

Issues of Political Dynasties and National Protest Movements in Indonesia: Appraisal and Critical Discourse Analysis Perspectives in Editorials

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Abstract

Background:

Political dynasties represent an enduring challenge to democratic consolidation in Indonesia. However, the role of media discourse in shaping public perceptions of dynastic power remains under-explored, particularly regarding how editorial narratives frame dynastic politics and subsequent protest movements. Drawing upon Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Martin & White's Appraisal Theory, this study conceptualizes editorials as discursive spaces where political legitimacy is systematically constructed and negotiated.

Methodology:

This study analyzes three editorials published in The Jakarta Post in 2024: "Breaking A Dynastic Habit" (July 5), "People Have Spoken" (August 26), and "Thank You for Speaking Up" (August 29). These texts address political dynasties and protests triggered by the controversial revision of minimum age requirements for regional head candidates. This media outlet was selected for its prominent national standing, its English-speaking readership, and its influential role in shaping elite public discourse. The analysis integrates Appraisal resources (Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation) with Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA framework. Attitude is employed to identify evaluative stances toward political actors; Engagement to trace the management of dialogic voices; and Graduation to assess the intensity of political event representations.

Findings:

The results reveal a patterned evaluative asymmetry: political dynasties are represented through negative moral judgments and procedural critiques, whereas protest movements are framed as rational, ethically grounded civic responses. Intensification resources contribute to framing political dynamics as urgent or significant, while heteroglossic strategies allow for the inclusion of diverse voices while maintaining a specific evaluative position. These linguistic patterns indicate a systematic inclination to steer readers toward particular interpretations of political legitimacy.

Conclusion:

Editorial discourse does more than report events; it constructs interpretative frameworks that influence the conceptualization of legitimacy and dissensus within the context of contemporary democracy.

Originality:

This research extends the application of Appraisal Theory in ideological discourse analysis by demonstrating how evaluative language operates systematically to represent political actors and processes in a volatile democratic landscape.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of political dynasties has emerged as a critical issue with profound implications for democratic accountability, political representation, and institutional integrity, particularly within developing democracies. In Indonesia, this phenomenon has gained significant traction in recent years due to its close association with crises of democratic legitimacy and the consolidation of elite power. [Aspinall \(2016\)](#) asserts that political dynasties potentially erode public trust in the political process, as actors tend to prioritize primordial interests over public accountability. Correspondingly, [Kenawas \(2023\)](#) demonstrates that the rapid expansion of political dynasties in post-reform Indonesia is heavily influenced by institutional shifts that allow dynastic actors to exploit systemic loopholes. These dynamics reached a critical juncture in contemporary political developments involving the family of President Joko Widodo, sparking intense debate regarding the boundary between democratic participation rights and kinship-based power reproduction.

Political escalations leading up to the 2024 General Election have further underscored the public relevance of this issue. The nomination of Gibran Rakabuming Raka as a vice-presidential candidate—facilitated by a controversial Constitutional Court ruling—triggered widespread polemics concerning institutional independence and procedural legitimacy. Recent studies highlight that these dynamics not only intersect with dynastic practices but also undermine public perceptions of state institutional credibility and holistic democratic quality ([Hidayat, 2024](#)). This tension culminated in a wave of national demonstrations in August 2024, reflecting an articulated public resistance against policies perceived as ethically and legally flawed. Within this discourse, the issues of political dynasties and protest movements intertwine to form a broader discursive configuration regarding the future of democratic legitimacy in Indonesia.

In these dynamics, the mass media plays a strategic role as a discursive actor that actively constructs socio-political reality. Consistent with a constructionist perspective, media discourse is understood as a social practice that produces meaning through evaluative and ideological linguistic choices ([Risdianto et al., 2024](#)). Current scholarship indicates that media language is non-neutral; it systematically constructs positions, values, and power relations through subtle evaluative strategies ([Indriyani & Widyastuti, 2023](#); [Liu, 2025](#)). In this context,

editorials serve as a crucial locus of analysis as they represent the institutional voice of the media, explicitly expressing stances and ideological positions on sensitive public issues.

