

THE REPRESENTATION OF ISRAELI SOCIAL ACTORS IN REPUBLIKA'S ONLINE MEDIA: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS BASED ON THEO VAN LEEUWEN'S MODEL

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas representasi aktor sosial pada pemberitaan perang Israel dengan Iran dalam media online Republika pada periode Juni 2025. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan aktor sosial Israel dalam pemberitaan menggunakan pendekatan representasi aktor sosial, analisis wacana kritis model Theo van Leeuwen. Metode kualitatif deskriptif digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Pendekatan kualitatif berfungsi untuk memahami serta mendeskripsikan representasi aktor sosial dalam pemberitaan perang Israel dengan Iran di media online Republika secara komprehensif dan kontekstual. Sementara itu, pendekatan deskriptif melalui analisis bahasa dalam teks wacana digunakan untuk menjelaskan jenis atau bentuk-bentuk representasi aktor sosial berlandaskan teori Theo van Leeuwen. Sumber data pada penelitian ini adalah teks berita mengenai perang Israel dengan Iran dalam media online Republika. Pengumpulan data pada penelitian ini menggunakan metode pustaka, yaitu data yang didapatkan dari sumber tertulis. Data yang terjaring kemudian diberi kode, seperti sumber, penulis, dsb. Validitas data diuji dengan triangulasi data menggunakan studi dokumen yang sesuai berkaitan dengan pilihan leksikal dan representasi aktor sosial. Sedangkan teknik analisis pada penelitian ini menggunakan teknik analisis distribusional, yaitu metode analisis yang menjadi alat penentunya adalah bahasa itu sendiri. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media online Republika memberikan aktor-aktor sosial Israel seperti negara Israel, perdana menteri Benjamin Netanyahu, dan pejabat Israel secara eksplisit dengan lebih banyak merepresentasikannya menggunakan strategi inklusi seperti Determinasi-Indeterminasi, Nominasi-Identifikasi, dan Nominasi-Kategorisasi, Objektivasi-Abstraksi, Diferensiasi-Indiferensiasi, dan Asimilasi-Individualisasi, sehingga pembaca mengetahui dengan jelas apa yang dilakukan aktor-aktor tersebut. Temuan ini menunjukkan peran penting media dalam menyampaikan informasi dan mereproduksi realitas untuk pembaca.

Kata Kunci: analisis wacana kritis, representasi aktor sosial, Theo van Leeuwen, Republika

Abstract

This research examines the representation of social actors in the news coverage of the Israel-Iran war in the online media outlet Republika during June 2025. This study aims to describe the social actors of Israel in the news using the social actor representation approach, the critical discourse analysis model by Theo van Leeuwen. A qualitative, descriptive method was used in this research. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method. The qualitative approach serves to comprehensively and contextually understand and describe the representations of social actors in news coverage of the war between Israel and Iran in the online media outlet Republika. Meanwhile, the descriptive approach, through linguistic analysis of the textual discourse, is used to explain the types or forms of social actor representations based on Theo van Leeuwen's theory. The data source for this study is news text regarding the war between Israel and Iran in the online media outlet Republika. Data collection in this study used the literature review method, namely, data obtained from written sources. The collected data was then coded, such as source, author, etc. Data validity was tested through data triangulation using relevant document studies related to lexical choices and the representation of social actors. The research results show that the online media Republika explicitly reports on Israeli social actors such as the state of Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Israeli officials by representing them more thoroughly through inclusion strategies such as Determination-Indetermination, Nomination-Identification, Nomination-Categorization, Objectivation-Abstraction, Differentiation-Indifferentiation, and Assimilation-

Individualization, so that readers clearly understand what these actors are doing. These findings highlight the important role of the media in conveying information and reproducing reality for readers.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis, social actor representation, Theo van Leeuwen, Republika*

1. INTRODUCTION

Israel launched an attack on Iran in June 2025 following its conflict with Hamas in Palestine. This direct conflict between Israel and Iran has drawn the attention of the world and the global media, as the conflict between the two could impact humanitarian, political, and security stability in the Middle East. The issue of Iran's nuclear program arose because it was considered a threat to global security and Israel's existence in the Middle East, thus serving as the reason for Israel's direct attack on Iran that June. (Setiawan, 2025).

