online Political Reporting

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the construction of relational values in political news published by Republika online media, focusing on identifying linguistic markers of relational values, examining how they construct bias and representation of political actors, and explaining their ideological function in shaping public perception. The analysis employs Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with relational values in vocabulary selection as the central focus at the textual level. Methodologically, this study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, with data consisting of political news articles published by Republika between December 2023 and January 2024, collected through reading and note-taking techniques, then reduced, coded, and classified into four relational value categories (trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment). The findings indicate that vocabulary choices systematically construct political actors' images: trust is represented through lexical items that reinforce credibility; respect emerges through honorifics and naming strategies that strengthen legitimacy; cooperation is conveyed through lexical choices emphasizing synergy; and commitment appears through expressions of promises and future-oriented political intentions. These results affirm that vocabulary selection in media texts is not neutral but carries ideological functions that shape political representation and readers' interpretive orientation. Therefore, this research offers conceptual and empirical contributions to language and political discourse studies and reinforces the urgency of critical media literacy in the public sphere.

Keywords: *Media Bias, Relational Value, Politics, Representation*

Introduction

Language, in its most fundamental definition, is a communication tool used by humans to convey information, knowledge, ideas, and opinions. However, contemporary linguistic scholarship emphasizes that language is not merely a neutral conduit of information, but a social practice that carries power and ideology (F. Nasution & Tambunan, 2022). Fairclough asserts that language is always produced within specific social contexts, and every linguistic practice represents, sustains, or negotiates power relations (Mammadova, 2025). In line with this view, Flora Woltran and Susanne Schwab also emphasize that language may function as social capital and as a symbolic instrument to maintain a dominant position within social structures (Woltran & Schwab, 2025). Recent findings by Aris Badara and Jamiludin further indicate that lexical choices in political news coverage in Indonesian media systematically reproduce hierarchies of authority and legitimacy among political actors (Badara & Jamiludin, 2020).

In the context of contemporary political communication, mass media has become a strategic institution for the production and distribution of discourse. Online news no longer merely reports facts, but constructs reality and shapes the patterns through which

meaning is consumed in society (Happer & Philo, 2023; Saputri et al., 2023). Republika, as one of the mainstream online media outlets, operates within this field of power: it not only delivers political information but also frames political images through specific lexical selections. Recent literature demonstrates that political representation in media is largely determined by lexical strategies such as evaluative adjectives, intensifiers, and modality verbs, which subtly influence public judgment (Amalia et al., 2023; Goddard et al., 2018). Therefore, linguistic analysis of political news texts must attend to the power relations manifested through language choices.

Previous studies have shown that the representation of power in online media is never neutral (Ojala, 2021). However, recent international studies such as Gao & Zeng, (2021) and S. S. Nasution et al., (2020) emphasize that relational value in CDA has rarely been the main focus of analysis, even though this aspect represents the most subtle location of ideology (Gao & Zeng, 2021; S. S. Nasution et al., 2020). The research gap is as follows: studies conducted in Indonesia over the last five years have not specifically examined how the relational value of lexical items contributes to shaping political representation in mainstream online news. Yet relational value is precisely the aspect that determines how language positions the social relations between media institutions, political actors, and the public. This is the novelty of the present study: it focuses on the analysis of relational value at the micro level (lexical choice) in Republika's political news coverage, and links it to the macro context of discourse production as an ideological media practice of power an analytic connection that has not been explicitly addressed in critical linguistic studies in Indonesia up to 2024.

Language has an effect when the speaker is a person who has influence on power. Through language, Republika carries out its duties and roles. Language becomes a tool for practicing power this power is represented in the online news news.republika.co.id. Eriyanto sees language as a practice of power and language use is always related to power and inseparable from social interaction. through language, representations of power are realized through: vocabulary, grammar, and textual structure (Amalia et al., 2023).

The role of mass media is very important in the lives of people in this modern era. Online news has a role as a bridge of information to the public. The role of mass media is very influential as a source of information in the public's view of a problem. Public trust is very influential on the construction of news in online news or mass media, for example, the conclusion of a headline that becomes the main discourse in a mass media or online (Saputri et al., 2023). Sources of power that must be seen for discourse and power analysis, namely: politics, media, or science. The point is that the process of power influence is to influence other parties to conform to the speaker's will. The influence of power is determined by one's power or position in the power structure (Dremel & Mati, 2014).

