

DEFORESTATION AND PALM OIL EXPANSION IN INDONESIAN ONLINE NEWS MEDIA: AN ECOLINGUISTICS STUDY

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ABSTRACT. *This study aims to analyze the ecological framing of deforestation and oil palm land expansion in Indonesian online media from an ecolinguistic perspective. The research data consist of seven news articles from CNN Indonesia, Kompas, Detik, Tempo, Liputan6, TribunNews, and BBC Indonesia. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, using Stibbe's Stories We Live By framework as the analytical foundation. The analysis focuses on ideology, framing, evaluation, identity, conviction, erasure, and salience as elements that shape environmental representations in media texts. The findings show that each media outlet constructs a different framing of the issue of deforestation. CNN Indonesia primarily frames deforestation as the loss of wildlife habitat, emphasizing forests as living spaces for non-human beings, while Kompas presents forest degradation as a systemic problem related to watershed management, spatial planning, and broader development activities. Detik constructs a more explicit cause-and-effect narrative by positioning oil palm plantations as a major cause of deforestation, whereas Tempo frames environmental degradation as a consequence of an extractive economic system that exceeds ecological limits. In contrast, Liputan6 places greater emphasis on administrative, legal, and spatial-planning aspects, making ecological damage and biodiversity loss salient. TribunNews directly associates deforestation with flash floods and forest governance, while BBC Indonesia emphasizes the interdependence between environmental degradation, affected communities, and ecological justice. In addition, the study recommends the development of alternative narratives that position forests as shared spaces of life and promote development that takes ecological limits into consideration. This study contributes to ecolinguistics by demonstrating how comparative media framing can reveal competing ecological ideologies within environmental discourse in Indonesia.*

Keywords: *ecolinguistics; media framing; deforestation; palm oil*

DEFORESTASI DAN EKSPANSI LAHAN SAWIT DALAM PEMBERITAAN MEDIA DARING INDONESIA: KAJIAN EKOLINGUISTIK

ABSTRAK. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis framing ekologis pemberitaan deforestasi dan ekspansi lahan sawit pada media daring Indonesia melalui perspektif ekolinguistik. Data penelitian berupa tujuh berita yang berasal dari CNN Indonesia, Kompas, Detik, Tempo, Liputan6, TribunNews, dan BBC Indonesia. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teori stories we live by dari Stibbe sebagai landasan analisis. Analisis dilakukan terhadap unsur ideologi, framing, evaluasi, identitas, conviction, erasure, dan salience yang membentuk representasi lingkungan dalam teks media. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa setiap media membangun framing yang berbeda terhadap isu deforestasi. CNN Indonesia membingkai deforestasi terutama sebagai hilangnya habitat satwa liar, dengan menekankan hutan sebagai ruang hidup bagi makhluk non-manusia, sementara Kompas menyajikan degradasi hutan sebagai masalah sistemik yang berkaitan dengan pengelolaan daerah aliran sungai, tata ruang, dan kegiatan pembangunan yang lebih luas. Detik membangun narasi sebab-akibat yang lebih eksplisit dengan menempatkan perkebunan kelapa sawit sebagai penyebab utama deforestasi, sedangkan Tempo membingkai degradasi lingkungan sebagai konsekuensi dari sistem ekonomi ekstraktif yang melampaui batas-batas ekologis. Sebaliknya, Liputan6 lebih menonjolkan aspek administratif, hukum, dan tata ruang, sehingga isu kerusakan ekologis dan keanekaragaman hayati menjadi kurang mencolok. TribunNews secara langsung mengaitkan deforestasi dengan banjir bandang dan tata kelola hutan, sementara BBC Indonesia menekankan ketergantungan antara degradasi lingkungan, masyarakat yang terdampak, dan keadilan ekologis. Di samping itu, penelitian merekomendasikan pengembangan narasi alternatif yang menempatkan hutan sebagai ruang kehidupan bersama dan pembangunan yang mempertimbangkan batas-batas ekologis. Studi ini berkontribusi pada ekolinguistik dengan menunjukkan bagaimana pembingkai media yang bersifat komparatif menyingkap ideologi ekologis yang saling bersaing dalam wacana lingkungan hidup di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: ekolinguistik; framing media; deforestasi; sawit

INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation caused by deforestation has become an ecological issue receiving considerable attention at both global and national levels. In Indonesia, deforestation is frequently associated with land-use changes for

economic purposes, including oil palm plantations. This phenomenon is not only an ecological issue but also a social, political, and linguistic concern because environmental realities are constructed through the language employed in mass media (Stibbe, 2021). Language is part of the social ecosystem that shapes how society understands relationships between

humans and the environment (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001).

Ecolinguistics examines the relationships among language, humans, and the environment, including how discourse may support or undermine ecological sustainability (Fill & Penz, 2017). Stibbe (2021) argues that language contains “stories we live by” that influence how individuals perceive nature, natural resources, and development. Similarly, Halliday (2001) argues that linguistic practices have ecological consequences because language choices may reproduce ideologies that encourage excessive environmental exploitation. Therefore, environmental news discourse has become an important focus of contemporary ecolinguistic studies (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014).

