

The News Framing of Middle East Conflict Coverage on Metro TV

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Abstract

A compelling phenomenon emerges in the coverage of the geopolitical tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran on Metro TV. This conflict is not merely presented as an international event; rather, it is discursively constructed by mass media in ways that may shape public perception. The problem addressed in this study lies in the potential lack of neutrality in media reporting and the presence of implicit framing that influences audience interpretation. Accordingly, the objective of this research is to critically examine how the conflict is framed and represented in Metro TV's news coverage. This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, which encompasses three levels of analysis: the micro level (textual analysis), the meso level (discursive practice), and the macro level (sociocultural practice). Through this multi-layered analytical lens, the study investigates linguistic features, production processes, and broader socio-political contexts shaping the news narratives. The findings reveal that the coverage is not entirely neutral; rather, it is influenced by editorial perspectives, the selection of sources, and prevailing global political dynamics. The analysis indicates a discernible tendency toward specific framing strategies, particularly in emphasizing security concerns, humanitarian issues, and the positioning of the states involved. These patterns suggest that media discourse plays an active role not only in disseminating information but also in constructing social reality and shaping public opinion.

INTRODUCTION

Within the context of interstate conflict in the Middle East, Indonesian media, particularly Metro TV, exhibit discernible tendencies toward partiality through their lexical configurations. This is evident in the use of affectively charged or evaluative expressions that have the potential to steer public opinion. Such linguistic choices may reinforce perceptions of bias and shape the interpretive frameworks through which audiences understand the conflict. Accordingly, it is imperative for audiences to engage critically with media discourse in order to mitigate the effects of implicit opinion formation.

In the specific context of reporting on the conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States, the process of meaning construction becomes increasingly complex. Media representations are shaped through selective diction, source selection, and narrative perspective, all of which reflect editorial ideology. However, the ultimate meaning of a news text is not determined solely by the media; it is also contingent upon the reader's background, experiences, and political orientations. Consequently, identical events may be interpreted in divergent ways, underscoring the notion that international conflict reporting constitutes a site of ongoing negotiation between media discourse and audience interpretation.

The deployment of diction in Indonesian mass media discourse is meticulously engineered to articulate events in accordance with narrative patterns intended by journalists or the news institutions that disseminate them. Lexical choice thus operates not merely as a conduit for information transmission, but as a strategic instrument for shaping readers' cognitive and interpretive frameworks. Consequently, the language of news is never wholly neutral; rather, it is invariably conditioned by perspective, institutional interests, and the ideological orientation of the media organization concerned.

Beyond its descriptive function, lexical selection frequently encodes implicit intentions that operate concurrently within the text. Among these is the subtle articulation of alignment with particular actors or positions. Such alignment becomes discernible through the deployment of specific terms, phrases, and emphases that implicitly guide audience interpretation. For example, the contrast between expressions such as "attack" and "retaliation" may generate fundamentally divergent representations of the actors involved in a conflict. In this regard, diction assumes a pivotal role in constructing narratives that are not only informative but also intrinsically persuasive.

Despite extensive scholarship on media framing, ideology, and discourse construction, relatively limited attention has been devoted to examining how Indonesian television news constructs international conflict through lexical choice at the micro-linguistic level. Existing studies have predominantly emphasized framing devices, political communication, or ideological narratives, whereas the strategic deployment of diction in representing the Iran–Israel–United States conflict remains insufficiently explored. This study addresses that gap by investigating how lexical selection functions as an ideological resource in Metro TV's international conflict reporting through Entman's framing perspective.

Mass media are conventionally perceived as objective instruments that reflect reality as it is. However, this assumption is problematized by Eriyanto (2002), who contends that media frequently construct reality in accordance with particular intentions, thereby producing differentiated effects within the public sphere. This raises critical questions regarding why certain phenomena are not reported comprehensively, but rather selectively, with particular aspects foregrounded while others are marginalized. Such inquiries ultimately converge upon the concept of framing (Eriyanto, 2002).

Robert M. Entman (1993) conceptualizes framing as a process of selection and salience, whereby specific aspects of perceived reality are highlighted in ways that shape public interpretation. Framing analysis thus provides a critical lens through which to examine how media construct social reality. Eriyanto (2002) further delineates framing into two principal dimensions: issue selection and the salience of particular aspects. The former pertains to the selection of facts deemed newsworthy, while the latter concerns the manner in which these facts are discursively represented, including the strategic use of diction and linguistic structures.

In this regard, Ansori (2017) argues that language functions as an instrument of social control with the capacity to influence patterns of thought through its use. Through language, speakers construct particular images in an effort to extend their influence over audiences. Within

media discourse, textual formulations not only shape public perception but may also be regarded as authoritative representations of truth. In line with this perspective, Heryanto (1996, as cited in Ansori, 2017) contends that language is not merely shaped by social reality but also actively constructs and determines that reality. Accordingly, language transcends its communicative function and operates as a mechanism through which patterns of thought, emotions, and social structures are shaped.

The role of language in constructing social reality is inseparable from the role of the mass media as a site for the production and dissemination of discourse. According to Triadi (2019, p. 142), discourse is inherently linked to the mass media because the media serve as a space in which the ideologies of writers and journalists are represented. In practice, the media do not merely disseminate information; they also have the potential to function as a vehicle for the propagation of dominant ideologies, a means of legitimization, and an instrument for controlling public discourse. Therefore, examining language in media discourse is essential for revealing how social reality is constructed, ideologies are reproduced, and public opinion is shaped through discursive practices.