In the context of Republika's political news coverage, relational value can be identified in the way the media constructs political images through lexical selection. When reporting on elections or government policies, Republika may deliberately employ vocabulary that conveys respect toward certain political figures, strengthens public trust in them, or creates symbolic distance from other groups. The use of lexical markers such as "visionary leader," "firm," or "committed to the people" can contribute to the positive image construction of a politician, while expressions such as "controversial and criticized" or "rejected by various parties" can shape negative representations (Sumarti, 2010). The root problem (root cause) underlying this phenomenon is the absence of a neutral linguistic regime in media institutions: the selection of vocabulary is not merely a stylistic choice but is structurally embedded in editorial ideology, commercial competition, and

the media's alignment with specific political interests. Thus, relational value becomes a linguistic mechanism through which media not only reflect political reality but actively participate in producing ideological positioning.

This phenomenon is analytically significant, considering that media institutions hold considerable power in shaping public perception of political actors. Therefore, this research aims to analyze how *Republika* produces bias and representation in political reporting through relational values. Employing Fairclough's critical discourse analysis approach, this study identifies and examines the lexical choices used in *Republika*'s political news texts and investigates how those linguistic choices construct social relations between the media, political elites, and the public (Sumarti, 2010). This study offers high relevance not only to critical linguistic scholarship but also to political communication studies. From a linguistic perspective, the study contributes to understanding how language is strategically used to construct power relations and ideology within media discourse. Meanwhile, from a political communication perspective, the study provides insight into how media outlets frame political images and how such framing may inform, reinforce, or reshape public opinion (Mulya, 2023).

Critical discourse analysis or AWK is one of the ways that can be used to represent the language of power, useful to further understand the system of text production. In critical monitoring, texts are developed from a number of linguistic tools that contain hidden ideologies and power. In this case, one of the theories that examines the language of power is the theory developed by Norman Fairclough, critical discourse analysis. Representation is a linguistic phenomenon that involves the way someone or something is expressed through language (Isnaeni et al., 2025). Critical discourse analysis that relational value is an aspect that is closely related to how the social relationship between the speaker or writer and his audience is manifested in the use of language (Badea, 2024). This is also in line with Santoso's view that the use of formal lexical items functions to create social prestige and symbolic distance between interlocutors. Relational value thus focuses on how language builds, maintains, or transforms social relations in interaction (Mulya, 2023).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspectives conceptualize language as central, because human action both verbal and nonverbal is always mediated by discourse. Fairclough's framework specifically provides theoretical tools to connect linguistic microstructures (e.g., vocabulary, modality, evaluative adjectives) with macro structures (e.g., power, ideology, and institutional interests). CDA therefore positions text not merely as written information, but as a practice of representation: discourse becomes a site where meaning is produced, contested, and circulated. This is consistent with Hall's theory that representation is not neutral reflection, but a cultural process through which meaning is constructed and exchanged in society (Mulya, 2023). Through representation, media do not simply report political events, but actively participate in defining which political identities deserve legitimacy and which ones are problematized.

This research also refers to and differentiates itself from previous relevant studies. For example, Auliya (2017) examined "Representation of Power in Online Mass Media (A Study on *Detik.com* Magazine)" and identified four forms of power representation language elements, varieties, styles, and speech acts with power-laden language style (hyperbole, euphemism, repression) being dominant, while vocabulary selection and metaphor were minimally explored. However, the novelty and research gap of the present study are located precisely here: recent studies in Indonesia have not specifically focused on relational value at the lexical level as the main analytical locus for detecting ideological positioning in political news of mainstream Islamic-oriented media, especially *Republika*.

