Naturalizing Disaster in Media Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Sibolga Landslide Coverage on Kompas TV

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Article Info :	Abstract
	Disaster discourse in Indonesian media often emphasizes natural factors while marginalizing structural causes, thereby depoliticizing complex socio-environmental issues. This study investigates the discursive construction of the Sibolga landslide as represented in the Kompas TV news article "PVMBG Ungkap Penyebab Longsor di Sibolga: Lereng Curam dan Hujan Ekstrem" published on November 27, 2025. Adopting a descriptive qualitative design within a critical paradigm, the research employs Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework, encompassing textual features, discursive practices, and socio-cultural contexts. The analysis reveals that the news discourse predominantly naturalizes the disaster by foregrounding geological and meteorological explanations provided by PVMBG, while systematically excluding perspectives from affected communities, independent researchers, and environmental advocates. Linguistic choices and narrative strategies legitimize scientific-institutional authority as the sole source of truth, while structural factors such as spatial planning violations, deforestation, and governance failures receive minimal or no attention. The study demonstrates how news media function not merely as information channels but as ideological spaces that reproduce dominant discourses on disaster, shifting responsibility from human actors and policies to uncontrollable natural forces. This research contributes to critical media and disaster studies by exposing how naturalization discourse reduces public demand for structural reforms and perpetuates vulnerability in disaster-prone communities in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Disaster Discourse, Naturalization, Critical Discourse Analysis, PVMBG, Kompas TV.* |

INTRODUCTION

Disasters have long been framed as sudden interruptions produced by nature, yet critical scholarship has demonstrated that hazard impacts emerge from historically produced social, political, and economic arrangements that distribute risk unevenly (Wisner et al., 2004; Blaikie et al., 2014). Vulnerability is neither accidental nor neutral, as it is shaped by development trajectories, land-use decisions, and institutional priorities that privilege certain interests over others (Bankoff, 2001). Media institutions occupy a strategic position within this configuration because they mediate how disasters are interpreted, explained, and remembered by the public. Through recurring narrative patterns, news discourse contributes to the normalization of particular causal explanations while rendering others peripheral or invisible (Ellis, 2019).

Indonesia presents a compelling context for examining these dynamics due to its exposure to overlapping geological and hydrometeorological hazards combined with intense development pressure. Landslides, floods, and earthquakes repeatedly affect areas where rapid urban expansion intersects with weak environmental governance. Public understanding of these events is shaped not only by scientific assessments but also by how news organizations frame causation and responsibility (Alexander, 2014). Media narratives that emphasize physical triggers often dominate early reporting, establishing interpretive boundaries that persist long after the event subsides (Hall et al., 1978).

A recurrent feature of disaster reporting is the tendency to attribute damage primarily to rainfall intensity, topography, or soil conditions, a practice widely described as the naturalization of disaster (Pelling, 2003). This framing shifts attention away from land conversion, deforestation, spatial planning violations, and regulatory failure that transform hazards into disasters (Blaikie et al., 2014). By privileging environmental explanations, news discourse frequently absolves decision-makers from scrutiny and reduces disasters to unavoidable misfortunes. Such representations limit public debate

about prevention, accountability, and structural reform that could reduce future losses (Bohensky & Leitch, 2014).

These patterns became visible following the landslides that struck Sibolga City, North Sumatra, on 24–25 November 2025. Multiple slope failures occurred across six locations within densely populated hillside areas, including Tangga Seratus, Café Rumah Uci, Bukit Aido, and Aek Parombunan, causing fatalities, displacement, and infrastructure damage. Official statements released by the Center for Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation identified intense rainfall, steep slopes, and saturated soils as the principal causes of the disaster. This explanation was rapidly circulated by national broadcasters, including Kompas TV, reinforcing a singular causal narrative focused on natural conditions.

