

**Attitude Realization in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's
Doctoral Program: An Appraisal Analysis****Namira Az-Zahra¹ ✉, T. Thyrhaya Zein², Muhammad Yusuf³**^{1,2,3}Master's Program in Linguistics, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Sumatera Utara,
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Article Info	Abstract
<i>Article History:</i> Received 9 March 2026 Approved 24 April 2026 Published 30 April 2026 Keywords: <i>attitude, academic legitimacy, evaluative language, media discourse, Tempo.co</i>	News reporting does not merely convey facts but also realizes social evaluation through linguistics choices employed in news texts. This study analyzes the realization of attitude in the news coverage of Tempo.co concerning the controversy surrounding Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program and to reveal how evaluative patterns represents the media's stance toward the actors and intitutions involved in the debate over academic legitimacy. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach using discourse analysis based on Appraisal Theory, paticularly the attitude subsystem comprising affect, judgement, and appreciation. The data consist of 282 evaluative clauses identified in 25 news articles published between October 16, 2024, and March 22, 2025. The findings show that judgement is the most dominant type of attitude, occurring in 218 clauses (77%), followed by appreciation (45 clauses; 16%) and affect (19 clauses; 7%). The dominance of judgement indicates that the news frames the issue as matter of compliance with academic norms, scientific integrity, and institutional accountability. Most evaluations are realized through inscribed attitude and attributed to external sources possessing symbolic authority. These findings suggest that evaluative language in Tempo's reporting constructs a normative framework of academic legitimacy in the public sphere.

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INTRODUCTION

Online mass media plays a central role as the main source of public information in the development of society today. Advances in information technology have given rise to a rapid, massive, and easily accessible flow of news, including news about academic and higher education issues. However, this abundance of information does not necessarily guarantee neutral and objective understanding. The social reality presented by the media is always constructed through specific language choices that contain

perspectives, evaluations, and ideological positions.

From a linguistic perspective, the main issue with news reporting lies not only in the facts presented but also in how language is used to frame, assess, and interpret those facts. One example of this is the strategic use of evaluative language in news texts to shape public perception rather than maintain neutrality (Chalimah et al., 2023). The use of evaluative language in news texts is often presented in such a way that it appears to be a natural and unquestionable factual representation. Moral and normative evaluation of actors and events are often not presented as explicit

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opinions but are attached to terms, grammatical structures, and source citation strategies that appear objective (Sun, 2024; Liu, 2016; Wang, 2017). Thus, news language can function as a mechanism for normalizing certain social evaluations.

Media discourse is closely related to ideology and power. Media operate as ideological institutions that shape public understanding through selective representation and evaluative framing (Bhandari, 2025; Zaklama, 2025). In this context, evaluative framing plays a crucial role in constructing how events are perceived and judged.

The concept of academic legitimacy is central to this study. Academic legitimacy refers to the perceived validity and acceptability of academic processes based on institutional norms, procedural compliance, and meritocratic standards. However, legitimacy is socially constructed through discourse and influenced by symbolic power and institutional legitimacy theory (Buchanan et al., 1993; Byrd, 2019; Deephouse & Suchman, 2012). In media discourse, academic legitimacy is negotiated through evaluative representations that position actors and institutions as appropriate, problematic, or questionable. In this regard, academic legitimacy is closely related to public trust in academic governance and institutional accountability.

The mass media not only acts as a channel of information, but also as a social actor with symbolic authority in shaping public understanding (Muklis & Siregar, 2024). In line with van Dijk (2000) view, media with high social legitimacy have greater power to influence readers' perspectives on an issue. Evaluations presented in this type of media tend to be more easily accepted as valid understandings and normalized as reasonable perspectives.

This case provides a critical site for examining how academic legitimacy is discursively constructed through evaluative language in media discourse. It is evident in Tempo.co's online coverage of the controversy surrounding Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program. The case attracted public attention due to the relatively short duration of study and alleged

procedural irregularities. Bahlil Lahadalia, who served as Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources and Chairman of the Golkar party completed his doctoral program, within 1 year and 8 months. This duration sparked debate regarding procedures and institutional regulations (Juliansyah, 2024; Yusrial, 2024). The controversy escalated when the Mining Advocacy Network objected to the inclusion of its name in the dissertation followed by an ethics hearing conducted by the Board of Professors of Universitas Indonesia, which identified academic violations and imposed sanctions (Sulistya, 2024; Yusrial, 2025). These events are not merely presented as a factual chronology but are framed through evaluative language that constructs judgments about fairness, appropriateness, and academic legitimacy of the actors and institutions involved.