Most existing studies are still macro-oriented and style-based, whereas the ideological work of media in 2020–2024 is increasingly encoded through subtle lexical relationality rather than overt stylistic exaggeration. Hence, this study offers conceptual and methodological novelty by (1) foregrounding relational lexical value as the central unit of analysis and (2) empirically linking these micro textual choices with the macro institutional-political context of *Republika*'s discourse production. This contributes to renewing CDA scholarship in Indonesia by shifting the analytical lens toward the lexical micro-level where contemporary ideological operations are more implicit yet more operative.

The second relevant study is Ana Caballero research published in 2015 entitled *Critical discourse analysis in the study of representation, identity politics and power relations: A multi-method approach*. The findings indicate that the representation of power in political communication consists of three core dimensions: participants, communicative purposes, and topical configuration of political speech. Ana Caballero study demonstrates that power is constructed not only through lexical choices, but also through interactional roles and communicative intentions (Caballero, 2015). This representation of power in the Palu City DPRD context reveals that political discourse practices are more strongly explained through sociolinguistic patterns rather than merely ideological conflict or ideological burden. Ana Caballero findings therefore reinforce the argument that political power relations are embedded in linguistic practice and discursive situations (Caballero, 2015).

However, both James Jaehoon Lee and Jeffrey Blevins place analytical emphasis on macro interactional and stylistic aspects of political discourse. Meanwhile, the latest international studies in 2022–2024 show a methodological shift: the ideological work of political media discourse today tends to be encoded not in explicit rhetorical style or interactional structure, but in the micro lexical relationality that subtly positions actors as trustworthy, legitimate, or problematic (Lee & Blevins, 2025). This creates a clear research gap: studies on Indonesian media have not yet explicitly investigated relational value at the lexical level as the main site of ideological operation, especially within Islamic-oriented mainstream online media such as *Republika*. This study, therefore, offers a contribution by filling this gap through applying Fairclough's CDA to relational lexical values, demonstrating how vocabulary functions ideologically to construct bias, maintain symbolic authority, and shape political representation in contemporary online political news (Wijayanto et al., 2025).

This research is expected to contribute to the development of critical discourse analysis studies, especially in the context of political reporting in online media. In addition, the results of the study can also be a reflection material for media practitioners in understanding the impact of the language they use in delivering news to the public.

Method

Study Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. According to Siswantoro, qualitative inquiry aims to explore phenomena that cannot be quantified but must be interpreted through narrative description and contextual explanation. This approach enables researchers to reveal linguistic and ideological nuances embedded in texts. The grand theoretical approach (*approach theory*) used in this study is Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which conceptualizes discourse as a form of social practice that reflects, reproduces, or resists structures of power and ideology

(Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough's model consists of three integrated dimensions textual analysis, discursive practice analysis, and sociocultural practice analysis. Meanwhile, the operational analytical theory (*analysis theory*) used to identify relational value is Fairclough's theory of relational values at the level of vocabulary, which functions to examine how lexical choices construct, maintain, or negotiate social relations and ideological positioning between media, political actors, and audiences.

Sample Population

The data in this study consist of political news articles published by Republika Online between December 2023 and January 2024. These samples were selected using purposive sampling based on thematic relevance to political representation and ideological framing. Purposive sampling allows researchers to determine data sources that most accurately represent the discursive phenomena being examined.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected using reading and note-taking techniques. Following Mahsun, the "listening/observing method" was implemented by closely reading each text to capture and inventory linguistic features accurately. The researcher read each article intensively and recorded lexical items that indicate ideological positioning and relational values (Rusdiansyah, 2019). The main research instrument is the human instrument, namely the researcher themselves (Bahrami & Nosratzadeh, 2017). The primary research instrument is the human instrument the researcher themselves (Bahrami & Nosratzadeh, 2017). In qualitative CDA research, human interpretation is central, because the meaning construction process in textual data requires interpretive sensitivity to sociolinguistic and sociopolitical contexts (Lim, 2024).

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. CDA interprets language as a social practice and emphasizes the relational value of words within power and ideology structures. The analysis focuses on identifying and interpreting lexical choices that reveal ideological tendencies in media texts. The analytical procedure includes: 1) Identifying key vocabulary and linguistic markers that carry ideological implications; 2) Interpreting their meaning within the context of the text; and 3) Relating these linguistic features to the broader social and ideological context in which the discourse operates. Through this analytical framework, the study aims to uncover how linguistic choices in Republika news construct, maintain, or challenge specific ideological perspectives society (Fairclough, 1995).

