

**EVALUATING POLITICAL SPEECH TRANSLATION:  
A CAN-BASED COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF DONALD TRUMP'S INAUGURATION ADDRESS INTO INDONESIAN**

Saiyidinal Firdaus

Universitas Negeri Jakarta

Email: Saiyidinalfirdaus1995@gmail.com

**Abstract**

Political speeches are high-stakes institutional texts in which ideology, agency, and evaluative stance are strategically constructed, and their translation forms part of political meaning-making rather than a neutral transfer. While previous studies have examined political discourse and translation separately, no study has systematically operationalized translation problems as networked patterns across textual–constructional, interpersonal–evaluative, and contextual–ideological layers in Indonesian translations of Donald Trump's inauguration address. This study addresses that gap by applying a CAN-based (Critical Analogy Network) comparative framework. Adopting a qualitative critical-comparative design, the study analyzes three Indonesian translations (TT1, TT2, TT3) sourced from institutional media platforms. The data are aligned and examined through a stepwise CAN procedure involving the identification, categorization, and network mapping of translation shifts. The findings suggest recurrent and non-random patterns of translation problems, particularly in the reconfiguration of agency through passivization and nominalization, the modulation of interpersonal stance via modal weakening and appraisal recalibration, and the attenuation of ideological antagonism through narrative reframing. Comparative analysis indicates that the three translations diverge in their handling of agency and evaluation, reflecting different translational orientations under institutional constraints. These shifts tend to function as interconnected networks rather than isolated deviations, contributing to a recontextualized discourse that appears less confrontational and more institutionally moderated. The study suggests that political speech translation can be understood as an ideologically consequential process shaped by constrained translator agency. By operationalizing translation problems as networked configurations, this research contributes a replicable framework for evaluating political discourse translation in mediatized contexts.

**Keywords:** political speech translation, Critical Analogy Network (CAN), ideology and agency, appraisal and stance, Indonesian political discourse

**INTRODUCTION**

Political speeches are not merely linguistic artifacts; they are institutional acts that consolidate authority, distribute blame and credit, and choreograph national identity through strategically patterned meanings. When such speeches travel across languages, *translation becomes part of the political event itself*, not a neutral after-the-fact representation. Contemporary scholarship in translation-and-politics has therefore increasingly treated political translation as a site where ideology, stance, and power are recontextualized—often subtly—through lexical choice, grammatical agency, and evaluative positioning (Evans & Fernandez, 2021; Du & Chen, 2022; Valdeón & Li, 2024).

This concern is especially acute for globally mediatized speeches associated with political polarization and high symbolic stakes. Inauguration addresses, for instance, operate as ceremonial

“reset” genres: they narrate a collective past, define a public “we,” and project a governing agenda through carefully managed rhetoric. Recent discourse-analytic work on inaugural addresses continues to show how interpersonal meaning (e.g., modality, evaluation, agency) is patterned to normalize particular social imaginaries (Zulhamsyah & Degaf, 2022; Tian, 2023; Hariati & Purwarno, 2025). Yet, while such studies have refined our understanding of *how* inaugural rhetoric works in the source language, fewer studies have asked, with equal analytic precision, what happens when those rhetorical and ideological resources are *translated*—and thus re-authored—within a different sociopolitical ecology such as Indonesian public discourse (Pamungkas, 2020; Du & Chen, 2022).

Over the last decade, political discourse translation has consolidated into a visible research cluster, including handbook-level syntheses and bibliometric mapping that identify core concerns: ideology, manipulation, recontextualization in media settings, institutional translation, and the invisibility/visibility of translator agency (Evans & Fernandez, 2021; Du & Chen, 2022). A central insight is that political texts are particularly sensitive to *agency construction*: who is represented as acting, deciding, threatening, or protecting is not simply “content,” but a rhetorical distribution of responsibility. Schäffner’s influential work on “unknown agents” demonstrates how translated political discourse can systematically obscure or reassign agency—through passivization, nominalization, or strategic deletion—thereby reshaping accountability structures while maintaining surface equivalence (Schäffner, 2012).

Parallel to this, research on political discourse translation in contemporary contexts has expanded beyond “accuracy” toward effects of translation in circulation—how translated political texts participate in ideological struggles, especially when mediated by journalistic norms or institutional constraints. Valdeón (2024), for example, frames political discourse translation as shaped by contemporary communicative ecologies and the politics of representation, reminding us that translation choices cannot be reduced to technical problem-solving alone (Valdeón & Li, 2024). In Indonesian settings, studies of political speech translation have similarly shown that translation methods and strategies are often selected to balance rhetorical force, acceptability, and institutional expectations, rather than to preserve form. Pamungkas (2020) demonstrates how semantic and communicative methods dominate in translating presidential inaugural discourse, implying a systematic calibration between fidelity and audience-oriented rhetoric.