Scientific assessments of rainfall thresholds and slope stability remain essential for understanding immediate failure mechanisms. Media reliance on these explanations becomes problematic when coverage excludes questions concerning why settlements were permitted on gradients exceeding 25–60 percent or how vegetation loss altered hydrological behavior. The absence of discussion on building permits, zoning enforcement, and hazard mapping reflects a broader reluctance to interrogate governance practices shaping vulnerability (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022). Through selective emphasis, news discourse may position affected residents as passive victims while shielding regulatory institutions from public accountability.

News reporting operates as a discursive practice that both reflects and reproduces power relations embedded within society. Journalists depend heavily on institutional sources who function as authoritative definers of events, establishing frames that structure subsequent interpretations (Hall et al., 1978). This asymmetry privileges official perspectives while marginalizing community voices, civil society critiques, and alternative expert interpretations. Similar mechanisms have been identified in political and conflict reporting, where discourse serves to legitimize dominant actors through linguistic and narrative strategies (Amer, 2009).

Critical Discourse Analysis offers a robust framework for unpacking these processes by treating language as a form of social practice intertwined with power and ideology (Fairclough, 1989; Huspek, 1991). CDA assumes that ideological meanings are embedded within textual choices, patterns of representation, and silences that structure what can be said and thought (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). Fairclough's three-dimensional model integrates textual analysis with examination of news production routines and broader socio-cultural conditions. This approach enables systematic exploration of how disaster narratives are constructed, circulated, and naturalized within media institutions.

Empirical studies of disaster communication have documented consistent tendencies toward depoliticization and technical framing that obscure governance failures (Alexander, 2014; Bohensky & Leitch, 2014). Research on Indonesian media has similarly highlighted the dominance of official sources and limited critical interrogation of policy and enforcement shortcomings (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022). Despite this growing body of scholarship, focused analysis of landslide reporting through the lens of naturalization remains scarce. This study addresses that gap by examining the Kompas TV coverage of the Sibolga landslide using Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to reveal how meaning and ideology are articulated within disaster news discourse.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach grounded in a critical paradigm and relies on secondary data in the form of a single news article published on the Kompas TV online portal entitled *"PVMBG Ungkap Penyebab Longsor di Sibolga: Lereng Curam dan Hujan Ekstrem,"* written by Rizky L. Pratama, edited by Desy Afrianti, and released on November 27, 2025. The primary data consist of the news text itself, with analytical attention directed toward lexical choices, clauses, and narrative structures that construct disaster causation, institutional authority, and social actors, while Kompas TV as a media institution is also treated as contextual data in order to situate the process of news production. Data were collected through a literature-based document study and analyzed using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework, encompassing textual analysis, discursive practice, and socio-cultural practice. This analytical model enables examination of how the Sibolga landslide is discursively represented, how institutional sources shape news framing, and how broader socio-political conditions of disaster governance and vulnerability in Indonesia inform the naturalization of disaster within media discourse.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Naturalization of Disaster in Kompas TV's Sibolga Landslide Coverage

The analysis of the Kompas TV article *"PVMBG Ungkap Penyebab Longsor di Sibolga: Lereng Curam dan Hujan Ekstrem"* demonstrates a coherent discursive strategy that frames the Sibolga landslide as an event driven almost exclusively by natural forces, rather than as an outcome of socially produced vulnerability (Kompas TV, 2025). Through the application of Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis, the text reveals how language operates to normalize disaster causation while stabilizing institutional authority and narrowing the space for critical accountability (Fairclough, 2013; Huspek, 1991). This pattern aligns with broader critiques of disaster communication that identify media as a key actor in translating complex socio-environmental processes into simplified narratives of inevitability (Alexander, 2014; Tierney et al., 2006). Within this framework, disaster is rendered as an external shock rather than as a manifestation of long-standing political and planning decisions (Blaikie et al., 2014; Bankoff, 2001).

