

The Attitude of CNN Indonesia Online Media in Reporting Corruption Cases in Indonesia

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Abstract: This study aims to reveal the types of language attitude employed by the online media outlet CNN Indonesia in reporting corruption cases in Indonesia and to analyze how ideological messages are represented through the use of such attitudes. The research adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The analysis is conducted using the Appraisal theory, particularly the subsystem of attitude, which encompasses affect, judgement, and appreciation. The data consist of clauses containing evaluative attitudes drawn from 15 CNN Indonesia news texts on corruption cases published between January 1 and December 31, 2024. The data were collected through documentation, observation, and note-taking techniques, and analyzed using an interactive model. The findings indicate that the use of attitude is dominated by the judgment category (65%), particularly within the subcategory of propriety, which evaluates perpetrators of corruption as unethical, immoral, and irresponsible. Additionally, positive judgment is used to legitimize law enforcement agencies as professional and credible actors. The appreciation category (29%) is used to assess the social, economic, and ecological impacts of corruption. In comparison, affect (6.27%) is rarely applied and more frequently appears implicitly to reinforce the negative image of the perpetrators. These findings suggest that language attitude functions not only as a linguistic evaluative tool but also as an ideological strategy through which the media frames perpetrators as "public enemies" and strengthens the hegemony of anti-corruption discourse.

Keywords: appraisal; attitude; corruption; media ideology; online media

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Introduction

Corruption is a serious problem that hinders national development and the creation of good governance in Indonesia. Corrupt practices not only cause economic losses but also undermine public trust in government institutions. Corruption remains a central issue in Indonesia, as it undermines the integrity of public officials, erodes the credibility of legal institutions, and tarnishes the country's national image. It is no surprise that the mainstream media often focuses on corruption cases in their reporting. In this case, reporting on corruption cases not only conveys facts but also shapes the public's interpretation of the perpetrators, institutions, and legal processes.

The media plays a crucial role, as it not only serves as a conduit for information but also shapes public opinion (Kusumaningsih, 2024). In line with this, information in the media is also capable of constructing the minds and habits of society (Dewi et al., 2021). Through the way the media narrates a case, the public is led to understand who is considered guilty, the extent to which the relevant institutions can be trusted, and how the legal process works. Thus, the media plays a crucial role in building public critical awareness of corrupt practices while pressuring institutions to be more transparent and accountable. Ultimately, the media plays a significant role in shaping social and political perceptions, including those in online media.

Online media can be understood as a form of digital journalism that presents and distributes information through websites. The primary characteristics of this media are the speed of news delivery, the diversity of content formats, and its global reach (Romli, 2018; Muqsith, 2021). Another advantage of online media is the interactive nature of the internet, which enables the integration of various elements, such as text, images, audio, and video, making news delivery more dynamic than conventional media (Hadi, 2010). Currently, numerous online media outlets are easily accessible. One of the many popular and interesting online media outlets to study is CNN Indonesia.

The popularity of CNN Indonesia is evident from the fact that it is often used as a point of comparison with other media outlets (Naqqiyah, 2020; Siswanti, 2019). CNN Indonesia operates as an online news portal in collaboration with Warner Media, presenting both local and international content in Indonesian, allowing the Indonesian public to access global news (Firdaus et al., 2022). Through CNN Indonesia, numerous studies have been conducted on national issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Naqqiyah, 2020), the relocation of Indonesia's new capital (Triamanda et al., 2023), and international humanitarian issues such as the situation in Al-Aqsa (Siswanti, 2019). This demonstrates the role of CNN Indonesia as a mainstream media outlet that helps shape public opinion through its news coverage and language choices, making it an important object of study.