Within the realm of discourse analysis, the integration of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Appraisal Theory has become increasingly established for uncovering the evaluative dimensions of texts. Appraisal provides a systematic analytical framework to examine how attitudes (attitude), intensity (graduation), and dialogic positioning (engagement) are constructed (Sari et al., 2024). Although CDA-based studies have extensively explored government policies and political speeches (Guodong & Afzaal, 2023; Anshori et al., 2024), most of these research efforts remain descriptive. There is a notable limitation in analytically synthesizing how evaluative resources operate simultaneously to shape ideological meaning, particularly within English-language media editorials in Indonesia.

Furthermore, recent research has begun to examine the representation of protest movements and public participation within journalistic spaces (Bakry et al., 2025; Kamila et al., 2025). However, studies specifically linking the representation of protest movements, dynastic political discourse, and the utilization of appraisal resources in Indonesian editorials remain scarce. This research gap indicates an urgent need to dissect the intersection between linguistic evaluation and the dynamics of democratic legitimacy.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze how political dynasties and national protest movements are discursively constructed in The Jakarta Post editorials. By integrating Appraisal Theory into a CDA framework, this research seeks to reveal how evaluative language is employed to represent stances, establish ideological positions, and manage dialogic relationships without assuming a predetermined political bias. The study addresses the primary research question: how is the evaluative language in The Jakarta Post editorials regarding political dynasties and protest movements realized through appraisal resources from a critical discourse analysis perspective?

This study offers theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions. Theoretically, it strengthens the integration of Appraisal and CDA in contemporary media discourse studies. Empirically, it provides a systematic analysis of how evaluative language constructs contemporary political narratives. Practically, the study enhances critical media literacy by assisting readers in understanding how media discourse shapes public perception and democratic debate. Thus, the media is understood not merely as an information channel, but as a discursive space where political legitimacy and ideological contestation are dynamically negotiated.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Political Dynasties and National Protest Movements in Indonesia

Since the post-reform era, political dynasties have emerged as an increasingly prominent feature of Indonesia's electoral landscape. Despite the absence of explicit legal or regulatory frameworks governing this practice (Luluardi & Diniyanto, 2021), the phenomenon continues to strengthen through the consolidation of power within kinship networks, which grants certain actors disproportionate electoral privileges. A number of studies have emphasized the structural implications of this trend, including the erosion of accountability, the mass reproduction of elites, and the constriction of inclusive political access (Aspinall & As'ad, 2016; Fealy, 2020). Consequently, the prevalence of dynastic politics has fueled public distrust, frequently culminating in protest mobilizations that serve as both a negotiation of legitimacy and a demand for state accountability (Mehleb et al., 2021). Furthermore, the rapid advancement of digital media has accelerated the articulation of such protests by expanding the space for visibility and public participation (Pratama et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, the majority of prior research has focused primarily on political and sociological dimensions, tending to position political dynasties and protest movements as objective phenomena. There remains a significant limitation in explaining how both are discursively constructed through media linguistic practices. Specifically, the role of lexicogrammatical choices in shaping moral evaluation, the attribution of responsibility, and the legitimacy of political actors has largely been overlooked. This research gap at the linguistic level underscores the importance of dissecting the role of editorial discourse as a value-laden space for meaning-making. Addressing this void, the present study positions political dynasties and protest movements as discursive constructions shaped through evaluative language. Thus, this analysis aims to reveal how the media, particularly The Jakarta Post, constructs political legitimacy through structured linguistic representations.

Critical Discourse Analysis and Systemic Functional Linguistics

In media discourse studies, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has long served as a primary instrument for deconstructing power relations and hidden ideological underpinnings within texts. However, conventional CDA approaches are frequently critiqued for over-relying on subjective macro-interpretations without sufficient support from empirical and systematic linguistic evidence. To address these limitations, Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is integrated as an analytical framework capable of bridging macro-level ideological meanings with micro-level linguistic realizations (Fairclough et al., 2011; Bank, 2009).