At the textual level, the dominance of nature-centered vocabulary constructs a deterministic account of causation that privileges geophysical explanations over social ones. Repeated lexical items such as "hujan intensitas tinggi," "lereng curam," and "tanah jenuh air" function to anchor the narrative firmly within meteorological and geological registers, creating an impression of technical neutrality and scientific closure (Fairclough, 2013). The recurrence of the adjective "curam" and the frequent invocation of rainfall intensity reinforce a sense of inevitability, as if topography itself were sufficient to explain loss of life and damage. Similar lexical strategies have been identified in disaster reporting elsewhere, where technical terminology operates ideologically by masking the political origins of vulnerability (Bohensky & Leitch, 2014; Tierney et al., 2006).

Equally significant is what the text omits, as silence functions as a powerful discursive device within critical analysis (Van Dijk, 2015). The absence of terms related to spatial planning, environmental regulation, deforestation, land conversion, or institutional responsibility systematically erases human agency from the causal chain. Settlements are mentioned descriptively, yet the decision-making processes that allowed housing development on steep and unstable slopes remain unexamined. This pattern mirrors findings from Indonesian media studies showing a consistent reluctance to interrogate governance failures in disaster contexts (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022; Fauzan, 2018).

Grammatical structures further reinforce this asymmetry of agency by allocating action selectively among social actors. PVMBG is repeatedly positioned as an active subject through material and verbal processes, such as "merilis," "menyebut," and "mengidentifikasi," which present the institution as the authoritative producer of truth (Kompas TV, 2025). Natural phenomena are similarly endowed with agency through causal constructions that portray rainfall and slope conditions as actors that "menyebabkan" and "memicu" destruction. Human actors, by contrast, appear largely in passive constructions, depicted as victims who "meninggal," "dinyatakan hilang," or "terpaksa mengungsi," a grammatical pattern that depoliticizes suffering and diffuses responsibility (Fairclough, 2013; Van Dijk, 2015).

Modal expressions within the article consolidate this hierarchy of knowledge and authority. Statements attributed to PVMBG are articulated with high epistemic certainty, leaving little room for alternative interpretations or critical questioning of the official explanation (Alexander, 2014). Predictions regarding future rainfall or continued risk are framed cautiously, yet the causal narrative explaining the disaster itself remains unqualified and definitive. Such asymmetrical modality positions scientific institutions as unquestionable arbiters of meaning, a tendency widely documented in studies of expert-driven disaster discourse (Amer, 2009; Bohensky & Leitch, 2014).

At the level of discursive practice, the article reflects routinized journalistic dependence on official sources, particularly state technical agencies. This reliance aligns with institutional news production norms in Indonesian media, where authoritative voices are prioritized to ensure credibility and speed of reporting (Saragih, 2019; Ellis, 2019). The prominence of PVMBG as the sole explanatory source limits discursive diversity and marginalizes perspectives from affected communities, urban planners, or environmental advocates. Similar patterns have been observed in comparative media research, where elite sourcing shapes public perception by defining the boundaries of legitimate interpretation (Hopkins et al., 2017; Gulbrandsen et al., 2019).

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To substantiate these discursive tendencies, Table 1 synthesizes empirical findings from this study, official reports, and prior research on disaster media representation. The table illustrates how lexical frequency, source dominance, and thematic emphasis converge to naturalize disaster causation while sidelining structural explanations (Kompas TV, 2025; Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022; Fauzan, 2018). By juxtaposing textual evidence with existing scholarship, the data underscore the patterned nature of naturalization rather than treating it as an isolated editorial choice. This triangulation aligns with qualitative rigor standards emphasizing transparency and analytical coherence (Tracy, 2010).

Table 1. Discursive Patterns in Kompas TV's Sibolga Landslide Coverage

Analytical Aspect	Empirical Finding (This Study)	Supporting Official / Prior Research
Dominant Lexicon	"hujan intensitas tinggi," "lereng curam," "tanah jenuh air" recur frequently	Natural hazard framing in media (Tierney et al., 2006; Bohensky & Leitch, 2014)
Institutional Voice	PVMBG cited as primary and authoritative source	Elite source dominance (Alexander, 2014; Saragih, 2019)
Human Agency	Passive representation of victims; absence of planners or regulators	Governance silence in Indonesian media (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022; Fauzan, 2018)
Causal Narrative	Linear sequence: rain + slope→disaster	Naturalization of vulnerability (Bankoff, 2001; Blaikie et al., 2014)