In the context of reporting corruption cases in Indonesia, online news such as that presented by CNN Indonesia operates in a competitive information ecosystem in terms of word choice, emphasis, and linguistic evaluation in news texts that have the potential to influence public perception of perpetrators of corruption and law enforcement agencies (Amalia & Sirulhaq, 2025). From a linguistic perspective, the way the media expresses its attitude towards events

and news actors provides a direct means of examining how evaluative meanings are formed and conveyed. In this case, a language attitude analysis is necessary to highlight that media discourse is a social practice connected to power relations and the ideologies implied in language choices. Thus, in this case, CNN Indonesia, as one of the mainstream media outlets that not only conveys facts but also shapes attitudes through its language choices, can reflect the media's ideology in framing the representation of corruption in Indonesia.

The attitude of CNN Indonesia online media in reporting corruption cases in Indonesia can be analyzed using appraisal theory in systemic functional linguistics. Appraisal is a term that refers to how speakers and writers evaluate and express their attitudes towards the people, objects, and events they talk or write about (Martin & Rose, 2007). This evaluation can be positive, negative, or neutral, and is typically expressed through linguistic devices such as modality and evaluative lexical choices. Modality analysis is the method by which speakers and writers convey their level of commitment to the truth of a statement. Meanwhile, evaluative lexical choice analysis refers to the specific words chosen by speakers or writers to express their evaluations and attitudes.

The evaluation of a text involves examining how it is manifested in clauses. Speakers or writers usually interpret their experiences and integrate them with the judgments they make, then convey these attitudes through the text (Martin & Rose, 2007). Attitude itself is divided into several parts, namely affect, judgment, and appreciation. Affect is used to express feelings related to emotional conditions, both positive and negative, such as happiness or unhappiness, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, a sense of security or insecurity. Judgment is a statement or expression of attitude towards an action, which can take the form of criticism, appreciation, or disapproval. This assessment examines how speakers or writers evaluate personality and social behavior in relation to cultural, ethical, legal, and personal standards. Judgment also includes sources of behavioral assessment in accordance with norms, whether in the form of praise, criticism, admiration, or contempt.

Meanwhile, appreciation is an attitude towards an object that involves evaluating the aesthetic quality of a process or product without directly touching on emotional aspects. Appreciation is governed by three main variables: impact and quality, balance and complexity, and evaluation (Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2007; Thompson, 2013; Halliday & M.I.M., 2014). This theory is particularly suitable for categorizing and assessing evaluative language expressions used, as well as revealing how the use of such language can convey ideological messages contained in news texts.

Previous studies have examined the use of language in online media coverage of corruption cases, such as Suryawati & Widaningsih (2022), which focused on media framing analysis through the attitudes of Kompas.com and Wartaekonomi.co.id in their coverage of the alleged corruption case involving Gibran-Kaesang using Robert N. Entman's framing method. Furthermore, Nurrohmah & Setiawati (2025) revealed the ideology of corruption discourse in news coverage of the PT Timah corruption case on the Tempo.Co news portal by analyzing three dimensions of discourse, according to Norman Fairclough, namely text, discourse practice, and

sociocultural. Meanwhile, Khasanah & Faris (2018) used van Dijk's critical discourse analysis on liputan6.com regarding the acid attack on KPK investigator Novel Baswedan and found editorial bias that was more favorable to the victim while portraying the police negatively. Then Palau & Palomo (2021) examined how the media in Spain framed the issue of corruption, whether within a substantive framework that discussed causes, effects, and solutions or not. The results showed that the media highlighted political actors and judicial institutions, while ignoring civil society actors, resulting in a news framing that did not support corruption prevention efforts. In addition, Hu (2023) highlights in his research that the state power structure limits media criticism in China through language and journalistic practices that appear in corruption news and is the result of a compromise between the desire for criticism and authoritarian control.

Based on the above explanation, these studies only focus on framing analysis and critical discourse analysis to understand how online media constructs narratives in reporting corruption cases. Specifically, there has been no study that examines linguistic attitudes using appraisal theory, which provides detailed analytical tools to reveal the evaluative aspects of language that are often implicit. Thus, this study fills the gap by aiming to reveal the types of linguistic attitudes employed by CNN Indonesia in its reporting of corruption cases in Indonesia and how the ideological messages conveyed through these linguistic attitudes are represented.