Mass media play a strategic role in shaping public understanding of environmental issues through framing. Framing enables media institutions to select and emphasize particular aspects of reality, influencing audience interpretations of reported events (Entman, 1993). Entman (1993) explains that framing involves selecting and highlighting aspects of reality to define problems, identify causes, make moral judgments, and suggest solutions. Consequently, deforestation may be framed as an ecological crisis, a consequence of economic development, or a problem of natural resource governance (Cox, 2013).

The expansion of oil palm plantations is similarly reported from competing perspectives. On the one hand, the palm oil industry is considered a strategic sector contributing to economic growth, employment, and foreign exchange earnings (Cramb & Curry, 2012). On the other hand, palm oil expansion is associated with forest loss, habitat degradation, land conflicts, and increased carbon emissions (Hansen, 2018). These competing interests produce different discursive constructions in media coverage (Richardson, 2007). News media do not always present environmental realities neutrally; ideological tendencies, institutional interests, and editorial strategies influence their construction of environmental issues (Fairclough, 1995). Consequently, the same event may generate different representations of actors, causes, impacts, and solutions (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Media language therefore functions not only as information transmission but also as a means of constructing social and ecological meanings (Stibbe, 2021).

Although environmental framing has been widely studied, research integrating framing theory and ecolinguistics remains limited, particularly in Indonesian media coverage of palm oil expansion (Fill & Penz, 2017). Ecolinguistics enables

researchers to identify ecological narratives, environmental ideologies, and power relations embedded in media language (Goatly, 2001), offering additional perspectives for understanding environmental discourse in mass media (Alexander & Stibbe, 2014). A comparative analysis of multiple media outlets can further reveal how environmental realities are constructed through different lexical choices, metaphors, social actors, and argumentative strategies (Baker et al., 2008; Bednarek & Caple, 2017). Such comparison is particularly relevant to deforestation and palm oil expansion because these issues involve competing narratives concerning environmental protection, economic development, government policy, and community interests (Hansen, 2018). Understanding how online media frame environmental issues is therefore important because dominant framings may influence public attitudes toward environmental policies and natural resource management (Entman, 1993).

Several studies have examined environmental discourse from an ecolinguistic perspective. Laili (2016) examined euphemisms in Indonesian environmental discourse and found that linguistic expressions frequently obscure ecological damage and reduce public awareness of environmental issues. Mukhibun et al. (2024) analyzed dysphemism in environmental news and demonstrated that negative lexical choices function as evaluative strategies in representing environmental destruction. Similarly, Istiqomah and Yuniawan (2025) investigated euphemism and dysphemism in environmental news published by Detik.com and revealed the ideological role of lexical choices in constructing environmental meanings. Mukminin (2025) analyzed environmental discourse in NU Online and identified dominant themes of conservation, ecological crisis, and religious ecology. These studies demonstrate the role of language in shaping environmental perceptions and ecological awareness. However, previous research has largely focused on specific lexical features, particularly euphemism and dysphemism, broad environmental themes, or individual and limited media contexts. Consequently, less is known about how multiple linguistic and discursive choices work together to construct broader ecological narratives, including how media define environmental problems, assign responsibility, foreground or background actors, and make ecological consequences more or less visible.

A further gap concerns the comparative application of Stibbe’s (2021) *Stories We Live By* framework across Indonesian media. Previous studies provide limited evidence of whether particular

ecological representations characterize individual news organizations or reflect broader patterns across environmental journalism. Comparative analysis of seven media outlets can therefore identify both shared and competing representations of deforestation and palm oil expansion. It can also show how different Indonesian media construct, reinforce, or contest ecological narratives concerning environmental protection, economic development, government policy, and community interests.

Therefore, this study applies Stibbe's (2021) *Stories We Live By* framework systematically to seven Indonesian online media outlets: CNN Indonesia, Kompas, Detik, Tempo, Liputan6, TribunNews, and BBC Indonesia. By examining deforestation and palm oil expansion across these outlets, the study identifies how different media make particular ecological elements salient, erase or background others, construct environmental actors and responsibilities, and reproduce different stories about relationships between forests, development, and human–nature relations. This comparative approach extends the application of Stibbe's framework from individual or limited media contexts toward comparative ecolinguistic analysis of Indonesian environmental journalism.

This study primarily employs Stibbe's (2021) *Stories We Live By* framework as its main analytical framework, while incorporating Entman's (1993) framing theory as a complementary framework. Stibbe views discourse as a means through which societies construct and reproduce stories that shape relationships between humans and the more-than-human world. Entman's (1993) framing theory explains how media selectively emphasize aspects of reality to define problems, identify causes, make moral evaluations, and suggest solutions. From an ecolinguistic perspective, language is a social practice that influences human relationships with the environment (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2001). Stibbe's (2021) concept of stories we live by further explains how underlying narratives and ideologies shape perceptions of nature, development, and ecological sustainability, while Halliday (2001) emphasizes that linguistic choices may reproduce ideologies that support environmental exploitation. Thus, Stibbe provides the primary ecological lens for identifying ecological narratives and representations, while Entman supports the analysis of how media select and emphasize particular aspects of environmental reality.