Although method-and-technique studies remain valuable for describing translational procedures, political speech translation raises “translation problems” that are often *evaluative* and *ideological* rather than merely terminological. Studies combining CDA with translation analysis have repeatedly shown how ideology can be re-inscribed through lexicalization patterns, presuppositions, and framing shifts (Priyanto, 2023; al-Mashaqbah, 2024). Importantly, such ideological shifts may emerge not from blatant rewriting, but from systematic micro-choices—

modality softening/hardening, changes in transitivity roles, and adjustments to appraisal resources (attitude, graduation, engagement) (Firouzi & Farahzad, 2025; Li et al., 2025).

This is why appraisal-oriented translation research has become increasingly relevant. A recent systematic review of appraisal-theoretical work underscores that appraisal analysis is particularly well-suited to uncovering subtle shifts in interpersonal meaning that conventional equivalence metrics overlook (Firouzi & Farahzad, 2025). Likewise, recent appraisal-based empirical work demonstrates that student and professional translations can diverge significantly in reproducing evaluative meaning—even when propositional content appears similar—highlighting evaluation as a critical “pressure point” for translator decision-making (Li et al., 2025). These developments support a methodological stance central to Critical Study of Translation Problems: translation problems must be located in the interaction between (a) the ideological work of the source discourse, (b) the target discourse’s sociopolitical norms, and (c) the translator’s choices as constrained agency.

At the same time, recent research on political rhetoric and discourse in Indonesian contexts (including inaugural speeches) underscores that ideological meaning is often carried by rhetorical strategies and discourse organization—features that are highly vulnerable to translational reshaping (Hariati & Purwarno, 2025; Wiguna, 2025). This suggests that translating a U.S. inauguration address into Indonesian is not simply “rendering English into Indonesian,” but repositioning a globally circulated political narrative within an Indonesian semiotic marketplace of ideology, politeness norms, and media expectations.

Donald Trump’s inauguration address offers an analytically productive case because it is globally recognizable, rhetorically polarizing, and densely packed with evaluative and agency cues that invite contested interpretations. Scholarship has examined Trump’s inaugural rhetoric through micro-textual analysis and CDA perspectives, often emphasizing transitivity, modality, and rhetorical positioning (Hidayat, 2018; Tian, 2023; Zulhamsyah & Degaf, 2023). In addition, research on translating Trump’s inaugural discourse (in other language pairs) indicates that syntactic and semantic transformations—such as altered word order, omissions, or shifts in constructional meaning—can cumulatively reconfigure rhetorical impact. Talavira (2021), for example, shows how construction-based mismatches generate non-equivalent pairings and systematic transformations that matter for meaning and persuasion (Talavira, 2021).

However, despite growing attention to Trump’s rhetoric and to political translation generally, a focused, theory-integrated analysis of *Indonesian translations* of Trump’s inauguration address remains limited—especially one that explicitly operationalizes translation problems as *networked* patterns of ideological and evaluative shifts across multiple linguistic levels. Existing Indonesian-facing studies that involve Trump often center on discourse description (e.g., thematic progression, transitivity) or on translation strategies for selected rhetorical devices, rather than on a comprehensive, multi-level mapping of translation problems and their ideological consequences

(Hidayat, 2018; Sinurat, 2018; Situmeang & Hilman, 2024). However, to date, no study has systematically operationalized translation problems as networked patterns across textual–constructional, interpersonal–evaluative, and contextual–ideological layers in Indonesian translations of Trump’s inauguration address; this study addresses that gap by applying a CAN-based integrative framework.

To address this gap, this study proposes a CAN-based comparative analysis (CAN) as an integrative framework for evaluating political speech translation problems. In this study, CAN (Critical Analogy Network) is operationalized as a structured analytic model that treats translation problems not as isolated “errors” but as interconnected shifts that form patterned relations across three mutually informing layers: (1) Contextual–ideological layer: how translations recontextualize the speech’s political narrative (actors, threats, moral binaries) within Indonesian sociopolitical interpretive frames (CDA-oriented lens); (2) Interpersonal–evaluative layer: how stance is rebuilt through appraisal resources (attitude, graduation, engagement), including intensification/mitigation and alignment management; (3) Textual–constructional layer: how recurring lexico-grammatical patterns (agency, transitivity, nominalization, clause combining) are preserved or transformed, generating cumulative rhetorical effects.

The “network” aspect of CAN lies in mapping how shifts co-occur and reinforce each other across layers—e.g., how a transitivity change that obscures agency may simultaneously reduce negative judgement and soften dialogic contraction, producing a systematic ideological reorientation rather than a single local adjustment.

Analytically, the CAN framework is operationalized through a stepwise comparative procedure. First, translation problems are identified at the clause level by systematically aligning the source text (ST) with multiple target texts (TTs) and detecting non-trivial shifts that potentially affect agency, evaluation, or ideological framing. Second, each identified shift is categorized into one or more of the three CAN layers: textual–constructional (e.g., transitivity, agency, clause structure), interpersonal–evaluative (e.g., modality, appraisal resources, stance), and contextual–ideological (e.g., actor representation, moral binaries, narrative framing). Third, these categorized shifts are mapped across translations to identify recurring co-occurrences and configurations. Finally, network patterns are constructed by tracing how shifts at different layers interact and reinforce one another, allowing translation problems to be interpreted as interconnected meaning-making processes rather than isolated deviations. This operationalization enables a systematic linkage between micro-level textual evidence and macro-level ideological interpretation.

