# Silenced Voices: Strategies of Exclusion and Inclusion in the Coverage of Sexual Violence in Indonesian Online Media

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the representation strategy of victims of sexual violence in online media coverage using the Critical Discourse Analysis (AWK) approach of the Theo van Leeuwen model. The object of study is five news articles from national online media, Kompas.com, Tempo.co, Merdeka.com, Detik.com, and Metrotvnews.com, that raised the case of rape by students of the Padjadjaran University specialist doctor education program (PPDS). The method used is descriptive qualitative with critical discourse text analysis techniques, including exclusion and inclusion strategies, such as passivation, nominalization, objectivation, identification, and assimilation. The results showed that in most news, the perpetrators were described explicitly by mentioning their social status and institutional affiliation. At the same time, the victims were often presented vaguely and subordinated in the sentence structure. This finding shows that the media has not fully sided with the perspective of victims, so the news has the potential to influence public perceptions of victims of sexual violence negatively. The implications of this research are recommended as teaching materials for news texts in Indonesian language learning at the high school level to form media literacy and students' critical perspectives on the issue of sexual violence.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Sexual Violence, Online Media, Theo Van Leeuwen.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cases of sexual violence raised in media coverage often reflect social inequality, especially towards victim groups. In many cases, the media portrays victims as deserving of such treatment, creating a distorted and unfair narrative. While perpetrators are given sympathetic space in the media narrative, victims are cornered through negative labeling. This indicates a systemic gender bias in journalistic practice, as revealed by (Garcia-Favaro, 2016) that digital media is often a means of spreading sexist discourse that ignores women's agency.

In the current condition, the coverage of sexual violence cases in digital media has increased both in terms of quantity and complexity. However, the news has not fully favored the victims. In practice, the media still tend to use language and narrative frames that maintain patriarchal power relations so that victims are often represented negatively or even omitted from the narrative structure. This phenomenon is a concern because it affects not only the image of victims but also the way society understands and responds to the issue of sexual violence in general. Conventional media such as radio, television, and newspapers, as well as online media, have a strategic role in shaping public perceptions of sexual violence issues. By disseminating information to a broad audience, the media helps determine the direction of the social meaning of an event.

Theo Van Leeuwen's critical discourse analysis model offers a valuable perspective in understanding the representation of victims in the media public sphere. He explains that marginalized groups, such as laborers, women, fishermen, and people with low political power, are often reduced in meaning and placed in a passive position. In contrast, dominant groups tend to control the construction of meaning in news texts. In this context, Van Leeuwen's approach focuses on how individual and collective social actors are represented through exclusion and inclusion (Rilma, R., & Gani, 2019; Rosmita, 2019). The study (Coe & Scacco, 2017) emphasizes that the strategic selection of news frames can emphasize or cover up injustices against victims in media discourse.

Furthermore, Van Leeuwen outlines two main strategies in analyzing the representation of social actors, namely exclusion and inclusion. Exclusion refers to the process of omitting actors in the discourse structure, either explicitly through passivation and nominalization or implicitly through the removal of the role of the perpetrator or victim from the narrative. On the other hand, the inclusion strategy highlights how actors are featured, either through categorization, differentiation, objectivation, or personal or collective identification (Chandradewi, Suandi, & Putrayasa, 2018). By using this approach, it can be traced to what extent the media provides space for victims of sexual violence to appear as subjects who have agency or vice versa, as mere objects of narration. (Lewis & Reese, 2020) found that mainstream digital media still reproduce many representational inequalities, especially in the discourse of sexual violence, which makes victims' voices inaudible.

Based on these findings, it is important for senior secondary education, especially students in grade XII, to be given learning materials based on critical discourse analysis. The material can help students develop a critical understanding of media coverage and build social awareness and empathy for victims of sexual violence. This is a preventive effort so that students do not become part of the culture of blaming victims that still often occurs in society.