This war between Israel and Iran has been reported by various media outlets in many countries as a news narrative. A narrative can be oral or written and possesses coherence, continuity, and meaning. A narrative also aims to convey the ideas, concepts, or messages that the author wishes to communicate to the reader (Rahmawati & Zakiyah, 2021). In addition, institutions also use exclusion and the definition of discourse as a means of gaining power (Pratama et al., 2022). The language used in mass media reporting also aims to convey a specific ideology through sentence structure, word choice, and the social actors who are featured or omitted (Ghassemi & Hemmatgosha, 2019).

The media and language are two elements that shape reality. This reality is shaped in accordance with the interests of certain centers of power, which are also linked to the survival of the media itself. In this context, the media actually occupies an ambiguous position, as it has the capacity to exert both "positive" and "negative" impacts. Naturally, this normative nature is closely tied to the interests it represents. The mass media have developed a power that

must be acknowledged based on the various possibilities at hand (Susetyo & Dzarna, 2024).

This war between Israel and Iran naturally involves the social actors responsible for the conflict, such as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. According to van Dijk (1998), the language used by the mass media frames social actors in news coverage to establish and maintain ideological dominance, while subtly shaping the public's judgments and perceptions of an event (van Dijk, 1998).

The online media outlet Republika was selected as the source for research on news coverage of the war between Israel and Iran from June 13 to 24, 2025. Republika is a media outlet founded on Islamic values that views global events from the perspective of moral values and a sense of solidarity with Muslim nations (Muthaqin et al., 2021). This was prompted by the founding of Republika alongside the Islamic organization the Association of Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI), marking the resurgence of Islam in Indonesia (Tabroni, 2024). Therefore, Republika's media background has the potential to influence its coverage of Israel's war with Iran.

This study focuses on the social actors covered by the mass media in reports on the war between Israel and Iran; therefore, Theo van Leeuwen's (2008) theory of social actor representation is used to analyze the data in this study. Theo van Leeuwen's discourse analysis stems from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, which views language not merely as a tool for communication but also as a social practice related to power relations and the dissemination of ideology. Van Leeuwen emphasizes his analytical model on how social

actors are represented through two approaches: exclusion and inclusion.

Critical discourse analysis views language as an element linked to action, not merely a linguistic study. Through this approach, it becomes evident that social groups compete with one another for power by utilizing language (Wahyuni et al., 2024). According to Hafidzah et al., critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a theory that seeks to interpret a text by examining social phenomena to identify specific interests. This approach is one way to critically analyze discourse to uncover the meanings it contains (Hafidzah et al., 2024).

In addition to the primary analytical approach using social actor representation theory, the influence of media ideology will also be examined in the mass media's coverage of the war. Nur argues that one of the objectives of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is to examine the power relations and ideologies embedded in language (Nur, 2019). Therefore, Louis Althusser's theory of ideology, the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA), through which social institutions and practices seek to instill and reproduce the dominant ideology, is employed to complement this study (Althusser, 2014).

Research on Critical Discourse Analysis has been extensively conducted by other researchers, with diverse contexts and focuses. Mustofa, Zawawi, Jambak, Ghufon, Fadhila, and Wirmansyah (2025), conducted a similar study on Iran's attacks on Israel during the conflict before June 2025, using a social actor representation approach, but their research was limited to an analysis of inclusion strategies alone. Second, Izzahurrohman, Darmayanti, and Lukman (2025), conducted a study of social actors in the media coverage of the normalization of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, focusing on two foreign media outlets. Third, Damanhoury, Saleh, and Lebovic (2025), researched media coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

approach. Building on this previous research, the researcher sought to present a new study; first, this study selected national media outlets for analysis in relation to global events. Second, this study combines Theo van Leeuwen's Critical Discourse Analysis theory with Louis Althusser's media ideology theory. Therefore, it is hoped that this study can contribute to the body of linguistic research, particularly critical discourse analysis, in Indonesia.

