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Framing Power in Japan's Digital Sphere: A Corpus-Based Functional Approach

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ABSTRACT

The emergence of the term "Japanese First" in public media discourse can be traced to the second quarter of 2025, based on documented reports and news coverage collected during the data compilation period. This study conducts a comparative analysis of political representations of the Japanese First issues by contrasting coverage in the English-language press and Indonesian-language press on online discourses. Drawing on a corpus-driven investigation of 45 news articles published in online discourses from July to September 2025, we disseminate how different news agencies represent, legitimise, and stigmatise the Japanese First issues. This study utilises a mixed method consisting of quantitative analysis to provide statistical analysis for linguistic features and qualitative analysis to describe the usage of its features, such as keywords, collocations, and KWIC, which are related to our study. The research combines a corpus-based approach with discourse analysis (CADA) to investigate language use in relation to transitivity analysis. The findings of our analysis reveal differences in transitivity patterns between two corpora in the news articles published in different languages. English-language discourse tends to emphasis perceptual and ideological framing that associates parties with specific values, beliefs, and moral imagery while the Indonesian-language discourse predominantly portrays the performative actions of parties.

Keywords: Language and ideology, Japanese First, transitivity halliday, online discourse

ABSTRAK

Munculnya istilah "Japanese First" dalam wacana media publik dapat ditelusuri hingga kuartal II-2025, berdasarkan laporan terdokumentasi dan liputan berita yang dikumpulkan selama periode kompilasi data. Studi ini melakukan analisis komparatif representasi politik dari isu-isu Jepang Pertama dengan membandingkan liputan di pers berbahasa Inggris dan pers berbahasa Indonesia pada wacana online. Berdasarkan investigasi yang digerakkan oleh korpus dari 45 artikel berita yang diterbitkan dalam wacana online dari Juli hingga September 2025, kami mengeksplorasi bagaimana berbagai kantor berita merepresentasikan, melegitimasi, dan menstigmatisasi masalah Japanese First. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode campuran yang terdiri dari analisis kuantitatif untuk memberikan analisis statistik untuk fitur linguistik dan analisis kualitatif untuk menggambarkan penggunaan fitur-fiturnya, seperti kata kunci, kolokasi, dan KWIC, yang terkait dengan penelitian kami. Penelitian ini menggabungkan pendekatan berbasis korpus dengan analisis wacana (CADA) untuk menyelidiki penggunaan bahasa dalam kaitannya dengan analisis transitivitas. Temuan analisis kami mengungkapkan perbedaan pola transitivitas antara dua korpus dalam artikel berita yang diterbitkan dalam bahasa yang berbeda. Wacana berbahasa Inggris cenderung menekankan pembingkai perseptual dan

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ideologis yang mengasosiasikan partai dengan nilai, keyakinan, dan citra moral tertentu sementara wacana berbahasa Indonesia sebagian besar menggambarkan tindakan performatif para pihak.

Kata Kunci: Bahasa dan kekuasaan, Japanese First, transivitas halliday, wacana daring

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, political discourse has gained prominence in Indonesian online media, reflecting global concerns over nationalism, migration, and ideological polarization (UNDP, 2019). Media discourse does not merely report events but constructs social realities by shaping public perception and ideological positioning (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022; Roslyng & Dindler, 2023; Suwarno, 2025). Within this context, the “Japanese First” issue has received attention in Indonesian news coverage, particularly given Indonesia’s role as a major sender of migrant workers to Japan. As Japanese immigration policies directly affect Indonesian nationals, the issue carries clear social and political relevance.

The bilingual corpus design reflects the transnational circulation of nationalist discourse and enables comparison of how the same political phenomenon is linguistically constructed for different audiences. Drawing on Systemic Functional Linguistics, this study examines how ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings contribute to the construction of nationalist ideology. Given the influence of media framing on public opinion and policy perception (Entman et al., 2009; Krisberg & Verga, 2018; Pang, 2025), analyzing representations of “Japanese First” across linguistic contexts provides insight into how digital discourse negotiates identity, inclusion, and exclusion in a globalized era.

The emergence of the “Japanese First” issue in online discourse has become increasingly visible across digital news platforms, reflecting intensified debates on nationalism, cultural identity, and immigration policies perceived as threatening Japanese social values (Capobianco, 2019; Tsuneyoshi, 2019). The rapid expansion of digital media has transformed the production and circulation of political discourse, generating large-scale textual data in which ideological framing often operates through patterned repetition and collocational clustering.

Given the scale and complexity of such data, a Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) approach is methodologically more appropriate than manual close reading alone. CADA enables the systematic identification of recurring lexical patterns while enhancing analytical transparency. Combined with Halliday’s transitivity framework, this approach facilitates a

rigorous examination of how participants, processes, and evaluative structures reproduce ideology within Japan's digital sphere.

Previous studies have examined the relationship between language and ideology in Japanese nationalist discourse, primarily focusing on print media, government policy, or popular culture rather than digital media dynamics (Hosokawa, 2015; Kawamura & Iwabuchi, 2022; Matsuda, 2002; Merklejn & Wiœlicki, 2020). While political discourse research in Japan highlights nationalist rhetoric and cultural symbolism, corpus-based studies often limit their analysis to keywords and collocations without exploring their functional linguistic dimensions (Biber, 2015; Gablasova et al., 2017). Moreover, although Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) has been widely applied to social texts, its integration with corpus-assisted approaches to investigate digital ideological construction remains limited (Chen & Ma, 2025; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Bou-Franch, 2018). This gap suggests that the role of linguistic choices in constructing national identity and ideology within digital discourse has not been fully theorized. To address this limitation, the present study integrates SFL and Corpus-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) to examine how the "Japanese First" discourse represents ideology in digital media contexts.