Accordingly, this study aims to (1) identify the dominant ecological representations constructed by seven Indonesian online media outlets in reporting

deforestation and palm oil expansion, (2) examine the linguistic strategies through which these representations are constructed, and (3) compare similarities and differences among the outlets. The study contributes to ecolinguistic media research by demonstrating how different news organizations construct, reinforce, or contest ecological narratives around deforestation and palm oil expansion.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach because it focuses on interpreting language, ideology, and environmental representations in news texts rather than statistical measurement. Data were collected on 16 June 2026 using the observation method (*simak*) and note-taking technique (*catat*). The corpus consists of seven online news articles, one from each of seven media outlets: CNN Indonesia, Kompas, Detik.com, Tempo, Liputan6, TribunNews, and BBC Indonesia. The articles, published between October and December 2025, which are:

- CNN Indonesia, “Ribuan Hektare Hutan Jadi Sawit, ‘Rumah’ Gajah di Bengkulu Hilang” (29 October 2025);
- Kompas, “Ekspansi Sawit hingga Masifnya Permukiman Gerus Hutan di DAS Sumatera Utara” (25 December 2025);
- Detik.com, “Deforestasi Indonesia Parah, Rusaknya Hutan karena Kebun Kelapa Sawit?” (2 December 2025);
- Tempo, “Tulah Ekonomi Ekstraktif” (6 December 2025);
- Liputan6, “Eks Sekjen Kemenhut: Pelepasan 1,6 Juta Hektare Hutan Era Zulhas Bukan untuk Sawit, tapi Tata Ruang” (6 December 2025);
- TribunNews, “Deforestasi Picu Banjir Bandang, Akademisi Dorong Reformasi Tata Kelola Hutan” (25 December 2025); and
- BBC Indonesia, “Deforestasi di Lahan Konsesi Perusahaan Berperan dalam Banjir dan Longsor di Sumut, Menurut Hasil Riset” (30 December 2025).

The articles do not report the same event but address the broader issue of deforestation and palm oil expansion through different cases and dimensions, including forest loss, land-use change, environmental consequences, governance, and human–ecological relations. This comparative design examines how different media construct ecological narratives around a shared environmental issue while accounting for event-specific contexts. The unit of analysis is a linguistically identifiable discourse

segment, including words, phrases, metaphors, evaluative expressions, representations of social actors, and causal statements. The complete articles serve as contextual units.

The data were analyzed using ecolinguistic discourse analysis, primarily based on Stibbe's (2021) *Stories We Live By* framework. The analysis examined ideology, framing, evaluation, identity, conviction, erasure, and salience, with classification determined by the function of each expression within its textual context. Ideology refers to underlying beliefs about humans, nature, and development; framing to foregrounded aspects of environmental problems; evaluation to value judgments; identity to representations of human and non-human actors; conviction to propositions presented as established or certain; erasure to backgrounded or omitted ecological actors, consequences, or perspectives; and salience to elements given particular prominence.

The analysis proceeded through four stages: data reduction, data display, re-examination, and conclusion drawing. Relevant discourse segments were first identified and coded according to Stibbe's categories, while unrelated expressions were excluded. The reduced data were then organized into comparative tables containing the story category, linguistic or discourse evidence, and ecological interpretation. The coded segments were subsequently re-examined in their original contexts and compared across the seven articles, focusing on foregrounded and backgrounded ecological aspects, actors, consequences, responsibility, and ecological values. These patterns were synthesized into broader ecological narratives, including the tension between forests as living spaces and forests as resources for development.

To enhance analytical credibility, each coded segment was cross-checked against its original context to ensure that its classification was supported by its linguistic function. Multiple coding was retained only when each category could be justified by a distinct analytical function. This procedure ensured that interpretations remained grounded in textual evidence rather than isolated lexical expressions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. CNN Indonesia

The CNN Indonesia article entitled "Ribuan Hektare Hutan Jadi Sawit, 'Rumah' Gajah di Bengkulu Hilang" frames deforestation as an ecological crisis affecting wildlife. Relevant expressions include "rumah gajah," "1.585 hektare hutan habitat gajah di

bentang alam Seblat telah hilang," "konflik manusia-gajah," "kehilangan habitat," and "alih fungsi hutan."

The expression "rumah gajah" is significant because rumah (home) metaphorically represents the forest as a living space for elephants rather than merely land for economic conversion. It therefore contributes to metaphor and framing by emphasizing the ecological function of forests as wildlife habitat.

The sentence "1.585 hektare hutan habitat gajah di bentang alam Seblat telah hilang" makes the scale of forest loss salient through the precise figure and frames the forest as elephant habitat. The expression telah hilang negatively evaluates the change as ecological loss, while bentang alam Seblat situates it within a specific ecological landscape, producing a destructive representation centered on wildlife habitat loss.