At the socio-cultural level, the discourse reflects broader structural conditions shaping disaster governance in Indonesia. Rapid urbanization in hazard-prone areas, combined with uneven enforcement of spatial planning regulations, creates landscapes of risk that are normalized through routine administrative practices (Blaikie et al., 2014; Bankoff, 2001). Media narratives that foreground natural triggers without interrogating these conditions contribute to a depoliticized understanding of disaster. This process aligns with global critiques of vulnerability discourse that warn against treating exposure as a natural attribute rather than as a product of political economy (Bankoff, 2001).

The naturalization evident in the Kompas TV article also performs an ideological function by legitimizing institutional authority while limiting public contestation. By presenting PVMBG's explanation as exhaustive and final, the discourse discourages scrutiny of policy failures and shifts attention away from long-term risk reduction. Comparable dynamics have been observed in coverage of other crises, where technical language serves to stabilize hegemonic interpretations and marginalize dissenting perspectives (Amer, 2009; Shuo et al., 2014). In this sense, the news text does not merely report a disaster but actively shapes the moral and political horizons within which the event is understood.

These findings reaffirm the analytical value of Critical Discourse Analysis for unpacking the ideological dimensions of disaster reporting. Fairclough's framework reveals how textual features, production routines, and socio-cultural contexts intersect to reproduce dominant narratives of inevitability and natural causation (Fairclough, 2013; Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). The Sibolga case illustrates how media discourse can obscure the social roots of vulnerability, even in contexts where human decisions play a decisive role in shaping risk. Recognizing these discursive mechanisms remains essential for advancing more accountable, reflexive, and prevention-oriented approaches to disaster communication (Alexander, 2014; Sobari et al., 2025).

Discursive Practice (Meso Level): Production, Circulation, and Reception of Disaster Meaning

At the meso level, the Kompas TV report on the Sibolga landslide illustrates how institutional routines of news production shape the boundaries of meaning long before audiences encounter the text. The article is produced within a conventional journalistic framework that prioritizes speed, authority, and institutional credibility, resulting in exclusive reliance on PVMBG as the sole definitional source of causation (Kompas TV, 2025; Saragih, 2019). Such dependence reflects a broader media logic in which official institutions are treated as epistemically superior and procedurally reliable, especially in

crisis reporting (Ellis, 2019). Critical discourse scholarship has repeatedly shown that this practice embeds power asymmetries into news texts at the point of production rather than at the level of interpretation alone (Fairclough, 2013; Huspek, 1991).

The monopolization of voice by PVMBG grants the institution effective control over the interpretive framework through which the disaster is understood. No alternative perspectives appear from affected residents, independent researchers, civil society organizations, or local authorities responsible for land-use governance. This absence is not incidental but structurally patterned, reflecting what Fairclough conceptualizes as differential access to discourse, where elite actors enjoy routine visibility while marginalized groups remain unheard (Fairclough, 2013). Comparable patterns have been documented in Indonesian media analyses, where government-aligned narratives dominate reporting on crises and policy failures (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022; Fauzan, 2018).

From a critical political communication perspective, this form of sourcing positions PVMBG as a "primary definer" whose explanations set the parameters for public understanding at an early stage of the news cycle. Once these parameters are established, alternative interpretations face structural obstacles to visibility and legitimacy (Alexander, 2014). The article's production context illustrates how institutional authority becomes naturalized through repetition and exclusivity rather than through open contestation. Similar dynamics have been identified in international media coverage of disasters and conflicts, where elite discourse acquires hegemonic status through routine journalistic practices (Amer, 2009; Tierney et al., 2006).