The coverage of this case reveals systematic evaluative patterns realized through specific linguistic choices. Actors are evaluated through expression such as *tidak wajar* 'unreasonable', *kurang tegas* 'indecisive', or *fokus dan rela* 'focused and willing' which show that the individuals in the news text are not only described factually but also evaluated based on academic norms, scientific integrity, and personal capacity. The events are constructed through terms such as *menuai polemik* 'reaping controversy' or *menuai sorotan* 'reaping attention', which frames them as problematic phenomena. Meanwhile, academic institutions are represented through procedural and legitimacy oriented language, such as *sesuai prosedur* 'in accordance with procedure' or *memenuhi syarat* 'meets requirements'. Interestingly, these evaluative meaning are often realized implicitly, creating an impression of objectivity while simultaneously guiding readers toward particular interpretations. This indicates that media discourse represents events and constructs evaluative frameworks that shape public perceptions of academic legitimacy.

In the context of this controversy, Tempo.co became one of the online media outlets that consistently reported on developments in the case of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program. As part of

the Tempo media group, which is known for its tradition of investigative journalism and critical reputation towards those in power, Tempo.co has strong symbolic legitimacy in the Indonesian media sphere (Chan & Saragih, 2024; Mola, 2024). This character makes Tempo.co a relevant object for examining how evaluative language operates as an ideological mechanism in media trusted by the public. Evaluations that appear in media reporting with high legitimacy have the potential to be more easily accepted as a legitimate representation of reality.

Within systemic functional linguistics, language is understood as a social semiotic system that realizes ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The interpersonal metafunction, is particularly, relevant as it concerns how speakers or writers negotiate attitudes and positions. The appraisal framework developed by Martin & White (2005) provides a systematic approach to analyze evaluative meaning through the subsystem of attitude, which includes affect (expression of emotion), judgement (evaluation of behavior or character), and appreciation (evaluation of phenomena or objects). This framework enables the identification of how evaluation is linguistically realized and how it contributes to the construction of social meaning.

Previous studies have demonstrated the close relationship between language, ideology, and power in media discourse. Research has shown how media construct political reality through linguistic choices, particularly in electoral and policy related issues (Putri & Chasana, 2025; Rahadi, 2019; Rahman & Hamdani, 2023; Santoso et al., 2022). At the appraisal based studies have highlighted how evaluative resources (attitude, engagement, and graduation) function in constructing ideological meanings across political and media discourse (Cahyono et al., 2021; Likeyi & Han, 2025; Zhang & Pei, 2018). In parallel, these studies emphasize that ideology operates through evaluative framing, shaping how legitimacy and authority are constructed in public discourse (Freedden, 2021). This indicates that evaluative functions as a key discursive mechanism through

which ideological meanings are constructed and legitimized in media discourse. These perspectives position discourse as a key site where social reality, including institutional legitimacy is negotiated (Roslyng & Dindler, 2023).

Despite these developments research has rarely examined academic controversies as a distinct discursive domain. In particular, the role of evaluative language in constructing academic legitimacy especially through the attitude subsystem of appraisal remains underexplored. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the realization of attitude in Tempo.co's news coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program. By integrating appraisal analysis with perspectives on media ideology and institutional legitimacy, this study itself within broader interdisciplinary debates on how evaluative language constructs academic legitimacy in media discourse. By integrating appraisal analysis with perspectives on media ideology and institutional legitimacy this study contributes to broader interdisciplinary debates on how discourse constructs legitimacy, authority and social reality in the context of academic controversies.