The purpose of this study is to examine the representation of Israeli social actors in news coverage of the war between Israel and Iran in the online media outlet *Republika*, using Theo van Leeuwen's critical discourse analysis framework. Specifically, this study aims to identify and classify the strategies of social actor representation, whether exclusion or inclusion, used in news texts. Additionally, the study aims to identify patterns of representation regarding social actors and how these patterns influence the construction of meaning and ideology within media discourse.

2. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method, using a critical discourse analysis approach. Qualitative research is a scientific research method that differs from quantitative approaches. Although the processes are similar, qualitative research emphasizes textual and visual data and employs a variety of research designs. (Creswell, 2014). This study is also descriptive in nature, meaning it explains how data-related issues were resolved and concludes with a summary of findings. The data for this study were sourced from the online media outlet *Republika* regarding the Israel-Iran conflict.

In this study, data collection was conducted using the literature review method, which involves gathering data from written sources such as magazines, newspapers, novels, and so on. The collected data was then annotated with the source (book, newspaper title, etc.),

author, line number, page number, and column number (for newspapers or magazines) (Nur, 2019). Using this method, the researchers collected several news articles covering the Israel-Iran war that were published online by *Republika* between June 13 and 24, 2025.

During the data collection process for this study, the researcher accessed the online media outlet *Republika* and entered keywords related to the Israel-Iran war. The researcher then selected articles relevant to the study's theme. Over the 12 days the war lasted, the researcher selected one article each day. The selected articles were then copied into Microsoft Word and assigned data codes, consisting of a number, the online media source, and the article's publication date.

The validity of the data in this study was tested using data triangulation in the form of a document analysis approach. Document analysis is a planned process for examining and evaluating documents, whether in physical or digital form. Like other analytical approaches in qualitative research, document analysis requires the examination and interpretation of data to derive evidence-based meaning, insights, and knowledge. Document analysis is often used in conjunction with other qualitative research techniques as a strategy for triangulation, combining various approaches to study the same phenomenon (Bowen, 2009).

The analytical technique used in this study is a distributional analysis technique, which is a method of analysis in which the language itself, such as words, syntactic functions, and so on, serves as the determining factor (Nur, 2019). The Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach, based on Theo van Leeuwen's model (2008), was used as a data analysis tool in this study, specifically to examine the representation of social actors through two approaches: exclusion and inclusion strategies.

In addition to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Theo van Leeuwen's model, Louis Althusser's theory of discourse ideology,

specifically the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA), is also used to examine the ideology of the media in question, thereby producing specific news coverage regarding the representation of social actors in the news.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This discussion of the representation of Israeli social actors in news coverage of the war with Iran employs Theo van Leeuwen's Critical Discourse Analysis approach. Research data were obtained by identifying social actors appearing in news texts, which were then analyzed using strategies of social actor representation, namely exclusion and inclusion. Subsequently, the collected data were reduced and categorized based on strategies, such as determination, identification, categorization, and other forms, within the applied theoretical framework. The results of this classification were then systematically organized into tables to facilitate the mapping of the identified representation patterns. Through this process, the study not only identifies the types of strategies employed but also reveals trends in the representation of Israeli social actors in the analyzed news coverage.

Table 1. Data Classification

No	Strategy	Israel
Exclusion		
1	Passivation	-
2	Nominalization	4
3	Non-finite clause	-
Inclusion		
1	Differentiation-Indifferentiation	5
2	Objecivation-Abstraction	20
3	Nomination-Categorization	26
4	Nomination-Identification	37
5	Determination-Indetermination	65
6	Assimilation-Individualization	19
7	Assosiation-Dissosiation	-

Referring to the findings from Republika's online media presented in Table 1, the strategy of determination was more dominant in reporting on Israel. This can be seen from the data collected: 63 instances involved the strategy of determination, while only 2 instances involved the strategy of indeterminacy. This finding indicates that the online media outlet Republika aims to clearly portray Israeli social actors as specific and identifiable entities, such as by naming individuals, their positions, or their institutional affiliations, so that readers can clearly understand who these social actors are and what they did during the 12-day war with Iran.