Text distribution further amplifies these effects through the affordances of digital news platforms. As an online article published within days of the event, the Kompas TV report benefits from rapid circulation, algorithmic visibility, and ease of sharing across social media ecosystems (Gulbrandsen et al., 2019). Early frames tend to exert disproportionate influence over subsequent interpretations, particularly in high-uncertainty situations such as disasters (Hopkins et al., 2017). In digitally mediated environments, speed of publication often outweighs plurality of perspective, reinforcing dominant frames before counter-discourses can emerge (Bergström, 2020).

Audience positioning within the text further constrains interpretive agency by presenting information in a neutral, authoritative register that invites acceptance rather than interrogation. Readers are implicitly constructed as lay recipients of expert knowledge, expected to trust institutional explanations without questioning their scope or limitations (Ellis, 2019). The absence of dissenting voices narrows the range of plausible readings, guiding audiences toward a preferred interpretation that aligns with naturalized causation (Van Dijk, 2015). Studies of media representation have shown that such positioning plays a decisive role in stabilizing hegemonic meanings, even when audiences possess critical capacities (Sobari et al., 2025).

Intertextually, the article draws heavily on PVMBG's official report released one day earlier, reproducing its terminology, causal logic, and emphasis on physical triggers. This close alignment demonstrates how news discourse frequently operates as an extension of institutional communication rather than as an independent arena of scrutiny (Alexander, 2014). Interdiscursively, scientific-geological discourse is blended with journalistic objectivity and emergency reporting conventions, producing a hybrid text that appears factual, urgent, and authoritative at once (Fairclough, 2013). The convergence of these discourses reinforces dominant interpretations by aligning multiple registers associated with credibility and expertise (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018).

To strengthen the analytical claims at the meso level, Table 2 presents comparative data drawn from this study, official documentation, and prior research on Indonesian disaster reporting. The table demonstrates consistent patterns of source dominance, exclusion of non-elite voices, and reliance on institutional discourse across multiple cases. This triangulation highlights that the Sibolga coverage reflects a systematic media practice rather than an isolated editorial decision (Tracy, 2010). Empirical synthesis of this kind is essential for situating textual findings within broader communicative structures (Van Dijk, 2015).

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Table 2. Discursive Practice Patterns in Indonesian Disaster News

Dimension	Findings from This Study	Official Reports	Previous Research
Primary Source	PVMBG as sole authority	PVMBG technical bulletins	Government dominance (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022)
Excluded Voices	Victims, NGOs, planners	Not cited in reports	Similar exclusion (Fauzan, 2018)
Distribution Speed	< 72 hours post-event	Immediate release	Early framing effects (Alexander, 2014)
Discursive Blend	Scientific + news discourse	Technical language	Hybrid authority (Tierney et al., 2006)

At the socio-institutional interface, these discursive practices reflect broader governance arrangements in which technical expertise is privileged over participatory accountability. Disaster management institutions occupy a central role in defining risk, while planning agencies and political actors remain peripheral in media narratives (Blaikie et al., 2014). This configuration mirrors vulnerability discourses that frame exposure as an outcome of nature rather than of policy and political economy (Bankoff, 2001). Media reproduction of such framings contributes to the normalization of structural risk and the depoliticization of prevention.

The meso-level analysis also reveals how journalistic norms of objectivity can function ideologically by masking power relations embedded in sourcing and framing. Neutral tone and technical language give the impression of balanced reporting while concealing systematic exclusions that shape meaning (Shuo et al., 2014). Similar mechanisms have been observed in coverage of state institutions, where authority is reinforced through routine representational practices rather than explicit persuasion (Sobari et al., 2025). This form of ideological work operates subtly, making it particularly resilient to challenge.

The discursive practice surrounding the Sibolga landslide coverage demonstrates how disaster meaning is stabilized through interconnected processes of production, circulation, and reception. Institutional sourcing, rapid digital distribution, and authoritative audience positioning converge to naturalize disaster causation and marginalize structural explanations. These findings align with broader critical discourse scholarship emphasizing that media power lies not only in what is said, but also in who is allowed to speak and how quickly their version of reality circulates (Fairclough, 2013; Van Dijk, 2015). Understanding these mechanisms remains essential for challenging naturalized disaster narratives and for opening discursive space for accountability, prevention, and social justice in disaster governance (Alexander, 2014; Bohensky & Leitch, 2014).