Based on the above description, this study aims to analyze the realization of language attitudes in Tempo.co's news coverage on the Bahlil Lahadalia doctoral program case and reveal how these evaluative patterns represent the media's position towards the actors and institutions involved in the academic legitimacy polemic. Theoretically, this study expands the application of appraisal theory in Indonesian digital media studies on the issue of academic legitimacy. Methodologically, this study shows that systematic mapping of affect, judgement, and appreciation can provide a more accurate analytical basis for identifying media evaluative tendencies. Empirically, this study provides a description of the patterns of linguistic attitudes in Tempo.co's reporting while opening up new avenues of study in the realm of academic controversy as a discursive practice.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method within a discourse analysis framework. This approach is appropriate as the study aims to interpret evaluative meanings in news discourse and to provide an in depth analysis of linguistic phenomena. The research is grounded in appraisal theory particularly the attitude subsystem proposed by Martin & White, (2005).

The data consist of 282 evaluative clauses identified in 25 news articles published on Tempo.co between October 16, 2024, and March 22, 2025. The articles were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) the articles explicitly discuss the Bahlil Lahadalia doctoral program case, (2) the articles present evaluative content related to academic processes, actors, or institutions, and (3) the articles represent key developments in the controversy. Articles that only provide brief or purely informational reports without evaluative elements were excluded. The unit analysis in this study is the clause as it represents the minimal unit realizing experiential and interpersonal meaning in systemic functional linguistics. Evaluative clauses were identified based on the presence of linguistic indicators of attitude including evaluative adjectives (e.g. *tidak wajar* 'unreasonable'), mental or relational processes, and lexical items expressing judgement, affect, or appreciation. Each clause was then coded according to its attitude category (affect, judgement, appreciation) and its polarity (positive or negative).

Data collection was conducted using documentation and note-taking techniques (Herdiansyah, 2012; Sudaryanto, 2015). The procedures included: (1) retrieving relevant news articles using keywords such as "Bahlil Lahadalia" and "*gelar doktor*" through the Tempo.co search feature and Google operator (site:tempo.co), (2) downloading and organizing the data, (3) selecting articles based on the defined criteria, and (4) identifying and coding evaluative clauses.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the condensation stage, evaluative

clauses were selected and categorized. In the display stage, the data were organized into tables and supported by representative excerpts. In the final stage, the findings were interpreted to explain how evaluative patterns construct the media's position regarding academic legitimacy. To ensure reliability, the coding process was conducted systematically based on established Appraisal Theory criteria, and repeated coding was performed to maintain consistency. To minimize researcher bias, the analysis was guided strictly by theoretical definitions and supported by transparent coding procedures. In addition, theoretical triangulation was applied by comparing the findings with relevant studies in media discourse and evaluation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of attitudes realized through language choices in 25 online media news texts on tempo.co regarding the case of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program focused on identifying evaluative clauses as the main linguistic units that represent attitudes towards the actors, events, and processes reported, both from the journalists' narratives and from direct quotes from sources. Based on the overall data, 282 evaluative clauses were found to express attitudes in the news reports. These clauses were then classified into the attitude subsystem in Martin & White (2005) appraisal theory, which includes affect, judgement, and appreciation. The distribution of attitude types can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Distribution of Attitudes in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

No	Type of Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
1	Affect	19	7%
2	Judgement	218	77%
3	Appreciation	45	16%
	Total	282	100%

Table 1 shows that judgement is the most dominant type of attitude in Tempo.co's news coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program, reaching 218 clauses (77%) of the total evaluative clauses. The dominance of judgement indicates

that the case of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program is framed as a matter of social behavior and compliance with academic norms. And institutional responsibility rather than purely as an emotional or technical issue. The high frequency of judgement shows that Tempo.co's reporting systematically directs readers to assess the actions of actors, both individuals and institutions, in relation to values such as fairness, appropriateness, integrity, and compliance with academic rules.

In contrast, affect only appeared in 19 clauses (7%). This shows that the expression of feelings or emotions was relatively limited in the news coverage. Affect in this news coverage generally appeared in the form of concern, disappointment, or worry expressed by sources, especially academics and alumni. The low frequency of affect reflects Tempo.co's tendency to maintain emotional distance and prioritize rational and normative evaluation. Meanwhile, appreciation appeared in 45 clauses (16%) of the total evaluative clauses. Appreciation in this news report was used to assess the quality, value, or characteristics of non-human phenomena such as rector decisions, academic mechanisms, or editorial policies. The presence of appreciation served to frame events structurally and institutionally and to reinforce the narrative regarding the quality or problems of academic governance.