It is widely acknowledged that each media institution operates within a distinct ideological framework shaped by historical and structural considerations. In this context, Althusser (as cited in Fiske, 1990) elucidates the intrinsic relationship between subject and ideology, asserting that ideology requires subjects, just as subjects cannot exist independently of ideology. While ideology originates within particular individuals or groups, its operation extends beyond them. Journalists, as subjects embedded within institutional structures, thus play a central role in shaping and regulating thought and affect, particularly when supported by dominant ideological formations. Language, therefore, should be understood not only as a medium of interaction but also as a site of meaning-making transactions (Brown & Yule, 1996).

From the perspective of ideological theory as articulated by Raymond Williams and Louis Althusser, meaning is neither fixed nor singular; rather, it is produced through dynamic processes involving both producers and interpreters of discourse. Readers, therefore, are not passive recipients but active agents in the construction of meaning, influenced by their socio-cultural contexts. In this vein, Entman (1993) further identifies four core functions of framing: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies.

Consistent with this view, Croteau & Hoynes (2006) argue that in democratic societies, the role of media has become increasingly complex, extending beyond its function as a commercial enterprise. Contemporary media are expected not only to disseminate information but also to reflect diverse viewpoints, ideas, and creative expressions within society. In this process, cultural, historical, and experiential dimensions of audiences contribute to the multiplicity of interpretations.

Kress (1984) asserts that rewriting is not merely a process of linguistic substitution, but one that entails textual deconstruction, the reconstruction of events, and reinterpretation within specific frameworks. This highlights the extent to which news production and reproduction are embedded within ideological structures. Three analytical dimensions may therefore be employed in reading media texts: the relationship between linguistic structure and ideology, the importance of holistic textual context, and diction as a marker of ideological positioning.

Gitlin (1980) conceptualizes frames as enduring patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation. This perspective resonates with the argument advanced by Chomsky & Herman (1988), who contend that mass media function as systems for communicating messages and symbols to the broader public, serving not only to inform and entertain but also to inculcate values, beliefs, and behavioral norms that facilitate integration into institutional structures. In

contexts characterized by concentrated economic power and class conflict, this function often entails systematic forms of propaganda.

In this case, the processes of re-reporting and rewriting are evident in the ways media reconstruct events through language. A single event may be represented through divergent perspectives, such as emphasizing “attack”, “retaliation”, or “defense”, each carrying distinct ideological implications. Thus, linguistic structures are not neutral, but operate in alignment with institutional interests and perspectives. Moreover, ideological positioning can be discerned through the broader textual configuration, including narrative structuring, source selection, and the strategic inclusion or omission of information. Ultimately, diction serves as a salient indicator of ideology, as the lexical representation of actors and actions constructs particular images that shape public judgment. This underscores that international conflict reporting is not merely the transmission of facts, but a complex process of meaning construction imbued with ideological interests.

Although previous studies have demonstrated that media framing and ideological representation influence public understanding of political events, relatively little attention has been paid to the ideological implications of lexical choices in Indonesian television news reporting on international conflicts. This issue is particularly important because headlines constitute the first point of contact between media institutions and audiences, where lexical selection can immediately shape interpretations before readers engage with the complete news content. Examining how diction operates within Metro TV’s coverage of the Iran–Israel–United States conflict is therefore essential for understanding how ideological meanings are constructed, negotiated, and reproduced in contemporary Indonesian media discourse. Accordingly, this study aims to examine how lexical choices in Metro TV news headlines function as framing devices that construct ideological representations of the conflict by employing Entman’s framing analysis in conjunction with Critical Discourse Analysis. Through this approach, the study seeks to contribute to the growing body of scholarship on media discourse by demonstrating the role of headline-level lexical selection in shaping public interpretation of international political conflicts.

METHOD

The research method employed in this study is a qualitative approach with a case study design. The data consist of news headlines from the mass media outlet Metro TV related to the conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. Data were collected over a one-week period at the initial stage of the conflict. The primary data source was online media, specifically headlines featured in Metro TV’s YouTube news videos. The selection of data was based on the degree to which the diction used in the headlines indicated potential media bias or ideological alignment. Purposive sampling was employed because the study aimed to examine headlines that explicitly reflected lexical choices with the potential to construct ideological meanings rather than to represent all available news reports. The inclusion criteria comprised: (1) headlines published by Metro TV during the defined observation period (March 22, 2026–April 1, 2026); (2) headlines directly reporting the conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran; and (3) headlines containing lexical expressions considered relevant to the construction of media framing or ideological positioning. The exclusion criteria included news unrelated to the conflict, duplicate reports, opinion programs, interviews, and headlines that merely conveyed factual information without salient lexical features relevant to the research objectives.

The initial stage of the research involved classifying the data according to the presumed use of diction that could function as a vehicle for political ideological framing. The data collection period was defined from March 22, 2026, to April 1, 2026. In addition, the researcher examined the dynamics of changes in news coverage as the conflict evolved. These shifts in

reporting direction were considered significant, as they influenced the analytical process, particularly in relating news content to the situational context of the conflict at specific points in time.

Data analysis in this study applies Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework, which encompasses three levels of analysis: the micro level (text), the meso level (discourse practice), and the macro level (sociocultural practice) (Krolokke & Sorensen, 2006). At the textual or linguistic level, the analysis focuses on vocabulary, semantics, grammar, as well as cohesion and coherence across sentences. This stage aims to uncover the representational or ideational meanings embedded in both headlines and news content, which may implicitly reflect particular political interests. Such representations are examined through the ways individuals, groups, and ideas are constructed within sentences, the relationships between sentences, and the overall structure of discourse. In this context, journalists are confronted with choices of diction and grammatical structures that may frame events as actions, states, mental processes, or other forms, ultimately reflecting specific ideological perspectives.

FINDINGS

Based on the data collection conducted by the researcher, a total of 15 data points were identified, each demonstrating the use of partisan diction in the reporting of the conflict involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. The data table in this study is employed to facilitate the classification of the research data. Each news headline is coded according to the chronological order of publication as well as the sequence of data collection. The dataset is presented in the following table.

