

# Framing Agricultural Media: An Analysis of Critical Discourse of Business CNN and CNN Indonesia Using van Dijk's Theory

Andini<sup>1\*</sup>, Rohmah Sinta Nuriyah<sup>1</sup>, dan Janefa Astrid Endang Rahmadian<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Nahdlatul Ulama University Lampung, Indonesia

\*Email: [diniaandini4@gmail.com](mailto:diniaandini4@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

This study analyzes the representation of foreign workers in the United States agricultural industry using the critical discourse analysis (CDA) model by Teun A. Dijk. Using a case study from a CNN Business article titled "America's Farmers Are in Desperate Need of Workers. Foreigners are the answer" (2016), this study explores how mass media shapes public opinion on employment and immigration issues. The Dijk model, which includes the structural dimensions of the text (macrostructure, superstructure, microstructure), social cognition, and social context, is used to uncover the symbolic discourse and ideological construction of the media. The analysis revealed that CNN Business systematically framed the labor shortage problem as an urgent national crisis, positioning foreign workers as the "saviors" of agricultural productivity by using positive diction and problem-solving narratives. The study also compared it to CNN Indonesia's article on the potential abuse of social assistance in regional elections, highlighting how the media shapes social realities and directs public opinion according to their respective ideological contexts. This study concludes that the mass media play an active role in shaping and directing public opinion through linguistic strategies and hidden rhetoric embedded in news texts. Therefore, critical media literacy is essential for the public to understand biased narratives and potential hidden agendas in media coverage.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, framing, public opinion, media representation, van Dijk.

## Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis representasi pekerja asing di industri pertanian Amerika Serikat menggunakan model analisis wacana kritis (CDA) Teun A. Dijk. Menggunakan studi kasus dari artikel CNN Business berjudul "Pertanian Amerika Sangat Membutuhkan Pekerja. Orang asing adalah jawabannya" (2016), penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana media massa membentuk opini publik tentang masalah ketenagakerjaan dan imigrasi. Model Dijk, yang mencakup dimensi struktur teks (makrostruktur, superstruktur, struktur mikro), kognisi sosial, dan konteks sosial, digunakan untuk mengungkap wacana simbolis dan konstruksi ideologis media. Analisis tersebut mengungkapkan bahwa CNN Business secara sistematis membingkai masalah kekurangan tenaga kerja sebagai krisis nasional yang mendesak, memposisikan pekerja asing sebagai "penyelamat" produktivitas pertanian dengan menggunakan diksi positif dan narasi solusi masalah. Perbandingan dengan artikel CNN Indonesia tentang potensi penyalahgunaan bantuan sosial dalam pilkada, menyoroti bagaimana media membentuk realitas sosial dan mengarahkan opini publik sesuai dengan konteks ideologis masing-masing. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa media massa berperan aktif dalam membentuk dan mengarahkan opini publik melalui strategi linguistik dan retorika tersembunyi yang tertanam dalam teks berita. Oleh karena itu, literasi media kritis sangat penting bagi publik untuk memahami narasi bias dan potensi agenda tersembunyi dalam liputan media.



## INTRODUCTION

The issue of foreign workers in the agricultural sector is one of the topics that has received widespread attention, especially because of its impact on the economy and social dynamics. CNN Business article by Long (2016) highlighting the problem of labor shortages in U.S. agriculture and positioning foreign workers as the primary solution to address the problem. Media reports like this not only convey facts, but also shape narratives that can influence public perception of foreign worker groups. In an increasingly complex global context, how the media frames this issue is crucial to understanding to reveal the ideological values and hidden forces behind news texts. This is in line with Pang, Sun, and Zhu (2024), which shows how international media such as *The New York Times* and *China Daily* represent migrant workers as objects of national ideology in the context of a global pandemic, forming a narrative of rescue or threat following the political interests of each country. Similar things were also found by Pang, Sun, and Zhu (2024), which analyzed more than 180,000 media reports in China and found that migrant workers are consistently represented in ideological frames as symbols of nationalism or social threats, depending on the political needs of the media in question.

However, studies that analyze the representation of foreign workers in the international media with Dijk's approach are still limited, especially in the context of agricultural discourse and migrant economic policies. Research by Kurniawan

and Lestari (2022) shows that media coverage of migrant workers during the pandemic tends to be framed pragmatically to support the national economic agenda, but there is still a lack of critical reflection on global power relations. These findings reinforce the urgency of research that is able to delve deeper into the role of the media in shaping public opinion ideologically through linguistic strategies.

