

Emotional Representation and Moral Framing of Indonesia's Defeat in Al-Jazeera Arabic News: A Faircloughian Critical Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how an Al-Jazeera Arabic news text constructs Indonesia's defeat to Iraq in the fourth qualifying round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup through patterns of emotional representation and moral framing. The study aims to identify how linguistic choices and discursive strategies shape the representation of Indonesian players' post-match conduct. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach and is designed as a single-text critical case study. The data consists of selected excerpts from one Al-Jazeera Arabic online news article reporting the incident. The analysis was conducted through close reading using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis framework, encompassing text analysis, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. The findings indicate that the report constructs the Indonesian national team through evaluative lexical choices, plural categorization, causality, and imperative headline structure that foreground emotional instability, indiscipline, and collective attribution. Rather than functioning solely as neutral sports reporting, the text may be interpreted as directing readers toward a moral evaluation of the team's conduct. This study contributes specifically to the discussion of Arab media representation of non-Arab actors in the context of sport, while also extending the application of Critical Discourse Analysis to contemporary sports journalism.

Keywords: Al-Jazeera Arabic, Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough, Sports Discourse, Indonesia National Team

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana sebuah teks berita Al-Jazeera Arabic mengonstruksi kekalahan Indonesia dari Irak pada babak keempat kualifikasi Piala Dunia 2026 melalui pola representasi emosional dan pembingkai moral. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi bagaimana pilihan kebahasaan dan strategi diskursif membentuk representasi terhadap perilaku pemain Indonesia setelah pertandingan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dan dirancang sebagai studi kasus kritis berbasis satu teks. Data penelitian berupa kutipan-kutipan terpilih dari satu artikel berita daring Al-Jazeera Arabic yang melaporkan insiden tersebut. Analisis dilakukan melalui close reading dengan menggunakan kerangka Analisis Wacana Kritis Norman Fairclough yang mencakup analisis teks, praktik wacana, dan praktik sosiokultural. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa teks berita tersebut mengonstruksi Tim Nasional Indonesia melalui pilihan leksikal evaluatif, kategorisasi jamak, kausalitas, dan struktur judul imperatif yang menonjolkan ketidakstabilan emosi, ketidakdisiplinan, dan atribusi kolektif. Dengan demikian, teks tidak semata-mata berfungsi sebagai laporan olahraga yang netral, melainkan dapat ditafsirkan sebagai pengarah pembaca menuju evaluasi moral atas perilaku tim. Penelitian ini secara khusus berkontribusi pada kajian representasi media Arab terhadap aktor non-Arab dalam konteks olahraga, sekaligus memperluas penerapan

Analisis Wacana Kritis dalam jurnalisme olahraga kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: *Al-Jazeera Arabic, Analisis Wacana Kritis, Fairclough, Berita Olahraga, Tim Nasional Indonesia*

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INTRODUCTION

On 14 October 2025, the fourth-round qualifier for the 2026 FIFA World Cup (Asian zone) between the Indonesian national football team (hereafter, the national team) and Iraq, held in Riyadh, drew considerable attention across Asia. The match, which ended in a 1–0 defeat for Indonesia, not only extinguished the Garuda’s hopes of advancing to the World Cup finals, but also generated emotionally charged scenes involving several Indonesian players at the final whistle. These moments quickly attracted international media attention, particularly from outlets in the Middle East. Among the most prominent was Al-Jazeera Arabic, whose coverage of the post-match situation featured an imperative headline using the word “شاهد” (watch/see). This lexical choice appears to direct readers’ attention toward the emotional reactions of Indonesian players rather than the broader dynamics of the match itself (Richardson, 2009). In the context of digital journalism, such headlines do more than merely inform; they function as affective prompts that invite audiences to engage with events emotionally through visual mediation (Bednarek & Caple, 2017).

Al-Jazeera Arabic is widely recognized as one of the most influential pan-Arab media organizations. Established in Doha, Qatar, in 1996, the network entered the digital news sphere in 2001 (Seib, 2008). Over time, it has developed a strong reputation for framing political, cultural, and social issues within the Arab world (Zayani, 2005), often shaping public perspectives across the region. Its broad reach and symbolic authority mean that its reporting may carry interpretive weight beyond the immediate event being described. In the contemporary digital environment, where news circulates rapidly and is frequently accompanied by visual content, such framing practices may play a significant role in shaping audience perception.