This study aims to explicitly examine the linguistic attitudes employed by CNN Indonesia in reporting corruption cases in Indonesia using appraisal theory. Specifically, this study seeks to:

1. identify the types of attitudes used by CNN Indonesia in its reporting of corruption cases in Indonesia.
2. reveal how these attitudes represent ideological meanings in the media's portrayal of corruption cases in Indonesia.

The expected results will not only contribute to linguistic studies, particularly appraisal in Indonesian media, but also enhance the critical literacy of the public in reading the news, so that they do not passively accept the media's attitudes.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach and method were chosen because the purpose of the study is to understand the meaning behind the use of language in news texts and to enable researchers to present the linguistic facts found and interpret them. The research design is discourse analysis using appraisal theory, specifically attitude (Martin & White, 2005) and (Martin & Rose, 2007), which is used to classify and analyze evaluative attitudes in texts through the categories of affect, judgment, and appreciation. The data in this study consists of evaluative language attitudes used in CNN Indonesia news texts about corruption cases in Indonesia. The data source consists of CNN Indonesia news texts published from January 1 to December 31, 2024, specifically 15 selected news texts relevant to the issue of corruption in Indonesia. This study is limited to CNN Indonesia's coverage of corruption cases in Indonesia throughout 2024, focusing on the appraisal subsystem of the attitude system. The analysis does not encompass other subsystems or aspects of reader

reception; therefore, the study's results focus on the ideological representations that appear at the textual level.

The amount of data analyzed consisting of 15 news texts is considered sufficient because the analysis focuses on clauses as the primary carriers of evaluative meaning within appraisal theory. Each text contains multiple evaluative clauses, allowing for an in depth examination of how attitudes are linguistically constructed. In addition, the evaluative patterns identified across the texts show recurring tendencies, enabling a comprehensive ideological interpretation without reliance on a large quantity of data. Nevertheless, this study is not intended to represent the overall patterns of corruption reporting across Indonesian online media. The selection of CNN Indonesia was conducted purposively, taking into account its position as a mainstream media outlet with wide readership and a significant role in shaping public discourse. This research is not designed as a comparative media study, therefore other online media are acknowledged but not analyzed directly. Consequently, the findings should be understood as context specific to CNN Indonesia and should not be generalized to Indonesian online media as a whole.

Data collection in this study was conducted using documentation techniques (Herdiansyah, 2012) and observation and note-taking techniques (Sudaryanto, 2015). The process included 1) searching for news using the keywords "corruption" and "corruption in Indonesia" through both the website search feature and Google operators (site:cnnindonesia.com), 2) downloading and saving news texts, 3) selecting relevant news, and 4) coding clauses containing evaluative attitudes based on attitude categories and their positive and negative values. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model (Miles et al., 2014) comprising three stages. First, data condensation was carried out through the selection, focusing, simplification, abstraction, and organization of clauses containing evaluative attitudes. Second, data presentation was carried out in the form of attitude distribution tables, representative text quotations, and analytical narratives. Third, conclusions were drawn by interpreting how these evaluation patterns reflect the ideology of CNN Indonesia online media in its reporting of corruption cases. Data validation was maintained through theoretical triangulation, which involved comparing the analysis results with appraisal theory and was supported by literature related to media language analysis.

Results

The Types of Attitudes Used by CNN Indonesia in Its Reporting of Corruption Cases in Indonesia

Based on an analysis conducted using appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2007) on 15 news texts about corruption cases in Indonesia between January 1 and December 31, 2024, in the online media outlet CNN Indonesia, several types of linguistic attitudes were identified. These linguistic attitudes were found in 255 clauses, each of which had a predicative meaning. These linguistic attitudes encompassed the categories of affect, judgment, and appreciation, which varied lexically and exhibited both positive and negative

polarities. The use of these linguistic attitudes was dominated by the category of judgment, followed by appreciation, with affect being the least used. This is illustrated in the following table.