Socio-Cultural Practice (Macro Level): Hegemony, Governance, and the Naturalization of Risk

At the macro level, the Kompas TV coverage of the Sibolga landslide must be understood as a discursive response shaped by temporal urgency, institutional arrangements, and deeply embedded socio-cultural structures that govern how disasters are made intelligible in Indonesian public discourse. Published three days after the event, the article emerges at a moment when public anxiety, humanitarian concern, and demand for immediate explanation converge, creating conditions in which authoritative and rapidly available accounts gain discursive dominance (Fairclough, 2013; Alexander, 2014). In such moments, media institutions tend to privilege sources capable of providing swift, definitive explanations, while investigative and critical perspectives requiring temporal distance are deferred or excluded (Ellis, 2019). The presence of fatalities and displacement further produces a moral climate in which questioning official explanations risks being perceived as insensitive, reinforcing acceptance of naturalized narratives (Tierney et al., 2006).

Institutionally, the dominance of PVMBG within the discourse reflects the narrow epistemic scope of disaster explanation authorized in Indonesian media. PVMBG's mandate centers on geological hazard identification rather than spatial planning enforcement, environmental governance, or regulatory accountability, which structurally constrains the explanatory repertoire available to journalists relying

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on this institution (Kompas TV, 2025; Saragih, 2019). This limitation is reproduced discursively when other relevant institutions, including the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and the Sibolga City Government, remain absent from the narrative. Such institutional silence effectively prevents regulatory failure, land-use violations, and governance deficits from entering public debate, confirming Fairclough's argument that power operates through what is excluded as much as through what is articulated (Fairclough, 2013; Huspek, 1991).

At the societal level, the article resonates with long-standing cultural frameworks through which disasters are interpreted as inevitable acts of nature or fate. In Indonesia, religious and traditional worldviews often coexist with scientific explanations, creating a receptive environment for narratives that emphasize uncontrollable natural forces over human responsibility (Bankoff, 2001; Bergström, 2020). Media discourse that foregrounds rainfall, slope morphology, and geological conditions aligns smoothly with these cultural logics, reducing cognitive dissonance and minimizing resistance among audiences (Hopkins et al., 2017). Such alignment enhances the persuasive power of naturalization by embedding it within socially familiar interpretive schemas rather than presenting it as a contested claim.

Simultaneously, rapid urbanization and development pressures provide a material backdrop that remains largely invisible within the discourse. Hillside settlements in Sibolga are not anomalous but are products of land scarcity, economic inequality, and permissive regulatory practices common across Indonesian cities (Blaikie et al., 2014). Local governments operating under decentralized authority often lack technical capacity and political incentive to enforce zoning restrictions, while developers and landowners exert sustained pressure for permit approval (Bankoff, 2001). The media's failure to connect these structural dynamics to disaster outcomes reflects an ideological accommodation with developmental priorities that normalize risk as collateral to growth (Bohensky & Leitch, 2014).

Representation of social actors within the article further consolidates these macro-level dynamics. PVMBG appears as a neutral, competent expert institution tasked with protecting the public through knowledge, while natural forces are depicted as autonomous agents of destruction (Amer, 2009). Affected residents are positioned as passive victims deserving humanitarian concern but not discursive agency, while actors responsible for land-use decisions, regulatory oversight, and profit extraction are entirely absent. This representational hierarchy mirrors broader power relations in which state expertise is elevated above citizen knowledge and political accountability is displaced by technical authority (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018; Van Dijk, 2015).

These patterns reflect a broader configuration of power in which access to discourse is unevenly distributed. Government institutions enjoy routine legitimacy and visibility, while communities, civil society organizations, and independent researchers are structurally marginalized from mainstream disaster narratives (Firdausi & Sahayu, 2022; Sobari et al., 2025). The authority to define reality rests with actors whose mandates are least threatening to existing political and economic arrangements. As critical discourse studies have shown, such asymmetries enable dominant groups to maintain hegemony by shaping common sense rather than by overt coercion (Amer, 2009; Fairclough, 2013).