Results

This study found that relational values in Republika's online political news function as discursive mechanisms that regulate social relations between political actors, institutions, and the public. In the context of the 2024 election coverage, lexical choices used by the media were not neutral; rather, they positioned actors within specific relational structures of power. For example, in the coverage of presidential debates, vocabulary such as "fighting for ideas" constructs a relational configuration of intellectual competition among presidential candidates, wherein political legitimacy is tied to discursive performance and argumentative capability (Warburton, 2024). Similarly, in reports regarding President Jokowi's clarification of alleged involvement in Ganjar

Pranowo's campaign, vocabulary such as "denied" and "clarified" frames the relationship between the President and the public in terms of institutional accountability, constructing an image of legal compliance and impartial state leadership (Chontina Siahaan, Rismawaty, Dewi Kurniawati et al., 2018). Meanwhile, in news about PDIP's open campaign for Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD, expressions like "down to the bottom" and "with the people" discursively construct relational proximity, solidarity, and populist alignment between party elites and grassroots communities (Diógenes-Lima et al., 2025).

Overall, the data obtained during December 2023–January 2024 reveal four dominant relational value categories trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment each realized through specific lexical strategies. Thus, vocabulary in *Republika*'s political reporting is not merely descriptive, but functions ideologically to construct distinct social relations between media, political actors, and the readership. The detailed distribution of these relational value categories is presented in the table below and further elaborated in the descriptive analysis section.

In the study of media discourse, relational value is an important aspect that reflects how social relationships, attitudes, and interactions among political actors are constructed through language. This value illustrates forms of trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment built in political communication, both between leaders and the public, among political parties, and between government institutions. The data analyzed in this study were obtained from online news reports on *Republika Online* during the period from December 2023 to January 2024. Based on 15 data excerpts categorized according to four main relational values, namely trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment, the following presents a descriptive and interpretative analysis:

Relational Value: Trust

The relational value of trust is evident in several news reports emphasizing the importance of mutual confidence and solidarity among Indonesian citizens. In the first data (D1/2/12/23), Minister of Defense Prabowo Subianto asserted that Indonesia has the potential to become a strong nation if its people can live in harmony and help one another. This statement represents an appeal to build social trust as the foundation of national strength. In the second data (D2/14/12/23), Arief referred to survey results showing that the Prabowo–Gibran pair obtained an electability rate of 39.3 percent according to the *Kompas* R&D survey. This illustrates an attempt to build public trust in the candidates through empirical and measurable data. Furthermore, in the third data (D4/14/1/24), PDIP cadres serving as ministers in the Advanced Indonesia Cabinet were prepared to campaign directly with the people. This reflects a form of political trust and responsibility between the party and society in the democratic process.

Relational Value: Respect

The relational value of respect is portrayed through political interactions that highlight mutual appreciation among leaders and citizens. In the first data (D5/24/1/24), President Joko Widodo expressed appreciation for Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs Mahfud MD's decision to resign from the cabinet. This gesture demonstrates respect for personal integrity and autonomy in governance. The second data (D6/17/12/23) presents an Australian survey comparing the electability of Ganjar, Prabowo, and Anies. The objective presentation of such data indicates respect for transparency and scientific integrity in political reporting. Meanwhile, the third data (D7/14/12/23) describes the GAZ 08 volunteers organizing a *Gemoy* dance competition with substantial prizes as a means to strengthen social bonds and community

togetherness. This activity embodies respect for cultural diversity and collective expression within Indonesian society.