Meanwhile, "konflik manusia-gajah" represents humans and elephants as interacting actors, contributing to identity and framing. "Kehilangan habitat" negatively evaluates the ecological consequence, while "alih fungsi hutan" represents deforestation as land-use change. Together, these expressions construct a narrative in which palm-oil expansion is associated with the loss of ecological space necessary for wildlife.

Table 1. Lexicons of Ecological Framing Used by CNN Indonesia

Story Category	Ecological Lexis	Ecological Impact Analysis
Ideology	elephants' home, elephant habitat, disappearing forests	Nature possesses intrinsic value as wildlife habitat (constructive)
Framing	elephants' home disappears	Forests are framed as living spaces rather than commodities (constructive)
Metaphor	elephants' home	Promotes ecological empathy (constructive)
Evaluation	loss, threat, destruction	Deforestation is evaluated negatively (constructive)
Identity	communities and government as habitat protectors	Humans are environmental guardians (constructive)
Conviction	oil palm expansion causes habitat loss	Ecological causality emphasized (constructive)
Erasure	economic benefits receive little attention	Economic aspects become less visible (ambivalent)
Salience	elephants, habitat, forests, 1.585 hectare	Ecological elements are emphasized (constructive)

2. Kompas

The Kompas article, "Ekspansi Sawit hingga Masifnya Permukiman Gerus Hutan di DAS Sumatera Utara," places deforestation within a structural framework of watershed management and spatial planning. Relevant data include "ekspansi sawit," "gerus hutan," "degradasi hutan," "DAS," "tata ruang," "tutupan hutan," "Banjir bandang

menghancurkan permukiman warga, termasuk di Kota Tanjung Pura, Kabupaten Langkat, yang sempat lumpuh selama beberapa hari,” and “Achmad menyampaikan, banjir juga melanda Desa Garoga dan Huta Godang di DAS Batang Toru.”

The expression “ekspansi sawit” foregrounds oil-palm cultivation as an environmental pressure, framing plantation expansion as a process associated with forest change. “Gerus hutan” conceptualizes forest loss as gradual erosion, contributing to metaphor and framing. Meanwhile, “degradasi hutan,” “DAS,” and “tutupan hutan” shift attention toward ecological systems: degradasi hutan negatively evaluates forest conditions, while DAS (watershed) and tutupan hutan (forest cover) represent forests as components of a broader ecological and spatial system, contributing to evaluation and salience.

The sentence “Banjir bandang menghancurkan permukiman warga, termasuk di Kota Tanjung Pura, Kabupaten Langkat, yang sempat lumpuh selama beberapa hari” represents flooding as a destructive event affecting communities. Menghancurkan negatively evaluates the impact, while permukiman warga and the specific reference to Tanjung Pura make community vulnerability salient. However, the sentence itself does not establish deforestation as the cause. Similarly, “Achmad menyampaikan, banjir juga melanda Desa Garoga dan Huta Godang di DAS Batang Toru” expands the geographical scope of flooding. Juga melanda creates salience by showing that multiple locations were affected, while melanda represents flooding as an external environmental force but is less evaluative than menghancurkan.

The association among “ekspansi sawit,” “permukiman,” and “gerus hutan” constructs human land-use activities as forces capable of altering ecological systems. Wildlife and biodiversity receive comparatively less prominence, which can be interpreted as erasure insofar as non-human ecological interests are less visible than land-use and spatial-management concerns.

The article’s technocratic and policy-oriented framing is reflected in “DAS,” “tutupan hutan,” “degradasi hutan,” and “tata ruang.” These terms represent forests as part of a hydrological system, measurable forest-cover conditions, an ecological condition, and an object of institutional spatial management, respectively. Together with “ekspansi sawit” and “masifnya permukiman,” they construct plantation expansion and settlement growth as competing land-use pressures. Thus, Kompas frames deforestation less as an individual moral violation and more as a systemic problem of land use, ecological management, and spatial governance.

Table 2. Lexicons of Ecological Framing Used by Kompas

Story Category	Ecological Lexis	Ecological Impact Analysis
Ideology	watershed, forest, landscape	Forests as ecological systems (constructive)
Framing	forest degradation, struck	Damage viewed as a continuous process (constructive)
Metaphor	erosion/degradation	Gradual ecological decline (constructive)
Evaluation	massive, degradation, destroying	Negative evaluation of land conversion and natural disaster (constructive)
Identity	humans as agents of change	Human responsibility emphasized (constructive)
Conviction	oil palm and settlements reduce forests	Ecological relationship emphasized (constructive)
Erasure	wildlife rarely discussed	Biodiversity less visible (ambivalent)
Salience	watersheds, forest cover, flash floods, struck	Ecological systems emphasized (constructive)

3. Detik.com

The Detik.com article, “Deforestasi Indonesia Parah, Rusaknya Hutan karena Kebun Kelapa Sawit,” establishes an explicit cause-and-effect relationship between forest destruction and oil-palm plantations. Relevant data include “deforestasi,” “parah,” “rusaknya hutan,” “karena kebun kelapa sawit,” and “deforestasi ... karena kebun kelapa sawit.” The headline first establishes the environmental problem through “Deforestasi Indonesia Parah,” where parah negatively evaluates the condition of Indonesian forests. The second clause, “Rusaknya Hutan karena Kebun Kelapa Sawit,” provides an explicit explanation through the causal marker karena (because), linking rusaknya hutan with kebun kelapa sawit. Thus, oil-palm plantations are presented not merely alongside deforestation but as an explanation for forest destruction.