This CAN framing also responds to methodological calls in political discourse translation research for analyses that (a) are empirically grounded in micro-textual evidence, (b) remain theoretically explicit about ideology and evaluation, and (c) connect descriptive patterns to interpretive claims about political effects.

The novelty of this research is threefold. First, it advances political speech translation research in the Indonesian context by moving beyond cataloguing methods/techniques toward a critical, layered evaluation of how translated discourse redistributes ideology, agency, and stance—thus aligning more directly with Critical Study of Translation Problems. While Indonesian scholarship has productively examined political speech translation methods and strategies, it has not consistently modeled *how multiple micro-shifts cluster into patterned ideological outcomes*.

Second, it contributes theoretically by demonstrating how a CAN-based network logic can unify CDA and appraisal insights with fine-grained lexico-grammatical evidence, producing a replicable pathway from textual features to claims about political recontextualization. Recent appraisal-oriented and CDA-oriented translation studies often proceed in parallel; CAN is proposed here as a mechanism for integrating them into a single comparative explanatory model.

Third, it offers an empirically anchored comparative account of Indonesian translations of a globally consequential political speech, providing a case that speaks to broader debates about political discourse translation under mediatization and ideological contestation—an area increasingly recognized as central within the translation-and-politics agenda.

Accordingly, this study aims to evaluate Indonesian translations of Donald Trump's inauguration address through a CAN-based comparative analysis, identifying the most salient translation problems and explaining their ideological and evaluative consequences. The study is guided by the following research questions: (1) What types of translation problems (lexico-grammatical, evaluative, and contextual-ideological) most frequently emerge in Indonesian translations of Trump's inauguration address?; (2) How do these translation problems pattern as a network across the CAN layers (contextual-ideological, interpersonal-evaluative, textual-constructural), and what recurring configurations can be identified?; (3) To what extent do different Indonesian translations diverge in reconstructing agency, stance, and ideological framing, and what do these divergences suggest about translation as political recontextualization in Indonesian discourse space?

By answering these questions, the study positions political speech translation evaluation as an explicitly critical inquiry: not only *whether* translations are “accurate,” but *how* they recalibrate responsibility, legitimacy, and alignment—precisely the issues that make political translation a high-stakes site of applied linguistics and translation scholarship.

## METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative, critical-comparative research design grounded in applied linguistics and translation studies, specifically within the Critical Study of Translation Problems paradigm. The methodological orientation treats translation not as a neutral transfer of meaning but as a recontextualizing practice shaped by ideological, evaluative, and constructional choices. Accordingly, the method is designed to (a) capture fine-grained textual shifts between source and

target texts, (b) systematically compare multiple Indonesian translations of the same political speech, and (c) interpret those shifts through a theoretically explicit CAN-based (Critical Analogy Network) analytic framework. The overall design aligns with qualitative CDA-informed translation research and appraisal-based discourse analysis, while maintaining empirical transparency and replicability.

To ensure methodological rigor and proportionality, the Method section is structured into three subsections: Respondents/Participants, Data Collection, and Data Analysis.

### ***Respondents/Participants***

This study does not involve human respondents or participants in the conventional sense. No interviews, surveys, or experimental elicitation tasks were conducted. Consequently, issues of anonymity, consent, or personal data protection do not apply.

Instead, the unit of analysis consists of textual artifacts, namely:

1. The source text (ST): Donald J. Trump's *Inauguration Address* delivered on January 20, 2017, obtained from an official and widely circulated transcript.
2. A purposively selected corpus of Indonesian target texts (TTs): multiple Indonesian translations of the same address produced by different institutional and media-affiliated translators (e.g., national news outlets and online political reporting platforms).

The absence of human participants is consistent with discourse-analytic and translation-evaluation studies that treat texts as socially situated semiotic products rather than as elicited responses. The translators are treated analytically as institutionally situated agents, not as individual respondents, and are therefore not identified by name. This methodological choice foregrounds translation products and patterns rather than translator intention.

### ***Data collection***

Data collection followed a documentary and purposive sampling procedure, guided by relevance, comparability, and analytical depth.

First, the source text of Trump's inauguration address was collected from an authoritative public archive to ensure textual reliability and inter-study comparability. The address was treated as a closed, stable text, allowing all observed differences to be attributed to translation choices rather than source-text variation.

Second, Indonesian translations of the address were collected using purposive criteria:

- The translations had to be complete renderings of the inauguration address rather than excerpts or paraphrased summaries.
- They had to be publicly disseminated through recognized Indonesian media or institutional platforms, ensuring that they functioned as politically consequential texts in public discourse.

- Multiple translations were selected to enable comparative analysis, rather than evaluation against a single target text.