This research examines the use of Theo Van Leeuwen's critical discourse analysis model in recommending teaching materials for news texts for high school students. The primary focus is to form students' critical awareness of sexual violence narratives in the media so that they no longer place the victim as the party to blame. In line with the views of (Amir, 2022), the critical discourse analysis approach not only focuses on the linguistic structure or presentation of the text but also explores the ideological and power background behind the emergence of specific messages in media texts. This means that this approach requires understanding the social, cultural, and political contexts that shape the meanings in discourse. Furthermore, research (Anugrah, 2021) reveals that some news texts place victims of sexual violence in a marginalized position, one of which is through biased identification strategies, such as negative labeling or insensitive identity disguise. However, observations on Detik.com, Metronews.com, Metro.com, and Tempo.co media show that in several cases, the

media coverage tends to prioritize neutrality, namely conveying factual and balanced information between perpetrators and victims without narratives that corner certain parties.

On the other hand, the Merdeka Curriculum at the high school level, especially class XII, emphasizes the importance of reading and understanding news texts as part of Indonesian language learning. In the first semester syllabus, learning news text requires students to understand news content's structure, language, and context. Therefore, teaching materials integrated with a critical discourse analysis approach are very relevant because they hone literacy skills and build students' critical awareness of how the media shapes social reality. In this context, analyzing the coverage of sexual violence on digital media platforms such as Kompas.com is important, given the high access and exposure of students to online news.

The novelty of this research lies in two things: first, this research explicitly applies Van Leeuwen's critical discourse analysis model to examine news texts on sexual violence in the February-March 2025 edition of Kompas.com online media. This approach is still rarely used in secondary education in Indonesia. Second, the analysis results are used as the basis for developing teaching materials for news texts in high school, which not only focus on the linguistic aspects but also build students' critical literacy on the issue of sexual violence. Thus, this research fills the void in media and education studies and contributes to strengthening character education and gender equality in the school environment.

International studies also support this kind of research. According to (Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Baden, 2016), media representations convey facts and shape social constructions of who is considered important and how their roles are interpreted. In addition, research by (Harp, Grimm, and Loke 2018) in the context of sexual violence coverage in American media shows that news framing often perpetuates gender stereotypes, even when the media tries to be narratively neutral. This finding reinforces the relevance of integrating the critical discourse analysis approach into education, especially to equip students to read news texts literally, reflectively, and critically towards the power structures hidden behind them.

#### **METHODS**

According to (Moleong, 2017), a qualitative approach is a research method oriented toward an in-depth understanding of the phenomena experienced by participants, such as attitudes, perceptions, motivations, and actions, with a presentation in the form of a complete and contextual narrative. This type of research does not prioritize numerical aspects but focuses on the meaning and interpretation of social reality as perceived by the subject under study. This approach is often based on an interpretive or phenomenological paradigm, which is rooted in the tradition of social sciences such as sociology and anthropology. It developed during the 1920-1930 era through the strong influence of the Chicago school (Murdiyanto, 2020). In this context, the qualitative approach places the researcher as the main data collection and interpretation instrument. (Abdussamad, 2021) emphasizes that qualitative research is naturalistic, uses triangulation techniques, and prioritizes the inductive process over-generalization.

The critical discourse analysis model developed by Theo Van Leeuwen is in line with this qualitative approach. In this study, Van Leeuwen's methodology is used to explore how social representation practices occur in media coverage, especially in portraying victims of sexual

violence. Van Leeuwen contributes to the discourse analysis framework that seeks to reveal hidden power relations through discursive practices in the media. Therefore, this approach is relevant to examine how the labeling, exclusion, or inclusion of social actors is shaped through media language.

This research specifically uses news published by five online news portals, namely Kompas.com, Detik.com, Metronews.com, Metro.com, and Tempo.co, which are representative of Indonesia's mainstream digital media landscape. These portals were chosen because they reflect the diversity of media characteristics, in terms of ownership, editorial orientation, readership reach, and narrative approach in reporting social issues. Kompas.com and Tempo.co are known for their more investigative and neutral reporting style. Detik.com and Metro.com tend to be oriented toward the speed and popularity of content, while Metronews.com presents a typical perspective of media affiliated with national broadcasting institutions. By choosing these diverse sources, this research seeks to gain a fuller picture of how the mainstream media frames the issue of sexual violence.