Media reporting, however, does not merely convey events; it actively constructs meaning, perception, and social identity (Nuranti et al., 2024). Media texts qualify as discourse insofar as they exhibit coherence, cohesion, and clear rhetorical orientation. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) proceeds from the premise that language is not a

neutral vehicle of communication, but a social practice implicated in power relations and ideological processes (Van Dijk, 2006; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Within this framework, Norman Fairclough emphasizes that discourse can sustain symbolic dominance through choices of vocabulary, grammar, and narrative structure. In sports reporting, such discursive practices may contribute to the construction of particular representations of athletes and teams, including attributes such as emotionality, discipline, or maturity, which may extend beyond individual actors to broader national identity.

In this context, two analytical dimensions become particularly relevant: emotional representation and moral framing. Emotional representation refers to the way media discourse foregrounds affective states such as anger, frustration, or loss of control to shape how social actors are perceived. Moral framing, meanwhile, concerns how events are narrated in evaluative terms that implicitly guide audiences toward judgments about propriety, discipline, and legitimacy. In digital sports journalism, these two dimensions often intersect, especially when emotionally charged incidents are selectively highlighted and circulated across transnational media environments.

This issue warrants careful examination because football today extends well beyond the boundaries of sport. It operates as a form of soft power (James, 2021), a source of national pride, and a symbolic arena in which states compete not only over match outcomes but also over international image. Media portrayals of national teams, particularly in cross-regional contexts, may influence how countries are perceived within global sporting discourse (Al-Emadi et al., 2022). When Indonesia, a non-Arab country with a growing football presence in Southeast Asia, becomes the subject of pan-Arab media coverage, questions of representation, identity, and regional positioning become analytically significant.

Recent scholarship has explored Arab media representation through critical discourse analysis. (Alluhaidah, 2023) for instance, demonstrates that Al-Jazeera frequently constructs social actors through strategies of naming, exclusion, and moral evaluation, thereby shaping the image of particular groups in socio-political reporting. (Ahmad & Al-Zoubi, 2025) identify a pattern of reversed Orientalism in coverage of the Qatar World Cup, where Arab media articulated a positive self-identity while challenging perceived Western bias in global sports discourse. Elsewhere, (Parveen & Showkat, 2025) suggest that imperative headlines and visual emphasis in digital news can intensify

emotional readings and accelerate audiences' moral judgments. From a geopolitical sports perspective, (BalaEddy, 2023; Devendra, 2025) argue that media and sport in the Gulf region function as instruments of soft power and symbolic competition among states

Despite these contributions, existing research has largely focused on political discourse, Arab–Western relations, or mega sporting events such as the Qatar World Cup. Studies examining how pan-Arab media represent non-Arab national teams in specific match contexts, particularly in moments of defeat and emotional controversy, remain limited. More specifically, there is a lack of research that applies Fairclough's three-dimensional framework to analyze how emotional representation and moral framing operate within Arab sports news discourse about Southeast Asian teams. This study therefore addresses the following research question: How does Al-Jazeera Arabic linguistically and discursively construct Indonesia's defeat through emotional representation and moral framing?

To answer this question, this study employs Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to examine a selected Al-Jazeera Arabic news text reporting on Indonesia's defeat by Iraq. The study aims to identify the linguistic features, discursive production practices, and sociocultural contexts through which the event is represented. By doing so, this article seeks to contribute specifically to the study of Arab media representation of non-Arab actors in the context of sport, while also extending the application of CDA in contemporary sports discourse.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach and is designed as a single-text critical case study. A qualitative design is appropriate because the analysis focuses on textual data in the form of words, phrases, clauses, and discursive structures rather than numerical measurement (Zuchri & Rapanna, 2021). The descriptive orientation of the study lies in its attempt to examine the selected media text systematically and interpretively on the basis of observable linguistic evidence. In this research, language is not treated merely as a medium of information transfer, but as a discursive resource through which representation, evaluation, and ideological meaning are constructed.