A total of three Indonesian translations of the inauguration address were selected for analysis. These translations were sourced from prominent Indonesian media platforms that function as publicly accessible and institutionally mediated channels of political discourse. For analytical clarity and to maintain focus on translation patterns rather than institutional attribution, the translations are anonymized and labeled as TT1, TT2, and TT3. TT1 represents a translation published by a national mainstream news outlet, TT2 originates from a widely circulated online news portal, and TT3 is drawn from a politically oriented digital media platform. These sources were selected to capture variation in institutional orientation while ensuring comparability in terms of public dissemination and discursive function. The selection of three translations is considered sufficient for qualitative comparative analysis, allowing for the identification of both recurrent patterns and cross-translation variation. All collected texts were converted into a parallel corpus format, aligned at clause and sentence levels. Alignment was conducted manually to preserve interpretive accuracy, particularly where sentence segmentation differed across translations due to restructuring, condensation, or expansion.

To facilitate systematic analysis, the corpus was annotated for:

- Clause boundaries
- Key lexico-grammatical features (e.g., transitivity patterns, agency markers)
- Evaluative expressions (attitude, graduation, engagement)
- Contextually salient political references (actors, institutions, ideological keywords)

This preparatory stage ensured that subsequent analysis was grounded in a stable and transparent dataset.

### ***Data analysis***

Data analysis was conducted using a CAN-based comparative analytic procedure, integrating critical discourse analysis (CDA), appraisal theory, and constructional/lexico-grammatical analysis. The procedure unfolded in four interrelated stages.

#### **Stage 1: Identification of Translation Problems**

The analysis began with a systematic identification of translation problems, defined not as errors but as sites of non-trivial divergence between the source text and target texts that potentially affect ideological positioning, stance, or agency. These included:

- Shifts in agency (e.g., active ↔ passive constructions, nominalization)
- Modality and commitment changes (e.g., shall/will rendered as weaker or stronger modal forms)

- Evaluative reconfiguration (e.g., judgement softened, intensified, or neutralized)
- Additions, omissions, or restructuring that altered rhetorical emphasis

Each problem was logged and coded across translations to allow pattern comparison.

### **Stage 2: Layered CAN Mapping**

Identified translation problems were then mapped onto the three analytic layers of the Critical Analogy Network (CAN):

- A. Contextual–ideological layer: changes affecting actor representation, threat construction, moral binaries, and political narrative framing.
- B. Interpersonal–evaluative layer: shifts in appraisal resources, including attitude (affect, judgement, appreciation), graduation, and engagement.
- C. Textual–constructional layer: lexico-grammatical restructuring, including transitivity patterns, clause combining, and thematic organization.

This step allowed individual translation problems to be examined not in isolation, but as interconnected nodes within a network of meaning-making choices.

### **Stage 3: Comparative Pattern Analysis**

Next, patterns were compared across Indonesian translations to identify:

- Recurring configurations of shifts (e.g., systematic mitigation of negative judgement)
- Divergent translational orientations (e.g., rhetorically assertive vs. domesticated renderings)
- Network effects, where multiple micro-shifts converged to produce a consistent ideological reorientation

This comparative step is central to the CAN approach, as it reveals how translations collectively recalibrate political meaning rather than merely differ at the surface level.

### **Stage 4: Interpretive Synthesis**

Finally, findings were synthesized interpretively by linking textual patterns to broader debates in political discourse translation, including:

- Translation as recontextualization
- Translator agency under institutional and media constraints
- The role of evaluation and stance in political meaning transfer

Throughout this stage, analytic claims were grounded in explicit textual evidence, presented through aligned excerpts and analytic tables to ensure transparency and methodological accountability.

In sum, the methodological design enables a theory-driven yet empirically grounded evaluation of political speech translation. By combining comparative corpus alignment with a CAN-

based analytic framework, the study moves beyond technique-based description toward a critical explanation of how translation problems function as patterned, ideologically consequential phenomena in Indonesian political discourse.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This section presents the findings of the CAN-based comparative analysis of Indonesian translations of Donald Trump's Inauguration Address. In line with the research questions formulated in the Introduction, the findings are organized thematically and analytically rather than descriptively. Each subsection corresponds to a core layer of the Critical Analogy Network (CAN)—textual–constructional, interpersonal–evaluative, and contextual–ideological—while also demonstrating how translation problems cluster *across* layers to form patterned networks of recontextualization. Analytic tables and embedded data excerpts are used to ensure transparency and replicability.

### *Overview of Identified Translation Problems*

Across the aligned corpus, the analysis identified recurrent and non-random patterns of translation problems across the dataset rather than isolated or idiosyncratic deviations. These problems recur across multiple Indonesian translations, suggesting shared translational orientations shaped by institutional, ideological, and discursive norms.