In addition to the type of attitude, evaluative clauses are also analyzed based on the polarity, explicitness, and appraiser. This serves to reveal the attitudes are positive or negative; whether they are explicitly stated or implied; and whether they are voiced by the journalist (writer-appraiser) or attributed to other sources (other-appraiser). These three aspects make it possible to trace how social evaluation is constructed explicitly and implicitly, as well as how the media manages the distribution of evaluative voices to shape certain perspectives on the social reality reported, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Distribution of Attitude Dimensions in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

No	Aspect	Device	Total	Percentage
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1	Attitude Polarity	Positive	103	37%
		Negative	179	63%
2	Explicitness	Invoked	101	36%
		Inscribed	181	64%
3	Appraiser	Media Online	38	13%
		Tempo.co		
		Other Appraiser	244	87%

Based on Table 2 above, it can be seen that in terms of attitude polarity, negative attitudes (63%) were more dominant than positive attitudes (37%). This dominance of negative attitudes cannot be directly interpreted as the media taking sides against certain individuals, but also reflects the focus of the news coverage on issues of academic procedure, alleged ethical violations, irregularities in the academic process, and so on. Positive attitudes in this reporting appear in the context of institutional defense, procedural legitimacy, and efforts to maintain academic objectivity, especially in statements by campus officials or government officials. Thus, this reporting presents a dynamic discourse between criticism and legitimacy. When viewed from the aspect of explicitness, evaluative clauses are more often realized through inscribed attitudes (64%) than invoked (36%). This shows that evaluations in Tempo.co's reporting are realized directly and explicitly, especially through the use of clear evaluative lexicon in source quotations. However, the existence of evaluative clauses that realize attitudes implicitly remains significant. This indicates that attitudes are also constructed through implicit strategies such as the presentation of information that directs readers to evaluative conclusions without direct statements.

Although inscribed attitudes are more dominant the presence of invoked attitudes remain significant. This apparent contrast does not indicate inconsistency but rather reflects a dual evaluative strategy. Explicit evaluations provide clear normative positioning, while implicit evaluations function to subtly guide readers toward particular interpretations without overtly stating judgement. This combination allows the media to balance evaluative force with the appearance of objectivity.

In terms of appraiser, most evaluative clauses came from external other appraiser (87%), while only 13% came from Tempo.co journalists' narratives. This shows that the journalistic strategy in this reporting placed social evaluation on the voices of other parties with symbolic authority, such as academics, alumni, officials, and official institutions. With this strategy, the media can convey strong criticism and evaluations while maintaining an image of objectivity and neutrality. Overall, this shows that the stance in Tempo.co's coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program case was realized systematically, predominantly through judgement, with a negative tone and sourced from authoritative social actors. This pattern is an important basis for understanding how the journalistic language in this reporting not only represents reality but also directs readers toward a certain way of interpreting academic, ethical, and institutional legitimacy issues.

These findings can be interpreted within a broader theoretical framework of media discourse and ideology. The dominance of judgement particularly negative social sanction indicates that evaluation functions as a discursive mechanism through which media construct normative expectations regarding academic legitimacy. In line with Fairclough (1995) such evaluative patterns are not neutral but reflect ideological positioning where language is used to naturalize particular standards of academic conduct.

Furthermore, the reliance on external appraisers with symbolic authority aligns with van Dijk's (2000) notion of elite discourse where dominant voices shape public cognition and define what is considered legitimate knowledge. In this sense, Tempo.co's reporting does not merely describe the controversy but actively constructs a framework through which academic legitimacy is judged and contested.

Affects in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

Based on the analysis of 25 Tempo.co news articles on Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program, 19 evaluative clauses expressing affect were identified, making affect the least frequent attitude

type compared to judgement and appreciation. This finding indicates that Tempo.co does not rely on emotional expression as the primary evaluative strategy but uses it selectively to frame particular events. Affective expressions appear mainly in news texts that highlight conflict, social reactions, or institutional responses. Most articles, especially those reporting procedural updates, investigation processes, or institutional clarifications, contain no affective language. This pattern suggests that Tempo.co maintains emotional distance in reporting and prioritizes rational and normative evaluation over emotional engagement.