The main objective of this study is to describe the linguistic structures and framing patterns that emerge in online discourse on Japanese First Issues. Specifically, this study seeks to (1) identify how linguistic elements represent nationalist ideology and Japanese identity exclusivism, (2) outline language functions based on SFL theory that support the process of meaning construction in texts, and (3) demonstrate how corpus-assisted analysis can uncover ideological tendencies hidden behind recurring language patterns. Thus, this study not only contributes to the development of applied linguistic theory but also offers new perspectives on how digital discourse influences how people interpret nationality and social membership (Matrood, 2025). Through these objectives, this study is expected to strengthen academic understanding of the relationship between language structure, power, and ideology in digital communication spaces.

This study is significant because the "Japanese First" discourse not only reflects nationalist sentiment in Japan but also illustrates how language regulates identity boundaries and social membership in a globalized era. Rather than a purely local phenomenon, "Japan First" can be situated within the broader rise of digital nativist populism (Bergmann, 2020). As migration and information flows intensify, the issue is continuously renegotiated in online spaces saturated with ideological contestation. Japan's digital ecosystem presents a distinct configuration in which nationalist discourse circulates through hybrid interactions between mainstream media and digital grassroots movements, particularly on video-based platforms. While digital populism

has been extensively studied in Western contexts, limited attention has been paid to how racial homogeneity is constructed within Japanese populist discourse. This gap further underscores the relevance of the present study.

This study employs SFL theory and the CADA approach that have rarely been applied in Japanese studies. Accordingly, this research hypothesis that specific linguistic patterns are used strategically to maintain dominant discourses and marginalize alternative views. This argument is based on the belief that language is never neutral but instead becomes an instrument of power that shapes social and ideological realities (Cameron, 2013; Thompson, 1987; Wright & Hailu, 1988). In the context of rising digital nationalism and the increasing role of online media in shaping public perception, examining how nationalist discourse is linguistically constructed becomes crucial. Understanding the ideological framing of “Japanese First” is not merely a linguistic inquiry but an investigation into how language contributes to the construction of inclusion, exclusion, and power relations in contemporary society.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do recurring linguistic patterns construct and legitimize the “Japanese First” ideology in online discourse?
2. How are ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions mobilized to position political actors and social groups?
3. In what ways do these linguistic representations reproduce power relations and shape social inclusion or exclusion?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is using a mixed-method approach integrating Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL), which combines qualitative and quantitative methodology to provide empirical evidence to support qualitative insights (Biber, 2015; Chen & Ma, 2025; Gablasova, Brezina, & McEnery, 2017). CL methods identify significant linguistic patterns across large datasets, including concordance analysis, collocation analysis, and keyword analysis (McEnery & Hardie, 2011; Nor et al., 2019; Nor & Zulcafli, 2020; Nor et al., 2021; Liu & Bakar, 2024). These quantitative analyses lighten the potential selectivity and subjectivity in traditional CDA research, thus enhancing the validity and credibility of findings (Hardt-Mautner, 1995; Baker et al., 2008; Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022).

In contrast, CDA enhances quantitative findings by employing linguistic data to uncover hidden ideologies and power relations embedded in discourse (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk,

1988; Cameron, 2013; Thompson, 1987; Wright & Hailu, 1988). This combination of methodological approaches allows for insights into the representation of the term ‘Japanese First’ in digital dynamics (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Bou-Franch, 2018; Kawamura & Iwabuchi, 2022). In this study, AntConc was used to identify linguistic features of that term in the news dataset with transitivity analysis of Halliday (1978), following previous studies on transitivity in political and social discourse (Jesudas, 2024; Pineda & Gumban, 2025; Supatmiwati et al., 2025).

Furthermore, research which uses the CADA approach also has limitations in terms of its reliability and validity. The second rater was consulted to enhance analytical reflexivity, which uses corpus results as primary data, combined with manual interpretation (Matrood, 2025; Roslyng & Dindler, 2023). The analysis involved an independent second rater with a background in corpus linguistics and linguistics systemic functional (SFL). Both of the analyst’s conducted the analysis independently. Divergent interpretations were subsequently discussed and reconciled through theory-driven discussion rather than statistical calculation. Figure 1 displays the workflow that used in this study