The focus of the research is directed at the news coverage of the case of PPDS Unpad Students Involved in Sexual Violence Cases, which intensively appeared in the publication on April 9, 2025. The unit of analysis in this research is news text, while the research subjects are the five online media that represent media discourse. The data collection technique was carried out through digital documentation, which was compiled and analyzed narratively, following the principles of the interpretive qualitative approach.

# **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### News 1 Kompas.com

A critical discourse analysis of the article entitled "Unpad Terminates PPDS FK Unpad Student for Involved in Rape Case," published by Kompas.com on April 9, 2025, can be carried out using the exclusion and inclusion model proposed by Theo Van Leeuwen.

#### **Exclusion (Expulsion Process)**

Exclusion refers to the omission or obscuring of certain actors in the text so that the reader is not fully informed about their role or identity.

1) Passivation

Passivation occurs when the passive voice structure is used to hide the perpetrator of the action. In this article, there are sentences:

"Dismissal from studies is a serious step taken by Unpad after receiving reports of sexual violence committed by PAP."

In the sentence, the action of "dismissal from the study" is presented without explicitly mentioning who performed the action, so the reader's focus is more on the action itself rather than the perpetrator. Exclusion refers to the omission or obscuring of certain actors in the text so that the reader is not fully informed about their role or identity.

#### 2) Nominalization

Nominalization is the process of turning a verb into a noun, which can obscure who the actor of the action is. Quotes in this article

"Dismissal from studies is a serious step taken by Unpad..."

The word "dismissal" is a nominalized form of "dismiss", which obscures the subject of the dismissal.

### **Inclusion (Entry Process)**

Inclusion relates to how actors or events are included and presented in the text, which can affect the reader's perception of them.

1) Objectivation-Abstraction

Objectivation occurs when information is presented in a concrete and clear manner, while abstraction presents information in a general or vague manner. In this article, there is objectivation in the mention of the perpetrator's initials:

"Universitas Padjadjaran (Unpad) has dismissed or dropped out a student participating in the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) at the Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Padjadjaran (FK Unpad) with the initials PAP (31)..."

The mention of the initials "PAP" and the age "31" provide concrete information about the perpetrator.

2) Nomination-Categorization

Nomination refers to naming specific individuals, while categorization groups individuals based on certain attributes. In this article, the perpetrator is categorized as:

"a student participating in the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) at the Faculty of Medicine, Padjadjaran University (FK Unpad)".

The use of this category highlights the academic status of the perpetrator and the institution where he studied, which may influence readers' perception of the case.

3) Assimilation-Individualization

Assimilation presents the individual as part of the group, whereas individualization highlights the individual separately. In this article, the perpetrator is individualized through the mention of his initials and status, such as:

"a student participating in the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) at the Faculty of Medicine, Padjadjaran University (FK Unpad) with the initials PAP (31)".

This makes the reader focus on the individual rather than the group.

4) Association-Dissociation

Association connects individuals with certain groups or institutions, while dissociation separates them. In this article, there is an attempt at dissociation when Unpad takes firm steps by dismissing the perpetrator, which shows that the institution does not support the perpetrator's actions and tries to separate itself from the case.

This analysis shows how language structures and discourse strategies in the news can influence the way readers understand and assess the events and actors involved.

#### News 2 Tempo.co

The following is a critical discourse analysis of the news entitled "PPDS Unpad Student Involved in Sexual Violence Case" published by Tempo.co on April 9, 2025.

# **Exclusion (Exclusion Process)**

Exclusion in discourse refers to the omission or obscuring of certain actors in the news text. In this article, the exclusion strategies found include:

1) Passivation

Passivation occurs when the action is presented in passive form so that the perpetrator of the action becomes unclear or hidden. In this news, there is a sentence:

"The incident allegedly occurred in mid-March, in the hospital area."