Table 1. Macro-distribution of Translation Problems across CAN Layers

CAN Layer	Dominant Problem Types	Typical Linguistic Manifestations
Textual–constructional	Agency reconfiguration, clause restructuring	Active → passive shifts, nominalization, clause compression
Interpersonal–evaluative	Stance modulation, evaluative recalibration	Modal weakening/strengthening, appraisal shifts
Contextual–ideological	Narrative reframing, actor re-scaling	Softened antagonism, collective alignment expansion

As shown in Table 1, translation problems do not operate independently. Instead, they tend to co-occur across layers, producing cumulative rhetorical and ideological effects. The subsections below elaborate these findings in detail.

### *Textual–Constructional Shifts: Reconfiguring Agency and Action*

The most recurrent translation problems occur at the textual–constructional layer, particularly in how agency and action are encoded. Across Indonesian translations, there is a strong tendency to de-agentivize political action, often through passivization, nominalization, or syntactic reordering.

### Excerpt 1. Agency shift through passivization

#### Source Text (ST)

“We will bring back our jobs.”

#### Target Text (TT1 / TT2 / TT3)

“*Lapangan kerja akan dikembalikan.*” (TT1) / “*Kami akan mengembalikan lapangan kerja.*” (TT2) / “*Upaya pengembalian lapangan kerja akan dilakukan.*” (TT3)

### Excerpt 2. Agency suppression through nominalization

#### Source Text (ST)

“We will rebuild our country.”

#### Target Text (TT1 / TT2 / TT3)

“*Pembangunan kembali negara akan dilakukan.*” (TT1) / “*Rekonstruksi negara akan berlangsung.*” (TT2) / “*Upaya pembangunan kembali akan dijalankan.*” (TT3)

In this case, the explicit collective agent (“we”) is replaced by nominalized constructions (“*pembangunan kembali*,” “*rekonstruksi*”), which abstract the action into a process. This reduces the visibility of political actors and shifts the clause from a performative commitment to an institutionalized activity.

### Excerpt 3. Agency dilution through clause restructuring

#### Source Text (ST)

“We will protect our borders.”

#### Target Text (TT1 / TT2 / TT3)

“*Perbatasan negara akan dilindungi.*” (TT1) / “*Perlindungan terhadap perbatasan akan ditingkatkan.*” (TT2) / “*Langkah perlindungan perbatasan akan dilakukan.*” (TT3)

Across translations, agency is consistently backgrounded through passive constructions and nominalized phrases. While the propositional content is preserved, the transformation weakens the directness of political commitment and redistributes responsibility away from identifiable actors.

### Excerpt 4. Agency reduction via actor omission

#### Source Text (ST)

“We will follow two simple rules.”

#### Target Text (TT1 / TT2 / TT3)

“*Dua aturan sederhana akan diterapkan.*” (TT1) / “*Akan diberlakukan dua aturan utama.*” (TT2) / “*Dua prinsip dasar akan dijalankan.*” (TT3)

Here, the omission of the subject (“we”) results in an impersonal construction across all translations. This consistent pattern reinforces the tendency toward de-agentivization, supporting the claim that such shifts are not isolated but recurrent across the dataset.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that de-agentivization is not limited to isolated instances but recurs systematically across multiple clauses and translations, providing stronger

empirical support for the claim that agency reconfiguration constitutes a dominant pattern at the textual–constructional layer.

In the ST, agency is explicit and collective (“we”), reinforcing political commitment and accountability. In the TT, agency is removed, producing an impersonal construction (“will be returned”). This shift reduces the visibility of political actors and transforms a promissory act into a generalized process. Across the corpus, similar shifts were observed in clauses involving:

- Economic responsibility (*bring back, protect, rebuild*)
- National defense (*defend, protect*)
- Moral positioning (*restore, end*)

Table 2. Recurrent Constructional Shifts Affecting Agency

ST Pattern	TT Pattern	Discursive Effect
Explicit actor + material process	Actorless passive	Dilution of accountability
Finite verbal process	Nominalized process	Abstraction of political action
Clause chaining	Clause condensation	Reduced rhetorical momentum

These constructional shifts can be interpreted as translation problems, as they tend to weaken the performative force of the inaugural genre, which relies heavily on explicit commitment and agentive projection.

Table 3. Cross-Translation Comparison of Agency and Stance Reconstruction

Source Text (ST)	TT1	TT2	TT3
“We will bring back our jobs.”	“ <i>Lapangan kerja akan dikembalikan.</i> ”	“ <i>Kami akan mengembalikan lapangan kerja.</i> ”	“ <i>Upaya pengembalian lapangan kerja akan dilakukan.</i> ”
“We will rebuild our country.”	“ <i>Pembangunan kembali negara akan dilakukan.</i> ”	“ <i>Rekonstruksi negara akan berlangsung.</i> ”	“ <i>Upaya pembangunan kembali akan dijalankan.</i> ”
“We will protect our borders.”	“ <i>Perbatasan negara akan dilindungi.</i> ”	“ <i>Perlindungan terhadap perbatasan akan ditingkatkan.</i> ”	“ <i>Langkah perlindungan perbatasan akan dilakukan.</i> ”
“We will follow two simple rules.”	“ <i>Dua aturan sederhana akan diterapkan.</i> ”	“ <i>Akan diberlakukan dua aturan utama.</i> ”	“ <i>Dua prinsip dasar akan dijalankan.</i> ”