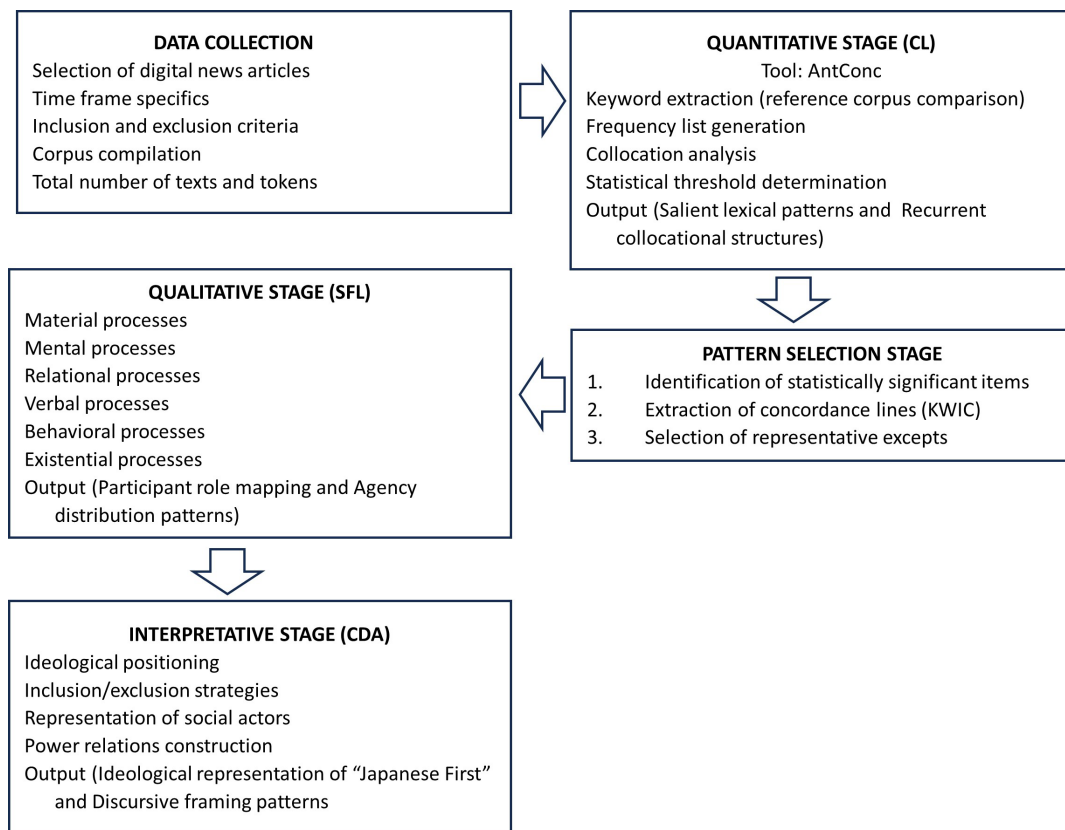


Figure 1. CADA Analysis Flowchart

Data Collection

This study employs purposive sampling to construct a self-built bilingual corpus of online news headlines containing the keyword “Japanese First” in English and Bahasa Indonesia. The dataset comprises 45 articles published between September 22 and September 26, 2025. The timeframe was selected due to major political events in Japan, including the Prime Minister’s resignation and the leadership contest within the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which intensified public discourse on power and party legitimacy. Accordingly, the study adopts an event-based corpus design, focusing on discursive reactions to these specific events rather than long-term patterns.

The corpus comprised bilingual digital news articles in Indonesian and English explicitly addressing the “Japanese First” issue. Duplicate content across reports was excluded to prevent redundancy. The final dataset consisted of 29 Indonesian articles (18,129 tokens) and 9 English articles (10,559 tokens), drawn from mainstream news outlets to ensure representation of dominant media discourse (see Table 1).

Table 1. Mainstream Media Selection

Language	No	Mainstream Media	Dates
Indonesian Language	1	Ohayo Jepang Kompas	27 Juli 2025
	2	Kompas.com	24 Juli 2025
	3	Bablast.id	12 Agustus 2025
	4	Kaorinusantara	15 Juli 2025
	5	Metrotvnews	14 Juli 2025
	6	CNBC Indonesia	22 Juli 2025
	7	Kabar24	21 Juli 2025
	8	BBC Media News	21 Juli 2025
	9	Metrotvnews	14 Juli 2025
	10	Alinea.id	26 Juli 2025
	11	BBC News Indonesia	21 Juli 2025
	12	IDN Financial	21 Juli 2025
	13	MU4.co.id	10 September 2025
	14	detikNews	21 Juli 2025
	15	Tribunnews	22 Juli 2025
	16	VIVA	29 Juni 2025
	17	KompasTV	22 Juli 2025
	18	CNN Indonesia	22 Juli 2025
	19	Kaorinusantara	30 Juni 2025

	20	Titip Jepang	30 Juni 2025
	21	Tribunnews	21 Juli 2025
	22	Katakini.com	26 Juli 2025
	23	Kaorinusantara	1 Juli 2025
	24	Tribunnews	22 Juli 2025
	25	Kompas.com	22 Juli 2025
	26	Inilah.com	12 September 2025
	27	Kuatbaca.com	21 Juli 2025
	28	Informasi.com	22 Juli 2025
	29	Warta Lombok.com	21 Juli 2025
English Language	1	DW	22 Juli 2025
	2	New Mandala	18 Juli 2025
	3	The Guardian	25 Juli 2025
	4	BBC News	21 Juli 2025
	5	The Japan Times	1 Juli 2025
	6	The Strait Times	4 Juli 2025
	7	New Mandala	18 Juli 2025
	8	Politico	22 Juli 2025
	9	France24	23 Juli 2025

In discourse-oriented corpus research, representativeness and contextual relevance take precedence over numerical symmetry. Although the Indonesian corpus (29 articles) exceeds the English corpus (9 articles), this disparity reflects differences in media coverage intensity within the selected timeframe and mainstream outlets rather than sampling bias. Both corpora were restricted to national mainstream media meeting predefined criteria, including comparable political orientation and thematic focus. To mitigate size imbalance, all frequencies were normalized per 1,000 words to ensure analytical comparability.