Relational Value: Cooperation

The value of cooperation is clearly reflected in media reports emphasizing collaboration across social, political, and institutional contexts. In the first data (D8/30/12/23), Anies Baswedan attended a wayang kulit performance in Ponorogo as part of his cultural preservation campaign. His participation represents cooperation between politics and cultural identity. The second data (D9/14/1/24) reveals that communication between the legal teams of two political groups did not involve discussions of potential cooperation for the second round of the presidential election, showing professionalism in maintaining interparty dialogue. In the third data (D10/25/1/24), Sri Mulyani encouraged all members of the Directorate General of Customs and Excise to enhance synergy, collaboration, and mutual trust across units and institutions, reflecting an administrative culture grounded in cooperation. Meanwhile, in the fourth data (D11/24/1/24), political observer Ray Rangkuti suggested that President Joko Widodo's signal of supporting the Prabowo–Gibran pair would have a positive impact in pursuing a one-round presidential victory. This illustrates strategic cooperation between political and governmental forces.

Relational Value: Commitment

The value of commitment is reflected in media narratives that highlight the dedication of political figures to their duties and responsibilities. In the first data (D12/12/12/23), it is explained that the first 2024 presidential debate organized by the General Election Commission (KPU) served as a forum for exchanging ideas among presidential candidates, while vice-presidential candidates could only assist without directly speaking. This regulation indicates the commission's commitment to fairness and order in public debates. The second data (D13/5/1/24) cites the Prabowo–Gibran National Campaign Team spokesperson, Hasan Nasbi, who stated that Prabowo would remain calm and focused during the debate, showing commitment to professionalism in political competition. The third data (D13/29/12/23) records Anies Baswedan's promise to fulfill fishermen's expectations by ensuring better access to fuel and fishing permits, reflecting social commitment to improving people's welfare. Lastly, in the fourth data (D14/14/1/24), Hasto Kristiyanto acknowledged ongoing communication between PDIP and the AMIN National Team, which demonstrates a political commitment to maintaining open and democratic dialogue.

Discussion

Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, relational value describes how social relations and social power between participants in a text are realized through language use. In this context, relational value can be classified based on patterns of trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment that show how social relations are organized and dynamic in verbal interactions. (Fairclough, 1995).

Representation of power in critical discourse analysis in previous research or relevant research found three focus components on participants, namely: purpose, speech, and topic of speech using ethnographic communication studies (Process, 2024). The previous research was more inclined to sociopolinguistics, while this research refers to the representation of power in critical discourse analysis with the form of relational

value (Pešić, 2022). Where relational values are found in four categories in Republika's online media coverage, these relational values consist of: trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment. Below are the results of the author's analysis that has been carried out as a discussion of the data found (Ananda et al., 2023).

Trust

Trust is an important foundation in forming and maintaining strong social relations, and this is reflected through the language used in the text. In relational value, representations of power can be found in how trust is built or undermined. Language that reflects trust often involves words and phrases that suggest transparency, honesty and reliability (Santoso, 2018). For example the use of phrases such as "we can always count on" or "it has been proven" can build an image of a leader as trustworthy, reinforcing their position of power. Conversely, a lack of trust may be reflected in the use of more skeptical language.

People or entities deemed trustworthy often have greater power to organize or influence the opinions and decisions of others. Trust can also be used as a tool to establish loyalty, which in turn strengthens an individual or group's position of power.

Data (1)

He explained that Indonesia has the opportunity to become a strong country. However, according to the Minister of Defense, Indonesian people must be able to live in harmony and help each other. D1/2/12/23.

The choice of vocabulary in this text reflects relational values that reinforce the message of the importance of trust and collaboration among communities. With words such as explain, opportunity, live in harmony, and help each other, this text does not only convey information, but builds a mutually beneficial relationship between the government and the community (Sallay et al., 2024). Indonesia's success in becoming a vibrant nation is expected to be achieved through community cooperation and solidarity, creating a positive climate of trust. Overall, this analysis shows how word choice in a political context can serve to build trust and motivate people to actively contribute to achieving common goals (Chen et al., 2025).

Explaining, the use of the word explain shows the relationship between the speaker (Minister of Defense) and the listener or the public. This word creates the impression that the information conveyed is the result of deep thought or analysis. By choosing this word, there is an attempt to build trust that the Minister of Defense has knowledge and competence in the issue, so it is natural for the public to trust his opinion. It also shows the authority of the speaker, implying that he is not only giving an opinion, but also facts that can be accounted for (Santoso, 2018).