The results of the affect analysis show that the affect in the coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program case in the online media Tempo.co is realized through various forms of emotional expression directed at the actors, processes, and social impacts of the academic events reported. The emotions that emerged were dominated by negative orientations, both in terms of unhappiness (8 clauses), insecurity (6 clauses), and dissatisfaction (2 clauses). Positive affect appears to a limited extent, mainly in the form of inclination (2 clauses) and satisfaction (1 clause) directed at institutional efforts or normative recommendations rather than at Bahlil's academic achievements themselves, as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Distribution of Affects in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

No	Affect Type	Polarity	Frequency
1	Dis/inclination	Positive	2
		Negative	-
2	Un/happiness	Positive	-
		Negative	8
3	In/security	Positive	-
		Negative	6
4	Dis/satisfaction	Positive	1
		Negative	2
Total			19

Based on Table 3 above, it can be seen that the most dominant subtype of affect is unhappiness, which includes expressions of disappointment, displeasure, and anger. This affect arises in the context of responses to the social impact of decisions or events reported in the news. This affect is realized through invoked affect and inscribed. Inscribed affect is realized through

lexicon such as *kaget* 'shocked', *kecewa* 'disappointed', *berang* 'angry', and so on. This affect of unhappiness not only reflects personal feelings but also represents a collective emotional reaction to the decision of the Universitas Indonesia.

The subtype of insecurity represents feelings of anxiety, restlessness, worry, or disturbance towards situations that are considered to disrupt the stability of shared values or norms. This affect is realized through lexicon such as *pertanyaan besar* 'big questions', *kekhawatiran* 'concerns', *prihatin* 'worries', and so on. These expressions indicate collective anxiety about the legitimacy of academic processes, particularly those related to publication practices, graduation procedures, and their implications for the integrity of higher education. This affect appears both explicitly through statements from sources such as the Professor at the Universitas Indonesia (UI), the Student Executive Board of Universitas Indonesia (BEM UI), and alumni, and implicitly through the narrative of Tempo.co journalists who frame the events as problematic without directly mentioning emotions. Thus, the affect of insecurity is not only personal but is constructed as a shared and normalized social feeling. Dissatisfaction appears as an affective form of critical evaluation toward institutional processes, particularly the Universitas Indonesia rector's policy on Bahlil Lahadalia's dissertation. Realized through the lexicon *menyayangkan* 'regret', it conveys rational dissatisfaction without questioning personal morality. This affect mainly emerges in academic criticism that views the decision as inconsistent with ethical recommendations.

Positive affect in the news appears in the subtype of satisfaction affect related to affective evaluation of the achievement of certain expectations or goals. The satisfaction affect found is realized through lexicon such as *menghargai* 'appreciate' and *mendukung* 'support'. This affect is directed at the steps taken by the Universitas Indonesia in handling the polemic over the legitimacy of obtaining a doctoral degree itself and the main actors in the case. Satisfaction affect is expressed by parties external to the institution,

such as Commission X of the Indonesian House of Representatives, which shows acceptance of the UI's procedures and institutional response. Thus, the emergence of positive affect serves to frame the normative recognition of the institution's actions, without weakening the fundamental and developing criticism in the news coverage as a whole.

The affect of inclination in this news coverage is prospective in nature, as it refers to something expected, desired, and pursued in the future. This affect is realized through the lexical item *berharap* 'hope', which signals a future oriented stance regarding the implementation of the recommended sanctions. This affect reflects a normative expectation and institutional anticipation that the recommendations of the Board of Professors will be followed up in accordance with the applicable regulations, rather than representing a personal emotional reaction to past events. In this context, the affect of inclination functions as an evaluative counterbalance by introducing a prospective and moral orientation. However, its occurrence remains limited and does not dominate the overall evaluative direction of the news coverage, which tends to be critical. This can be seen in the following data presentation.