The data source of this study is an Arabic-language online news article published by Al-Jazeera Arabic concerning the Indonesian national team's defeat to Iraq in the

fourth round of the 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifiers. The article, published on 12 October 2025, bears the headline “شاهد.. لاعبو إندونيسيا يعتدون على الحكم بعد الخسارة أمام العراق” (Al-Jazeera, 2025). The analytical data consist of selected textual excerpts, particularly sentences and lexical items that are relevant to the representation of the Indonesian national team. The article was selected purposively because it became one of the most visible and widely circulated reports concerning the post-match incident in the Arab digital media sphere. In this sense, the text is treated as a critical case because it offers a concentrated site for examining how a non-Arab national team is represented in pan-Arab sports news discourse.

Data collection was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher accessed the official Al-Jazeera Arabic website and identified the relevant article related to the Indonesia–Iraq match. Second, the article was documented and segmented into analytically significant excerpts. Third, the Arabic text was translated into Indonesian using a semantic and context-sensitive translation approach, with attention to lexical nuance, pragmatic force, and discursive implication. This procedure was necessary because the present study does not focus solely on propositional meaning, but also on evaluative and ideological dimensions embedded in the text. Fourth, the data were classified according to recurring linguistic features and representational patterns relevant to the research focus. Digital text documentation and structured note-taking were used as the primary instruments of data collection.

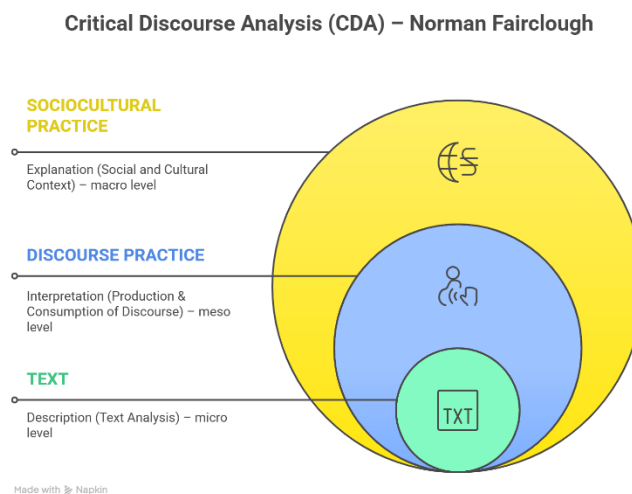
To preserve interpretive accuracy, the translation process prioritized contextual equivalence rather than literal word-for-word transfer. Several Arabic expressions were retained in their original form during analysis when their semantic or rhetorical value was analytically significant. This procedure was intended to minimize semantic reduction and to maintain the discursive specificity of the source text

The data were analyzed through close reading using Norman Fairclough’s three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis. Close reading was employed to enable detailed examination of lexical choice, grammatical structure, evaluative wording, and textual organization. Fairclough’s model was selected because it allows the analysis to move beyond the internal features of the text and to situate them within broader processes of discourse production and sociocultural context.

The first analytical level, text analysis, focuses on vocabulary, grammatical

construction, categorization, modality, and evaluative expression to identify how social actors are represented in the news report. The second level, discourse practice, examines the processes through which the text is produced, circulated, and consumed, including editorial framing, source selection, and digital dissemination. The third level, sociocultural practice, addresses the broader contextual dimensions surrounding the text, including regional football culture, media positioning, and the symbolic relations between Arab and non-Arab actors in Asian football discourse (Rahman et al., 2022).

Figure 1.
Dimensions of Discourse Analysis



Within Fairclough's framework, the relationship between language, discursive production, and social structure constitutes a central analytical concern (Yuhandra et al., 2024). Accordingly, the three dimensions of analysis are not treated as separate levels, but as interconnected aspects of discourse that together shape the construction of meaning in media texts. The findings are presented in a narrative-analytical form to preserve interpretive precision while allowing space for critical reflection and close engagement with the data (Zaim, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of a critical discourse analysis of an Al-Jazeera Arabic news text concerning the Indonesian national team's defeat by Iraq in the 2026 World Cup qualifiers. The analysis follows Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, encompassing text analysis, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice. Particular attention is given to how linguistic choices and representational strategies may

contribute to the construction of meaning within the report. In line with the analytical focus of this study, the discussion emphasizes how patterns of emotional representation and moral framing are articulated through media language.

