

The Face of Prabowo Subianto as Elected Indonesia's President on Al-Jazeera Arabic: A Roger Fowler's Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract:

Al-Jazeera Arabic is one of the Middle Eastern media outlets with a high intensity of reportage on Indonesia. This study aims to examine how Al-Jazeera Arabic reported the victory of Prabowo Subianto in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. It employs Critical Discourse Analysis based on the model proposed by Roger Fowler et al. as an ideological framework to analyze the discourse surrounding Prabowo Subianto's election as the eighth President of the Republic of Indonesia. From Fowler's perspective, a media outlet's stance toward an issue can be observed through its two outermost layers: lexical choice (diction) and syntactic construction (structure). Based on an analysis of four news reports on Prabowo Subianto as the president-elect, Al-Jazeera at the lexical level frequently employs the epithet "*al-jinīrāl al-sābiq*" ("the former general"), etc which functions as an affirmation of his past as an Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) general one marked by controversy and closely associated with alleged human rights violations in 1998. At the structural level, Al-Jazeera consistently affiliates Prabowo with Joko Widodo, portraying him variously as a rival, a subordinate, and as politically linked through his partnership with Widodo's son as the vice-presidential running mate.

Keywords: Al-Jazeera Arabic; Critical Discourse Analysis; Indonesia Presidential Election 2024; Prabowo Subianto; Roger Fowler

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election has become one of the most historic elections within the political dynamics of the Republic of Indonesia. This is attributed to several highly controversial political agreements that took place during this era. It began at the onset of President Joko Widodo's second term in 2019, which drew widespread international media attention due to his appointment of Prabowo Subianto—his rival in the 2019 election—as Minister of Defense, alongside Prabowo's running mate, Sandiaga Uno, as Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy.

This political decision captured global attention, not only because Prabowo had been Jokowi's rival in two consecutive elections, but also because, for the first time since his initial electoral participation in 2009 as Megawati Soekarnoputri's vice-presidential candidate, Prabowo and the Gerindra Party joined the government coalition after spending 20 years in the opposition camp. Mongabay referred to this phenomenon as a "marriage oligarchy" an attempt to weaken the opposition's voice, which ultimately left only the Democratic Party and PKS in the opposition (Gokkon, 2019). Furthermore, Foreignpolicy.com also noted that this phenomenon was part of Jokowi's process of "dividing the political pie," and no one had anticipated Prabowo's name being on that distribution list (Laksmana, 2026).

The surprising phenomenon that occurred in 2019 turned out to be merely a developing embryo. What was even more astonishing was the advancement of the Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming (Joko Widodo's eldest son) ticket as presidential and vice-presidential candidates. This news once again captured global attention, including that of the Arab world and the Middle East.

The Arab world and the Middle East indeed possess a distinct affinity with Indonesia, particularly in the media sector. Major Middle Eastern media outlets such as Al-Jazeera even maintain permanent reporters, such as Ali Sabri, who are frequently assigned to cover news from Indonesia. They also once applied for a permit to establish a branch office in Indonesia, although this did not materialize. These factors demonstrate a strong connection between Al-Jazeera and the political context in Indonesia, including matters concerning Prabowo Subianto. This is evident as Al-Jazeera was the only Middle Eastern media outlet that successfully conducted an interview with Prabowo Subianto prior to the 2024 Presidential Election (Sabri, 2024)

Prabowo Subianto himself is a politician and the founder of the Gerindra Party, who has participated in the Indonesian Presidential Elections since 2009, when he was paired with Megawati Soekarnoputri (Aminuddin & Ramadlan, 2015). Prabowo was the Commanding General of Kopassus (Special Forces Command) and is the former husband of Siti Hediati Hariyadi (the daughter of President Soeharto).

Prabowo's career as a high-ranking military officer ended after he was honorably discharged as the Commander of Kostrad (Army Strategic Reserve Command) in 1998. He then went into self-exile in Jordan, returning a few months later when the political situation began to stabilize. Prabowo resumed his active involvement in politics through Golkar, the party belonging to his former father-in-law. In 2008, Prabowo left Golkar and founded the Gerindra Party. In 2009, Prabowo ran alongside Megawati Soekarnoputri in the presidential race as her vice-presidential candidate, but they only secured 26% of the vote.

In the subsequent period in 2014, Prabowo ran again as a presidential candidate, facing Joko Widodo, a rising politician whose political career skyrocketed during that era. This rivalry continued into the 2019 Presidential Election, yielding the same result: Prabowo's defeat.

However, that year marked a turning point. Prabowo decided to reconcile with Joko Widodo and joined the government coalition as the Minister of Defense (Arifin dkk., 2020). This decision ultimately led to Joko Widodo's full support for Prabowo in the 2024 Presidential Election, culminating in the pairing of Widodo's son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, as his vice-presidential running mate. Naturally, these political decisions sparked various media speculations regarding Prabowo Subianto's political stance and his relationship with Joko Widodo. The media, as informational entities, possess their respective ideologies. Even independent media outlets choose independence as a means to safeguard their own ideologies.