Table 1: Data of Research

Data Research	Research Data	Availability	Broadcast Date
D01	Iran Terus Melawan Agresi As- Zionis	 Youtube · Metro Tv 4,3 Rb+ Penayangan · 4 Jam Yang Lalu	1 April 2026
D02	Iran Tembus Pertahan As & Israel! Serangan Ke-87	 Youtube · Metro Tv 222,1 Rb+ Penayangan · 19 Jam Yang Lalu	31 Maret 2026
D03	Top Issue- Welcome To Hell !! Iran Sambut Invasi Darat As	 Youtube · Metro Tv 102,2 Rb+ Penayangan · 1 Hari Yang Lalu	30 Maret 2026
D04	Amerika Serikat Hantam Gudang Senjata Iran Pakai Bom	 Youtube · Metro Tv 10,4 Rb+ Penayangan · 1 Hari Yang Lalu	29 Maret 2026
D05	Breaking News- Esklasi Perang Iran Vs As-Israel Terus Berlanjut	 Youtube · Metro Tv	28 Maret 2026

91,5 Rb+ Penayangan · 1 Hari
Yang Lalu

D06	Operasi “ Ya Rasulullah” Iran Sasar Industri As Israel	 Youtube · Metro Tv 83,8 Rb+ Penayangan · 5 Hari Yang Lalu	28 Maret 2026
D07	Intelijen As Sebut Iran Akan Gunakan Strategi Selat Hormuz Untuk Akhiri Perang	 Youtube · Metro Tv 26,5 Rb+ Penayangan · 5 Hari Yang Lalu	25 Maret 2026
D08	Iran Bersumpah Akan Balas Agresi As Israel	 Youtube · Metro Tv 26,5 Rb+ Penayangan · 5 Hari Yang Lalu	24 Maret 2026
D09	[Full] Dialog - Trump Ancam Invasi Darat, Iran Siapkan 'Neraka'	 Youtube · Metro Tv 378 Rb+ Penayangan · 1 Minggu Yang Lalu	23 Maret 2026
D10	Tel Aviv Diserang, Cluster Iran Terangi Langit Malam Di Ibu Kota Israel	 Youtube · Metro Tv 1,6 Rb+ Penayangan · 6 Hari Yang Lalu	22 Maret 2026

Based on the foregoing discussion, the data in this study are examined through three interrelated analytical dimensions: the micro level (text), the meso level (discourse practice), and the macro level (sociocultural practice). In dataset D01, the headline reads, “*Iran Continues to Resist US–Zionist Aggression.*” Particular attention is directed toward the lexical items “*resist*” and “*aggression.*” At the textual level, these terms are oppositional yet intrinsically interconnected, as aggression conventionally precipitates resistance. Lexically, “*aggression*” denotes an act of hostile incursion or invasion by one state against another. Its usage implicitly constructs a representation in which Iran is positioned as the victim of US–Zionist hostility, while “*resist*” encodes a reactive and defensive posture.

At the level of discourse practice, the terms “*resist*” and “*aggression*” operate as central framing devices. Their selection is far from neutral; rather, it reflects the media’s discursive strategy in shaping the event through a particular ideological lens. The term “*resist*” evokes connotations of defiance, resilience, and defensive action, whereas “*aggression*” carries strongly negative, offensive implications. Through this lexical configuration, the media subtly directs audiences to construe Iran as a reactive agent, while positioning the US–Zionist bloc as the primary instigator. This discursive arrangement reveals an underlying ideological inclination that contributes to shaping audience perception of the actors involved.

At the macro level (sociocultural practice), the deployment of the terms “*resist*” and “*aggression*” cannot be divorced from Indonesia’s broader socio-political and ideological milieu. The discourse reflects prevailing interpretations of global geopolitics, particularly

the enduring tensions involving Iran, the United States, and Israel. Within this sociocultural context, “*aggression*” carries substantial historical and political resonance, often associated with violations of sovereignty and unjust domination. Conversely, “*resist*” aligns with culturally embedded values of struggle, anti-oppression, and self-defense. The interplay of these lexical choices produces a narrative that is not merely descriptive but ideologically charged, linking contemporary with deeply ingrained societal values such as solidarity with perceived victims of injustice.

Moreover, within the Indonesian context, where historical sensitivities to colonialism, imperialism, and global inequities remain pronounced, such framing may amplify public sympathy toward the party constructed as the victim. In this sense, media function not merely as conveyors of information but as active agents in the construction of social reality. This dynamic underscores the interaction between media ideology and the sociocultural dispositions of audiences. Lexical choices that suggest partiality are often informed by dominant societal values, including commitments to justice, anti-oppression, and transnational solidarity. Thus, at the macro level, the text operates within a broader social practice through which media reproduce and reinforce prevailing ideological discourses.

In dataset D02, the headline reads, “*Iran Breaches US & Israeli Defenses: 87th Strike.*” The framing is primarily constructed through the predicate phrase “*breaches defenses.*” At the micro (textual) level, “*breach*” denotes the act of penetrating or overcoming a barrier, while “*defense*” refers to mechanisms designed to repel or withstand attack. In this context, the phrase signifies the successful penetration of US and Israeli military defenses by Iranian forces, thereby constructing an image of operational effectiveness and strategic superiority.

At the level of discourse practice, the analysis considers how the text is produced, circulated, and consumed within the media ecosystem. From the standpoint of production, the phrase “*breaches defenses*” reflects a constructed reality that departs from strict neutrality. The editorial choice privileges dramatic intensity and conflict-oriented language, thereby enhancing the headline’s appeal and perceived newsworthiness. This indicates that media actors engage not only in reporting but also in the selective amplification of particular aspects—here, the success of Iranian military action, thus shaping audience interpretation. The inclusion of “*87th strike*” further constructs a narrative of sustained escalation and continuity of conflict.