Figure 2.
Headline of the Indonesian National Team News (Al-Jazeera, 2025)



1. Text Analysis

Text analysis seeks to examine how vocabulary selection, grammatical construction, and discourse organization are used to produce particular representations of the Indonesian national team. As argued by Fairclough (2015), texts are not neutral carriers of information, but discursive forms through which social reality may be constructed and evaluated.

a. Emotional Representation through Emphatic Markers (*Tawkīd*) and Causality

Data 1

ويبدو أن هذه الخسارة تسببت في فقدان لاعبي إندونيسيا وأحد أفراد الطاقم الإداري أعصابهم

“It appears that this defeat caused Indonesian players and one member of the coaching staff to lose their composure”

The particle *لَا* in this construction functions as a *ḥarf tawkīd*, serving to reinforce the certainty of the information following introductory expressions such as *ويبدو* (Zakaria et al., 2025). Its use lends the subsequent statement the status of a fact rather than a tentative interpretation (Hisham, 2013). As a result, the sentence does more than convey information; it appears to guide readers toward interpreting the defeat as a direct cause of the players’ emotional response.

The causal verb phrase *تسببت في* (caused) explicitly constructs a cause–effect relationship in which defeat is linked to emotional loss of control. Rather than simply describing a sequence of events, this structure may function as a form of emotional representation, in which the players are positioned as unable to regulate their response to defeat. Within critical discourse analysis, such causal framing can be interpreted as contributing to a naturalization effect, whereby evaluative interpretations are presented as self-evident (Putri, 2019). As noted by Fairclough (2003), causality in media discourse may operate as a form of discursive legitimation, as interpretations of motive and behavior are framed as given rather than constructed.

b. Moral Framing through Pluralization and Collective Attribution

Data 1

لاعبو إندونيسيا يعتدون على الحكم

/Lā ‘ibū Indūnīsiyā ya ‘tadūna ‘alā al-ḥakami/.

‘Indonesian players attack the referee’

Data 2

فقدان لاعبي إندونيسيا وأحد أفراد الطاقم الإداري أعصابهم

/Fuqḍānu lā ‘ibī Indūnīsiyā wa aḥadi afrādi al-ṭāqimi al-idārī a ‘ṣābahum./

‘Indonesian players and one member of the coaching staff lose their composure’

The phrase *لاعبو إندونيسيا* (Indonesian players) is repeatedly used to describe the post-match incident. However, available reports suggest that the actions involved only a limited number of individuals rather than the entire team. The use of the plural form may therefore be interpreted as a strategy of overgeneralization (Van Dijk, 2015), in which

individual behavior is extended to represent the group as a whole.

From the perspective of critical discourse analysis, this pattern can be understood as a form of moral framing, whereby isolated actions are recontextualized as collective attributes. In this case, individual misconduct appears to be generalized into a broader characterization of the national team. As discussed by (Fairclough, 1994), such processes may contribute to naturalization, in which particular representations come to appear normal and unproblematic. Consequently, the Indonesian national team is not only described in relation to specific actions, but may also be positioned as an ethically problematic collective. This form of representation can be interpreted as contributing to broader processes of group-based evaluation and potential stereotyping.

c. Moral Framing through Negatively Charged Diction

Data 1

لاعبو إندونيسيا يعتدون على الحكم

/Lā'ibū Indūnīsiyā ya'tadūna 'alā al-ḥakami/.

'Indonesian players attack the referee.'