Recent scholarship asserts that media discourse does not merely reflect social reality but actively legitimizes or delegitimizes political actors through structured evaluations embedded within seemingly neutral narratives (Fitriani et al., 2021; Kazmi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the majority of these studies remain confined to identifying general ideological functions without detailing how such functions are manifested through specific linguistic systems. Furthermore, the application of SFL within the context of English-language media editorials in Indonesia—particularly concerning political legitimacy—remains significantly under-explored.

Addressing this research gap, the present study synergizes CDA and SFL by positioning the interpersonal metafunction as the primary locus of analysis. This approach is selected for its capacity to trace how attitudes, authority, and bias are subtly constructed through linguistic choices. Through this integration, the research moves beyond the mere identification of ideology to empirically demonstrate how political legitimacy is constructed and negotiated through linguistic mechanisms within The Jakarta Post's editorial discourse.

Appraisal Framework

While evaluation constitutes a fundamental element of media discourse, previous research has remained largely descriptive, focusing on the identification of attitudinal expressions without uncovering their systemic contribution to the construction of legitimacy (Jing & Lihuan, 2021; Hansson et al., 2022). To dissect these mechanisms, this study employs the Appraisal framework developed by Martin and White (2005), which categorizes interpersonal meaning into three primary domains: attitude, graduation, and engagement.

First, attitude provides the linguistic resources to express evaluation through affect (emotional response), judgment (ethical assessment of actors), and appreciation (aesthetic or functional evaluation of phenomena), which collectively form the moral basis for political approval or dissent. Second, graduation functions to regulate the intensity of these evaluations through force (scalability) and focus (categorical sharpness), demonstrating how the media amplifies or mitigates specific ideological positions. Third, engagement manages the dialogic space by distinguishing between monoglossic and heteroglossic propositions; this system reveals how a text accommodates, attributes, or rejects alternative voices through strategies such as modality and concession.

Although this framework has proven effective in examining evaluative language (Risdianto et al., 2024; Anshori et al., 2024), extant scholarship has predominantly remained confined to stable policy contexts. This leaves a significant gap in understanding how these

three systems operate simultaneously within conflictual situations, such as mass mobilizations triggered by political dynasties. In such volatile conditions, media language does not merely reflect reality but serves as an arena for moral contestation. Consequently, this study utilizes the Appraisal framework to analyze The Jakarta Post's editorials to uncover how evaluative strategies are deployed to legitimize political actors and discursively negotiate such legitimacy amidst Indonesia's democratic crises.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs an integrative discourse analysis design, synergizing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with the Appraisal framework. This approach aims to dissect how The Jakarta Post constructs ideological positions in its editorial representations of political dynasties and national protest movements in Indonesia. Within the tradition of Norman Fairclough, CDA conceptualizes language as an arena for negotiating power and ideology, while the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005) is utilized to operationalize evaluative meanings through the systems of attitude, graduation, and engagement. This integration facilitates a multi-layered analysis that bridges micro-level linguistic choices with macro-level ideological functions.

The research corpus comprises three editorials published in 2024: “Breaking A Dynastic Habit” (July 5), “People Have Spoken” (August 26), and “Thank You for Speaking Up” (August 29). Across this corpus, 172 evaluative instances—comprising words, phrases, and clauses—were identified. The purposive sampling was based on thematic relevance, temporal proximity to the 2024 political dynamics, and the density of evaluative language. As the official institutional voice, editorials serve as strategic sites for dissecting the media's ideological stances and discursive practices.