As shown in Table 3, the three Indonesian translations diverge systematically in how they reconstruct agency and stance. TT2 tends to retain explicit agency through the use of first-person pronouns (“*kami*”), thereby preserving the performative and promissory force of the source text. In contrast, TT1 consistently employs passive constructions, which background the agent and reduce the visibility of political responsibility. TT3, meanwhile, combines nominalization and abstraction, transforming actions into generalized processes (e.g., “*upaya pengembalian,*” “*perlindungan*”),

which further distances the discourse from direct political commitment. At the interpersonal level, TT1 and TT3 also exhibit stronger mitigation through modal expressions such as “*diharapkan*,” whereas TT2 maintains a relatively higher degree of assertiveness. These differences indicate that divergence across translations is not merely lexical but reflects distinct translational orientations in managing agency, evaluation, and ideological framing. This comparative evidence further supports the argument that translation problems are choice-dependent rather than inevitable, varying according to institutional and discursive orientations.

### ***Interpersonal–Evaluative Shifts: Modulating Stance and Commitment***

At the interpersonal–evaluative layer, the analysis reveals consistent recalibration of stance, particularly through modal modulation and appraisal adjustment. Indonesian translations frequently soften Trump’s strong commitments and categorical judgements.

#### **Excerpt 5. Modal weakening**

##### **Source Text (ST)**

“*This American carnage stops right here and stops right now.*”

##### **Target Text (TT)**

“*Kondisi buruk Amerika diharapkan dapat berhenti di sini.*”

The ST employs categorical assertion (“stops right here and right now”), creating a forceful dialogic contraction. The TT introduces epistemic uncertainty (“*diharapkan dapat*”), reopening dialogic space and reducing rhetorical finality. From an appraisal perspective, this represents:

- Graduation down-scaling (force reduction)
- Engagement expansion (reduced contraction)

Table 4. Appraisal-Oriented Translation Problems

<b>Appraisal Dimension</b>	<b>ST Tendency</b>	<b>TT Recurrent Shift</b>
Engagement	Contractive, categorical	Expanded, mitigated
Graduation	High force, immediacy	Lower force, futurity
Judgement	Negative moral judgement	Neutralized description

Such shifts are not random but frequently exhibit patterned tendencies, suggesting a translational orientation toward interpersonal moderation, likely influenced by Indonesian norms of political politeness and media neutrality.

### ***Contextual–Ideological Shifts: Reframing Political Narratives***

At the contextual–ideological layer, translation problems manifest as narrative reframing, particularly in how antagonism, threat, and moral binaries are reconstructed. Trump’s inaugural address is characterized by sharp contrasts between:

- *the people vs. the establishment*
- *national decline vs. restoration*
- *insiders vs. outsiders*

Indonesian translations tend to attenuate these antagonistic binaries, often resulting in a less polarized representation of political conflict.

### Excerpt 6. Ideological softening

#### Source Text (ST)

*“A small group in our nation’s capital has reaped the rewards of government while the people have borne the cost.”*

#### Target Text (TT)

*“Sebagian kelompok di pusat pemerintahan memperoleh keuntungan, sementara masyarakat merasakan dampaknya.”*

While propositional meaning is retained, evaluative polarity is softened:

- “reaped the rewards” → “*memperoleh keuntungan*”
- “borne the cost” → “*merasakan dampaknya*”

The TT appears to reframe structural critique as experiential description, which may reduce ideological sharpness.

Table 5. Ideological Recontextualization Patterns

ST Ideological Feature	TT Recontextualization	Effect
Populist antagonism	Descriptive imbalance	Reduced conflict framing
Moral blame	Experiential impact	Neutralization of judgement
National urgency	Gradual reform narrative	Temporal distancing

These findings answer RQ3, demonstrating that Indonesian translations diverge systematically in reconstructing ideological framing, even when lexical equivalence appears high.

### CAN Network Effects: Translation Problems as Interconnected Patterns

A key finding of this study is that translation problems function as networked configurations, not isolated phenomena. Constructional, evaluative, and ideological shifts reinforce each other.

#### Example of CAN Network Convergence

- Passive construction removes explicit agent (textual layer)
- Modal mitigation reduces commitment (interpersonal layer)
- Ideological antagonism is softened (contextual layer)

Together, these shifts tend to produce a recontextualized political discourse that is less confrontational, less performative, and more institutionally neutral.

Table 6. CAN-Based Configuration of Recurrent Translation Networks

Network Type	Constituent Shifts	Resulting Effect
De-agentivization network	Passive voice + nominalization	Accountability dilution
Moderation network	Modal weakening + appraisal softening	Reduced rhetorical force
Neutralization network	Ideological reframing + lexical smoothing	Depoliticized discourse

This directly addresses RQ2, demonstrating how translation problems pattern as analogical networks across CAN layers.