The verb يعتدون derives from اعتدى, meaning “to violate,” “to assault,” or “to attack.” Semantically, the term is commonly associated with acts of transgression and aggression rather than mere objection or protest. In Arabic news discourse, lexical selection plays an important role in positioning events and social actors, as meaning is shaped not only through denotation but also through semantic association and contextual nuance (Zakaria, 2024a). The use of this verb may therefore position the players' actions within a framework of norm violation. Rather than representing the incident as a heated response typical of competitive sport, the lexical choice appears to encourage a reading in which the players are construed as engaging in improper or excessive behavior. Such diction also demonstrates how textual meaning may extend beyond literal reference into evaluative and value-laden interpretation (Zakaria, 2024b). In this sense, the word choice contributes to a process of moral framing, where the event is understood not merely as a sporting incident, but as an ethically charged action.

Data 2

شهدت نهاية مباراة منتخب العراق وإندونيسيا في ملحق التصفيات الآسيوية المؤهلة إلى كأس العالم ٢٠٢٦، تصرفاً صادمًا أقدم عليه أحد أفراد الطاقم الإداري للمنتخب الإندونيسي

/Syahidat nihāyatu mubārāti muntakhabay al-‘Irāqi wa Indūnīsiyā fī mulḥaqi at-taṣfiyāti al-Āsiyawiyyati al-mu’ahhilati ilā ka’si al-‘ālamī 2026, tasarrufan sādīman aqdama ‘alayhi aḥadu afrādi at-ṭāqimi al-idārī lil-muntakhabi al-Indūnīsī./

‘The end of the match between Iraq and Indonesia in the Asian qualifying play-offs for the 2026 World Cup witnessed a shocking act carried out by a member of the Indonesian team’s staff’.

The choice of the verb شهدت (witnessed) introduces the event in a manner that may enhance its perceived significance. In Arabic news discourse, this verb is often used in contexts involving notable or extraordinary occurrences. A more neutral alternative such as حدثت (occurred), could have been used; however, the selected form appears to heighten the sense of drama. This lexical choice may contribute to an emotional representation of the incident as intense and exceptional.

The phrase تصرفاً صادمًا (“a shocking act”) further amplifies this framing. Through a *maf’ūl muṭlaq* construction combining a verbal noun and an adjective, the act is portrayed as disgraceful and inappropriate. The adjective صادم goes beyond mere surprise; it carries a strong moral charge, marking the actor as having violated sporting ethics. Notably, صادم originates from a physical sense of collision or impact, yet here it functions metaphorically, signaling a “moral shock” or ethical affront. Through this construction, the action is not only described but also evaluated. This may be interpreted as a form of moral framing, where the incident is positioned as ethically problematic. Language, in this sense, does not merely report events, but participates in guiding interpretation and judgment (Chen et al., 2023).

Data 3

ويبدو أن هذه الخسارة تسببت في فقدان لاعبي إندونيسيا وأحد أفراد الطاقم الإداري أعصابهم

/Wa yabdū anna hāzihi al-khasārata tasabbabat fī fuqdāni lā‘ibī Indūnīsiyā wa aḥadi afrādi at-ṭāqimi al-idārī a’sābahum./

‘It appears that this defeat caused Indonesian players and one member of the coaching staff to lose their composure’

The phrase فقدان أعصابهم is an idiomatic expression meaning loss of emotional

control. The use of the nominal form *فقدان* (a verbal noun meaning “loss”) may contribute to presenting this condition as factual and stable rather than situational. Through nominalization, the text appears to reify emotional instability as a definable state rather than a momentary reaction. This construction may reinforce an emotional representation in which the players are positioned as psychologically unstable. At the same time, it supports a broader moral framing, as emotional loss of control is implicitly evaluated as inappropriate within the norms of professional sport.

2. Discourse Practice

Discourse practice concerns how a text is produced, circulated, and made meaningful within particular media environments. At this level, the analysis moves beyond the internal features of language to examine editorial decisions, source selection, patterns of circulation, and potential modes of reception (Fairclough, 2003; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The central concern here is not only what is written, but also how the report is discursively organized and positioned for its intended audience.