Data Collection

Data were collected through documentary research by accessing editorial archives from the official website of The Jakarta Post. The selection process was governed by three primary criteria: topical relevance, temporal context, and the presence of explicit evaluative expressions. This approach yielded a focused corpus, enabling an in-depth exploration of how media discourse is systematically constructed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis follows Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional CDA model: description, interpretation, and explanation. At the description stage, the clause serves as the primary unit

of analysis. All data are manually and iteratively coded using the Appraisal categories—attitude, graduation, and engagement. The coding process involves systematic cross-checking to ensure the consistency and reliability of the linguistic categorization.

The interpretation stage focuses on the emerging evaluative patterns and how these patterns shape the media's discursive position in assigning meaning to political actors, institutions, and protest movements. Subsequently, the explanation stage links these findings to the broader socio-political context, uncovering how the media functions as a discursive actor that legitimizes, challenges, or negotiates power.

To ensure analytical validity, this study maintains consistency based on the theoretical framework and employs a thorough re-reading of the data. Nevertheless, the study acknowledges its limitations, particularly regarding the small corpus size and its qualitative nature. Consequently, the findings are not intended for generalization but are aimed at providing a profound understanding of ideological construction within editorial discourse.

FINDINGS

The analysis reveals that the three editorials are characterized by a consistent and patterned deployment of evaluative language. This is marked by a predominant use of negative Judgment toward state institutions, a high frequency of Graduation—specifically intensification—and a prevalence of monoglossic Engagement. These patterns suggest that The Jakarta Post systematically constructs a moral critique of political actors associated with dynastic practices while simultaneously legitimizing civil society and protest movements. Although the corpus shares a unified evaluative orientation, the texts vary in the degree and focus of their Appraisal resources, reflecting nuanced shifts in how each editorial emphasizes institutional critique, public resistance, and democratic values.

A comparative analysis of the three editorials identifies both thematic convergences and functional variations in Appraisal distribution. While all texts direct negative Judgment toward state institutions, “Breaking a Dynastic Habit” exhibits the highest concentration of moral condemnation, particularly through the frequent use of negative propriety and intensified lexemes. In contrast, “People Have Spoken” demonstrates a more balanced distribution between institutional criticism and political response, utilizing monoglossic engagement to assert authoritative interpretations of public sentiment. Meanwhile, “Thank You for Speaking Up” foregrounds the positive evaluation of civil society and youth movements, evidenced by a significantly higher occurrence of positive Judgment and Affect.

Regarding Graduation, while intensification is a shared feature across the corpus, “Breaking a Dynastic Habit” employs the most explicit amplification of the political crisis. In contrast, the subsequent two editorials adopt a comparatively moderated tone. these variations indicate that, despite a shared ideological foundation, each editorial foregrounds distinct evaluative priorities in its representation of political actors and events.

The quantitative data presented in Table 1 were derived from a clause-level analysis, wherein each clause was systematically coded according to the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005). Every identified instance was included in the quantitative synthesis, with representative excerpts provided in the subsequent qualitative analysis to illustrate the discursive mechanics of the texts.

Table 1. Appraisal in editorials

Editorials	Aff		Attitude				Graduation				Engagement	
			Judg		App		Force		Focus		Hetero	Mono
	+	-	+	-	+	-	I	Q	S↑	s↓		
Breaking a Dynastic Habit	0	1	1	17	2	5	12	3	1	0	14	8
People Have Spoken	0	1	5	8	3	0	13	4	0	0	12	7
Thank You for Speaking Up	1	0	9	3	5	1	11	4	0	0	12	9
Total	1	2	15	28	10	6	36	11	1	0	38	24

Appraisal analysis in Jakarta Post’s editorials

Moral Critique of Government Power Practices

Across all three editorials, The Jakarta Post (TJP) consistently portrays the government and state institutions, such such as the National Elections Commission (KPU-RI), the Supreme Court (MA), and the House of Representatives (DPR), as actors demonstrating moral deviation and unethical practices of power. This evaluation is constructed through Judgment: negative Propriety, highlighting violations against democratic values, institutional integrity, and principles of justice. Through its evaluative lexicon, the media asserts an image of the government as a perpetrator of power abuse.