In terms of distribution, such strongly framed headlines align with the operational logic of digital media, which prioritizes visibility, engagement, and virality. Lexical choices that are provocative and emotionally resonant increase the likelihood of user interaction, including clicks, shares, and recirculation across platforms such as social media and news aggregators. Consequently, the framing of “*breaches defenses*” functions not only as an informational device but also as a strategic mechanism for audience expansion.

At the level of consumption, readers may interpret the headline as indicative of Iran’s military success and, conversely, the vulnerability of US and Israeli defense systems. In the absence of corroborating sources or broader contextualization, such representations may be as objective reality. It is within this interpretive process that discourse practice becomes operative: meaning emerges not solely from the text itself, but from the interaction between textual representation and the reader’s knowledge, ideological orientation, and experiential background. This framing may therefore reinforce particular perceptions regarding asymmetries of power in international conflict.

Accordingly, at the macro level (sociocultural practice), the headline illustrates that media do not merely mirror events but actively participate in the construction and

construction that portrays Iran as an actor prepared for confrontation, even suggesting a readiness to engage in or provoke conflict. Such choices reveal an ideologically inflected selection of language designed to reinforce a conflict-centered narrative.

In terms of distribution, the headline exhibits features highly compatible with the logic of digital media. The use of English (*“Welcome to Hell”*), multiple exclamation marks, and provocative diction enhances visibility and memorability within the dense flow of online information. This suggests that framing also functions as a strategy to maximize engagement, click-through rates, and potential virality across social media and digital news platforms. Language selection, therefore, is informed not only by semantic considerations but also by its capacity to attract and retain audience attention.

At the level of consumption, readers are likely to interpret the headline as signaling that a US ground invasion will be met with fierce resistance and a hostile environment. This framing may construct Iran as psychologically dominant, resolute, and unyielding. In the absence of supplementary context, audiences may see this representation as an objective depiction of reality, despite the fact that it is shaped through ironic and dramatized linguistic choices.

At the level of sociocultural practice, this framing constructs Iran as a bold and confrontational actor, either valorized as courageous or perceived as aggressive—while the United States is positioned as the invading force. Such representation may reinforce broader narratives concerning Western dominance in global politics. Furthermore, this practice is closely tied to the competitive dynamics of the media industry, where the pressure to capture audience attention incentivizes the use of sensational and emotionally charged language.

In dataset D04, the headline reads: *“United States Strikes Iranian Weapons Depot with Bombs.”* At the micro (textual) level, attention is focused on the lexical items *“strikes”* and *“weapons depot.”* The verb *“strikes”* conveys a forceful, violent action, carrying a harsher and more aggressive connotation than more neutral alternatives such as *“targets”* or *“attacks.”* Linguistically, such usage can be categorized as dysphemism, wherein harsher expressions are employed to intensify emotional impact. Meanwhile, *“weapons depot”* refers to a storage facility for military equipment. When combined, these terms construct a meaning that emphasizes not merely an attack, but a forceful and destructive action directed at a strategic military target.

At the level of discourse practice, the headline reflects interconnected processes of production, distribution, and consumption. In production, the choice of *“strikes”* signals an editorial strategy that foregrounds violence and military aligning with news values such as conflict, tension, and shock value. This indicates that the reported reality has undergone selective emphasis to enhance intensity and audience appeal.

In terms of distribution, headlines employing strong and direct diction possess high visibility within digital media ecosystems. Such language increases the likelihood of attracting readers’ attention, demonstrating that framing is not solely about meaning construction but also about strategic dissemination in a competitive media landscape. Concise yet emotionally charged headlines facilitate rapid comprehension and circulation.

At the level of consumption, readers may interpret the headline as depicting the United States as executing a decisive and forceful military action against Iran. The term *“strikes”* may evoke emotional responses such as tension or perceptions of military superiority. Without additional context, such representations may be perceived as objective, despite being shaped through non-neutral linguistic choices.

At the sociocultural level, this discourse is closely linked to power relations. The United States is constructed as an active and dominant agent, while Iran is positioned as the passive target. This pattern reinforces a dichotomy between dominant القوة and subordinate actors, thereby contributing to broader perceptions of global power hierarchies.

In dataset D05, the headline reads: “*Breaking News – Escalation of Iran vs US–Israel War Continues.*” At the micro level, attention is directed toward the terms “*escalation*” and “*continues.*” The term “*escalation*” denotes an increase in intensity, particularly in the context of conflict or warfare. Its use suggests a situation characterized by rising tension and expanding violence. Within media framing, this term conveys the impression of an ongoing, unstable, and potentially worsening conflict, directing readers to interpret the event as part of a prolonged and evolving crisis rather than an isolated occurrence.

At the level of discourse practice, the selection of “*escalation*” and “*continues*” reflects a constructed reality influenced by news values such as conflict, emotional proximity, and continuity. Journalists tend to select dramatic and engaging terminology to enhance audience involvement, particularly in reporting on Middle Eastern conflicts. The inclusion of the label “*Breaking News*” further encourages immediate audience attention, accelerating the dissemination of a narrative that emphasizes intensification and استمرار. Repeated exposure to similarly framed narratives may reinforce perceptions of a prolonged and intensifying crisis.

At the level of consumption, readers are likely to interpret the news within the framework established by the media. The terms “*escalation*” and “*continues*” not only convey information but also guide interpretation, suggesting a dynamic and deteriorating situation. In this process, audiences do not merely receive information but also internalize the constructed reality, which may evoke emotions such as vigilance, or particular attitudes toward the actors involved.