The use of the phrase "allegedly happened" in the passive form obscures the identity of the perpetrator, so that the reader's focus is more on the event rather than the individuals involved.

2) Nominalization

Nominalization turns verbs into nouns, which can lead to the omission of the perpetrator of the action. In this article, the use of the word "event" as a form of nominalization obscures who is involved in the action, so the perpetrator is not explicitly mentioned.

#### Inclusion

Inclusion relates to how actors or events are included and presented in the news text. In this article, the inclusion strategies found include:

1) Objectivation-Abstraction

Objectivation presents information concretely and clearly, while abstraction presents information generally or vaguely. In this news, there is objectivation in the sentence:

"The incident allegedly occurred in mid-March, in the hospital area."

The specific mention of time and location provides concrete information to the reader.

2) Nomination-Categorization

Categorization occurs when individuals or groups are classified based on certain attributes. In this article, the perpetrator is referred to as "Unpad PPDS students", which categorizes individuals based on their academic status and institution. This can affect the reader's perception of the institution as a whole.

3) Nomination-Identification

Identification provides additional information to recognize certain individuals or groups. In this news story, the victim is referred to as a "family member of the patient", which identifies the victim based on her relationship with the patient at the hospital.

4) Assimilation-Individualization

Assimilation presents individuals as part of a group, while individualization highlights individuals separately. In this article, the perpetrator is identified as "Unpad PPDS students", which associates the individual's actions with a particular group or institution, thus affecting the institution's image. This analysis shows how the choice of language and structure in news reporting can influence readers' perceptions of the event and the actors involved.

## News 3 Merdeka.com

The following is a critical discourse analysis of the news entitled "Chronology of Unpad Resident Doctor Sedating and Raping Patient's Family at RSHS, Here's the Common Sense" published by Merdeka.com on April 9, 2025.

## **Exclusion (Exclusion Process)**

Exclusion in discourse refers to the omission or obscuring of certain actors in news texts. In this article, the exclusion strategies found include:

1) Passivation

Passivation occurs when the action is presented in passive form so that the perpetrator of the action becomes unclear or hidden. In this news, there is a sentence:

"The victim, whose age was not explained, was drugged by the PAP perpetrator."

Although the perpetrator is mentioned, this sentence structure places the victim as the main subject, so that the reader's attention is focused on the victim rather than the perpetrator's actions.

2) Nominalization

Nominalization turns verbs into nouns, which can lead to the omission of the perpetrator of the action. In this article, the use of the word "drugging" as a form of nominalization obscures who committed the act, so the perpetrator is not explicitly mentioned.

#### Inclusion

Inclusion relates to how actors or events are included and presented in the news text. In this article, the inclusion strategies found include:

1) Objectivation-Abstraction

Objectivation presents information concretely and clearly, while abstraction presents information generally or vaguely. In this news, there is objectivation in the sentence:

"The victim was then taken to the 7th floor, a new building at RSHS that was still empty."

The specific mention of the location provides concrete information to the reader.

2) Nomination-Categorization

Categorization occurs when individuals or groups are classified based on certain attributes. In this article, the perpetrator is referred to as "a Padjajaran University (Unpad) medical student who was interning at Hasan Sadikin Hospital Bandung (HS Hospital) with initials, PAP", which categorizes individuals based on their academic status and institution. This can affect the reader's perception of the institution as a whole.

3) Nomination-Identification

Identification provides additional information to recognize a particular individual or group. In this news story, the victim is identified as "the woman who was waiting for her family to be treated", which links the victim to her specific situation at the hospital.

4) Assimilation-Individualization

Assimilation presents the individual as part of a group, whereas individualization highlights the individual separately. In this article, the actor is identified as "Padjajaran University (Unpad) medical students", which associates the individual's actions with a particular institution, thus affecting the institution's image. This analysis shows how the choice of language and structure in news reporting can influence readers' perceptions of the event and the actors involved.