In contrast to the strategy of determination, the fact that only two instances of the strategy of indeterminacy were identified indicates that the obscuring of Israeli social actors was minimal. The instances of the strategy of indeterminacy were limited to general references such as "Israeli officials," without any specific labeling, and their very small number pales in comparison to the dominant strategy of determination.

Other findings indicate that the identification strategy was also used quite frequently, with 37 instances representing Israeli actors. This strategy was implemented through the use of evaluative terms such as "colonization or occupation," which refers to the act of seizing, controlling, and ruling over a region or country. Additionally, "enemy," meaning an adversary (ranging from competition to war), and "aggression" refer to acts of physical or psychological attack against another party. The use of these terms is not merely a matter of naming the actors but goes further to convey specific judgments, thereby shaping the image of Israel and establishing a particular framework of meaning. This identification strategy in portraying Israeli actors is not merely descriptive but also evaluative. Such labeling indirectly guides readers to understand Israel's actions within the context of a conflict fraught with

values such as oppression, violence, and injustice. Therefore, the identification strategy serves to construct a discourse that positions Israel in a specific light while revealing ideological biases in the news coverage under examination.

The findings on objectivation strategies in Republika's online media use 20 data points to represent Israeli actors. This strategy demonstrates how Israel's actions are focused on objects or outcomes, such as attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, military sites, and civilian areas, as well as the resulting death toll. This strategy indicates that news coverage does not always directly feature Israeli actors; instead, it highlights the concrete consequences of their actions. This indirectly links the actions to Israeli actors while providing insight into the extent of the damage and the impact of the attacks.

The results of the study on exclusion strategies indicate that four instances were identified in which the strategy of "nominalization" was used to represent Israeli social actors, a practice that can be considered relatively limited. The strategy of nominalization is used to transform actions into events without identifying the perpetrators. According to Theo van Leeuwen, nominalization is used to obscure or reduce the visibility of actors to shift attention to the action itself, rather than to who is performing it. However, given the number of exclusion strategies employed, the online media outlet Republika tends to present Israeli actors directly rather than obscuring them through abstract actions. Thus, the actors' responsibility for the reported events remains relatively clear to readers.

Looking at the patterns evident in these online media reports, Israeli social actors are generally portrayed prominently. The dominance of inclusion strategies, such as determination, identification, and objectivation, along with the presence of exclusion strategies, indicates a representational tendency that positions Israel as a subject directly involved in the various actions

or events being reported. This pattern contributes to constructing the meaning of Israel's position and role in the interstate conflict that is the focus of the coverage.

Exclusion Strategy

Exclusion is a process of omitting groups or actors mentioned in news texts. It can alter how people view an issue and legitimize a particular perspective (Humaira et al., 2023). The exclusion strategies employed by Israeli social actors in Republika's online media, as shown in Table 1, were found only in the nominalization strategy, with a total of four instances. The findings from this data are presented below.

Table 2. Nominalization Strategies of Israeli Social Actors

No	Strategy	Text Excerpt
1	Nominalization	<i>Serangan</i> juga menysasar tempat tinggal para ilmuwan senior yang terlibat dalam program nuklir Iran. (2_Republika_14 Juni 2025)

In data entry 1 of Table 2, there is a text excerpt that demonstrates nominalization, which is the process of converting a verb into a noun (Kanita et al., 2023). This can be seen in the word "serangan," which functions as a noun, while its root is the verb "menyerang." The effect of this strategy is to remove the perpetrator of the attack and shift the reader's focus to the event itself, in this case, the fact that a senior Iranian nuclear scientist was the victim of the attack.

Inclusion Strategy

Inclusion is a critical discourse analysis technique related to the portrayal of actors or groups in news coverage (Yuliana et al., 2023). The inclusion strategies used to represent Israeli actors in Republika's online media in this study were found to be quite diverse. The following presents the data findings for each of these

inclusion strategies, organized into Table 3 (differentiation strategies), Table 4 (objectivation and abstraction strategies), Table 5 (nomination and categorization strategies), Table 6 (nomination and identification strategies), Table 7 (determination and indetermination strategies), and Table 8 (assimilation and individualization strategies).