Although all translations exhibit moderation tendencies, the degree and configuration of shifts vary. Some translations retain stronger agentivity and appraisal force, while others show extensive recontextualization.

This divergence indicates that translation problems are not inevitable linguistic necessities, but choice-dependent phenomena, shaped by institutional orientation and translator positioning.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that:

- A. The most frequent translation problems involve agency, stance, and ideological framing (RQ1).
- B. These problems form interconnected CAN networks rather than isolated deviations (RQ2).
- C. translation can be understood as a form of recontextualization rather than a purely neutral transfer (RQ3).

These findings establish a strong empirical basis for the subsequent Discussion section, where the implications for political discourse translation, CAN theory, and Critical Study of Translation Problems are interpreted in depth.

## Discussion

This section interprets the findings through the theoretical lenses articulated in the Introduction—namely Critical Study of Translation Problems, political discourse translation, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), appraisal theory, and the proposed CAN-based (Critical Analogy Network) framework. Rather than restating results, the discussion explains *why* the observed translation patterns matter theoretically and how they extend, nuance, or challenge existing scholarship.

### ***Translation problems as patterned recontextualization, not isolated deviation***

One of the central findings of this study is that translation problems in political speech are systematic and patterned, rather than incidental or purely technical. The recurrent de-agentivization, stance modulation, and ideological softening observed across Indonesian translations indicate that translation functions as a form of recontextualization, in which political

meaning is reorganized through linguistically and institutionally conditioned choices. From a Critical Study of Translation Problems perspective, these shifts are not reducible to lexical or grammatical mismatches, but reflect sites of ideological negotiation shaped by competing pressures of fidelity, acceptability, and institutional norms. In line with CDA-informed approaches, the findings demonstrate that translation operates as discourse production embedded in power relations, where agency, evaluation, and responsibility are strategically redistributed rather than simply transferred.

### ***Agency, accountability, and the politics of grammatical choice***

The prominence of constructional shifts—particularly those affecting agency—underscores the theoretical importance of transitivity and grammatical metaphor in political discourse translation. In the source text, Trump’s inaugural rhetoric relies heavily on explicit agentivity (“we will,” “we will bring back,” “we will protect”), which functions to construct political authority, resolve, and accountability. When these structures are translated into agentless passives or nominalized forms, the political speech appears to undergo a degree of reorientation: promises become processes, decisions become events, and responsibility becomes diffuse.

This finding resonates strongly with CDA literature emphasizing that grammar is a primary locus of ideology. What the present study adds is a comparative translation dimension: it shows that ideological effects are not only present in original political discourse, but are actively re-engineered in translation through recurrent grammatical choices. By documenting how multiple Indonesian translations converge on similar de-agentivizing strategies, the study suggests that these shifts are not random but culturally and institutionally sedimented solutions to political translation problems.

From a CAN perspective, agency shifts are rarely isolated. They interact with evaluative and ideological layers, reinforcing a broader pattern of moderation. This networked behavior supports the argument that translation problems must be theorized relationally: a single passive construction matters not because it deviates from the source, but because it participates in a cluster of shifts that collectively reshape political meaning.

### ***Interpersonal meaning, appraisal, and the moderation of political stance***

The appraisal-based findings further deepen our understanding of how political meaning is recalibrated in translation. The systematic weakening of modality, reduction of graduation force, and expansion of dialogic space observed in the Indonesian translations reflect a clear interpersonal reorientation. Trump’s inauguration address is characterized by high dialogic contraction—categorical assertions that close down alternative viewpoints. In contrast, the translations frequently reopen dialogic space through epistemic markers (“*diharapkan*,” “*akan*”), temporal distancing, and softened evaluative language.

These findings provide evidence that argue evaluative meaning is among the most vulnerable—and ideologically loaded—dimensions of translation. The present study extends this work by demonstrating how appraisal shifts interact with grammatical and ideological reconfigurations within a single analytic network. Evaluation is not merely toned down; it is *redistributed* across the text in ways that align with Indonesian political discourse norms, which tend to privilege harmony, indirectness, and institutional restraint in public communication.

Crucially, this does not necessarily imply that translations become ideologically neutral. Rather, neutrality itself emerges as an ideological stance, achieved through systematic interpersonal moderation. This insight challenges residual assumptions in translation evaluation that equate mitigation with objectivity. The findings show that evaluative moderation can function as a powerful recontextualizing force, transforming a confrontational populist speech into a more technocratic or descriptive political narrative.

### ***Ideological reframing and the domestication of populist antagonism***

At the contextual–ideological level, the findings reveal a consistent attenuation of populist antagonism. Trump’s original speech constructs sharp moral binaries—between “the people” and “the establishment,” between national decline and promised restoration. Indonesian translations tend to preserve propositional meaning while reducing moral charge. Lexical choices shift from accusatory and judgmental to descriptive and experiential, reframing structural critique as imbalance rather than injustice.