Table 1

Distribution of CNN Indonesia Online Media Attitudes in Corruption Case Reporting

Attitude Category	Subcategory	Number of Findings	Percentage (%)	Dominant Orientation	
Judgment (65%)	Propriety (ethics/morals)	94	36.86%	Negative perpetrators	towards
	Veracity (honesty)	32	12.55%	Negative perpetrators	towards
	Capacity (ability/competence)	21	8.24%	Positive towards law enforcement officials	
	Tenacity (responsibility/consistency)	19	7.45%	Negative perpetrators	towards
Appreciation (29%)	Valuation (impact/value)	73	28.63%	Negative towards corruption and positive towards the legal process	
Affect (6%)	Implicit emotion	(implied) 16	6.27%	Negative perpetrators	towards
Total		255	100%		

Discussion

The table above shows that 65% of the language used in CNN Indonesia news reports is judgmental. The most dominant subcategory is propriety (36.86%), which assesses acts of corruption as unethical, immoral, and against the law. CNN Indonesia consistently frames perpetrators with terms such as extortion, bribery, conspiracy, abuse of authority, and others. This is evident in the following data.

1. Terdakwa kasus dugaan korupsi yang juga mantan Menteri Pertanian Syahrul Yasin Limpo (SYL) didakwa melakukan pemerasan RP44,5 miliar selama periode 2020-2023 (CNN Indonesia on Wednesday, February 28, 2024).
2. Uang itu disebut untuk kepentingan pribadi SYL dan keluarga (CNN Indonesia on Wednesday, February 28, 2024).

In data 1, it can be seen that the evaluative item in the clause is 'didakwa melakukan pemerasan', while in data 2, it is 'kepentingan pribadi'. The appraisers or expressers the evaluative element in both data are law enforcement and the media, and the appraised is Syahrul Yasin Limpo (SYL). The polarity used in both words is also negative; however, in data 1, it refers to unethical actions, and in data 2, it refers to the abuse of authority.

The subcategory of veracity (12.55%) emphasizes the dishonesty of the perpetrator through expressions such as *proyek fiktif*, *tidak melaporkan gratifikasi*, or *seakan-akan terjadi bencana*, and so on. Then, the capacity subcategory (8.24%) emphasizes the perpetrator's ability to abuse power, as seen in expressions such as "suspect in the case," "responsible for the action," and "abuse of authority," among others. Meanwhile, tenacity (7.45%) is used to assess the perpetrator's avoidance of responsibility, for example, by failing to attend court hearings or investigations. This is evident in the following data.

3. KPK resmi menahan Gus Mudhlor sebagai tersangka kasus dugaan suap dana insentif (CNN Indonesia on Tuesday, May 7, 2024).
4. Pemeriksaan dilakukan penyidik Jaksa Agung Muda Bidang Tindak Pidana Khusus (CNN Indonesia on Wednesday, August 21, 2024).
5. Saat digiring, Adam tak berkomentar banyak kepada media (CNN Indonesia on Saturday, April 27, 2024)

When examining data 3, it is evident that the evaluative item in the clause is 'tersangka kasus dugaan suap,' and the appraisers are the KPK and the media. The appraiser is Gus Mudhlor, with a negative polarity, to assess the dishonest and unethical behavior of the party being assessed, thus falling into the veracity subcategory. However, when viewed in data 4, which is the capacity subcategory, it can be seen that the evaluative item is *dilakukan penyidik* as reported by the media against the Attorney General's Office. This falls under positive polarity, which indicates professionalism. Then, in data 5, it can be seen that the evaluative element in the data is *tak berkomentar*, which is an implicit defensive expression made by the media towards Adam with negative polarity, indicating a lack of responsibility. This finding confirms CNN Indonesia's ideology of attempting to delegitimize perpetrators of corruption by portraying them as immoral, dishonest, and irresponsible.