The expression “rusaknya hutan” foregrounds ecological deterioration, while “karena kebun kelapa sawit” explicitly establishes causality. Together, they contribute to framing and conviction, presenting oil-palm plantations as an important cause of forest destruction. The repeated references to “deforestasi” and “rusaknya hutan” create salience, making forest loss the dominant environmental concern. At the level of identity, humans are positioned as agents of environmental transformation through plantation development.

Detik.com also produces a form of reverse erasure by giving oil palm greater causal prominence while comparatively reducing the visibility of other potential drivers of deforestation. In “rusaknya hutan karena kebun kelapa sawit,” oil palm receives explicit causal marking, while alternative explanations are

less prominent. This does not mean that Detik.com completely excludes other causes; rather, reverse erasure here refers to the unequal distribution of salience within the analyzed discourse.

Table 3. Lexicons of Ecological Framing Used by Detik.com

Story Category	Ecological Lexis	Ecological Impact Analysis
Ideology	deforestation, forest destruction	Forests should be protected (constructive)
Framing	severe deforestation	Environmental crisis as emergency (constructive)
Metaphor	severe	Damage as illness (constructive)
Evaluation	severe, damaged, forest destruction	Negative evaluation (constructive)
Identity	humans as destroyers	Human responsibility emphasized (constructive)
Conviction	oil palm causes deforestation	Explicit ecological belief (constructive)
Erasure	limited social aspects	Ambivalent
Salience	deforestation, forest destruction	Ecological threats emphasized (constructive)

4. Tempo

The Tempo article, “Tumbangnya Infrastruktur Ekonomi Bernama Hutan,” frames environmental degradation not as the result of a single policy but as a consequence of an economic system based on natural-resource exploitation. Relevant expressions include “fiksi berbahaya bahwa kemajuan ekonomi berasal dari kegiatan ekstraksi sebanyak mungkin, secepat mungkin,” “para pembuat kebijakan masih memperjuangkan ekspansi sektor ekstraktif sebagai sumber pertumbuhan,” “kerugian ekonomi yang jauh lebih besar daripada pendapatan yang diperoleh dari alih fungsi hutan,” “tuloh ekonomi ekstraktif,” “eksploitasi sumber daya,” “krisis ekologis,” and “kehancuran.”

The statement “fiksi berbahaya bahwa kemajuan ekonomi berasal dari kegiatan ekstraksi sebanyak mungkin, secepat mungkin” challenges the assumption that economic progress requires intensive extraction. Fiksi berbahaya negatively evaluates this assumption, while sebanyak mungkin and secepat mungkin emphasize excessive extraction. This framing is reinforced by “para pembuat kebijakan masih memperjuangkan ekspansi sektor ekstraktif sebagai sumber pertumbuhan,” which identifies policymakers as maintaining the extractive-development model. The claim that economic losses are “jauh lebih besar daripada pendapatan” from forest conversion further presents an economic argument against deforestation. Together, these expressions construct a critical story in which extractive development produces ecological and economic costs.

The expression “eksploitasi sumber daya” strengthens this representation by positioning natural resources as objects of intensive and harmful use, contributing to evaluation and ideology. Similarly, “krisis ekologis” and “kehancuran” negatively evaluate environmental consequences and increase their salience.

Tempo therefore presents a counter-story to development narratives that regard economic growth and resource extraction as inherently positive. The expression “tuloh ekonomi ekstraktif” is particularly significant. Tuloh (“curse”) functions as a metaphor because an economic system cannot literally be a curse. By transferring associations of misfortune and harmful consequences to the extractive economy, the metaphor represents resource extraction as a source of social and environmental costs rather than primarily as an economic benefit. This interpretation is reinforced by “eksploitasi sumber daya,” “krisis ekologis,” and “kehancuran.”

This finding is consistent with Mukhibun et al. (2024), who found that negative lexical choices in environmental news function as evaluative strategies in representing environmental destruction. The Tempo finding extends this observation from individual negative lexical items to a metaphorical construction, as “tuloh ekonomi ekstraktif” transfers negative evaluative meaning to the economic system responsible for resource extraction.