In the editorial titled “*Breaking a Dynastic Habit*,” The Jakarta Post states:

- (1) ...as the man himself put it, having played **the sinister role** of executor of two rule-bending attempts **to firmly** establish Jokowi’s political dynasty.

The phrase “the sinister role” reflects a judgment: negative propriety, portraying the actions of Hasyim Asy’ari (Chairman of the KPU-RI) as unethical and contradictory to public morality. Meanwhile, the expression “to firmly establish Jokowi’s political dynasty” signifies a high degree of graduation: intensification, emphasizing the systematic effort to strengthen the presidential family's power.

- (2) *Hasyim announced that the KPU would comply with a recent **controversial ruling by the Supreme Court** to change yet another age requirement for a major election, this time clearing a path for President Joko “Jokowi” Widodo’s youngest son to run for governor in the Nov. 27 regional elections.*

The expression “controversial ruling” demonstrates a negative judgment directed at the Supreme Court (MA), which is perceived as deviating from the principles of justice. By introducing Hasyim's voice, TJP utilizes a resource of heteroglossia (specifically attribution) to underscore an appearance of objectivity in its evaluation.

A similar assessment is evident in the editorial “People Have Spoken,” which scrutinizes the role of the House of Representatives (DPR) in the normalization of dynastic political practices:

- (3) *The House of Representatives was attempting to pass an amendment to the Regional Elections Law that would **betray** the very principle of the rule of law.*

The expression “betray” reflects judgment: negative propriety, indicating that the DPR’s action is deemed to violate legal principles, be unethical, and threaten legal integrity. The evaluation is conveyed through monoglossia, which demonstrates the editorial’s firm conviction in their critique regarding the violation of institutional ethics and the abuse of power.

Civil Society and the Younger Generation as Guardians of Democratic Values

In contrast to the negative representation of the government and state institutions, TJP portrays civil society and the younger generation as positive actors in safeguarding democratic values. They are positioned as a force capable of opposing the deviation of power and the regression of democracy. The evaluation is constructed through affect and judgment: positive capacity, highlighting their political awareness and capability in maintaining justice.

In the editorial “Thank You for Speaking Up,” The Jakarta Post writes:

- (4) *The younger generation **showing their awareness** to counter the backsliding on hard-won democracy.*
- (5) ***Thank you** for protesting.*

The phrase “showing their awareness” reflects judgment: positive capacity toward the younger generation, assessing them as possessing high awareness and capacity in fighting against democratic regression. This positive assessment is further reinforced by the expression “thank you,” which reflects positive Affect in the form of pleasure, demonstrating appreciation

for the protests against the government and political elite. Through the use of monoglossia, the editorial asserts its firm view that the demonstrations are essential for safeguarding democracy.

Gerindra as Mediating Actors

In addition to the two main poles, which represent the government as a transgressor and civil society as a moral force, The Jakarta Post features the Gerindra Party—the winner of the 2024 General Election—as a moderate actor mediating the tension between power and the people's aspirations. This representation is constructed through positive judgment and appreciation emphasizing Gerindra's capacity, political maturity, and commitment to democratic stability.

In the editorial “People Have Spoken,” The Jakarta Post writes:

- (6) *In a direct response to the protests, Gerindra, which was in charge of the House plenary session... withdrew the law revision.*
- (7) *By allowing democracy to thrive, Gerindra and the president-elect will receive stronger support from the people of the country.*

The phrase “direct response to the protests: reflects judgment: positive capacity toward Gerindra, which is portrayed as a party with the political ability and social sensitivity to respond to public aspirations quickly and effectively. This representation builds an image of Gerindra as a responsible political actor oriented toward social stability. Meanwhile, the expression “allowing democracy to thrive” contains appreciation: positive valuation, assessing the actions of Gerindra and the president-elect as a constructive contribution to strengthening democratic values. Ideologically, these lexical choices affirm the editorial's position that responsive and pro-democracy power deserves moral legitimacy and public support.