Table 3. Differentiation strategies of Israeli social actors – the State of Israel

No	Strategy	Text Excerpt
2	Differentiation	Israel sebelumnya mengklaim menghancurkan fasilitas program nuklir Iran yang berkembang pesat. Namun sejumlah warga sipil Iran terenggut nyawanya akibat serangan tersebut, termasuk balita dan anak-anak. (3_Republika_15 Juni 2025)

Data point 2 in Table 3 contains a text excerpt describing a differentiation strategy that contrasts the stated objectives of the Israeli attack with its actual consequences. In the opening excerpt, Israel is portrayed as the party attacking Iran's nuclear facilities. However, in the subsequent section, the narrative shifts to the civilian casualties resulting from the Israeli attack. This highlights the discrepancy between the stated objectives of the attack and its actual consequences on the ground.

Table 4. Objectivation and Abstraction Strategies of Israeli Social Actor – the State of Israel

No	Strategy	Text Excerpt
3	Objectivation	Serangan Israel juga menysasar Kota Natanz, di selatan Teheran, yang merupakan lokasi fasilitas pengayaan uranium utama Iran. Selain itu di Kota Tabriz, barat laut Teheran, tempat ledakan dilaporkan terjadi di dekat pusat penelitian nuklir dan dua

	pangkalan militer. Serangan juga dilancarkan ke Isfahan, selatan Teheran; Kota Arak, barat daya Teheran; dan Kota Kermanshah, sebelah barat Teheran (1_Republika_13 Juni 2025)
4	Abstraction Iran menanggapi dengan serangkaian serangan rudal yang menyebabkan <i>kehancuran yang belum pernah terjadi sebelumnya</i> di beberapa kota di Israel. (11_Republika_23 Juni 2025)

Data point 3 in Table 4 presents information on objectivation strategies, which refer to information provided by actors about an event in the form of clear instructions without ambiguity (Syafuruddin et al., 2021). It has been accurately and concretely reported that Israel has carried out attacks on verifiable targets and locations, such as the cities of Natanz, Tabriz, Isfahan, Arak, and Kermanshah, as well as nuclear facilities and military bases. Within Theo van Leeuwen’s framework, objectivation is defined as a strategy that presents the actions of social actors concretely, such as the names of specific individuals or groups and facts whose veracity can be verified. In the quoted sentence above, the online media outlet Republika does not mention human casualties; instead, the report specifically and clearly identifies the physical and geographical targets that were attacked. This indicates that the discourse focuses more on the strategic, military, and infrastructure aspects, as well as the affected locations.

In data point 4, the phrase “kehancuran yang belum pernah terjadi sebelumnya” exemplifies the abstraction strategy used in that sentence. Theo van Leeuwen states that abstraction occurs when reality is depicted through non-concrete concepts or descriptions. By using the term “kehancuran,” the focus shifts from specific actions and the actors involved to broader effects. Furthermore, the use of the

phrase “yang belum pernah terjadi sebelumnya” heightens the dramatic and critical impact of the representation, giving readers an understanding of the extent of the damage caused.

Table 5. Nomination and Categorization Strategies of Israeli Social Actors – Israeli Officials

No	Strategy	Text Excerpt
5	Nomination and Categorization	<i>Menteri Pertahanan Israel Katz</i> mengatakan dia telah mengumumkan situasi darurat di seluruh negeri karena tindakan Israel di Iran. (1_Republika_13 Juni 2025)

In data point 5 of Table 6, the sentence combines categorization and nomination strategies in describing the Israeli social actor. The use of the phrase “Menteri Pertahanan” reflects a categorization strategy, as the actor is described based on their position or social role within the government structure. On the other hand, the mention of the name “Katz” is an example of nomination, which presents the actor specifically as an individual. The word “Israel” also serves as a determiner that clarifies the actor’s affiliation. The combination of these three strategies indicates that the actor is not only clearly identified but also granted legitimacy through their official title, thereby reinforcing the authority and credibility of the statements presented in the text.