- 1) Hasil putusan tersebut membuat berang banyak pihak (data 247).
- 2) Asosiasi alumni UI, bersama civitas akademika UI dan masyarakat yang prihatin atas skandal ini melayangkan tiga tuntutan (data 241).
- 3) Adapun dia menyayangkan keputusan rektor (data 224).
- 4) Selaku pimpinan Komisi X, ia menghargai dan mendukung langkah-langkah yang telah dilakukan UI (data 172).
- 5) DGB berharap Rektor UI akan menindaklanjuti rekomendasi sanksi sesuai peraturan yang berlaku (data 205)

Judgements in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

Based on the analysis of 25 Tempo.co news articles about Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program case, it was found that judgement was the most dominant attitude compared to affect and

appreciation. Of the total 282 evaluative clauses, 218 clauses (77%) expressed judgement in the form of social esteem and social sanction. This dominance indicates that Tempo.co frames the case primarily as a matter of behavior, capacity, normality, and the morality of the actors and the institution, rather than as an emotional or aesthetic issue. Judgements in the news coverage are largely negative, particularly when evaluating Bahlil's doctoral process, academic practices at the School of Startegis and Global Studies of Universitas Indonesia, and the rector's institutional decisions. Positive judgements appear mainly to mitigate criticism or affirm procedural legitimacy. Overall, Tempo.co constructs the case as a moral and institutional issue concerning academic integrity.

Judgements in this news coverage are divided into two main types: social esteem and social sanction, with a dominant tendency toward social sanction. Of the total 218 judgment clauses, 139 clauses realize social sanction while the other 79 evaluative clauses realize social esteem. This shows that this news report not only assesses the capacity or appropriateness of behavior, but more strongly highlights issues of ethics, integrity, and propriety in academic practice. This can be seen in detail in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Distribution of Judgements in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

No	Judgement Type	Judgement Subtype	Polarity	Frequency	
1	Social Esteem	Normality	Positive	11	
			Negative	20	
		Capacity	Positive	15	
			Negative	13	
		Tenacity	Positive	16	
			Negative	4	
2	Social Sanction	Veracity	Positive	6	
			Negative	13	
		Propriety	Positive	41	
			Negative	79	
		Total			218

Based on Table 4 above, it can be seen that in the type of social esteem, the most dominant subtype is normality with a total of 31 clauses consisting of 11 positive clauses and 20 negative clauses. The dominance of normality, which are mainly negative, shows that Tempo.co consistently frames this case as something that

deviates from common academic practice, particularly in relation to doctoral study periods that are considered too short. Normality function as an implicit mechanism for comparing actual practice with ideal academic norms, thereby creating an impression of irregularity. The negative judgment of normality in this news report is realized through the lexicon of *ketidakwajaran* 'unfairness', quantitative information such as *1 tahun 8 bulan atau 3 semester* '1 year and 8 months or 3 semesters', and so on. Meanwhile, positive judgments of normality are realized through the lexicon *wajar* 'appropriate' sourced from the Secretary General of the Golkar Party, while the object being assessed is directed at scientific work in general, not directly at Bahlil Lahadalia's dissertation. Thus, this strategy shows that positive judgments of normality are framed within the realm of normative generalization, so that the issue under debate is positioned as part of common academic practice.

The next subtype of social esteem is capacity, with a total of 28 evaluative clauses, consisting of 15 positive clauses and 13 negative clauses. This judgement is directed at both Bahlil as an individual actor and the Universitas Indonesia as the manager of the academic process. The relatively balanced distribution of positive and negative clauses in this sub-type indicates the dynamic discourse between institutional defense and public criticism of the ability of actors and institutions to maintain academic standards. Negative judgments of capacity are realized through lexicon such as *tidak biasa* 'unusual', *tidak mampu* 'incapable', and so on. Meanwhile, positive judgments are realized through lexicon such as *layak* 'worthy', which indicates that Bahlil is considered to have the competence, capability, and intellectual worthiness to hold a doctoral degree according to his examination team.

Furthermore, judgment of tenacity emerged as a subtype with the lowest frequency in social esteem, namely 20 evaluative clauses (16 positive and only 4 negative). The dominance of positive tenacity shows that when this aspect is raised, Tempo.co tends to reproduce narratives about the efforts, commitment, and seriousness of the actors,

especially through direct quotes from Bahlil or statements from supporting parties. However, the low frequency of this subtype compared to normality and capacity indicates that tenacity is not the main focus in the evaluation of the case, but is complementary or defensive in nature. Judgments of tenacity are realized through lexicon such as *fokus dan rela* 'focused and willing', *kompak* 'united', *kurang tegas* 'lacking firmness' and so on.