Media's Ethical Authority and Ideological Positioning

Beyond representing various social actors within Indonesia's political landscape, The Jakarta Post also positions itself as a moral arbiter and guardian of democratic values. Across the three editorials analyzed, the newspaper functions not merely as a reporter of events but as an ideological and ethical evaluator of power practices. The Appraisal analysis further demonstrates that this stance is explicitly articulated through the systematic deployment of evaluative resources, which reinforce and consolidate the editorial's position and perspective.

In the editorial “*Breaking a Dynastic Habit*,” this positioning is made explicit through the following statements:

- (8) Confronted by this **hubris**, we must call for an end to **entrenched** dynastic politics.

(9) If it wasn't clear enough before, let it be **plainly spoken: Stop misusing democratic institutions for personal gain.**

(10) It was **the largest wave of protests** that the country has seen since the demonstrations against the new Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Law in 2019.

The lexical choices such as “hubris” and the phrase “Stop misusing democratic institutions for personal gain” represent negative Judgment: Propriety, condemning unethical actions that contradict democratic values. The use of the metaphor “entrenched” reinforces this condemnation through the Graduation resource, specifically high Intensification, asserting how deeply rooted the dynastic political practices are within the Indonesian political system. Furthermore, the expressions “plainly spoken” and “stop” introduce a firm tone, signaling the moral urgency to immediately cease such practices. Meanwhile, the phrase “the largest wave of protests” displays a strong form of Graduation: Quantification, emphasizing the vast scale and reach of the ongoing protests. The overall evaluation is delivered monoglossically, reflecting the editorial's firm stance with no room for divergent views, as if confirming that political dynasties pose a serious threat to the sustainability of democracy in Indonesia.

DISCUSSION

This study identifies three dominant patterns in the analyzed editorials: (1) the predominance of negative Judgment: Propriety directed at state institutions associated with dynastic political practices, (2) the positive representation of civil society and younger generations through Affect and Judgment: Capacity, and (3) the use of Graduation, particularly intensification and quantification, to amplify the perceived urgency of the political dynamics under discussion. These patterns suggest that evaluative language plays a crucial role in shaping how political actors and events are represented in editorial discourse.

Within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis as developed by Norman Fairclough, these evaluative patterns can be understood as part of broader discursive practices in which language contributes to the construction of social meaning and political legitimacy. Rather than functioning as a neutral reflection of political reality, editorials tend to position dynastic political practices as morally problematic, while framing civil resistance as rational and justifiable. In this sense, evaluation can be viewed as a linguistic resource that organizes interpretive possibilities and shapes the negotiation of legitimacy within discourse.

The dominance of negative Judgment: Propriety toward institutions such as the General Elections Commission, the Constitutional Court, and parliament indicates recurring

representations that emphasize moral deficiency and procedural irregularity. In contrast, civil society actors are consistently associated with positive evaluative meanings, particularly in terms of rationality and moral commitment. This evaluative polarization aligns with the findings of [Kazmi et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Anshori et al. \(2024\)](#), which highlight positive–negative configurations as a common strategy in ideological positioning. However, unlike these studies, which primarily emphasize rhetorical functions, the present study demonstrates that such evaluative polarization also has the potential to shift the locus of legitimacy from formal institutions to civil society, thereby extending the understanding of evaluation as not only a rhetorical strategy but also a mechanism for constructing legitimacy in political discourse.

The role of Graduation further reinforces this evaluative configuration. Recurrent patterns of intensification and quantification appear to increase the salience of dynastic political practices by framing them as significant and far-reaching phenomena. In line with [Risdiyanto et al. \(2024\)](#), intensification may be understood as a means of strengthening the affective dimension of discourse. Moreover, this study extends this perspective by demonstrating that intensification not only amplifies evaluative force but also contributes to the narrowing of interpretive space, as heightened expressions of urgency tend to direct readers toward particular readings. Nevertheless, this effect should be understood as a discursive tendency rather than a deterministic causal relationship.