Table 6. Nomination and Identification Strategies of Israeli Social Actors – the Israeli Military

No	Strategy	Text Excerpt
6	Nomination dan Identification	Perdana Menteri Israel <i>Benjamin Netanyahu</i> , yang dicari oleh <i>Pengadilan Kriminal Internasional atas kejahatan perang di Gaza</i> , akan mengadakan pertemuan malam ini untuk menilai situasi dan melanjutkan serangan terhadap Iran, lapor lembaga penyiaran tersebut.

	(11_Republika_23 Juni 2025)
7	Identification Pasukan <i>penjajahan</i> Israel (IDF) mengonfirmasi bahwa mereka telah meluncurkan kampanye udara melawan program nuklir Iran. (1_Republika_13 Juni 2025)

Data point 6 in Table 6 portrays Benjamin Netanyahu through a combination of naming and identification strategies. The use of the name “Benjamin Netanyahu” reflects a naming strategy, as the individual is introduced by name. On the other hand, the clause “yang dicari oleh Pengadilan Kriminal Internasional atas kejahatan perang di Gaza” constitutes a form of identification. In the context of Theo van Leeuwen’s theory, identification can emerge through clauses that attribute specific characteristics to an individual. These clauses serve to attach a negative evaluative meaning to Netanyahu. Thus, the individual is not only personally identified but also ideologically framed. This demonstrates that the representation of an individual is constructed in a complex manner through a combination of complementary strategies.

In data point 7 of Table 6, the sentence portrays Israel as a social actor through a strategy of identification, as evidenced by the use of the phrase “pasukan penjajahan Israel.” From Theo van Leeuwen’s perspective, identification serves to apply labels that carry evaluative and ideological weight to the actor. The term “penjajahan” is not neutral; rather, it carries an evaluation that positions Israel as the party engaging in illegal acts of control. Thus, the actor is not merely portrayed as a military institution but is also depicted negatively through word choices that reinforce the ideological meaning constructed within the news report.

Table 7. Determination and Indetermination Strategies of Israeli social actors—the military and Israeli officials

No	Strategy	Text Excerpt
8	Determination	<i>Militer Israel</i> akhirnya melakukan serangan udara ke Iran. Ledakan dilaporkan terdengar di Teheran sementara sirine meraung-raung di seantero Israel. (1_Republika_13 Juni 2025)
9	Indetermination	Pada Rabu, harian Maariv melaporkan bahwa <i>para pejabat Israel</i> tengah bersiap untuk kemungkinan menyerang Fordow tanpa harus menunggu persetujuan dari AS. (10_Republika_22 Juni 2025)

Data point 8 in Table 7 demonstrates a strategy of determination, as evidenced by the explicit and specific identification of social actors, namely “Militer Israel” and “Israel.” From Theo van Leeuwen’s perspective, determination refers to the way actors are explicitly presented, such that their identities are neither concealed nor generalized. The mention of “the Israeli military” indicates the clarity of the institution as the primary perpetrator of the action, while the use of “Israel” in the subsequent section affirms the state’s affiliation with the event. In this way, the representation of the actor in this sentence is clear and direct, allowing readers to easily identify the party responsible for the reported action.

Data point 9 in Table 7 shows a strategy of indetermination, evident in the use of the phrase “para pejabat Israel” to represent a social group. In van Leeuwen’s context, indeterminacy refers to the mention of actors without specification or anonymity, so that individual identities are not clearly revealed. This phrase does not include specific names or titles but merely refers to a general group, so individuals

cannot be personally identified. Nevertheless, the mention of “Israel” still indicates national affiliation, without specifying who is directly involved. Therefore, the strategy of indeterminacy in this sentence serves to obscure the actors’ identities while maintaining an impression of authority through reference to the group of officials.