Table 4. Lexicons of Ecological Framing Used by Tempo

Story Category	Ecological Lexis	Ecological Impact Analysis
Ideology	extractive economy	Development has ecological limits (constructive)
Framing	curse of extractive economy, forest conversion, extractive sector expansion	Economic system causes damage (constructive)
Metaphor	curse, dangerous fiction	Exploitation as harmful consequence (constructive)
Evaluation	crisis, destruction, economy loss	Strongly negative (constructive)
Identity	government, industry, society	Shared responsibility (constructive)
Conviction	extractive economy causes crisis, development sources	Ecological causality (constructive)
Erasure	short-term benefits ignored	Ambivalent
Salience	exploitation, sustainability	Ecological impacts emphasized (constructive)

5. Liputan6

The Liputan6 article, “Eks Sekjen Kemenhut: Pelepasan 1,6 Juta Hektare Hutan Era Zuhhas Bukan

untuk Sawit, tapi Tata Ruang,” differs from the other media by emphasizing a defense of government policy. The contrastive structure “bukan X, tapi Y” rejects the interpretation that the 1.6 million hectares were released for oil-palm development and instead foregrounds “tata ruang” (spatial planning). The phrase “bukan untuk sawit” explicitly rejects a potentially negative association with oil palm, while “tapi tata ruang” provides an administratively legitimate alternative. Thus, the headline constructs a defensive framing that separates government forest-release policy from the controversy surrounding oil-palm expansion.

The article gives greater prominence to administrative and human-use issues than to ecological consequences. Relevant expressions include “pelepasan hutan,” “bukan untuk sawit, tapi tata ruang,” “pelepasan lahan hutan ... untuk lahan garapan masyarakat,” “dikelola secara turun-temurun,” “Perubahan Peruntukan Kawasan Hutan Menjadi Bukan Kawasan Hutan,” “fasilitas umum,” “permukiman,” “lahan masyarakat,” and “pemerintah.” These terms make spatial planning, settlements, community land, and regulation more visible than wildlife, biodiversity, habitat, and ecosystem loss.

The expression “pelepasan hutan” represents forest conversion through relatively neutral administrative terminology, lacking the negative force of perusakan hutan. Similarly, “pelepasan lahan hutan ... untuk lahan garapan masyarakat” frames conversion through community agricultural needs, while dikelola secara turun-temurun gives these uses social and historical continuity. The reference to “Perubahan Peruntukan Kawasan Hutan Menjadi Bukan Kawasan Hutan” further presents conversion as a formal administrative decision.

Expressions such as “permukiman,” “fasilitas umum,” and “lahan masyarakat” contribute to identity and framing by placing human needs and development at the center of the discourse. “Pemerintah” establishes an institutional identity, positioning the government as an authority responsible for spatial planning and land regulation. Consequently, government policy, land use, and community needs receive greater salience than wildlife and biodiversity.

In contrast, wildlife and biodiversity receive comparatively little linguistic attention, constituting erasure insofar as non-human ecological consequences are backgrounded. Thus, Liputan6 constructs forest-area change primarily as a matter of administration, spatial planning, and human development rather than a direct ecological crisis.

Table 5. Lexicons of Ecological Framing Used by Liputan6

Story Category	Ecological Lexis	Ecological Impact Analysis
Ideology	forest release, spatial planning	Administrative perspective (ambivalent)
Framing	spatial planning	Shift from ecology to bureaucracy (ambivalent)
Metaphor	forest release	Administrative masking (destructive)
Evaluation	spatial management	Neutral evaluation (ambivalent)
Identity	government as regulator, Zulhas	Humans control nature (ambivalent)
Conviction	land conversion needed	Ambivalent
Erasure	wildlife and biodiversity	Destructive
Salience	regulation and policy	Ecology less visible (destructive)

6. TribunNews

The TribunNews article, “Deforestasi Picu Banjir Bandang, Akademisi Dorong Reformasi Tata Kelola Hutan,” presents a distinct framing by directly linking deforestation to natural disasters. Relevant data include “deforestasi picu banjir bandang,” “isu kerusakan hutan di Sumatera kembali menjadi sorotan publik menyusul terjadinya banjir bandang,” “ancaman,” “tata kelola hutan,” “Sejumlah akademisi menilai bencana tersebut merupakan dampak nyata dari kerusakan ekosistem hutan yang berlangsung secara masif dan menjadi pengingat pentingnya perlindungan kawasan hutan sebagai penyangga kehidupan,” and “pemerintah.”

The headline “deforestasi picu banjir bandang” is the central linguistic element. The verb picu (trigger) establishes a direct causal relationship, assigning deforestation the role of cause and flooding the resulting effect. It therefore contributes to framing and conviction, representing forest destruction as an active force producing environmental consequences.

The sentence “Isu kerusakan hutan di Sumatera kembali menjadi sorotan publik menyusul terjadinya banjir bandang” connects forest damage with public attention following the flood. Kembali suggests renewed attention, while isu kerusakan hutan makes forest damage the central environmental concern and kerusakan provides negative evaluation.