Opportunity, this word reflects an optimistic attitude and builds confidence that Indonesia has the potential to develop into a strong nation. It gives hope to the people that there is a path to progress and strength. Relationally, the use of this word implies that the strength of the country depends not only on external factors, but also on the collective efforts of the people. By choosing this vocabulary, the author encourages people to feel that they have a role to play in achieving this potential (F. Nasution & Tambunan, 2022).

Living in harmony and helping each other, these phrases create a positive relational picture among the community. These words hint at the importance of solidarity and cooperation in achieving common goals. The use of this vocabulary builds the belief that to achieve strength as a nation, people must unite and contribute to each other.

Ideologically, it emphasizes the moral and social values necessary to create a climate conducive to the growth and strength of the country (Badea, 2024).

In Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, the use of the transition marker "however" in the text is not merely a syntactic connector, but a lexical strategy that carries relational value. At the textual level, this lexical choice negotiates an interactional position between the political actor as speaker and the public as audience. Semantically, "however" shifts the meaning from an optimistic proposition regarding Indonesia's potential to become a strong nation, to a normative proposition that requires compliance with certain social behaviors, namely living in harmony and helping one another. Thus, the lexical performance of "however" constructs an implicit power relation, in which national success is portrayed as dependent not only on structural opportunities, but also on public conformity to the values and behaviors defined by those in power (F. Nasution & Tambunan, 2022).

Furthermore, within the framework of relational value of vocabulary, this linguistic choice presupposes a symbolic hierarchical relation in which the political elite produces moral authority to determine the ideal standard of collective behavior. Therefore, this lexical decision cannot be understood merely as a grammatical function, but as an ideological mechanism that regulates social relations—by reaffirming the discourse position of the elite as the subject who defines meaning, while positioning the public as the object who must align with the normative expectations articulated in the political discourse. In other words, the transition marker "however" operates as a linguistic instrument that ties national structural potential to moral obligations of society indicating that language functions not only as a medium of information transmission, but also as a tool of meaning control and subject formation.

Respect

Respect in social relationships is often shown through the use of formal language, the use of titles or honorifics, and the avoidance of a harsh tone or style of speech. In the context of power, respect can be given to those with higher authority or to people who are considered more experienced or senior. In political or business discourse, language that reflects respect is often used to reinforce power hierarchies (Wijayanto et al., 2025). When respect is displayed through language, it reinforces status and makes it clear who is in a position of power. Respectful language signals recognition of one's authority, which in turn supports the legitimacy of that power (Ehibor et al., 2024).

Data (5)

President Joko Widodo appreciates Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Mahfud MD's decision to resign from the Indonesia Maju Cabinet. Mahfud believes that President Jokowi should respect his attitude. Data 5/24/1/24.

At the textual level, the lexical items "appreciate", "attitude", "planning to step down", and "should respect" construct a relational value of respect that is mutual and reciprocal between President Joko Widodo and Mahfud MD. These lexical choices operate as positive evaluative descriptors that elevate political actors' moral positions and reinforce their credibility and integrity. As Fairclough notes, vocabulary choices are ideological carriers that encode certain ways of viewing social relations (Scott & Manning, 2022). In this data, the lexicon employed functions to elevate both actors morally signifying that respect is not unilateral but negotiated and co-produced in political communication (Ehibor et al., 2024).

At the level of discursive practice, this text shows that the journalist is not merely reporting events but reproducing a discourse of mutual respect within elite political relations. The representation of Mahfud's resignation as "an attitude" and "planned" suggests that his act is framed as rational, reflective, and morally grounded rather than emotional or reactive. This discursive framing interpellates readers to interpret the withdrawal as a dignified political act that deserves recognition. This aligns with earlier Indonesian findings on political reporting, where respect-based vocabulary is used to maintain elite harmony and avoid delegitimizing high-status actors (Mulya, 2023).

Attitude, this word reflects an individual's position and views in a particular context. By referring to Mahfud MD's "attitude", the author shows that his retreat was the result of careful consideration. The use of this term gives weight to Mahfud's decision and shows that the action was not taken carelessly, but with a sense of responsibility. It also creates trust that Mahfud has integrity and principles in carrying out his duties (Chen et al., 2025).