Table 8. Assimilation and Individualization Strategies of Israeli social actors - Israeli officials

No	Strategy	Text Excerpt
10	Assimilation	<i>Para pejabat</i> Israel mengatakan mereka “menghadapi tingkat ancaman yang belum pernah terjadi sebelumnya,” (12_Republika_24 Juni 2025)
11	Individualization	Perdana Menteri <i>Benjamin Netanyahu</i> , yang menjadikan penghancuran program nuklir Iran sebagai prioritas utamanya, (3_Republika_15 Juni 2025)

Data 10 in Table 8 illustrates an assimilation strategy evident in the use of the phrase “para pejabat” to represent social actors. From Theo van Leeuwen’s perspective, assimilation means presenting actors as a collective group rather than as specific individuals. The use of the word “para” indicates a plural form that integrates various individuals into a single unit, so that the personal identities of each actor are obscured. In this way, the representation positions the actors as a collective entity voicing a shared position, thereby giving the impression that the statements made carry greater legitimacy and authority.

Data No. 11 in Table 8: In that sentence, Benjamin Netanyahu is portrayed through a strategy of individualization, evident in the

reference to the actor as a specific individual rather than as a member of a group. Individualization, according to Theo van Leeuwen, differs from assimilation, which presents social actors as a collective. Individualization refers to the way social actors are portrayed as identifiable single entities. By mentioning “Benjamin Netanyahu,” the reader focuses on the actor’s role in the events being discussed. Therefore, this approach serves to enhance accountability and highlight the actor’s role as the primary decision-maker for the actions mentioned above.

DISCUSSION

As a media outlet with historical ties to the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association (ICMI), the news presented by Republika cannot be separated from the social and institutional context underpinning it. Through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis, this institutional background plays a role in shaping how the media constructs reality through discourse. This connection can influence the patterns of representation of social actors in the news, including how international conflicts are understood and presented to readers.

Given Republika’s background and its close ties to Islamic issues, news coverage representing Israeli social actors exhibits certain tendencies that are not entirely neutral; rather, they are shaped through strategies of inclusion and exclusion that produce specific meanings. According to the strategies of determination and identification frequently observed in this study, Israeli actors are consistently presented through the mention of their names, titles, and institutional affiliations. These statements indicate a tendency to affirm the actors’ presence while clarifying who is responsible for the various reported actions. According to Critical Discourse Analysis, such clarity regarding the actors influences how readers perceive the main perpetrators of the conflict.

The findings of previous studies also reached the same conclusion regarding the portrayal of Israeli social actors. Strategies of determination and other inclusion strategies were clearly and frequently employed in news articles published by Al-Arabiya and BBC Arabic online (Mustofa et al., 2025). The same findings were also reported by the online media outlet Al-Riyadh; an inclusion strategy is explicitly implemented in the text (Izzahurrohman et al., 2025). Nevertheless, there is a fairly significant difference: while previous studies tended to focus more on the variety of strategies used to portray social actors, this study highlights the frequent use of evaluative labels, as evidenced by the high frequency of identification and categorization.

The differences revealed by these studies suggest that the representation of social actors is not always related to their frequency and prominence in the text, but also to how they are ideologically portrayed through lexical choices. According to Susetyo & Dzarna (2024), social reality, as well as its positive and negative effects, can be constructed through two components: the media and language. Therefore, this study not only confirms previous findings regarding the high frequency of inclusion strategies but also broadens the perspective by examining the evaluative aspects of the representation of social actors in the discourse.

Evaluative lexical choices such as “musuh,” “penjajahan,” “pendudukan,” and “agresi” carry ideological connotations that tend to portray Israel in a negative light, thereby shaping specific perceptions among readers. Furthermore, how individuals interpret events, whether by emphasizing military aspects or obscuring the perpetrators in specific situations, is influenced by the use of objectivation strategies that highlight the targets of attacks, such as facilities and territories, as well as terms like “serangan.”

The lexical choices used by the online media outlet Republika to describe Israel, such as

“penjajahan,” “pendudukan,” and “agresi”, are linked to the global discourse. Through a document analysis using data validity triangulation, referencing official UN documents, Francesca Albanese, as an official UN rapporteur, stated that Israel’s actions amount to genocide in Gaza (Albanese, 2024), which, historically and legally, is highly likely to have served as the basis for the online media outlet Republika in selecting the terminology used to represent Israeli social actors. The same applies to the identification strategy in Data 6, which was applied to the Israeli Prime Minister as a person who has committed war crimes in Gaza. This is based on an official letter issued by the International Criminal Court to Netanyahu, who is accused of committing genocide in Gaza (International Criminal Court, 2024).