Although judgment is largely directed at perpetrators, CNN Indonesia also presents positive judgment of law enforcement agencies through the subcategory of capacity. Expressions such as 'penegakan hukum profesional' and 'alat bukti cukup' construct law enforcement agencies as credible and competent actors. This demonstrates CNN Indonesia's efforts to legitimize law enforcement as a solution-oriented and morally legitimate entity in combating corruption, while fostering public trust in law enforcement institutions.

The attitude of appreciation, particularly in the valuation subcategory at 28.63%, as shown in the table above, reflects an evaluation of the impact of corruption. Examples that emerge are *kerugian negara Rp271 triliun*, *kerusakan ekologis*, *biaya pemulihan lingkungan Rp 12.1 triliun*, and *proses hukum sesuai prosedur*. This is evident in the following data.

6. Nilai kerugian ekologis atau kerusakan lingkungan yang dirimbulkan dalam perkara ini yaitu senilai Rp271.069.688.018.700 (CNN Indonesia on Thursday, March 28, 2024).

In data 6 above, it is known that the evaluative item in the data is kerusakan lingkungan and the appraiser is IPB experts, while the appraised is corruption. This data also reveals the use of negative polarity, indicating a severe environmental impact. By emphasizing financial, social, and ecological losses, CNN Indonesia constructs a representation that corruption is not merely an individual violation but a serious threat to public welfare. This attitude shows the media's alignment with the interests of the people.

Based on the table above, it can also be seen that affective attitudes only appear in 16 clauses with a percentage of 6.27%. Direct emotional expressions are rarely used because CNN Indonesia maintains a formal and objective news style. However, some diction, such as digiring, rompi oranye, and mendongkrak elektabilitas, implies an implicit emotional evaluation. This can be seen in the following data

7. Berdasarkan pantauan CNNIndonesia.com, Gus Mudhlor sudah mengenakan rompi oranye khas tahanan KPK dengan tangan diborgol (CNN Indonesia on Tuesday, May 7, 2024).

Data 7 shows that the evaluative elements in the clause are 'rompi oranye' and 'tangan diborgol', mentioned by the media in relation to Gus Mudhlor, which provide a visual to reinforce the negative image of him as a criminal. The lack of affect confirms that CNN Indonesia prioritizes an informative journalistic style, but slips in implicit moral evaluation to reinforce the negative image of the perpetrator. Thus, CNN Indonesia primarily uses negative judgments to assess perpetrators of corruption, as well as positive judgments for law enforcement officials, with additional appreciation for the impact of the case and minimal emotional impact.

Representation of Ideological Meanings in the Use of Attitude Language in CNN Indonesia Online Media

The analysis of 15 CNN Indonesia news texts on corruption cases published in 2024 reveals that the use of linguistic attitude functions serves not only as an evaluative strategy but also as an ideological mechanism for framing socio-political reality. In line with Fairclough (2013), media language constitutes an ideologically charged discursive practice through which lexical choices and evaluative strategies shape public perceptions of events, actors, and power relations. The patterns of attitude identified in CNN Indonesia's coverage reveal how ideological meanings are constructed through evaluations of corruption perpetrators, law enforcement agencies, and the societal impacts of corruption.

Based on the distribution of findings (Table1), judgement is the most dominant category, accounting for 65% of the 255 evaluative clauses analyzed. This dominance suggests that CNN Indonesia's ideological framing centers on moral evaluations of corrupt individuals. The prominence of the propriety subcategory (36.86%) reflects a consistent portrayal of corruption as unethical, immoral, and unlawful. Lexical items such as pemerasan, penyuapan, penyalahgunaan wewenang, and pemufakatan jahat do more than describe legal violations they construct perpetrators as actors who deviate from social and legal norms. From van Dijk's

(1998) perspective, this strategy contributes to an ideological binary between ingroup and outgroup positioning perpetrators as subjects of criticism and delegitimation.