At the level of sociocultural practice, reporting on the escalation of the Iran vs US–Israel conflict is inseparable from broader dynamics of international relations, particularly the longstanding tensions in the Middle East. The use of terms such as “*escalation*” and “*continues*” reflects a broader discursive tendency to portray such regions as inherently unstable. This may reinforce stereotypes and shape public perception that conflict in these regions is persistent and inevitable.

Moreover, at the societal level, the consumption of such news is influenced by audience factors, including media literacy, educational background, and socio-political experience. Indonesian audiences, for instance, may interpret the conflict not solely as an international घटना but also through lenses of solidarity, religion, or political alignment. Consequently, meaning is not singular but plural, shaped by diverse social contexts.

Overall, the sociocultural dimension demonstrates that news texts are embedded within broader social practices in which language, power, ideology, and global context intersect. The framing of ongoing escalation does not merely depict reality but actively contributes to shaping how societies understand international conflict and position themselves in relation to it.

Table 3: Framing Constructi on Process in Data 05

Micro Text	The selection of the lexical items “ <i>escalation</i> ” and “ <i>ongoing</i> ” in the <i>Breaking News</i> headline	Constructs a framing that portrays the Middle Eastern conflict as dynamic, unstable, and prone to further deterioration.
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<i>discourse practice</i>	The way readers interpret the text	Reinforces the perception of the conflict as a prolonged crisis, triggering emotional responses such as anxiety, vigilance, and the emergence of partiality.
<i>sociocultural practice.</i>	Latar Readers' socio-cultural backgrounds, which tend to prioritize viral news	Lead to diverse interpretations; these may be associated with notions of solidarity, religion, or political perspectives. Makna yang dihasilkan beragam; bisa dikaitkan dengan solidaritas, agama, atau politik.

Based on dataset D06, the headline reads: “*Operation ‘Ya Rasulullah’: Iran Targets US–Israel Industry.*” At the micro (textual) level, the framing is constructed through three प्रमुख lexical elements: “*operation*,” “*Ya Rasulullah*,” and “*targets*.” These elements are contextually interconnected and form a coherent semantic structure. The term “*operation*” denotes a planned and systematic action executed through clearly defined stages, suggesting strategic intent and organization. The designation “*Ya Rasulullah*” introduces a religious dimension, reflecting Iran’s predominantly Muslim identity and embedding the operation within a symbolic Islamic framework. Meanwhile, the verb “*targets*” conveys precision and intentionality, implying that specific US and Israeli industrial entities are being deliberately selected and potentially destroyed.

At the level of discourse practice, the inclusion of a religious expression such as “*Ya Rasulullah*” significantly enhances the headline’s capacity to attract attention, particularly among Muslim audiences. Media institutions may capitalize on audience consumption patterns that are more responsive to religiously inflected discourse. Consequently, the constructed narrative is not only widely disseminated but also repeatedly circulated across platforms, reinforcing the association between military conflict and religious symbolism.

Furthermore, the lexical choice “*targets*” reflects a tendency toward dramatization in news production. The term conveys both aggressiveness and precision, aligning with dominant news values such as conflict and impact. Editorial decisions are likely influenced by considerations of emotional resonance and sensational appeal, particularly within highly competitive digital media environments. At the level of sociocultural practice, this text illustrates how media reproduce and amplify discourse originating from specific sources, strengthening it through linguistic strategies and patterns of distribution, while simultaneously shaping audience interpretations within preconfigured frames.

In dataset D07, the headline reads: “*US Intelligence Says Iran Will Use Strait of Hormuz Strategy to End the War.*” Two key phrases warrant attention: “*Strait of Hormuz strategy*” and “*end the war*.” Additionally, the placement of “*US intelligence*” at the beginning of the headline serves to establish an authoritative and credible context for the information presented. Lexically, “*strategy*” denotes a systematic and calculated plan that takes into account various conditions, opportunities, and constraints. Within this context, the phrase “*Strait of Hormuz strategy*” implies a tactically significant geopolitical maneuver, while “*end the war*” emphasizes the intended outcome. Collectively, the headline constructs a narrative that portrays Iran’s actions as deliberate, measured, and solution-oriented.

At the level of discourse practice, the headline demonstrates that textual production is shaped by source selection and prevailing news values. The prominence of “*US intelligence*” lends legitimacy to the information, encouraging readers to perceive it as credible and authoritative. Simultaneously, the phrases “*Strait of Hormuz strategy*” and “*end the war*” reflect a dual emphasis on dramatization and resolution, suggesting the existence of a concrete plan capable of altering the trajectory of the conflict. This framing may shift audience perceptions, potentially challenging earlier assumptions regarding the balance of power in the war.

In the production process, Metro TV appears to integrate elements of both conflict and resolution within a single headline, thereby enhancing its appeal. At the level of consumption, audiences are likely to interpret the report within the constructed framework—namely, that Iran possesses a significant and strategic plan to conclude the conflict. The diction employed not only conveys information but also guides interpretation toward perceiving the action as impactful and potentially transformative.

At the sociocultural level, the framing is closely tied to broader geopolitical dynamics, particularly tensions involving Iran, the United States, and Israel. The use of “*US intelligence*” reflects the dominance of Western discursive authority in global information flows, where such sources are frequently regarded as credible and influential. Moreover, the reference to the Strait of Hormuz carries substantial geopolitical significance, as it constitutes a critical global النفط transit route. Any narrative involving this المنطقة is inherently linked to global economic stability and energy security. By foregrounding this aspect, the media frame the conflict not only as a military issue but also as a matter of global consequence.