To prevent duplication and content overlap, all texts were manually screened to minimize potential bias in the corpus (Hosokawa, 2015; Merklejn & Wiœlicki, 2020). Hyperlinks, advertisements, and image captions were removed prior to compilation into a single .txt file for analysis in AntConc. The 45 texts were examined through frequency and KWIC analysis to identify representations of immigrants within the “Japanese First” framing (Entman, Matthes, & Pellicano, 2009; Capobianco, 2019). This study is therefore positioned not as a large-scale quantitative corpus investigation, but as a qualitative corpus-assisted discourse analysis.

Data Processing

Subsequently, the dataset of each corpus is going to extract its keywords and then compare the themes emerging from the two keywords of both corpora, such as Bahasa Indonesia and English. After the collection of each theme that emerges from the two corpora, rather than from any predetermined categories, this helps generate a richer classification (Matsuda, 2002; Tsuneyoshi, 2019). In doing so, the obtained categories can be modified to more accurately reflect the lexical semantic features and themes about the term 'Japanese First'. Moreover, KWIC analyses of the keywords under each theme are further undertaken to provide more useful contextual clues and facilitate an in-depth understanding and comparison of the obtained themes at the discussion level (Krisberg & Verga, 2018; Pang, 2025).

Analytical Framework

The corpus used in this study comprised all news articles related to political representations of the Japanese First issues by contrasting coverage in the English-language press and Indonesian-language press on online discourses. Rather than being pre-categorized, thematic domains were emergently identified from the corpus through exploratory wordlist and collocational analysis. Five dominant themes, such as political, economic, immigration, media and communication, and ideological were subsequently established based on recurrent lexical clusters (Biber, 2015; Chen & Ma, 2025; Gablasova, Brezina, & McEnery, 2017). Within each theme, node words were selected following three inclusion criteria:

1. frequency ≥ 50 occurrences,
2. statistically significant collocates (Log-likelihood ≥ 15), and
3. thematic and ideological relevance as indicated by concordance analysis.

This process resulted in pair-node words representing political domains identified from both corpora. Each node was then examined through KWIC analysis and interpreted within the transitivity framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics as seen below on Table 2 (Jesudas, 2024; Pineda & Gumban, 2025; Supatmiwati et al., 2025). KWIC analysis serves as an entry point to identify discursively prominent lexical items, while transitivity analysis is used to examine how these items function within clause structures and in the formation of ideological positions.

Table 2. Transitivity System on Halliday (1985)

Process Type	Typical Participants	Circumstances
Material	Actor, Goal, Beneficiary	Time (e.g., “She arrived yesterday.”)
Mental	Senser, Phenomenon	Place (e.g., “The meeting occurred in the hall.”)
Relational	Carrier, Attribute / Token, Value	Manner (e.g., “He spoke softly.”)
Behavioral	Behaver	Cause/Purpose (e.g., “He left because he was tired.”)
Verbal	Sayer, Verbiage, Receiver	Accompaniment (e.g., “She studied with her friend.”)
Existential	Existent	–

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of research related to ideology in online discourse conducted using the CADA framework. The discussion follows the study’s objectives: (1) identifying linguistic patterns used to frame “Japanese First Issues” online, (2) examining ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions in the corpus, and (3) analysing how these linguistic representations construct ideology or social stance. First, the corpus data was analysed thematically by the researcher and then analysed using the AntCoc corpus analysis tool to identify significant themes within the discourse. These central themes were analysed by examining keywords appearing in the AntCoc wordlist.

Linguistic Patterns in Framing “Japanese First Issues” Online

Keywords were extracted inductively through frequency and collocation analysis in AntConc and grouped into thematic clusters based on semantic relations and discursive functions. These clusters were then interpreted deductively using framing theory (Entman, 1993; Cameron, 2013) to examine how linguistic patterns construct interpretative frames. Tables 2 and 3 present the significant themes derived through corpus-driven procedures rather than predefined theoretical categories.

Table 3. Wordlist in Indonesian and English Corpus Datasets

No.	Themes	Keywords	Keywords (English Corpus)
1	Politics	<i>partai</i> (party), <i>pemilu</i> (election), <i>kursi</i> (seat), <i>kampanye</i> (campaign), <i>oposisi</i> (opposition), <i>dukungan</i> (support), <i>menteri</i> (minister), <i>pemerintah</i> (government), LDP (LDP), <i>majelis</i> (assembly/house), <i>perdana</i> (prime), <i>politik</i> (politics)	party, election, LDP, Sanseito, minister, prime, seat, leader, government, democratic, house
2	Immigration	<i>imigrasi</i> (immigration), <i>imigran</i> (immigrants), <i>asing</i> (foreigners), <i>warga</i> (citizens), <i>orang</i> (people), <i>masyarakat</i> (society), <i>sentimen</i> (sentiment)	foreigners, migrant, workers, immigration, population, anti, support, nation
3	Ideology	<i>konservatif</i> (conservative), <i>populis</i> (populist), <i>sayap</i> (wing), <i>kanan</i> (right), <i>nasional</i> (national), <i>demokrat</i> (democratic)	anti, right, rhetoric, support, democratic
4	Media and Communication	<i>media</i> (media), <i>YouTube</i> (YouTube), <i>publik</i> (public)	media, said, just, like, about
5	Economy and Social	<i>ekonomi</i> (economic), <i>sosial</i> (social), <i>tinggi</i> (high), <i>muda</i> (youth/young)	economic, policies, population, workers, social