# News 4 Detik.com

The following is a critical discourse analysis of the news entitled "FK Unpad Terminates PPDS Doctor Suspected of Raping Patient Companion" published by detik.com on April 9, 2025.

## **Exclusion (Exclusion Process)**

Exclusion in discourse refers to the omission or obscuring of certain actors in the news text. In this article, the exclusion strategies found include:

1) Passivation

Passivation occurs when the action is presented in passive form so that the actor of the action becomes unclear or hidden. In this news, there is a sentence:

"An anesthesia resident doctor from the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) of the Faculty of Medicine, Padjadjaran University (FK Unpad) allegedly raped a patient companion at RSHS Bandung."

Although the perpetrator is mentioned, this sentence structure puts the focus on the action and the victim, while the identity of the perpetrator remains vague.

2) Nominalization

Nominalization turns verbs into nouns, which can lead to the omission of the perpetrator of the action. In this article, the use of the word "rape" as a form of nominalization obscures who committed the act, so the perpetrator is not explicitly mentioned.

#### Inclusion

Inclusion relates to how actors or events are included and presented in the news text. In this article, the inclusion strategies found include:

1) Objectivation-Abstraction

Objectivation presents information concretely and clearly, while abstraction presents information generally or vaguely. In this news, there is objectivation in the sentence:

"Dean of FK Unpad Yudi Hidayat gave a statement."

The specific mention of names and positions provides concrete information to readers.

2) Nomination-Categorization

Categorization occurs when individuals or groups are classified based on certain attributes. In this article, the perpetrator is referred to as "anesthesia resident doctors from the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) of the Faculty of Medicine, Padjadjaran University (FK Padjadjaran)", which categorizes individuals based on their academic status and institution. This may affect the reader's perception of the institution as a whole.

3) Nomination-Identification

Identification provides additional information to recognize a specific individual or group. In this news story, the victim is identified as "a patient companion at RSHS Bandung", which links the victim to her specific situation at the hospital..

4) Assimilation-Individualization

Assimilation presents the individual as part of the group, while individualization highlights the individual separately. In this article, the perpetrator is identified as "an anesthesia resident doctor from the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) of the Faculty of Medicine,

Padjadjaran University (FK Unpad)", which associates the individual's actions with a specific institution, thus affecting the institution's image. This analysis shows how the choice of language and structure in the news can influence the reader's perception of the event and the actors involved.

#### News 5 Metronews.com

The following is a critical discourse analysis of the news titled "Resident Doctor of FK Unpad Rapes Patient's Family, Kemenkes Blacklisted for Life" published by Metrotvnews.com on April 9, 2025. This analysis uses Theo Van Leeuwen's approach, specifically the strategies of exclusion and inclusion in the representation of actors.

#### **Exclusion (Exclusion Process))**

Exclusion refers to the omission or obscuring of certain actors in the discourse. In this news, exclusion is seen through the following strategies:

1) Passivation

Passivation occurs when the action is conveyed in passive form, so that the perpetrator of the action becomes unclear or hidden. Excerpt from the news:

"A resident doctor of the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) from the Faculty of Medicine of Padjajaran University (Unpad) committed rudapaksa against a patient's family at Dr. Hasan Sadikin Bandung Hospital (RSHS)."

In this sentence, although the perpetrator is referred to as a "resident doctor", his specific identity is not revealed, so the reader does not know who the real perpetrator is.

2) Nominalization

Nominalization turns the action into a noun, which can obscure who the perpetrator of the action is. However, in this news, there are no clear examples of nominalization that omits the actor.

## **Inclusion (Process of Inclusion)**

Inclusion relates to how actors are included and represented in the discourse. The inclusion strategies found include:

1) Objectivation-Abstraction

Objectivation provides concrete information, while abstraction presents information in general or vague terms. In this news:

"We have given strict sanctions in the form of prohibiting the PPDS from continuing his lifelong residency at Dr. Hasan Sadikin Bandung Hospital (RSHS) and we have returned him to the Faculty of Medicine of Unpad," said the Director General of Advanced Health Services of the Ministry of Health, Azhar Jaya."