In terms of social sanction, the sub-type of propriety is the most dominant with a total of 120 evaluative clauses, consisting of 40 positive clauses and 80 negative clauses. The high number of judgements of propriety confirms that this case is framed primarily as an issue of ethics and academic governance, not merely a technical or administrative issue. Judgements of propriety include evaluations of the rector's decisions, the Board of Professors' recommendation, supervisory practices, and even the special treatment allegedly given to Bahlil. Judgements of propriety in this news report are realized through lexicon such as *adanya kesalahan* 'there was a mistake', *digoreng* 'politicized', *menghormati* 'respect', and so on.

Meanwhile, the veracity appeared least frequently in social sanction, with 19 evaluative clauses (6 positive and 13 negative). The relatively low frequency of veracity indicates that the main issue in the news was not simply a matter of factual right or wrong, but rather the ethical appropriateness and moral implications of the actions and decisions taken. However, the dominance of negative values in the veracity indicates doubt and suspicion regarding the transparency, honesty, and consistency of the information conveyed by the parties involved. This type of judgement is realized through lexicon such as *ketidakjujuran* 'dishonesty', *bertentangan* 'contradiction', *informasi yang benar* 'correct information' and so on.

Overall, the distribution of judgements based on subtype shows that Tempo.co constructs its discourse by placing social sanction, particularly propriety, as the main axis of evaluation, supported by social esteem in the form of normality and capacity. This can be seen in the following data presentation.

- 6) *UI mengakui adanya kesalahan dari pihak universitas dalam pemberian gelar doktor terhadap Bahlil Lahadalia* (data 131).
- 7) *Sarmuji mengatakan bahwa persoalan ini menjadi besar hanya karena digoreng dalam isu politik* (data 231).
- 8) *Dosen Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik UI, Andrinof Chaniago, menilai ada ketidakwajaran dalam perolehan gelar tersebut* (data 43).
- 9) *Bahlil membutuhkan waktu sekitar 1 tahun 8 bulan atau 3 semester untuk bisa mengikuti Sidang Promosi Doktor* (data 12).
- 10) *Bila rektor UI dan anggota Majelis Wali Amanat (MWA) tidak mampu bersikap tegas silakan mengundurkan diri* (data 243)

Appreciations in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

Based on the results of the appraisal system analysis, particularly the appreciation subsystem, Tempo.co's news coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program shows a pattern of evaluation of academic products and mechanisms such as dissertations, journal publications, academic processes, institutional decisions, and the impact of academic policies. Therefore, the appreciation in this news coverage shows that Tempo.co also positions the Bahlil controversy as a structural academic problem rather than merely an individual issue. Of the 282 evaluative clauses analyzed, 45 (16%) realize appreciation. Although less dominant than judgement, appreciation plays a strategic role in framing the academic legitimacy and institutional quality of Universitas Indonesia. Dominated by negative evaluations, appreciation constructs Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral case as a structural academic issue affecting institutional values and higher education integrity, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Distribution of Appreciations in Tempo.co's News Coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's Doctoral Program

No	Appreciation Type	Appreciation Subtype	Polarity	Frequency
1	Reaction	Impact	Positive	-
			Negative	-
		Quality	Positive	-
			Negative	3

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2	Composition	Balance	Positive	-
			Negative	-
3	Valuation	Complexity	Positive	-
			Negative	6
		Positive	11	
		Negative	25	
Total				45

Based on Table 5 above, it can be seen that the realization of appreciation in Tempo.co's news coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program shows a very selective and uneven evaluative pattern between subcategories. Of the total 282 evaluative clauses analyzed, only 45 clauses realized appreciation, which were then distributed into the subtypes of reaction, composition, and valuation with very different tendencies from one another.

Subtypes of reactions that include the dimensions of impact and quality are almost entirely absent from the data. Based on the table, there are only three clauses that express reactions of quality, and all of them are negative. No positive reactions were found at all, either in terms of impact or quality. This shows that Tempo.co did not position this event as an emotional experience or a phenomenon that was assessed based on direct impressions, but rather as a structural and institutional issue. In other words, the reporting was not aimed at evoking readers' feelings but was more focused on rational and normative evaluation. Appreciation of quality reaction with a negative orientation is explicitly realized through the evaluative lexicon *cacat* 'flawed'. The appraised is Bahlil's dissertation, which is treated as an academic product, not as a personal act of its author. The choice of the word *cacat* 'flawed' is a very strong evaluative marker because it contains the meaning of fundamental imperfection and structural failure. In this case, the focus of criticism is directed at the quality of academic work.