Specifically, keyword clusters and statistically significant collocations were identified using AntConc, with recurring lexical patterns grouped into broader semantic domains based on co-occurrence and contextual usage. Following corpus-driven principles (Biber, 2015; Gablasova et al., 2017), these domains were derived from quantitative patterns rather than predefined categories. The analysis reveals dominant clusters related to political, immigration, and ideological discourse, particularly framing nationalism, party politics, and anti-immigrant sentiment (Cameron, 2013; Capobianco, 2019).

Table 4 presents the frequency distribution of keywords by theme. High-frequency terms such as *partai*, *asing*, and *right* reveal that online discourse heavily emphasizes political agency, foreigner-related issues, and ideological positioning (Biber, 2015; Chen & Ma, 2025). In both Bahasa Indonesia and English corpora, political and ideological keywords co-occur with references to nationalism and populism, reflecting framing strategies that reinforce the “Japanese First” narrative (Hosokawa, 2015; Kawamura & Iwabuchi, 2022).

Table 4. Frequencies Wordlist based on Themes

No	Category	Word (INA)	Raw	/1000	Word (ENG)	Raw	/1000
1	Politics	party	375	160.6	party	103	109.2
2	Immigration	foreign	222	95.1	sanseito	87	92.3
3	Immigration	citizens	116	49.7	said	48	50.9
4	Immigration	people	106	45.4	election	44	46.7
5	Politics	politics	103	44.1	house	44	46.7
6	Politics	election	99	42.4	foreigners	43	45.6
7	Politics	seat	93	39.8	LDP	37	39.2
8	Politics	LDP	83	35.5	right	35	37.1
9	Politics	assembly	82	35.1	anti	30	31.8
10	Immigration	immigration	75	32.1	anti	30	31.8
11	Immigration	immigrant	71	30.4	workers	26	27.6
12	Ideology	right-wing	66	28.3	workers	26	27.6
13	Politics	campaign	64	27.4	migrant	25	26.5
14	Economy & Social	high	64	27.4	social	24	25.5
15	Media & Comm	public	56	24.0	about	24	25.5
16	Ideology	wing	53	22.7	media	21	22.3
17	Economy & Social	social	52	22.3	policies	21	22.3
18	Ideology	populist	47	20.1	population	19	20.1
19	Economy & Social	economy	47	20.1	population	19	20.1
20	Politics	support	43	18.4	immigration	18	19.1
21	Economy	youth	39	16.7	support	17	18.0
22	Ideology	conservative	38	16.3	minister	17	18.0
23	Media & Comm	media	37	15.8	support	17	18.0
24	Media & Comm	YouTube	37	15.8	prime	16	17.0
25	Politics	minister	37	15.8	nation	16	17.0
26	Politics	government	37	15.8	just	16	17.0
27	Politics	opposition	36	15.4	rhetoric	16	17.0
28	Politics	prime	35	15.0	like	16	17.0
29	Immigration	society	31	13.3	democratic	15	15.9
30	Immigration	sentiment	31	13.3	seat	15	15.9
31	Ideology	national	30	12.8	government	15	15.9
32	Ideology	democratic	30	12.8	democratic	15	15.9
33	–	–	–	–	leader	14	14.9
34	–	–	–	–	economic	14	14.9

Although the corpus is relatively modest, normalized frequencies are treated as indicative rather than statistically generalizable. Collocation analysis (Table 5) shows that politic-related

words co-occur with ideological terms and party figures, reflecting personalization and strategic framing (Gablasova et al., 2017; Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022). The Indonesian corpus foregrounds concrete political actions, while the English corpus emphasizes ideological values such as democracy and liberalism, revealing cross-linguistic framing differences (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Bou-Franch, 2018; Merklejn & Wiœlicki, 2020).

Table 5. Collocations Based on Political Keywords

No	Collocation (INA)	Frequency	Likelihood	No	Collocation (ENG)	Frequency	Likelihood
		LR				LR	
1	Demokrat (democrat)	40	92.996	1	democratic	18	59.460
2	Kanan (right-wing)	51	70.577	2	cdp	8	28.033
3	Oposisi (opposition)	37	69.274	3	liberal	9	26.478
4	Sayap (wing)	42	63.308	4	sohei	8	49.391
5	Liberal (liberal)	30	62.606	5	kamiya	8	26.599
6	Ldp (LDP)	45	39.387	6	heat	2	13.575
7	Partai (party)	118	26.583	7	beleaguered	2	13.575
8	Berkuasa (ruling)	14	22.642	8	expected	2	11.909
9	Sanseito (Sanseito)	95	20.270	9	pressure	2	11.909
10	Populis (populist)	23	19.485				
11	Menteri (Minister)	30	184.920				
12	Shigeru (Shigeru)	17	101.287				
13	Ishiba (Ishiba)	22	95.150				
14	Abe (Abe)	7	31.418				
15	Shinzo (Sinzo)	6	29.527				
16	Ldp (ldp)	9	19.239				

Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual Functions

The KWIC analysis (Table 5) demonstrates the realization of ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions across both corpora (Jesudas, 2024; Pineda & Gumban, 2025; Thompson, 1987; Wright & Hailu, 1988). Terms such as *partai/party* and *Sanseito* function ideationally to represent political actors and their ideological positions, while relational processes construct identity, association, and differentiation (Jesudas, 2024; Pineda & Gumban, 2025).