The ideological formations underpinning the discourse are multiple and mutually reinforcing. Disaster naturalization attributes causality to physical forces, technocratic ideology privileges expert knowledge over democratic deliberation, and developmental ideology treats spatial expansion as inevitable despite its risks (Fauzan, 2018). Together, these ideologies depoliticize disaster, shield decision-makers from scrutiny, and reduce public pressure for reform in land governance and urban planning (Blaikie et al., 2014). The result is a discursive environment where vulnerability appears as misfortune rather than as the predictable outcome of policy and power (Bankoff, 2001).

To contextualize these findings, Table 3 synthesizes evidence from this study, official documentation, and prior research on disaster discourse and governance. The comparison illustrates consistent alignment between media framing, institutional mandates, and scholarly critiques of disaster naturalization. This triangulation strengthens the argument that the Sibolga coverage reflects a systemic pattern rather than an isolated editorial choice (Tracy, 2010). Empirical grounding of this kind is essential for demonstrating the structural nature of discursive power (Van Dijk, 2015).

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Table 3. Macro-Level Discursive and Structural Conditions in Disaster Reporting

Dimension	Evidence from This Study	Official Context	Prior Research
Temporal Pressure	3 days post-disaster publication	Rapid PVMBG release	Early framing dominance (Alexander, 2014)
Institutional Voice	PVMBG central, others absent	Geological mandate only	Elite access to discourse (Fairclough, 2013)
Cultural Resonance	Nature-focused causation	Public fatalism narratives	Vulnerability discourse (Bankoff, 2001)
Ideological Effect	Naturalization, depoliticization	No accountability focus	Disaster myths (Tierney et al., 2006)

When integrated with micro- and meso-level findings, the socio-cultural analysis reveals how discourse, institutions, and culture interact to stabilize naturalized interpretations of disaster. Linguistic choices, sourcing practices, and cultural receptivity converge to produce a coherent narrative that appears commonsensical while obscuring structural causation (Shuo et al., 2014; Bohensky & Leitch, 2014). This coherence is precisely what enables disaster discourse to function hegemonically, shaping public understanding without requiring overt persuasion (Fairclough, 2013). Media thus operate not merely as conveyors of information but as central actors in the social production of risk and responsibility (Ellis, 2019).

The Kompas TV article exemplifies how Indonesian disaster media participate in reproducing vulnerability through discursive means. By legitimizing PVMBG's authority, foregrounding natural forces, and excluding governance failures, the coverage contributes to a cycle in which disasters are framed as unavoidable and reform appears unnecessary (Alexander, 2014; Bankoff, 2001). Such representations carry material consequences, as they weaken demands for accountability and leave marginalized communities exposed to recurrent harm. A critical interrogation of these macro-level discursive practices is therefore essential for advancing more just and preventive approaches to disaster risk governance in Indonesia (Blaikie et al., 2014; Sobari et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Kompas TV coverage of the Sibolga landslide operates as a powerful discursive mechanism that systematically naturalizes disaster while marginalizing structural accountability. Through the interaction of textual strategies, institutional routines, and socio-cultural contexts, the news discourse privileges geological explanations and technocratic authority, particularly PVMBG, while silencing actors responsible for spatial planning, environmental governance, and regulatory enforcement. This configuration reinforces hierarchical power relations in which scientific-state institutions define reality, victims are rendered passive, and systemic governance failures remain unproblematic. The dominance of naturalistic and technocratic ideologies depoliticizes disaster, weakens public pressure for reform, and normalizes recurring vulnerability among marginalized communities. By applying Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, this research demonstrates that media narratives are not neutral reflections of catastrophe but active sites of ideological production that shape public understanding, legitimize institutional authority, and sustain the status quo. Recognizing and challenging such discursive practices is essential for advancing more accountable, justice-oriented approaches to disaster risk reduction in Indonesia.

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