The veracity (12.55%) and tenacity (7.45%) subcategories further reinforce this ideological construction by highlighting dishonesty and irresponsibility, for instance, through expressions such as "proyek fiktif" and "tidak melaporkan gratifikasi," as well as depictions of avoiding legal accountability. Together, these negative judgment patterns consistently delegitimize corrupt perpetrators on moral, ethical, and legal grounds. Conversely, positive judgement in the capacity subcategory (8.24%) is employed to construct law enforcement agencies as credible, professional, and competent actors. Expressions such as 'penegakan hukum profesional' and 'alat bukti cukup' serve to morally and institutionally legitimize these institutions in the fight against corruption. This strategy aligns with Fairclough's (2001) view that media discourse contributes to the production of hegemony through the legitimation of state institutions.

The appreciation category (29%) also plays a significant role, particularly in framing the impacts of corruption. The valuation subcategory (28.63%) conveys negative evaluations of the social, economic, and environmental consequences of corruption as illustrated by references to state financial losses and environmental restoration costs. Such framing positions corruption not merely as an individual crime but as a structural threat to public welfare, reflecting the media's ideological alignment with societal interests.

Although affect appears least frequently (6.27%) implicit emotional expressions still contribute to the ideological message. Visula and descriptive terms such as *rompi oranye*, and *tangan diborgol* evoke emotional responses and reinforce the criminal image of perpetrators without explicit emotional language. The limited use of explicit affect suggests an effort by CNN Indonesia to maintain journalistic formality and objectivity while implicitly conveying moral evaluation. Overall, the patterns of linguistic attitude in CNN Indonesia's corruption reporting reveal a consistent ideological strategy. Negative judgment is used to delegitimize those who perpetrate corruption. Positive judgment legitimizes law enforcement agencies, while appreciation and implicit affect emphasize corruption as a serious, multidimensional threat to society. These findings demonstrate how media discourse, as argued by van Dijk (1998), actively shapes public knowledge and opinion through evaluative and ideologically loaded discursive practices.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of 15 CNN Indonesia news texts on corruption cases published in 2024, this study finds that CNN Indonesia consistently uses evaluative language to construct ideological meanings in its reporting. Judgment emerges as the dominant category, primarily expressing negative moral evaluations of corrupt perpetrators in terms of propriety, veracity, and tenacity, which function to delegitimize them as unethical and irresponsible actors. In contrast, positive judgement is used to legitimize law enforcement agencies as professional and credible. Furthermore, appreciation frames corruption as a structural problem with serious social, economic, and environmental consequences. At the same time, the limited use of affect reflects

a formal journalistic style that nevertheless reinforces negative representations of perpetrators through implicit emotional cues.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings reinforce the relevance of appraisal theory particularly the attitude subsystem as an effective analytical framework of uncovering evaluative and ideological meanings in media discourse. This study demonstrates that linguistic attitudes are not neutral elements of language use but function as discursive mechanisms through which ideology, legitimacy, and delegitimacy are constructed in news texts. As such, this research contributes to media linguistics by illustrating how appraisal theory can be applied to examine the relationship between language, ideology, and power in online news reporting. From a practical perspective, the findings have implications for journalism and media literacy. For journalists and media institutions, the study highlights the importance of critical awareness of evaluative language choices, as such choices can shape public opinion and reinforce particular ideological positions. For audiences, the study highlights the importance of critical media literacy in recognizing the implicit attitudes, judgments, and ideological orientations embedded in news texts, thereby reducing the risk of passive media consumption. Future research may expand the scope of analysis by examining other online media outlets or adopting a comparative approach to explore variations in evaluative strategies across media institutions. Further studies could also investigate other appraisal subsystems, such as engagement and graduation or integrate textual analysis with audience reception studies to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of ideological construction and its effects in media discourse.

Author Contribution Statement

Namira: Conceptualization and Research Design; Data Curation and Investigation; Methodology; Project Administration; Writing - Original Draft; Writing - Review & Editing.
Erikson: Methodology; Writing - Review & Editing; Validation. **Jannah:** Visualization; Writing - Review & Editing.

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