Some previous research has also shown how media discourse shapes certain ideologies and reproduces power relations through language. For example, Rahmah and Yunita (2023) found that the representation of migrants in Indonesian online media is systematically constructed through selective diction, sentence structure, and rhetoric according to the political orientation of the media. Similarly, Sari and Wijaya (2021) shows that the news of social assistance during the pandemic is more framed as a political tool, not just a social issue. This shows that in various issue contexts, the media is often not neutral in conveying information, but actively directs public interpretation.

This study generally aims to investigate the representation of foreign workers in mass media coverage of the labor crisis in the United States agricultural sector. This research was conducted using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach from Teun A. van Dijk's model, which combines three main dimensions: the structure of the text (macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure), social cognition, and social context (Dijk 1998). In particular, this study aims to (1) analyze the structure

of CNN Business media text discourse based on Dijk's linguistic dimensions, namely macrostructure (main theme), superstructure (text organization), and microstructure (diction selection, syntax, cohesion, and rhetoric); (2) uncover the processes of social cognition involved in the production and interpretation of texts, such as the collective values and memories that shape readers' and journalists' understanding of the issue of foreign workers; (3) analyze the social and ideological context that influences the construction of media discourse and its implications for power relations in society; and (4) compare the discourse construction between CNN Business (United States) and CNN Indonesia in representing social issues related to workers and power. This research not only describes the content of the text but also seeks to unravel the ideological relationships hidden in the language of the media and foster critical awareness of the role of the media in shaping social reality.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the main method. The qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of this study is to understand in depth how foreign workers are represented in media texts, not to quantitatively measure data. The researcher adopted the CDA model developed by Dijk (1998), which emphasizes three main dimensions in discourse analysis: text structure, social cognition, and social context.

The main object of this study was a news article from CNN Business titled "American Ranches Are in Desperate Need of Workers. Foreigners are the answer," published on September 29, 2016. This article is analyzed as a media representation of the labor crisis in the United States agricultural sector, particularly in positioning foreign

workers as a solution to the problem. As a comparative material, this study also analyzed an article from CNN Indonesia entitled "Khofifah: Corona Social Assistance Can Benefit the Incumbent Pilkada," which was published in 2020. This article is used to see how media narratives regarding socio-political issues in Indonesia, especially related to social assistance and political interests, are constructed through discourse strategies that are similar or different from foreign media. This comparison aims to identify patterns of representation and the formation of public opinion in geographically and ideologically different media contexts.

Data collection is carried out through documentation, namely by downloading and reviewing the content of both articles thoroughly. Data analysis is carried out based on three main stages in the Dijk model: (1) macro structure to identify the main themes and core messages of each text; (2) superstructure to check how the text is logically structured (e.g. opening, content, and closing); and (3) microstructure to analyze linguistic elements, such as diction choices, syntax, metaphors, and other rhetorical strategies used to form narrative and ideological attitudes.

## RESULT & DISCUSSION

This study presents a novelty compared to previous research because it not only analyzes the representation of foreign workers in a single media outlet but also compares two news sources from different geopolitical and ideological contexts. This comparison provides a broader view of how discourse is constructed across different media systems. Previous comparative studies, such as (Hamid and Yusuf 2020), which focuses primarily on domestic employment issues in Indonesia, highlight how online journalism tends to reproduce

dominant power structures through specific framing techniques. While Anggraini and Fadhilah (2022) notes that media coverage of the distribution of social assistance is often ideologically charged, depending on the outlet's political alignment. These findings underscore the importance of cross-contextual discourse analysis as conducted in this study, which applies Dijk's comprehensive CDA framework.

The contribution of this research lies in the comprehensive application of Dijk's critical discourse analysis, which includes the dimensions of text structure, social cognition, and social context, to uncover how the media not only represents issues but also builds collective awareness and power relations in society. Furthermore, by raising the issue of migrant workers in both global and local media narratives, this study expands the scope of critical media studies in the context of information globalization, immigration, and public policy.

The discussion in this article refers to the theory of critical discourse analysis by Dijk, who views texts not only as linguistic structures but also as a reflection of the social structures, ideologies, and power relations that influence them. This approach involves three main levels of analysis: macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure. The macro structure reveals the main themes of the text, the superstructure examines the organizational patterns of information, and the microstructure highlights linguistic details such as meaning, sentence form, diction, and rhetorical style. These three levels are used to explore how the media constructs social reality through news texts and subtly guides public opinion. Therefore, the following discussion is prepared based on these three structural dimensions, by comparing two

articles from CNN Business and CNN Indonesia.