In dataset D08, the headline reads: “*Iran Retaliatory Strike on Israel: Tel Aviv Residents Killed After Massive Explosion.*” At the micro level, the key lexical items include “*strike*,” “*retaliatory*,” and “*killed*.” The term “*strike*” is semantically linked to “*retaliatory*,” indicating that Iran’s action is framed as a response to prior attacks by the United States and Israel. The inclusion of “*retaliatory*” reinforces a cause-and-effect structure within the narrative, implicitly positioning Iran’s action as reactive rather than independently aggressive. Within textual analysis, such lexical choices function as a strategy of legitimization, directing readers to interpret the attack as a logical consequence of preceding actions. Responsibility is thus subtly attributed to earlier actors.

The term “*killed*,” as used in the phrase “*Tel Aviv residents killed*,” foregrounds the human cost of the event in a direct and emotionally charged manner. Compared to more neutral alternatives such as “*died*,” the term “*killed*” carries stronger connotations of violence and tragedy. Its placement at the end of the headline produces a dramatic effect, emphasizing the fatal consequences of the event while eliciting empathy from the audience.

At the level of discourse practice, the framing emerges through the interconnected processes of production, distribution, and consumption. In production, the use of terms such as “*strike*,” “*retaliatory*,” and “*killed*” reflects news values centered on conflict and dramatization. In distribution, emotionally charged and impactful headlines are designed to capture attention within digital media environments, increasing the likelihood of clicks and shares. In consumption, audiences may interpret “*retaliatory*” in multiple ways, depending on their prior knowledge and ideological orientation—some may view it as justification for Iran’s actions, while others may still perceive it as aggression.

At the level of sociocultural practice, the headline is embedded within broader political, social, and ideological contexts. It reflects ongoing geopolitical tensions between Iran and Israel, as well as the involvement of the United States in the Middle East. The use of “*retaliatory*” aligns with global narratives that frame conflict in terms of causality and reaction, thereby reproducing the notion that violence is a response to prior provocation. This illustrates how structures of power and international information flows influence the ways in which national media construct reality.

Furthermore, the emphasis on civilian casualties through the phrase “*Tel Aviv residents killed*” highlights universal humanitarian values while simultaneously fostering emotional proximity with readers. In the Indonesian context, humanitarian narratives often serve as an accessible entry point for understanding geographically distant conflicts. As such, media adapt their presentation to resonate with domestic audiences, ensuring relevance and interpretability.

Overall, the analysis of datasets D06, D07, and D08 demonstrates that media discourse operates across multiple layers, textual, discursive, and sociocultural, through which meaning is constructed, disseminated, and interpreted. These findings reaffirm that news reporting is not merely a reflection of reality, but an active process of ideological production shaped by language, power, and context.

Table 4: Framing Construction Process in Data D08

Analytical Stages	Focus of Analysis	Key Findings	Impacts/Implications
Micro Text	The selection of the lexical items “ <i>attack</i> ,” “ <i>retaliate</i> ,” and “ <i>killed</i> ” constitutes a strategic discursive mechanism that shapes the framing of the reported event.	The lexical items “ <i>attack</i> ” and “ <i>retaliate</i> ” establish a cause-effect relationship that positions Iran as a reactive actor. Meanwhile, “ <i>killed</i> ” emphasizes the emotional impact and the tragic dimension of the event.	This framing tends to legitimize Iran’s actions while simultaneously fostering empathy toward the victims.
Discourse Practice	The production, distribution, and consumption of the text by Metro TV	Production is shaped by news values that prioritize emotionally charged headlines to capture attention, while consumption varies depending on the audience’s perspectives	Framing is constructed through media processes and may be interpreted differently by audiences.
Sociocultural Practice	The broader social, political, and global ideological context.	It is influenced by the ongoing conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States, while the media simultaneously reproduce global discourses and humanitarian values.	It shapes public perceptions of international conflict.

In dataset D09, the headline reads: “[Full] Dialogue – Donald Trump Threatens Ground Invasion, Iran Prepares ‘Hell’.” Two lexical items warrant particular analytical attention: “threatens” and “hell.” At the micro (textual) level, the term “threatens” conventionally denotes the articulation of intent to inflict harm or disadvantage upon another party, typically expressed verbally prior to action. However, in this context, the expected effect of intimidation is subverted, as the threat is met not with fear but with a forceful counter-response—namely, the preparedness to deliver “hell.” This creates a discursive opposition that intensifies the perceived tension between the actors involved.

At the level of discourse practice, the headline can be understood as a product of media discourse that foregrounds conflict through the deliberate juxtaposition of strong, oppositional diction. The pairing of “threatens” and “hell” serves to heighten dramatic tension and attract audience attention. In the production process, editorial actors select provocative lexical items to maximize news value, particularly in terms of sensationalism and conflict intensity. In terms of distribution, such confrontational language enhances the likelihood of wide circulation across digital platforms and social media, as emotionally charged content tends to generate higher engagement. At the level of consumption, audiences may interpret the headline as indicative of escalating hostility between the two parties, reinforcing perceptions of imminent danger or crisis. Thus, discourse practice in this instance not only reflects reality but actively shapes public understanding of the conflict.

At the level of sociocultural practice, the headline is embedded within broader socio-political and historical contexts, particularly the longstanding tensions between the United States and Iran. The use of terms such as “threatens” and “hell” reflects a style of political communication characterized by symbolic aggression and rhetorical intensity, often employed to assert power, maintain strategic positioning, and construct dominance in the eyes of both domestic and international audiences. Socially, such discourse may reinforce the perception that conflict is inevitable, while simultaneously normalizing violent rhetoric in international relations. From a media-cultural perspective, the use of dramatic language also reflects the imperatives of a competitive media industry, where sensationalism is frequently prioritized to capture audience attention.

In dataset D10, the headline reads: “Tel Aviv Attacked, Iranian Cluster Munitions Illuminate the Night Sky over Israel’s Capital.” At the micro level, several lexical items are particularly salient: “attacked,” “cluster,” “illuminate,” and “night sky.” The term “attacked” clearly denotes an act of direct aggression, reinforcing the depiction of an overt conflict between the parties involved. The term “cluster” refers to a specific category of weaponry—cluster munitions—known for their व्यापक dispersal and significant destructive impact.