The sub-type of composition that includes balance and complexity is realized in a relatively small number, namely 6 clauses in the complexity sub-type. All of these realizations are negative in nature, without a single positive composition. The dominance of negative compositions indicates that academic decisions are represented as something that is less transparent, unclear, and problematically complex. This shows the position

of the media as a critical observer of institutional discourse regarding the practice of power communication in the academic sphere. Appreciation of the composition subtype, particularly complexity, with a negative orientation is realized implicitly. The assessment is not expressed through technical evaluative lexicon such as complex or complicated, but is triggered through the evaluative metaphor *sangat terpoles dan diperhalus* 'highly polished and refined', which implies linguistic engineering and strategic complexity in the drafting of the UI Rector's decision.

Valuation is the most dominant subtype of appreciation, accounting for 36 of 45 clauses. Negative valuation predominates, indicating that Tempo.co frames the case as an issue of academic and institutional value. Through evaluative lexicon such as *merugikan* 'detrimental', discontinued, and *objektif* 'objective', the media emphasizes academic integrity, quality standards, and institutional reputation. This can be seen in the following data presentation.

- 11) *polemik disertasi Bahlil ini sangat merugikan UI* (data 279).
- 12) *kedua jurnal tempat publikasi karya Bahlil sudah masuk kategori jurnal discontinued* (data 19)
- 13) *Partai Golongan Karya atau Golkar menyatakan keputusan Rektor UI sudah objektif* (data 229)
- 14) *Redaksional keputusannya sangat terpoles dan diperhalus untuk menurunkan kesan bahwa BL dikenai sanksi* (data 150)
- 15) *disertasi Ketua Umum Partai Golkar itu sudah cacat sejak awal* (data 222).

Taken together the findings reveal a condident evaluative pattern in which judgement dominates, negative polarity prevails, and evaluative authority is largely attributed to external sources. This pattern demonstrates that Tempo.co constructs the controversy not merely as an isolated academic issue but as a broader moral and institutional problem concerning academic integrity.

More importantly these evaluative patterns function as a discursive mechanism for

constructing academic legitimacy. Through systematic use of judgement, selective emotional restraint, and strategic attribution of evaluative voice, the media establishes a normative framework that defines what counts as legitimate academic practice. This confirms that media discourse plays an active role in shaping public understanding of institutional credibility and academic governance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of 25 Tempo.co news articles coverage of Bahlil Lahadalia's doctoral program, the attitude in these reports was predominantly realized through judgment. Of the total 282 evaluative clauses analyzed, judgement emerged as the most dominant category with 218 clauses, far exceeding appreciation with 45 clauses and affect with 19 clauses. This dominance shows that Tempo.co constructs its assessment not through personal emotional expression, but through normative evaluation of the normality, capacity, tenacity, and propriety of the actors and institutions involved. Thus, media criticism is constructed as a rational and ethical evaluation, not as an affective reaction. Furthermore, the realization of attitude in news texts is more often presented implicitly and subtly through lexical choices, clause structure, and strategies for quoting authoritative sources. Through the use of the voices of academics, institutions, and symbolic actors, Tempo.co constructs evaluations that appear objective and informative, but systematically direct readers to a certain critical position. This pattern shows that media attitudes are realized as normative evaluations legitimized by social authority, rather than as explicit editorial opinions.

There are a number of limitations in this study that methodologically limit the scope and depth of the discussion. This study only focuses on one online media, namely Tempo.co, so the findings only represent discourse strategies in the context of that media. This limitation means that the results of this study cannot be compared with other media. The appraisal analysis in this study is

limited to the attitude subsystem without involving an in-depth analysis of the graduation and engagement subsystems. This limitation makes the study more focused on the type and direction of evaluation, but does not fully reveal how the media manages the diversity of voices and the intensity and reinforcement of evaluation. In this case, further research is recommended to involve more than one online media outlet with different ideological orientations in order to increase the power of the findings. It is also recommended to integrate the graduation and engagement subsystems into the appraisal analysis, which does not only focus on attitude. This integration will result in a more comprehensive understanding of how the media manages the source of voices, the level of certainty, and the intensity of judgment in constructing its ideological position.

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