### Macro Structure Analysis

The main text analyzed in this study was a news article from CNN Business (United States) that discussed the problem of labor shortages in the agricultural sector and how foreign workers are considered a solution. Thematically, the text belongs to the genre of feature journalism, which combines factual reporting with persuasive narratives. The writing style not only presents data and citations but also subtly builds opinions through the choice of diction, sentence structure, and supporting sources. This narrative is crafted to frame migrant workers as an essential element to the sustainability of American agriculture, reflecting an ideological strategy in the construction of meaning.

As a methodological reference, this study also refers to the analytical approach used by Julaeha, Suherman, and Julianto (2021), who applied Dijk's model in a CNN Indonesia news article about the 2020 Election. Although the themes are different, their research provides insight into how macro and micro structures in online news texts can be analyzed to uncover the ideological tendencies of the media. In their study, the text belongs to the genre of straight news, characterized by its informative and concise nature, with a focus on official statements and political events. This comparison shows that text genres play a role in shaping how information is organized and how meaning is constructed in media discourse.

An article from CNN Business, written by Long (2016), framing the labor shortage problem in the U.S. agricultural sector as an urgent national crisis that can only be solved through the involvement of foreign workers. The main theme built is that migrant workers are not only needed but

also help *Rescue* national agricultural productivity. In this narrative, migrant workers are positively represented as an important economic solution. This framing reflects the media's support for pragmatic immigration policies.

On the other hand, an article from CNN Indonesia titled *Khofifah: Corona Social Assistance Can Benefit Incumbents in Regional Elections* emphasizes the issue of moral and political integrity (Julaeha, Suherman, and Julianto 2021). This article centers on the statement of the Governor of East Java, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, who warned that social assistance funds (bansos) could potentially be used for political gain by the incumbent during the election. The subtopic highlights concerns over abuse of power during the pandemic crisis.

Both articles show that the media is not neutral in presenting the issue: CNN Business directs public opinion to the importance of foreign workers as an economic solution, while CNN Indonesia builds moral awareness regarding the actions of local political elites. It explains how macro structures are used by the media to construct a particular image and guide opinion according to the social context and ideological framework of each country. The findings of the moral framing at CNN Indonesia are in line with the results of the study Ruzungunde and Zhou (2021) which analyzes the South African media, in which migrant workers are ambiguously represented as economic contributors as well as social threats, depending on the vested interests that dominate the media narrative.

### **Superstructure Analysis**

CNN Business, through Long (2016) articles, organizes the narrative in a problem-solution pattern, beginning with a presentation of the labor crisis, followed by the affirmation that foreign workers are

the most logical solution. This structure is designed to conclude that pro-immigration policies are not only beneficial but also necessary.

On the other hand, CNN Indonesia by Julaeha, Suherman, and Julianto (2021) compiling the article using a pattern of warning or social control, emphasizing the role of public figures in warning the public about the potential manipulation of social assistance. No concrete solution is offered, as the main goal is to raise awareness and caution of political behavior during a crisis. This comparison shows how superstructures are used to guide readers: CNN Business seeks to rationalize economic policies, while CNN Indonesia seeks to evoke ethical and moral responsibility within the framework of local democracy.

At the micro level, there are a number of striking differences. Semantics CNN Business uses positively charged words such as *solution*, *essential*, and *Hardworking migrants*, creating a narrative that portrays foreign workers as economic heroes. On the other hand, CNN Indonesia uses diction that emphasizes the negative aspects of power, such as *misuse*, *manipulation*, and *Personal Promotion*, as well as describing Khofifah as a figure who *explains* and *expresses concern*, building his image as a leader who cares and is vigilant. According to Pasha & Mulya (2019), emotionally charged and evaluative diction in news texts is a form of intensification strategy, which aims to shape readers' attitudes towards a figure or issue. This strategy is commonly used in the mass media to implicitly instill an ideological point of view. The findings of moral framing in CNN Indonesia, which emphasized the dualism of views on social actors, are in line with the Stack and Wilbur (2021) findings in Canada, which shows the media and the government framing migrant workers both as economic heroes



and objects of protection/control during the pandemic.

Syntactically speaking, CNN Business uses passive sentences such as *Migrants needed* and *Labor shortage* to highlight the crisis without directly blaming specific actors. Responsibility is more shifted to the economic structure than to the government. The focus is placed on migrants as a solution. On the other hand, CNN Indonesia more often use active sentences such as *explained by Khofifah...* and *Khofifah stated...*, showing the active role of local figures as public supervisors. These sentences are constructed using logical conjunctions such as *therefore*, *and so on*, which reinforces the argumentative structure and creates a persuasive effect on the reader. As noted (Eriyanto 2015), sentence structure and conjunction not only reveal the relationships between ideas but also help shape reasoning that affects the reader's social consciousness.