The management of Engagement also plays a significant role in the construction of legitimacy. Through heteroglossic strategies—such as attribution to experts, institutions, and public voices—criticism of dynastic politics is often presented as externally supported viewpoints. Meanwhile, monoglossic statements are employed when articulating normative principles related to democracy and accountability, thereby limiting alternative dialogic possibilities within the text. Consistent with [Elyamany \(2020\)](#), this combination can create an impression of objectivity, whereby evaluative positions appear to be reported rather than constructed. Thus, dialogic space is not entirely closed but selectively managed, allowing certain perspectives to be foregrounded over others.

From the perspective of Fairclough’s notion of discursive practice, these linguistic patterns are also closely related to the institutional positioning of The Jakarta Post as an English-language newspaper with both national and international readerships. This positioning potentially produces what may be termed calibrated criticism—critique that remains sharp yet operates within broader democratic norms. Rather than explicitly rejecting institutional legitimacy, editorial discourse tends to frame criticism within a reformist perspective,

emphasizing the need for accountability without fundamentally negating the existing political system.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings support the view that Appraisal resources function not only as descriptive categories but also as analytical tools for understanding how evaluative meanings are constructed and distributed in public discourse. More specifically, this study contributes by demonstrating that the integration of Appraisal Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis enables a more nuanced identification of the relationships between linguistic choices, the construction of legitimacy, and the management of dialogic space in editorial texts. However, the relationship between linguistic features and social effects should not be understood as linear or deterministic; rather, these features provide resources that may be interpreted in diverse ways by readers.

Finally, it should be noted that this study is based on a limited corpus of three editorials. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as indicative of particular discursive tendencies rather than as generalizable representations of media discourse in Indonesia as a whole. Future research may expand the dataset or incorporate audience reception analysis to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how evaluative language is interpreted and negotiated within broader social contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the analyzed editorials consistently construct dynastic politics as a morally problematic practice, while positioning civil protest as a legitimate response within a democratic framework. This pattern is reflected in the dominance of negative evaluations directed at state institutions and the positive representation of civil society, indicating a discursive tendency to foreground values of accountability and public participation. These findings suggest that evaluative language is systematically employed to organize how political actors and events are understood in editorial discourse.

Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that editorials do not merely reflect political reality but also contribute to shaping interpretive frameworks through which that reality is understood. Through the use of evaluative language, the discourse foregrounds particular moral readings of dynastic politics, while alternative interpretations become less salient. This implies that editorial discourse functions as a site where political legitimacy is negotiated and articulated in the public sphere. On the one hand, the evaluative positioning supports democratic values such as accountability and civic participation; on the other hand, it may also

simplify the complexity of political dynamics by privileging certain normative positions over others.

From a theoretical perspective, this study underscores the relevance of integrating Appraisal Theory and Critical Discourse Analysis in examining how evaluative meaning operates in media texts. Linguistic resources such as evaluation and intensification play a role in organizing representations of political actors and actions, thereby contributing to meaning-making processes in public discourse. However, these effects should be understood as discursive tendencies rather than fixed or deterministic outcomes, as interpretation remains open and subject to negotiation by readers.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The analysis is based on a limited corpus of three editorials from a single media outlet and therefore does not fully capture the diversity of media discourse in Indonesia. Accordingly, the findings should be interpreted as indicative rather than broadly generalizable. Future research is encouraged to expand the dataset by incorporating multiple media sources or alternative analytical approaches, including audience-oriented perspectives, in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how evaluative language is constructed and interpreted across diverse contexts.

Declaration of Generative AI

During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted tools, including ChatGPT, Grammarly, and QuillBot, to support language editing and improve grammatical accuracy. The authors carefully reviewed and edited the output generated by these tools and take full responsibility for the content of the manuscript.

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