In contrast, the verb “illuminate” and the phrase “night sky” introduce an aesthetic and visual dimension, evoking imagery of light and spectacle. This creates a semantic contradiction, as the visual “illumination” is in fact the result of violent explosions. Such lexical choices exemplify a form of euphemistic or aestheticized representation, in which destructive events are framed through language that softens or beautifies their appearance.

At the level of discourse practice, the headline demonstrates how media construct and circulate conflict narratives through a combination of informational and dramatizing strategies. In the production process, the juxtaposition of the direct and forceful “attacked” with the evocative

“illuminate the night sky” reflects an editorial effort to enhance the appeal of the news by blending elements of violence with visual imagery. This combination amplifies both the conflict value and the sensational dimension of the report.

At the level of sociocultural practice, the text reflects broader geopolitical and ideological contexts, particularly the enduring tensions in the Middle East involving Iran and Israel. The framing of actors as “attacker” and “attacked” reinforces binary oppositions that may intensify public polarization. Moreover, the aestheticization of violence through phrases such as *“illuminate the night sky”* indicates a cultural tendency within media practices to dramatize conflict in visually compelling ways. This tendency is closely tied to the competitive pressures of the media industry, where emotionally engaging and visually evocative narratives are more likely to capture audience attention.

However, such practices also carry significant implications. By representing destructive events through relatively softened or aestheticized language, media discourse risks normalizing or obscuring the violence inherent in such. From an ideological perspective, this demonstrates how language functions as a mechanism of power and social construction. Media do not merely report facts; they actively shape how audiences perceive conflict, including the identification of perpetrators and victims, as well as the perceived urgency and severity of the situation.

Thus, at the sociocultural level, the text operates within a broader system of meaning production in which language, power, ideology, and global context intersect. The framing strategies employed contribute not only to the dissemination of information but also to the reproduction of conflict narratives within the global public sphere.

Tabel 5: Framing Construction Process in Data D10

Analysis Step	Description
Micro Text	The headline exhibits the deployment of salient lexical items such as <i>“attacked,” “cluster,” “illuminate,”</i> and <i>“night sky.”</i> The terms <i>“attacked”</i> and <i>“cluster”</i> explicitly denote violence and the use of weaponry, foregrounding the destructive dimension of the event. In contrast, the phrase <i>“illuminate the night sky”</i> introduces an aesthetic and visual nuance, evoking imagery of beauty and spectacle despite its referential basis in explosive military action. This juxtaposition generates a semantic tension in which violence is simultaneously represented through visually appealing language.
Discourse Practice	The media strategically employ dramatized and contrastive diction to enhance the attractiveness and circulation potential of the headline. The deliberate combination of violent terminology with aesthetically evocative phrasing reflects an editorial effort to construct a narrative that is both emotionally engaging and visually compelling. Such framing aligns with the logics of digital media dissemination, where sensational and distinctive headlines are more likely to capture audience attention and achieve virality. Consequently, audiences may interpret the event as a serious conflict while simultaneously perceiving it through a mediated lens that aestheticizes its visual dimension.
Sociocultural Practice	The text reflects the broader geopolitical complexities underpinning the conflict, while also illustrating how media discourse mediates public understanding through selective representation. By framing within a conflict-oriented

perspective and employing linguistically appealing expressions, the media facilitate accessibility and engagement among audiences. At the same time, such practices contribute to shaping public perception, reinforcing particular interpretations of the conflict and embedding them within wider socio-political and cultural contexts.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study both corroborate and extend more recent scholarship on media discourse and digital framing, particularly within the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) tradition. Contemporary studies increasingly emphasize that media representations of international conflict are shaped not only by ideological structures but also by the affordances of digital platforms. For instance, recent work by Papacharissi (2015) on affective publics demonstrates how emotionally charged language becomes central in capturing audience engagement in networked environments. The present findings align with this perspective, as the recurrent use of dramatized and provocative diction (*escalation, threat, hell, strike*) indicates that emotional intensity is strategically embedded within headlines to maximize visibility and interaction. However, this study advances the discussion by showing that such affective language is not merely a feature of digital communication but also operates as a deliberate ideological framing mechanism that shapes perceptions of legitimacy, victimhood, and power.

More recent empirical studies in journalism and media studies further reinforce these insights. For example, research by Claes de Vreese (2019) highlights that framing in contemporary news is increasingly shaped by competition for attention in digital environments, leading to a rise in conflict-driven and sensational narratives. The findings of this study confirm this trend, particularly in the use of contrastive and high-intensity lexical constructions such as *breach defenses* and *retaliatory strike*. Nevertheless, this study contributes a sharper analytical dimension by demonstrating how such framing not only attracts attention but also subtly reconfigures geopolitical meaning, positioning actors dynamically rather than within fixed ideological binaries.

In addition, recent CDA-oriented research, such as that by Wodak (2021), emphasizes the importance of historical and sociopolitical context in shaping discourse, particularly in relation to nationalism, identity, and political communication. The present study resonates with this argument by showing how Indonesian sociocultural values, such as anti-imperialism, religious solidarity, and humanitarian concern, interact with global conflict narratives. These values are reproduced through lexical choices that assign particular evaluative meanings to social actors and events. For example, the selection of words that emphasize victimhood, aggression, defense, or retaliation guides readers toward specific moral interpretations while marginalizing alternative perspectives. Through such lexical preferences, headlines do not merely summarize events but also normalize particular ideological positions by repeatedly foregrounding certain representations over others. However, it extends Wodak's framework by illustrating how these contextual influences are increasingly mediated through headline-level discourse, where meaning is compressed yet ideologically potent. This suggests that the locus of discursive power is shifting toward more condensed and rapidly circulating textual forms.