In the Al-Jazeera report titled *شاهد.. لاعبو إندونيسيا يعتدون على الحكم بعد الخسارة أمام العراق*, the production process appears to privilege immediacy, affective appeal, and audience engagement. This is signaled most clearly by the imperative *شاهد* (“watch”) laced at the beginning of the headline. In digital sports journalism, such an imperative functions not merely as an informational prompt, but also as an invitation to witness the event through a mediated and emotionally charged frame. Rather than orienting readers first toward analytical explanation, the headline directs attention to the incident as a spectacle worthy of immediate viewing. This suggests a discursive strategy that foregrounds emotional salience and audience responsiveness. Within media discourse studies, this approach is often described as visual-first framing, where images serve as both legitimizing evidence and emotional triggers (Parks, 2020).

The report also incorporates intertextual authority through its reference to Reuters (*رويترز*). The inclusion of Reuters may be read as a strategy of discursive legitimation, in which Al-Jazeera strengthens the credibility of its report by drawing on the authority of an internationally recognized news agency. In this sense, the article does not rely solely on its own narrative construction, but situates itself within a broader network of journalistic validation. As Richardson (2009) notes, source selection in news discourse is not neutral; it often contributes to how claims are stabilized and made more acceptable to

readers.

In terms of circulation, the report is also linked to video content distributed through Alkass TV Sports on platform X (قنوات الكاس [AlkassTVSports], 2025). The phrase *ظهر مقطع فيديو* (“a video clip showed”) functions as a textual cue that directs readers toward visual confirmation of the event. Although the present study does not undertake a full multimodal analysis of the video itself, the textual reference to such footage remains discursively significant. It suggests that the article is positioned within a digital media ecology in which textual narration is reinforced by the implied authority of circulating visual evidence.

From a Faircloughian perspective, this reflects controlled access to information, where some readers must rely entirely on narrative framing without the means to independently assess the visual proof (Fairclough, 2003). An additional point of interest lies in the restricted accessibility of the linked video, which appears unavailable in certain locations, including Indonesia. This uneven access may affect how different audiences encounter and verify the report. Readers who cannot access the referenced footage are more likely to rely on the textual framing provided by the article itself. From a discourse-analytic perspective, this condition may contribute to an asymmetry of interpretation, in which not all audiences are equally positioned to assess the evidentiary basis of the report independently.

At the level of reception, the report may be read as being oriented primarily toward Arab readers familiar with West Asian football dynamics. Within this interpretive horizon, the article appears to position Iraq as the successful and disciplined side, while Indonesia is associated more strongly with emotional reaction and post-match disorder. This tendency can be discussed in relation to Van Dijk’s notion of positive self-representation and negative other-representation (Fauzan, 2014), although such a reading should be understood as interpretive rather than definitive. News reception is shaped not only by textual form, but also by the ideological and cultural proximity between audiences and the social actors represented in the text.

Taken together, these discursive features suggest that the report does not function solely as a neutral recounting of a sporting incident. Rather, its headline structure, source alignment, digital circulation, and implied audience orientation may work together to reinforce a particular interpretation of the event. Within this process, the article appears

to amplify both emotional representation and moral framing, thereby guiding readers toward a specific understanding of the Indonesian national team's post-match conduct.

3. Sociocultural Practice

Sociocultural analysis situates the news text within broader social contexts beyond the newsroom. Fairclough emphasizes that media discourse is never produced in a vacuum; it is shaped by surrounding social, political, economic, and cultural conditions (Fauzan, 2016). Accordingly, this level of analysis considers how the selected news text may be interpreted in relation to its situational context, institutional background, and broader social environment.

At the situational level, the report emerges from a highly charged moment in the fourth round of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup. Indonesia, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia were placed in Group B, with decisive matches centralized in Riyadh between 8 and 14 October 2025. This setting may have contributed to a regionalized media atmosphere in which Arab teams occupied a more central narrative position. Within this context, the emotional reaction of Indonesian players after the match became a newsworthy incident that could be mobilized as part of a broader post-match storyline.

This situational framing is further suggested by the way the article shifts attention, particularly toward the end of the report, to the upcoming “مباراة حاسمة بين العراق والسعودية” (a decisive match between Iraq and Saudi Arabia). The Indonesian incident, therefore, does not stand entirely on its own, but appears to function discursively as a transitional moment that heightens emotional tension while also orienting readers toward a more regionally salient fixture. In this sense, the report may be read not only as coverage of an isolated controversy, but also as part of a broader narrative sequencing within Arab sports journalism.