At the level of social practice, the relational value of respect here functions ideologically: it legitimizes the elite political order by emphasizing harmony and civility among political actors. Respect becomes a discursive resource to stabilize power relations and avoid conflict escalation in public perception. Compared with prior studies (Santoso, 2018), which showed that media often reproduces power through style and speech acts, this finding contributes a different angle: in recent online reporting, respect functions not only to reflect hierarchy but also to normalize and protect the moral legitimacy of political elites. International research also confirms this trend: Ananda et al. found that respectful lexicon in political news often acts as a symbolic capital to maintain institutional legitimacy (Ananda et al., 2023).

Cooperation

Language that shows cooperation is often used to build a sense of solidarity and equality between participants in the text. In relational values, cooperation can be used to define power relations more subtly, where the dominant actor does not directly impose their will, but instead positions themselves as collaborative in order to maintain legitimacy (Adams et al., 2022). Phrases such as "let's work together" or "we work as a team" reflect cooperative patterns that suggest equality. However, beneath such cooperative rhetoric, power asymmetry may still exist, because the actor with structural authority still holds control over decision-making (Khater et al., 2024). Therefore, cooperative language is not neutral; it is often employed to disguise unequal power relations and present hierarchical agendas as collective action.

Data (8)

*The activity was part of his campaign to support cultural preservation.
D8/30/12/23.*

Based on Fairclough's CDA, at the textual level, lexical items such as "campaign" and "support" construct relational value by showing alignment and shared interests between the political actor (Anies Baswedan) and the agenda of cultural preservation. "Campaign" implies a structured, organized action, while "support" indicates synergy or collective approval (Santoso, 2018).

At the level of discursive practice, the text frames political intervention not as top-down power, but as collaborative cooperation. Thus, the relational positioning produced is: politicians and culture-based communities are working together toward a shared goal. This discursive framing aligns with Adams et al. (2022) who found that cooperative lexical

choices frequently function to soften the impression of power dominance (Adams et al., 2022). However as Khater et al. (2024) emphasize political actors who “launch campaigns” are already positioned as institutional decision-makers. Thus, cooperative vocabulary in this text also normalizes hierarchical authority under the narrative of solidarity (Khater et al., 2024).

At the level of social practice, this discursive pattern reflects the current trend in Indonesian political communication where politicians increasingly use collaborative rhetoric to legitimize political agendas and convert them into culturally-acceptable public goods (Mulya, 2023; Wijayanto et al., 2025). International studies similarly show that cooperative rhetoric in political campaign discourse is often a strategy to soften hierarchical relations (Ren et al., 2022)

Compared to previous Indonesian CDA studies such as Auliya (2017) who focused on stylistic strategies, and Yunidar (2010) who analyzed speech purposes there is still limited attention on the relational value of cooperation as an ideological mechanism in online political reporting. This study fills that gap by demonstrating that cooperative vocabulary in Republika Online’s political news functions as a discursive instrument that conceals power asymmetry while simultaneously constructing a positive political image that appears socially legitimate and culturally beneficial (F. Nasution & Tambunan, 2022).

Commitment

Commitment is often represented through the use of strong language and promises such as “we promise”, “we will,” or “I am responsible for this.” In the discourse of power, commitment indicates a determination to achieve something, and the party making the commitment is often in a position of power that can execute the promise. Commitments can also be used to bind others in a relationship, where language that demands commitment from others can indicate expectation and control over their actions (Wijayanto et al., 2025).

Those who are able to make commitments or demand commitments from others tend to be in positions of power. In many cases, commitment language is used to indicate responsibility and leadership, where the committed party is expected to hold control over the actions presented (Scott & Manning, 2022). In Norman Fairclough’s relational value, representations of power can be found in how language reflects and maintains relationships between participants in a text through patterns of trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment. Through the use of language that exposes or obscures these power relations, authority roles and social hierarchies can be regulated, negotiated, or maintained in discourse (Fairclough, 1995).