A notable distinction emerges in the English corpus, where *Sanseito* collocates with the adjective *beleaguered*, carrying an evaluative connotation that frames the party as politically pressured or under attack (Thompson, 1987). This lexical choice aligns with populist narratives that emphasize resistance against elite dominance (Wright & Hailu, 1988). In contrast, the Indonesian corpus does not exhibit comparable evaluative collocations, instead representing the party in a more institutional and descriptive manner. This divergence indicates differing ideological emphases and discursive positioning across the two contexts (Jesudas, 2024).

Table 6. Node Words Representing each Pair Political Domains

Codes	Node words
CADAP-INA	Partai
CADAP-ENG	Party

Transitivity analysis of political representations demonstrates how parties are constructed as agents or objects of social perception. In Bahasa Indonesia corpora (Table 7), material processes dominate, portraying parties as active political actors, while relational processes frame ideological identity and association (Supatmiwati et al., 2025; Jesudas, 2024).

Table 7. Transivity Analysis of Political Representations in Bahasa Indonesia Corpora

No	KWIC lines	Transitivity	Ideological Meaning
1	Partai ini berhasil meraih tiga kursi (<i>The party succeeded in winning three seats</i>)	Material Process (action/success)	Demonstrating agency and success, Sanseito is represented as a new, active force capable of penetrating the political system.
2	Partai ini juga menuntut penegakan konformitas budaya yang lebih ketat terhadap warga asing (<i>The party also demands stricter enforcement of cultural conformity for foreign residents</i>)	Material Process (enforcement)	Demonstrating control and power assertion which building a strong party image on immigration and cultural issues.
3	Partai ini dikenal karena menyebarkan teori konspirasi tentang vaksinasi (<i>The party is known for spreading conspiracy theories about vaccination</i>)	Relational Process (identification)	Associating the party with controversial views, negative representation through social labelling.
4	Kritik terhadap partai ini terus bermunculan (<i>Criticism of the party continues to emerge</i>)	Material/Behavioral Process (reaction)	Demonstrating public resistance, portraying the party as a subject that sparks social debate.
5	Partai ini lahir pada 2020 di tengah pandemi Covid-19 (<i>The party was founded in 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic</i>)	Material Process (emergence)	Depicting the ideological birth of specific social conditions, as example the pandemic as a discursive trigger.
6	Partai ini membangun platformnya dengan agenda nasionalis "Japanese First" (<i>The party built its platform on the nationalist "Japanese First" agenda</i>)	Material Process (construction)	Demonstrating ideological representation: nationalism as the basis for political action.

7	Partai ini mendapat sorotan melalui unggahan video di YouTube (<i>The party gained attention through video uploads on YouTube</i>)	Material Process (visibility)	Representing success in digital populism using social media as a new arena of power.
8	Partai Demokrat Liberal kehilangan mayoritas di majelis tinggi (<i>The Liberal Democratic Party lost its majority in the upper house</i>)	Material Process (loss)	Demonstrating the decline of the legitimacy of old powers, the symbolic delegitimization of the established system.
9	Partai Demokrat Liberal masih didukung oleh pemilih lansia (<i>The Liberal Democratic Party is still supported by elderly voters</i>)	Relational Process (association)	Constructing the party's image as a conservative and traditional force.
10	Koalisi Partai Demokrat Liberal dan Komeito kehilangan kendali di parlemen (<i>The coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and Komeito lost control of the parliament</i>)	Material Process (decline)	Representing institutional weakness, the discourse of a crisis of political legitimacy.
11	Partai-partai kecil membangun aliansi dengan partai-partai lain (<i>Small parties formed alliances with other parties</i>)	Material Process (collaboration)	Demonstrating a form of collective resistance to dominant power.
12	Partai-partai populis memanfaatkan retorika anti-imigran (<i>Populist parties exploited anti-immigrant rhetoric</i>)	Material Process (strategy)	Depicting instrumental ideology, racial issues are used as a political tool.
13	Dukungan terhadap partai-partai sayap kanan meningkat (<i>Support for right-wing parties increased</i>)	Relational/Existential Process (change)	Reflecting a shift in social ideology in society, the discourse of the normalisation of the extreme right.
14	Partai-partai besar memanfaatkan isu warga asing untuk memenangkan suara (<i>Major parties used issues related to foreign residents to win votes</i>)	Material Process (exploitation)	Revealing hegemonic and manipulative strategies in mainstream politics.
15	Para pemilih beralih ke Sanseito dan partai-partai oposisi lainnya (<i>Voters shifted to Sanseito and other opposition parties.</i>)	Material Process (shift)	Representing the shift in power from the old elite to new movements.