At the institutional level, the text may also be considered in relation to Al-Jazeera Arabic's position as a Qatar-based media organization. As widely discussed in previous scholarship, Al-Jazeera has long occupied an influential role in shaping public discourse across the Arab world and has frequently been examined as part of Qatar's broader media diplomacy and soft power strategy (Álvarez-Ossorio & García, 2021; Samuel-Azran, 2013). While it would be methodologically excessive to infer the institution's ideological orientation from a single article, the selected text may still reflect broader editorial tendencies associated with regional audience orientation, symbolic positioning, and the

prioritization of Arab-centered sporting narratives.

In the context of football reporting, such orientation may become especially visible when coverage concerns interactions between Arab and non-Arab teams. The article's focus on Indonesian emotional conduct, rather than on broader structural aspects of the match such as officiating, tournament arrangement, or competitive context, may suggest a preference for narrativizing the event through behavioral and moral evaluation. This does not necessarily indicate explicit institutional bias, but it does point to the possibility that certain forms of representation become more salient when a report is shaped for a particular regional audience.

At the broader social level, the text may be situated within ongoing transformations in sports geopolitics, regional identity, and media power in Asia. West Asian states, particularly in the Gulf, have increasingly expanded their visibility and influence in global sport through tournament hosting, investment in sports infrastructure, ownership of media networks, and participation in symbolic image-making (BalaEddy, 2023). Within this wider context, sports media do not merely report competition; they may also participate in constructing regional prestige and legitimacy.

Indonesia, by contrast, occupies a different symbolic position within Asian football. As an emerging Southeast Asian football nation, Indonesia has gained increasing attention, yet it may still be represented differently in cross-regional media discourse. In the selected report, the emphasis on emotional instability and post-match misconduct may be interpreted as part of a representational pattern in which the non-Arab team is positioned less as a competitive equal and more as a problematic or immature actor. Such a reading should be treated cautiously; however, it suggests the possibility that sports news discourse may contribute to symbolic differentiation between regional actors. Such representations align with theories of ideological media representation that reinforce majority-group identity and symbolic dominance (Mahdi, 2015).

From this perspective, the article can be read as participating in a broader discursive environment in which football is not only about sporting performance, but also about image, legitimacy, and regional identity. The selected text does not by itself establish a stable hierarchy between West Asia and Southeast Asia, yet it may illustrate how a single sports news report can reproduce evaluative distinctions that resonate with wider cultural and geopolitical imaginaries. In this way, the sociocultural context helps

explain why the Indonesian team is not represented merely as having lost a match, but as having failed emotionally and morally within a discursive field shaped by regional perception and symbolic comparison.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that Al-Jazeera Arabic constructs the Indonesian national team's defeat through intertwined patterns of emotional representation and moral framing. The report foregrounds emotional instability, loss of control, and indiscipline through evaluative lexical choices, plural forms that generalize individual actions into collective attributes, and an imperative headline structure that directs readers toward the incident as a morally charged event. In this way, the text does not merely report a post-match controversy, but also appears to guide readers toward a particular interpretation of the Indonesian national team's conduct.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes specifically to the discussion of Arab media representation of non-Arab actors in the context of sport. It also demonstrates the usefulness of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis for examining how sports news discourse may organize meaning not only through linguistic form, but also through patterns of evaluation, circulation, and contextual positioning. By connecting textual analysis with discourse practice and sociocultural context, the study offers a focused account of how football news can function as a site of symbolic representation beyond the match itself.

Nevertheless, this study is limited by its reliance on a single news text and a relatively narrow media scope. For this reason, the findings should not be generalized to Al-Jazeera Arabic's institutional ideology as a whole, but rather understood as an interpretive reading of one specific media event. Future research would benefit from examining a broader corpus across multiple Arab media outlets, time periods, and news formats. Comparative studies involving platforms such as Al-Arabiya, Asharq, or Sky News Arabia, as well as analyses of audience comments, social media circulation, and audiovisual materials, may further enrich understanding of how non-Arab actors are represented in Arab sports discourse.

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