The statement “Sejumlah akademisi menilai bencana tersebut merupakan dampak nyata dari kerusakan ekosistem hutan yang berlangsung secara masif dan menjadi pengingat pentingnya perlindungan kawasan hutan sebagai penyangga kehidupan” provides a stronger interpretation of the relationship between forest degradation and disaster. The phrase “merupakan dampak nyata dari” presents

the disaster as a concrete consequence of ecosystem damage, while “kerusakan ekosistem hutan” represents the forest as an interconnected ecological system. More importantly, “penyangga kehidupan” (support for life) constructs a strongly constructive ecological representation and provides a normative basis for forest protection.

Through “deforestasi picu banjir bandang,” the article constructs a causal chain connecting human-induced environmental change with tangible consequences for communities. This strengthens conviction, as the relationship between deforestation and disaster is presented as a concrete proposition rather than merely a possible association.

Consequently, TribunNews does not portray flooding as a purely natural event but as a consequence of human actions toward the environment. By linking deforestation with disasters and representing forests as “penyangga kehidupan,” the article increases the salience of ecological protection and supports the importance of forest management and governance.

Table 6. Lexicons of Ecological Framing Used by TribunNews

Story Category	Ecological Lexis	Ecological Impact Analysis
Ideology	forest governance	Forests protect life (constructive)
Framing	deforestation triggers floods, real impact	Disaster linkage (constructive)
Metaphor	triggers floods	Ecological catalyst (constructive)
Evaluation	floods, threats	Negative evaluation (constructive)
Identity	academics, government	Shared responsibility (constructive)
Conviction	deforestation causes disasters	Ecological causality (constructive)
Erasure	economic benefits less discussed	Ambivalent
Salience	floods and forests, massively	Ecological risks emphasized (constructive)

7. BBC Indonesia

The BBC Indonesia article, “Deforestasi di Lahan Konsesi Perusahaan Berperan dalam Banjir dan Longsor di Sumut, Menurut Hasil Riset,” frames deforestation and landscape change as socio-ecological problems, emphasizing their effects on nearby communities. Relevant data include “lahan konsesi perusahaan,” “kerusakan,” “banjir dan longsor,” “masyarakat terdampak,” “ruang hidup,” “Perseroan menerapkan praktik-praktik terbaik dalam pengelolaan hutan lestari melalui pola tanam dan panen yang disesuaikan dengan kondisi lanskap, guna memastikan perlindungan lingkungan dan keberlanjutan ekosistem di sekitar konsesi,” “deforestasi berperan penting dalam parahnya banjir

serta longsor yang menimpa wilayah Sumatra,” and “begitu sungai mati, dia kehilangan fungsi alaminya, yang lalu berdampak terhadap sekitarnya.”

The expression “lahan konsesi perusahaan” identifies corporate concession areas as the spatial context of deforestation, making corporate land management visible and contributing to framing and identity. “Banjir dan longsor” makes environmental consequences salient by showing that forest loss has effects beyond the forest itself.

The phrase “masyarakat terdampak” shifts attention to human consequences, representing communities as recipients of environmental effects and highlighting social vulnerability. Similarly, “ruang hidup” (living space), like “rumah gajah” in CNN Indonesia, conceptualizes the environment as a space necessary for life. However, BBC Indonesia emphasizes human communities rather than wildlife. It therefore contributes to ideology and framing by representing the environment as essential to human existence.

The statements “deforestasi berperan penting dalam parahnya banjir serta longsor” and “begitu sungai mati, dia kehilangan fungsi alaminya, yang lalu berdampak terhadap sekitarnya” further connect ecological degradation with environmental consequences. The former gives deforestation a significant role in worsening disasters, while the latter represents ecological systems as having functions whose disruption affects surrounding areas. The corporate statement concerning “hutan lestari,” “perlindungan lingkungan,” and “keberlanjutan ekosistem” also introduces a contrasting representation of corporate actors as claiming responsibility for sustainable forest management.

Overall, BBC Indonesia constructs an ecological story based on human–environment interdependence. From Stibbe’s perspective, this reflects relational framing, with communities, environmental impacts, and sustainability receiving greater salience, while economic growth and resource exploitation receive less attention. Thus, the article frames environmental degradation primarily through its social consequences, ecological interdependence, and the need for sustainability.

Table 7. Lexicons of Ecological Framing Used by BBC Indonesia

Story Category	Ecological Lexis	Ecological Impact Analysis
Ideology	sustainability, living space	Human-nature interdependence (constructive)
Framing	social and environmental impacts, crucial role	Ecology as social issue (constructive)

Metaphor	landscape change, dead river	Changing living space and personifies the river (constructive)
Evaluation	damage, loss	Negative impacts (constructive)
Identity	Communities, company and government	Shared responsibility (constructive)
Conviction	damage affects communities	Socio-ecological causality (constructive)
Erasure	economic aspects less emphasized	Ambivalent
Salience	communities and sustainability, deforestation	Socio-ecological focus (constructive)

Recommended New Stories

Based on the findings, several alternative ecological stories are recommended:

1. Forests as Life Partners

This story responds to resource-oriented and human-centered representations of forests. Kompas foregrounds “ekspansi sawit,” “permukiman,” “DAS,” and “tata ruang,” while Liputan6 emphasizes “pelepasan hutan” and “tata ruang,” constructing forests primarily as spaces organized and used by humans. In contrast, CNN Indonesia’s “rumah gajah” and “habitat gajah” represent forests as living spaces for non-human beings. “Forests as Life Partners” extends this ecological framing by representing forests as sustaining relationships among humans, wildlife, and local communities rather than merely as resources or land.