In English corpora (Table 8), a more balanced distribution of material, relational, and verbal/mental processes shows both concrete actions and evaluative commentary, reflecting symbolic and ideological framing of parties' public image (Matrood, 2025; Roslyng & Dindler, 2023).

Table 8. Transitivity Analysis of Political Representations in English Corpora

No	KWIC lines	Transitivity	Ideological Meaning
1	The party made a breakthrough at the polls, winning 14 seats in the upper house.	Material Process (achievement)	Demonstrates Sanseito's success as a new political force an ideology of victory and political agency.
2	The party was born in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.	Material Process (emergence)	Describes the party's origins as a socio-political reaction to the crisis, born from grassroots frustration.
3	The party has centered its messaging on a "silent invasion" by foreigners.	Material Process (focus)	Demonstrates ideological construction: xenophobia and nationalism as the core of the political narrative.
4	The party wants to curb foreigner numbers and levy heavy taxes on foreign purchases of Japanese land.	Material Process (control)	Represents the party as a controlling actor, attempting to limit the "other" and reinforce national exclusivity.
5	The party's nationalistic stance has won it backers, including former Air Self-Defense Force chief.	Material Process (gain/support)	Demonstrates ideological legitimacy: support from nationalist and militarist groups.
6	The party's hostility to foreigners has been a recurring theme since its founding.	Relational Process (identification)	Exclusive ideology is tied to the party's identity "anti-foreign" is the label attached.
7	The party's growing political influence bolstered by the media coverage.	Relational/Material Process (growth)	Discourse about increasing political power indicates the mainstreaming of far-right ideology.
8	Critics say that the party's stance has encouraged the spread of xenophobic rhetoric.	Verbal/Mental Process (evaluation)	Signals negative ideological evaluations from outsiders, the party is constructed as a spreader of hatred.
9	Sanseito party won a record number of seats in the upper-house elections.	Material Process (victory)	Constructs Sanseito as representing the rising "voice of the people", an ideology of anti-establishment success.
10	The ruling party lost its majority after Sanseito's rise.	Material Process (loss)	Signals the decline of the traditional power (LDP), a symbol of the changing political landscape.
11	The party stood out from Japan's other parties, with a tough anti-foreigner stance.	Relational Process (distinction)	Constructs an image of ideological differentiation: Sanseito as a party that is "different and assertive."
12	The far-right party made big election gains.	Material Process (achievement)	Represents right-wing populism as a new force; It illustrates the success of extreme rhetoric in the public sphere.

13	The party claims it is gaining support through its “Japanese First” approach.	Verbal Process (assertion)	It demonstrates self-legitimacy, the party asserts itself as a representative of national interests.
14	The LDP party’s conservative support base has been eroded by Sanseito.	Material Process (erosion)	It illustrates a power shift, the old party loses its base of support to the new movement.
15	The party has denied being xenophobic but continues its anti-globalist rhetoric.	Verbal Process (denial)	It demonstrates a discursive self-defence strategy: the party rejects negative labels while maintaining an exclusive ideology.

The transitivity distribution reveals uneven discursive agency across the corpora. In the Indonesian corpus, material processes dominate (12 instances), positioning political parties as primary actors in actions such as gaining seats or exploiting issues related to foreign residents, while migrants function mainly as goals rather than agents. The limited relational processes (3 instances) construct political identities without incorporating migrant subjectivity. In the English corpus, material processes remain frequent (9 instances), but verbal (3 instances) and relational (3 instances) processes introduce evaluative dimensions. These verbal processes, however, primarily attribute speech to political actors or critics rather than migrants, so discursive authority remains institutional (Osman, 2025). Across both corpora, migrants are largely represented as policy objects or rhetorical targets. This patterned allocation of transitivity roles demonstrates how linguistic choices subtly marginalize minority groups in digital news discourse.

The recurrent positioning of migrant lexicon as goals rather than actors indicates a non-neutral distribution of agency. From a language-as-ideology perspective, grammatical choices reproduce power relations and legitimize authority (Thompson, 1987; Cameron, 2013). Institutional actors are foregrounded as decision-makers, while migrants are reduced to objects of governance rather than political subjects. In line with transitivity-based CDA, such role distribution frames legitimacy and reinforces social hierarchies (Supatmiwati et al., 2025; Chen & Ma, 2025). Within digital discourse, where framings circulate repetitively (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Bou-Franch, 2018), this pattern may shape public perception and subtly marginalize minority groups. Overall, the systematic allocation of transitivity roles illustrates how online news discourse reproduces power asymmetries (Tasneem, 2025).

The performative tendency in Indonesian media and the evaluative tendency in English-language media may reflect differences in journalistic culture, ideology, and geopolitical context. From a corpus perspective, recurring transitivity and collocation patterns signal systematic discourse variation rather than stylistic coincidence (Biber, 2015; Gablasova et

al., 2017). In the Indonesian corpus, the dominance of material processes indicates event-oriented reporting that foregrounds concrete political actions and institutional developments. This aligns with research showing that transitivity distributes agency and responsibility in political discourse (Pineda & Gumban, 2025; Supatmiwati et al., 2025). Indonesia's geographical proximity to Japan and sensitivity to nationalism may further encourage cautious representations that prioritize actions over explicit ideological labeling (Hosokawa, 2015; Kawamura & Iwabuchi, 2022). Such patterns support findings that media discourse reflects identity negotiation and power relations within specific sociocultural contexts (Matsuda, 2002; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Bou-Franch, 2018).