### Microstructure Analysis

CNN Business article by Long (2016) using impersonal pronouns such as agriculture, labor, or economy to keep distance from certain individuals or groups, portrays these issues as systemic rather than personal. On the other hand, CNN Indonesia using personal pronouns such as he, they, and us, which creates a sense of closeness and shared perspective between political figures (Khofifah) and the audience. This linguistic strategy contributes to the construction of an empathetic and inclusive narrative. Recent research has shown that the use of pronouns like us, you, and them has a strong ideological effect in forming solidarity or strengthening group identity. Bailey, Altin, and Ford (2024) found that their use often reflects inclusive beliefs and resistance to traditional gender norms, which are influenced by ideologies related to identity and language. These findings

support the idea that pronouns are far from neutral; rather, they are powerful discursive tools that shape the alignment and interpretation of the audience in the media text.

Regarding the form of sentences, CNN Indonesia dominated by active sentences that put Khofifah as the main subject. This strengthens the framing of the media that supports its moral warnings and public voices. CNN Business, on the other hand, tend to use descriptive and explanatory sentences that focus on data and experience, rather than individual actions.

In style, CNN Business uses technical and pragmatic terms such as *crisis*, *policy* and *Labor shortage*, creating an impression of neutrality and data-driven reporting. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia uses diction that is more politically and rhetorically charged such as *Abuse* and *Personal Promotion* to form public opinion against the incumbent. As explained by Dijk (1998), lexical choices in news reporting are closely related to the ideological goals of the media in positioning figures and events in front of the public.

In terms of rhetoric, CNN Indonesia using provocative headlines and emotionally appealing diction to grab attention, such as *Incumbent Benefits*. Direct quotes from public figures are used to reinforce moral messages. On the other hand, Long (2016) emphasizes data-driven rhetoric, including statistics and farmer testimonials, to build logical credibility.

From the analysis of the microstructure of the two articles, it can be seen that the media uses various linguistic strategies to shape narratives and frame issues according to their respective ideological interests. CNN Business tend to use neutral and positive diction, passive sentences, impersonal pronouns, and data-driven descriptive styles to present foreign workers as rational and systemic economic

solutions. Meanwhile, CNN Indonesia highlight rhetorical and emotional aspects through evaluative diction, active sentences, personal pronouns, and provocative headlines to emphasize moral warnings against potential abuse of power by incumbents. The choice of sentence structure, lexical, and rhetorical style in the two articles reflects the media's ideological strategy in directing public opinion and strengthening the position of the discourse carried. Thus, the micro-elements in the text are not only technical but also play an important role in building meaning, reinforcing the message, and creating an influence on the reader.

## CONCLUSION

Based on a critical discourse analysis of two articles from different media sources, CNN Business and CNN Indonesia, it can be concluded that both media systematically use discourse structures to shape readers' perceptions of the issues discussed. CNN Business builds a narrative of the agricultural labor crisis in the United States through a pragmatic approach, portraying foreign workers as an essential element in maintaining economic sustainability. On the other hand, CNN Indonesia highlighted ethical concerns in the local political realm by raising the issue of misuse of social assistance funds by incumbents in the context of the regional elections.

This contrasting approach reflects how media constructs social reality through language. CNN Business emphasizes economic narratives and solutions-based policies, while CNN Indonesia focuses on moral warnings and public accountability. Through macrostructures, superstructures, and microstructures that include semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical aspects, it becomes clear that the media actively frames issues according to their respective social and ideological interests. Thus, mass media not only serves as a channel for

disseminating information but also as a tool to shape and direct public opinion. Therefore, the ability to read news texts critically is becoming increasingly important to prevent people from being easily influenced by a single narrative that may carry a hidden agenda.

### Abbreviations

Not attached.

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### Authors' Contribution

The first author contributes to formulating the main idea and overall direction of the article. The second author helps in gathering references, organizing the structure, and developing the content. Third authors support the writing process through discussion, content development, and ensuring the readiness of articles for submission.

### Declarations

**Consent to publications.** The author hereby gives full approval for the submission and publication of this article in Pawarta: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Dakwah. This article is an original collaborative work and has not been published or submitted elsewhere.

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### Authors' details

Andini – Student of the English Education Study Program, Nahdlatul Ulama University, Lampung. Contribute to formulating the main idea and overall direction of the article.

Rohmah Sinta Nuriyah – Student of the English Education Study Program, Nahdlatul Ulama University Lampung. Assist in collecting references, compiling articles, and content development.

Janeffa Astrid Endang Rahmadian – Student of the English Education Study Program, Nahdlatul Ulama University Lampung. Supporting the writing process through discussion, content elaboration, and final preparation for submissions.

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