This statement provides concrete information about the sanction given, which is a lifetime ban on continuing the resident program.

3) Nomination-Categorization

Nomination names individuals, while categorization groups individuals based on certain attributes. In this news story, the perpetrator is referred to as "a resident doctor of the Specialist Doctor Education Program (PPDS) from the Faculty of Medicine, Padjajaran

University (Unpad)". This categorization categorizes the perpetrators based on their roles without mentioning specific names, which may affect the reader's perception of the group in general.

4) Identification

Identification provides additional information to clarify who the actor is. However, in this news story, specific identification of the actor is not given, so the identity of the actor remains vague.

5) Association-Dissociation

Association connects actors with certain groups or institutions, while dissociation separates them from those groups. In this news:

"Unpad and RSHS claim to have provided assistance to victims in the reporting process to the West Java Regional Police (Polda Jabar)."

This statement shows the institution's efforts to support the victim, but does not explicitly position itself from the perpetrator's actions, even though the perpetrator is part of the institution.

#### CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the critical discourse analysis of five online news from Kompas.com, Tempo.co, Merdeka.com, Detik.com, and Metrotvnews.com that discuss the case of sexual violence by a resident doctor of PPDS FK Unpad, it can be concluded that the media tend to use typical exclusion and inclusion strategies as proposed in the theory of social representation by Theo van Leeuwen. Exclusion strategies, such as passivation and nominalization, are used to obscure the role of the perpetrator and divert readers' attention from the identity of the individual who committed the sexual violence. The perpetrators are often disguised through general terms such as "resident doctor" or "unscrupulous doctor," with no explicit mention of identity.

Meanwhile, inclusion strategies, such as categorization, identification, and objectivation, are seen in how the perpetrators are associated with certain institutions such as FK Unpad or RSHS. The media explicitly mentions the institution's actions in responding to the case as a form of responsibility, which is also an effort to dissociate between the perpetrator and the institution to protect the institutional image. Unfortunately, victims of sexual violence do not receive adequate representation. The identity of the victim tends to be omitted, and there are no empathetic narratives that highlight the psychological and social impacts experienced by the victim. This shows that the media discourse is still oriented towards the perpetrators and institutions, not on recovery and justice for victims.

This finding reinforces the view that media language is not a neutral tool but a means of producing meaning that contributes to shaping people's social perceptions of sexual violence cases. Therefore, the media need to apply the principles of gender-based justice and victim sensitivity in their journalistic practices. The media can take concrete steps such as presenting narratives from the victim's side, providing space for survivors' voices, and avoiding the use of terms that corner or disguise the suffering of victims. The media also needs to increase the capacity of journalists through training on the ethics of covering sexual violence cases,

including an understanding of the journalistic code of ethics that upholds the privacy rights of victims and the use of unbiased language.

This analysis provides important implications for developing more ethical and fair journalistic practices. In addition, these findings are also relevant for the world of education, especially in developing teaching materials for news texts in high schools, so that students can criticize how reality is framed in the mass media and are not trapped in discourse biases that corner victims. Thus, the mass media is expected to act as an agent of social change in favor of justice and recovery of victims of sexual violence, not merely as a conveyor of information.

#### SUGGESTIONS

Suggestions for future researchers are to expand the scope of research by involving more online media, both national and local, in order to obtain a more holistic picture of the representation of sexual violence cases in the mass media. In addition, the critical discourse analysis approach used in this study can be combined with other methods, such as media ethnography or audience reception analysis, to understand better how audiences interpret and respond to the news text. Future researchers are also advised to integrate gender perspectives and feminist theories as a basis for analysis, especially to examine the text's construction of victim and perpetrator identities and power relations. Research with a longitudinal approach also needs to be conducted to see the dynamics of news coverage over time, whether there are changes in discourse strategies or patterns that keep repeating. With these steps, future research is expected to contribute more broadly to the development of critical media literacy and support the protection of victims of sexual violence through fair and victim-perspective representations in the mass media.

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