In contrast, English-language media exhibit a more evaluative framing. This aligns with studies on news framing and ideological construction in journalism (Entman et al., 2009; Cameron, 2013). Evaluative categorization serves as a discursive strategy to position political actors within broader global narratives, reinforcing ideological alignments and influencing public perceptions (Thompson, 1987; Wright & Hailu, 1988; Roslyng & Dindler, 2023). Thus, observed cross-linguistic differences suggest that grammatical choices are embedded in cultural media practices and shaped by broader socio-political dynamics (Chen & Ma, 2025; Suwarno, 2025).

Ideology and Social Stance Construction

The transitivity and collocation analyses show how linguistic choices construct social and political ideologies. To reveal encoded power relations, this study examines the distribution of actors and patients in the texts (Supatmiwati et al., 2025; Fitri, 2025). The findings indicate that the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) is frequently represented as the active institutional actor regulating immigration policy, while immigrants are positioned as passive entities affected by political decisions. This asymmetrical agency distribution reflects underlying power relations, constructing political elites as narrative controllers and immigrants as marginalized groups.

Furthermore, the discourse reinforces nationalist orientations and aligns with the interests of the LDP and conservative groups. Lexical choices such as "*nasional*" and "*konservatif*" in the Indonesian corpus, and "*populist*" or "*right-wing*" in the English corpus, indicate processes of ideological labeling and legitimation across linguistic contexts. The study also finds that immigrants or foreigners are frequently constructed as threats or as socially distinct from the local population. Such representations suggest that the discourse functions to legitimize exclusionary narratives, strengthen negative stereotypes, and marginalize minority groups in Japan.

Indonesian discourse represents political parties as active agents shaping national politics, whereas English discourse more often frames them as objects of public evaluation and ideological categorization (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022; Kawamura & Iwabuchi, 2022). This contrast shows how online discourse normalizes nationalist ideology, defines political roles, and negotiates inclusion and exclusion (Hosokawa, 2015; Capobianco, 2019; Chen & Ma, 2025). The “Japanese First” discourse thus functions not only as linguistic expression but as a mechanism of ideological legitimation that may shape public opinion and immigration debates in Japan. It reinforces exclusionary political patterns and supports the broader legitimation of political decision-making.

The study shows that the framing of “Japanese First” operates through material actions, relational identity constructions, and verbal/mental evaluations, indicating that both linguistic patterns and transitivity choices are central to ideology construction in online discourse (Thompson, 1987; Wright & Hailu, 1988). Moreover, the findings contribute to understanding how multilingual political representations reflect social dynamics in pluralistic societies and how linguistic choices reinforce power relations, public perception, and cultural identity (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & Bou-Franch, 2018; Roslyng & Dindler, 2023).

However, this study has not explicitly unpacked the broader socio-political factors that may shape the Indonesian media’s emphasis on performative political actions rather than ideological categorization. Several plausible explanations warrant consideration. First, the limited depth of Indonesian journalists’ familiarity with domestic Japanese political dynamics may lead to a reliance on observable material events (e.g., campaign actions, policy proposals, public statements) rather than abstract ideological positioning. Second, differences in journalistic culture and news framing traditions may play a role; Indonesian journalism tends to foreground event-based reporting and political performance, whereas Anglo-American journalistic conventions often prioritize ideological labeling and analytical categorization. Third, the socio-political relationship between Indonesia and Japan may also influence framing choices, as diplomatic sensitivity and strategic partnership narratives could encourage reporting that highlights pragmatic political actions over potentially contentious ideological debates.

By acknowledging these factors, the study situates its linguistic findings within a wider socio-political ecology, strengthening the claim that transitivity and collocation patterns do not emerge in isolation but are embedded in institutional practices, cross-cultural media norms, and international political relations (Supatmiwati et al., 2025; Rosita & Jannah, 2025; Nainggolan et al., 2024). This clarification reinforces the argument that multilingual

representations of “Japanese First” are shaped not only by linguistic systems but also by contextual power structures and geopolitical positioning.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to understanding how transitivity and collocation analyses reveal the role of language in constructing political ideology and shaping public perception in digital discourse on the “Japanese First” issue. By comparing corpora, it shows how grammatical choices and lexical associations function as mechanisms of ideological legitimation. The findings demonstrate a contrast between English-language discourse, which foregrounds moral and ideological evaluation, and Indonesian-language discourse, which emphasizes performative political actions (Nainggolan et al., 2024). This divergence illustrates how digital political discourse operates differently across linguistic settings. The study extends framing theory by showing how online media constructs public perception and national identity through patterned representation, while offering empirical insights for multilingual digital communication research (Fitri, 2025). More broadly, it highlights the sociopolitical implications of digital media power in East Asian contexts, particularly in shaping inclusion and exclusion within the discursive sphere.

This study also highlights the relevance of these patterns to sustainable development issues, particularly inclusive education and gender equality in Japan. Despite methodological challenges, such as potential corpus duplication, the findings provide valuable insights into recurring discourse patterns. Future research is encouraged to further develop Computer-Assisted Discourse Analysis (CADA) for examining the escalation of national sentiment on dynamic social media platforms such as TikTok and X (formerly Twitter), in line with evolving digital communication trends.

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