2. Sustainable Oil Palm Cultivation

This story responds to polarized representations of oil palm as either an environmental threat or an economic activity. Detik.com links oil palm directly to forest destruction through “rusaknya hutan karena kebun kelapa sawit,” while Liputan6 uses “bukan untuk sawit, tapi tata ruang” to shift attention toward administrative justification. “Sustainable Oil Palm Cultivation” offers a third perspective: oil palm as an economic activity that must operate within ecological limits. It therefore moves beyond the binary representation of oil palm as either environmental destruction or legitimate development.

3. Indigenous Communities as Ecosystem Guardians

This story responds to the limited representation of local communities as active ecological actors. Although BBC Indonesia makes communities more visible through “affected communities,” “living space,” and “sustainability,” they are primarily represented as recipients of environmental impacts. “Indigenous Communities as Ecosystem Guardians” proposes an alternative representation of Indigenous and local communities as active

participants in environmental management and forest protection.

4. Development within Ecological Limits

Tempo’s “tulah ekonomi ekstraktif” challenges the assumption that resource extraction necessarily constitutes desirable development, while Liputan6 emphasizes administrative justification through “tata ruang,” “permukiman,” and “fasilitas umum.” These representations can produce opposing stories of extraction as harmful and development as legitimate when administratively justified. “Development within Ecological Limits” offers an alternative in which development and conservation are not mutually exclusive, provided that ecological carrying capacity, forest functions, biodiversity, and community interests are considered.

5. Forests as Life-Support Infrastructure

Kompas’s “DAS,” “tutupan hutan,” “degradasi hutan,” and “tata ruang” recognize forests as ecological systems but also frame them as objects of technical management. Liputan6 similarly foregrounds “pelepasan hutan” and “tata ruang.” “Forests as Life-Support Infrastructure” retains this systemic perspective while redefining forests as infrastructure that provides essential ecological functions for humans and non-human life, rather than merely as objects of spatial and development planning.

These proposed stories should not be interpreted as evidence that the seven media outlets already employ these narratives consistently. Rather, they are researcher-generated alternatives based on patterns identified in the empirical analysis. Their purpose is to demonstrate how ecological communication could move beyond development-centered or narrowly problem-focused representations toward narratives that more explicitly connect environmental sustainability, human well-being, and economic activity.

Table 7. Summary Tabel of Each Media Dominant Story, Ecological Orientation, and Main Linguistic Strategy

Media outlet	Dominant story	Ecological orientation	Main linguistic strategy
CNN Indonesia	Forests as wildlife habitat and living space	Wildlife/ecological	Metaphor, framing, salience
Kompas	Forests as ecological systems requiring land-use management	Technocratic/ecological management	Technical lexis, framing, ideology

Detik.com	Oil palm as a major cause of forest destruction	Direct environmental-risk orientation	Causal construction, evaluation, conviction
Tempo	Extractive economy as a source of ecological crisis	Counter-extractive/development-critical	Metaphor, evaluation, ideology
Liputan6	Forest release as spatial-planning and government policy	Administrative/policy-oriented	Contrastive construction, framing, identity
Tribun News	Deforestation as a cause of environmental disaster requiring governance	Ecological-risk/governance	Causal construction, evaluation, conviction
BBC Indonesia	Environmental degradation as a problem affecting communities and sustainability	Social-ecological	Framing, identity, salience, evaluation

CONCLUSION

The findings show that the seven media outlets construct different ecological stories. CNN Indonesia, Tempo, TribunNews, and BBC Indonesia foreground ecological consequences, environmental risks, or human–environment relationships through different strategies: CNN Indonesia emphasizes non-human habitat through “rumah gajah”; Tempo challenges extractive-development narratives through “tulah ekonomi ekstraktif”; TribunNews establishes a direct causal relationship between deforestation and flooding; and BBC Indonesia emphasizes environmental degradation, affected communities, and sustainability. In contrast, Kompas emphasizes land use and ecological management, while Liputan6 gives greater salience to spatial planning, government policy, and administrative justification.

However, the study is limited by its corpus of one article from each of the seven media outlets. Thus, the findings should not be interpreted as representing the permanent editorial orientation or general ecological ideology of each outlet. Rather, they identify the ecological stories constructed in the selected articles. Future research should examine a larger and systematically selected corpus covering multiple articles, events, and time periods to determine whether these patterns are consistent across the outlets or specific to the selected articles.

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