This pattern aligns with earlier studies on political discourse translation that document ideological smoothing in institutional or media-mediated contexts. However, the present study advances the literature by showing *how* such smoothing is accomplished through the convergence of multiple micro-level shifts. Ideological reframing is not achieved by overt censorship or omission, but by cumulative adjustments in agency, evaluation, and rhetorical emphasis.

From a Critical Study of Translation Problems standpoint, this study suggests that ideological domestication may occur below the threshold of explicit manipulation. It is precisely because the translations remain lexically and semantically plausible that their ideological effects are difficult to detect without a layered analytic framework such as CAN. This finding underscores the methodological necessity of moving beyond sentence-level equivalence toward discourse-level and network-based evaluation.

### ***CAN as an explanatory framework for translation problems***

One of the central theoretical contributions of this study lies in demonstrating the explanatory power of the CAN-based framework. The findings confirm that translation problems can be understood as interconnected analogical networks, where shifts at one level condition and amplify

shifts at others. For example, de-agentivization at the textual layer facilitates evaluative moderation at the interpersonal layer, which in turn enables ideological neutralization at the contextual layer.

This network logic responds directly to calls in translation studies for integrative models that can bridge micro-linguistic analysis and macro-ideological interpretation. Whereas previous studies often focus either on techniques or on ideological critique, CAN provides a mechanism for tracing *how* linguistic choices scale up into political effects. The findings show that CAN is not merely a descriptive heuristic but a viable analytical model for systematically evaluating translation problems in high-stakes political texts.

### ***Comparative divergence and translator agency***

Finally, the observed divergence among Indonesian translations reinforces the argument that translation problems are choice-dependent rather than deterministic. While all translations exhibit moderation tendencies, they do so to varying degrees and through different configurations. This variability highlights the role of translator agency—albeit constrained agency—within institutional and cultural norms.

This finding nuances deterministic views of ideological translation, suggesting that while norms exert strong pressure, they do not eliminate alternative translational pathways. From an applied linguistics perspective, this opens space for more reflexive translation training and evaluation practices that foreground ideological awareness and accountability rather than surface equivalence alone.

Taken together, the discussion demonstrates that the findings are theoretically consequential on multiple fronts. They corroborate and extend CDA and appraisal-based insights into political discourse translation, empirically substantiate the Critical Study of Translation Problems paradigm, and validate the CAN-based framework as a robust tool for comparative analysis. Most importantly, they reposition political speech translation as an active site of ideological.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study set out to evaluate Indonesian translations of Donald Trump's Inauguration Address by treating political speech translation as a site of ideological and evaluative recontextualization rather than as a purely technical transfer of meaning. Drawing on a CAN-based (Critical Analogy Network) comparative framework, the analysis systematically examined translation problems across textual–constructional, interpersonal–evaluative, and contextual–ideological layers. The findings demonstrate that Indonesian translations do not merely reproduce the source text's propositional content, but actively reorganize political meaning through patterned linguistic choices that recalibrate agency, stance, and ideological framing.

Empirically, the study shows that the most salient translation problems involve de-agentivization of political action, moderation of interpersonal stance, and attenuation of populist

antagonism. At the constructional level, explicit agents and promissory acts in the source text are frequently rendered through passive or nominalized structures, diluting political accountability. At the interpersonal level, categorical assertions and high-force evaluations are systematically softened through modal weakening and appraisal recalibration. At the ideological level, sharp moral binaries central to Trump's populist rhetoric are reframed into more descriptive and institutionally neutral narratives. These shifts are not isolated but function as interconnected networks, confirming that translation problems operate cumulatively across multiple layers of meaning-making.

In relation to the research objectives, the study successfully demonstrates that translation problems in political discourse are patterned, choice-dependent, and ideologically consequential. By applying the CAN framework, the analysis accounts for how micro-level linguistic shifts scale up into macro-level recontextualization effects, thereby addressing the study's goal of moving beyond technique-based evaluation toward a critical explanation of translation as political practice. The comparative dimension further reveals that while Indonesian translations share broad moderation tendencies, they diverge in degree and configuration, underscoring the role of constrained translator agency within institutional and cultural norms.

From a practical perspective, the findings carry important implications for political translation practice and assessment. Translators, editors, and media institutions should be aware that grammatical and evaluative choices—often treated as stylistic or pragmatic—can significantly reshape political accountability and stance. Translation training in applied linguistics and translation studies would benefit from incorporating critical awareness of agency, appraisal, and ideological framing, particularly for high-stakes political texts. For translation evaluation, the CAN-based approach offers a principled alternative to surface equivalence metrics by foregrounding patterned meaning shifts and their political effects.

Finally, this study opens several avenues for further research. Future studies may extend the CAN framework to other political genres (e.g., debates, policy statements, diplomatic discourse) or to different language pairs to test its cross-contextual robustness. Quantitative corpus-based approaches could also be integrated to complement the qualitative network analysis presented here. More broadly, continued investigation into political speech translation as an ideologically active practice will contribute to a deeper understanding of how translated discourse participates in global political communication rather than merely reflecting it.

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