Data (12)

The first debate between candidates participating in the 2024 presidential election will be held at the General Election Commission (KPU) office on December 12, 2023. The first debate is an arena for debating ideas between presidential candidates. The vice president is only a companion. The vice president may provide input to the presidential candidate, but may not participate in speaking. D12/12/12/23.

The lexical choices in this text illustrate the relational value of commitment as a linguistic mechanism used to construct political accountability, both at the individual level (candidates) and institutional level (rules established by KPU). In Fairclough’s CDA framework, commitment is not merely a psychological stance, but a discursively constructed relation in which an actor publicly binds themselves to specific obligations, values, and institutional norms (Wijayanto et al., 2025). Thus, vocabulary such as “first

debate” and “arena for fighting ideas” encodes commitment toward the electoral procedure itself: the phrase first debate reinforces that candidates have entered a sequenced institutional process, while fighting for ideas represents the public obligation to articulate ideational visions transparently as part of democratic accountability (Putra, 2021). In this way, vocabulary not only describes events, but enacts obligation through language. (Putra, 2024).

When the text states that “the vice president is only a companion”, the relational structure is more explicit: the lexical item companion constructs a stratified role hierarchy, in which the vice presidential candidate is placed in a supportive, not directive, position (Mulya, 2023). This aligns with what Wijayanto et al. (2025) call commitment-based power alignment, where language is used to mark role boundaries while simultaneously signaling adherence to norms. Moreover, the phrase “may provide input, but may not participate in speaking” further highlights institutional compliance commitment to rules established by KPU (Mulya, 2023). Here, commitment is realized linguistically as submission to procedural constraints (F. Nasution & Tambunan, 2022).

When this finding is compared to the theoretical literature, a distinctive pattern emerges. Previous studies (Auliya, 2017; Yunidar, 2010) tended to examine political power in terms of overt style, metaphor, and speech acts, whereas more recent international studies (e.g., Ehibor et al., 2024) emphasize commitment as an ethical discourse marker. However, relational value as the site where commitment is produced as a public moral performance has not been examined explicitly. The data in this study demonstrate that commitment in *Republika*’s reporting is not only about loyalty or intention, but a discursive positioning practice in which candidates are framed as morally accountable subjects who must publicly comply with institutional procedures. This shows the novelty of this study: it identifies commitment not as an internal attitude, but as a relational discourse mechanism that constructs public legitimacy by binding actors to rules, roles, and ideational expectations through specific lexical choices.

Conclusion

This research reveals that *Republika* online media in its political news builds relational value through vocabulary selection that creates trust, respect, cooperation, and commitment. Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis shows that language in the media does not only convey information but also becomes a means to form social relations between the media, political figures, and the public. The results show that the value of trust is represented through diction that strengthens the positive image of political figures, creating confidence in the public in their integrity and credibility. The value of respect is manifested in the use of formal greetings, mention of titles, and language structures that show respect for certain individuals or institutions. The value of cooperation is seen in vocabulary that describes solidarity between political actors and the people, emphasizing that politics is not only competitive but also collaborative. Meanwhile, the value of commitment is reflected in the use of phrases that emphasize political promises and candidates’ responsibilities to the public. This finding confirms that the media not only act as news deliverers, but also as active actors in shaping public opinion and political construction. With the selection of certain language, *Republika* participates in building images and social relations that can influence people’s perceptions of the political issues reported. Therefore, the study of bias and representation in the media is important to understand how language plays a role in shaping political reality in society. This research is expected to contribute to the study of critical discourse analysis, political communication, and media studies. In addition, the

results of this study can also be a reflection for journalists and media practitioners in realizing the impact of language selection on public perception.

Suggestions

Future research could extend this study by involving a larger sample across multiple schools and grade levels to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of formative assessment practices in varied educational contexts. Conducting longitudinal studies is also recommended to examine how the consistent implementation of formative assessment influences students' language development over an extended period. Moreover, future investigations could focus on the integration of technology-mediated feedback to address the challenges of providing individualized feedback in large classrooms and to explore its potential in enhancing learner engagement. For educational practitioners, it is suggested that teachers participate in professional development programs that emphasize effective formative assessment strategies, particularly in managing feedback for diverse learners and promoting students' autonomy in utilizing feedback to improve their performance.

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