Concerning all instances of this strategy in this study, the representation of Israeli social actors indicates that these actors are not only portrayed as the main protagonists in various events, but are also constructed using specific labels that prompt readers to interpret them. According to Van Leeuwen (2008), the strategy of determination clearly represents social actors, whether as individuals or groups. Therefore, Israeli actors are explicitly positioned in the news as the subjects responsible for events. Meanwhile, the strategy of identification serves to provide explanations regarding actors and categorizations that have the effect of imposing certain stereotypes on the actors (Van Leeuwen, 2008). It has constructed an image of Israeli actors in the discourse. Consequently, the resulting representations tend not to be neutral and place Israeli actors in a specific position in news coverage of the ongoing war.

This research can be further analyzed from Louis Althusser’s perspective on media ideology. Althusser views the media as part of the State Ideological Apparatus (ISA), and its function is to disseminate ideology through discourse. In this context, the media serves not

only as a conveyor of information but also as a tool that subtly shapes readers' perspectives on the social world. As Devit and Ridwan argue (2023), the media have the power to influence public opinion, shape views, attract attention, and shape attitudes and perceptions, as well as interpret reality.

The explicit inclusion of Israeli actors in the strategy of determination, combined with the critical use of identification strategies such as "penjajahan," "agresi," and "zionis," indicates that the constructed discourse is part of an ideologization process. The media indirectly guide readers to understand the conflict within a specific framework through these lexical choices and representational structures. Consequently, the resulting meaning is not neutral, but has been constructed through ideological practices.

This process can be viewed as an interpellation within Althusser's framework, in which readers are "called upon" to adopt a specific subject position in interpreting the reported events. Readers are positioned as parties who agree with or accept the construction of meaning presented through the representation of Israeli actors, which tends to be both clear and critical. Consequently, ideology operates coercively through language and discourse that appear natural. Consequently, readers are unaware that the meanings they form are products of the media's ideological construction. This demonstrates that news reporting not only records what happens but also actively participates in shaping social reality within a specific ideological framework.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the media not only conveys information but also helps construct social reality through the representation of social actors. The presence of a specific ideological stance in news reporting is evidenced by the tendency to explicitly portray actors while simultaneously

assigning them evaluative labels. Therefore, the discourse not only describes events but also provides readers with a specific understanding of the conflicts that occur.

These findings also indicate that the online media outlet *Republika* functions as a discursive practice that produces a specific ideology. Louis Althusser (2014) views the media as part of the State's Ideological Apparatus, which shapes readers' consciousness through the mechanisms of language and representation. In addition to a tendency to employ strategies of determination that emphasize the actor, the identification of the actor with critical labels such as "penjajahan," "pendudukan," and "agresi" indicates a framing that leans toward an anti-colonial ideology in its portrayal of Israel.

Overall, the results show that Israel is portrayed in the news as the dominant, active party responsible for various military actions. Furthermore, evaluative labels associate the country with a negative image. Identification strategies that use terms such as "penjajahan," "pendudukan," "agresif," and "zionis" create a non-neutral image. Conversely, the dominant determination strategy affirms Israel's presence as the primary actor. Furthermore, the application of nominalization and objectivation strategies influences the understanding of events by emphasizing the aspects of the attacks and their consequences. Overall, this representation creates an image of Israel as an aggressive military power operating within a colonial discourse, thereby reinforcing specific ideological interpretations in the analyzed news coverage.

This study is expected to contribute to the development of Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly regarding Theo van Leeuwen's concept of social actors in online media. Additionally, this study can serve as a reference for future research on media representations of international conflicts. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that future studies compare the representation of social actors in

media with different ideological backgrounds, in order to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the discourse construction related to international news coverage, particularly regarding international conflicts.

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