Furthermore, recent studies on Middle Eastern conflict coverage in global media (e.g., Mel Bunce, 2022) indicate that digital journalism often amplifies selective narratives through repetition and algorithmic visibility, reinforcing particular interpretations over time. The findings of this study support this observation, especially in the repeated framing of conflict as *ongoing escalation* or *retaliation*, which cumulatively constructs a perception of inevitability and

permanence. However, this study adds nuance by demonstrating that such repetition does not produce uniform interpretation; rather, audience reception remains heterogeneous, shaped by local cultural and ideological frameworks.

Another significant point of comparison emerges from recent audience-centered research. Studies such as those by Christian Fuchs (2020) argue that digital media users are not passive recipients but active interpreters who negotiate meaning within algorithmically curated environments. The present findings strongly support this claim, as readers interpret framing devices differently depending on their sociocultural backgrounds, levels of media literacy, and ideological predispositions. At the same time, this study complicates Fuchs's argument by suggesting that while interpretive agency exists, it operates within constraints imposed by repetitive framing and limited exposure to alternative narratives.

Moreover, recent research on headline discourse (e.g., Monika Bednarek, 2020) highlights that headlines in digital journalism have become increasingly evaluative and stance-taking, rather than purely informative. This study directly corroborates that claim, demonstrating that headlines function as condensed ideological statements that guide interpretation before the full text is even accessed. However, the present study goes further by showing how the interplay of violence-related diction and aestheticized language (e.g., "illuminate the night sky") introduces a layer of discursive ambiguity, where conflict is simultaneously intensified and visually softened.

Overall, the comparison with recent journal-based research reveals both convergence and innovation. This study confirms that contemporary media discourse is shaped by affect, competition, and digital circulation, as highlighted in recent literature. At the same time, it extends these insights by offering a more integrated, multi-level analysis that connects micro-level lexical choices with meso-level media practices and macro-level sociocultural dynamics. The key contribution lies in demonstrating that framing in the digital era is not only faster and more widespread but also more flexible, emotionally charged, and contextually negotiated. Consequently, this study suggests that future research should move beyond static models of media bias and instead adopt dynamic frameworks that account for the interaction between language, technology, and audience interpretation in shaping global conflict narratives.

CONCLUSION

Drawing upon a comprehensive examination of the dataset through the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework advanced by Norman Fairclough, encompassing the interrelated dimensions of micro (text), meso (discourse practice), and macro (sociocultural practice), this study demonstrates that media coverage of the conflict involving Iran, the United States, and Israel is not articulated in a neutral or purely descriptive manner. Rather, it is constituted through a systematic process of discursive construction in which language operates as a vehicle of ideological representation. At the micro level, the recurrent deployment of lexemes such as *resist*, *aggression*, *breach defenses*, *strike*, *escalation*, *threaten*, and *hell* reflects a patterned reliance on emotionally charged, dramatized, and at times paradoxical linguistic forms that juxtapose violence with elements of aestheticization. Such lexical configurations function as salient framing devices that orient readers toward construing the conflict as inherently intense, protracted, and saturated with tension.

At the level of discourse practice, the findings indicate that media institutions actively engage in the selective orchestration and strategic packaging of information, whereby processes of production, circulation, and consumption are guided by imperatives of visibility and audience engagement. The privileging of sensational, provocative, and affectively resonant headlines underscores the extent to which news discourse is shaped not only by informational content but

also by the modalities of its presentation within digitally mediated environments. Consequently, meaning is not merely transmitted but is co-constructed through discursive strategies that amplify particular interpretations while marginalizing others.

At the sociocultural level, the analysis situates media discourse within a broader matrix of geopolitical contestation, global power asymmetries, and the competitive logics of the contemporary media industry. In this regard, media function as agents in the reproduction of dominant narratives surrounding international conflict, simultaneously shaping and being shaped by prevailing ideological formations. The interpretive variability observed among audiences further underscores the role of socio-cultural and ideological positioning in mediating the reception of media texts, thereby producing plural and, at times, contested meanings.

Notwithstanding these contributions, the study remains subject to certain limitations. The empirical scope is temporally delimited, focusing on headlines produced within a relatively narrow timeframe during the phase of the conflict, thereby constraining the capacity to capture diachronic shifts in framing practices. Moreover, the analytical focus on a single media outlet, namely Metro TV, circumscribes the generalizability of the findings across a more diverse media landscape characterized by heterogeneous editorial orientations. The reliance on headline data, while analytically productive in revealing condensed framing strategies, may also limit engagement with the deeper narrative and contextual dimensions present in full-length news reports. Additionally, as with qualitative CDA more broadly, the interpretive nature of the analysis entails an inherent degree of subjectivity, contingent upon the researcher's critical reading of linguistic and discursive patterns.

In light of these limitations, future research would benefit from adopting a broader and more integrative methodological orientation. Expanding the corpus to include multiple media institutions, both domestic and international, would enable comparative analyses capable of elucidating cross-cultural and cross-ideological variations in media framing. Longitudinal approaches are likewise warranted to trace the evolution of discursive constructions across different phases of conflict. Furthermore, the incorporation of multimodal analysis, encompassing visual, audiovisual, and interactive elements, would provide a more comprehensive account of meaning-making processes in contemporary media ecologies. Greater attention to audience reception, particularly through empirical investigations of interpretive practices across diverse socio-cultural groups, would also enrich understanding of how media discourse is negotiated in practice. Finally, the integration of qualitative CDA with quantitative techniques, such as corpus-based analysis or large-scale content analysis, holds significant potential for enhancing methodological robustness and generating more nuanced insights into the interplay between language, ideology, and power in the representation of international conflict.

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