A robust body of literature has employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the intersection of media framing, political ideology, and power dynamics, particularly concerning political figures and institutional media narratives. Previous research by Nina Tiya Hara, et al. explored the representation of Prabowo Subianto in Western media, specifically through a CDA of BBC News, revealing how moral judgments and Western ideological positioning shape his political portrayal on the global stage (Hara dkk., 2026). In the realm of domestic political discourse, Ni Putu Dewi Eka Yanti, et al utilized Teun A. Van Dijk's framework to dissect the text of the 2019 Presidential Election victory claim speech, focusing on the internal rhetorical strategies and self-representation

of political actors in Indonesia (Yanti dkk., 2019). Furthermore, the application of CDA in uncovering media bias has been demonstrated by Iros Rosita and Agus Hamdani, who applied Roger Fowler's model to Indonesian online media reporting on local political controversies (Lucky Hakim), highlighting how syntactical structures manipulate public perception (Rosita & Hamdani, 2024). On the international broadcasting front, Sabri Alshboul and Alaa Mahfouz investigated the persuasive strategies and ideological framing of Al-Jazeera Arabic and Al Arabiya during the Jamal Khashoggi incident, proving that Middle Eastern media utilize specific linguistic structures to project regional political interests (AlShboul & Mahfouz, 2022).

While these studies provide foundational insights into media discourse and political framing, a significant research gap remains. Existing literature on Prabowo Subianto tends to focus either on his domestic self-representation (as seen in his 2019 speeches) or his portrayal through a Western-centric lens (such as the BBC), which predominantly emphasizes human rights narratives. Conversely, studies analyzing Al-Jazeera's linguistic strategies have primarily been confined to Middle Eastern geopolitical conflicts. To date, there is a lack of scholarly attention on how Middle Eastern media—specifically Al-Jazeera Arabic—frames Southeast Asian political transitions and the metamorphosis of its political figures. This current study fills this void by applying Critical Discourse Analysis to Al-Jazeera's coverage of Prabowo Subianto's recent electoral victory and his pragmatic alliance with Joko Widodo. By analyzing the lexical and syntactic constructions, this study aims to uncover how Al-Jazeera ideologically translates Indonesia's democratic dynamics—highlighting military backgrounds, political pragmatism, and dynastic alliances—into a cautionary narrative that resonates with the collective memory and political anxieties of the Arab audience.

Building upon the research gap outlined above, this study aims to uncover the discourse strategies and ideological framing constructed by the Arabic-language media, Al-Jazeera, in reporting Prabowo Subianto's electoral victory. Specifically, this research seeks to analyze how linguistic elements are employed to represent the political metamorphosis of the figure—from a military-backed opposition leader into a pragmatic successor allied with his former rival's political dynasty. To achieve this objective, this

study utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) not merely as a methodology, but as an epistemological bridge connecting the textual structures with the sociopolitical context of the Middle Eastern audience. Consequently, the core analysis of this research will focus on dissecting two micro-structures of the news texts: first, the lexical level, which highlights the operationalization of military diction, age attribution, and relational identification; and second, the syntactic construction level, which unpacks the narratives of electoral legitimacy and elite pragmatism. Through the interconnection of these two linguistic levels, this study will reveal how Al-Jazeera ideologically translates the dynamics of transactional democracy in Indonesia into a critical narrative that resonates with the Arab audience's collective memory and political trauma regarding the threat of authoritarianism

METHOD

This research presents the data processing and critical analysis of the news coverage regarding Prabowo Subianto as the president-elect of Indonesia on the Al-Jazeera news portal. The discourse critique in this study employs Roger Fowler's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model, which emphasizes two primary dimensions in conducting CDA: lexical selection and syntactic construction. At the level of lexical selection, specific choices can orient the subject or predicate toward a particular ideological stance. Meanwhile, at the syntactic construction level, the positioning and structural arrangement of words can similarly steer a sentence to reflect specific ideological leanings.

The primary data utilized in this study consist of four news articles published on the Al-Jazeera portal covering the election of Prabowo Subianto as the 8th President of Indonesia. The publication timeframe of these articles spans from January 2024 to October 2024. These specific texts were purposively selected because they fall under the *akhbar* (hard news) category—explicitly excluding interviews or opinion pieces—thereby providing a more authentic and objective basis for assessing the journalistic discourse. Based on the data examination, the researcher identified seven data points pertaining to lexical selection (diction) and five data points related to syntactic construction

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the lexical data findings from the Al-Jazeera news excerpts, the selection

of diction referring to Prabowo Subianto represents an identity framing that conveys a subtly critical tone. The use of phrases such as "Minister of Defense" (wazir ad-difa' / وزير الدفاع), "Former General" (al-jinral as-sabiq / الجنرال السابق), and "Former Special Forces Commander" (qa'id al-quwwat al-khashah as-sabiq / قائد القوات الخاصة السابق) initially constructs an image of assertiveness and authority.

However, this narrative is deconstructed through the specific mention of the age attribute "72 years old" (72 'aman / 72 عاما), which can be interpreted as an emphasis on advanced age. Within political journalistic discourse, the foregrounding of advanced age implicitly raises doubts regarding the subject's competence, stamina, and physical fitness for leadership. Furthermore, the description of Prabowo as a "long-time rival of former President Joko Widodo" (munafisan qadiman lir-ra'is as-sabiq Joko Widodo / منافسا قديما للرئيس السابق جوكو ويدودو) carries a satirical nuance that highlights contemporary political contradictions. This diction appears deliberately employed to underscore the irony of political pragmatism; wherein a figure historically positioned as the opposition and a 'long-time rival' is now compelled to compromise by forming a coalition with Joko Widodo's own son to secure his position as the "Strongest Candidate" (al-murasyah al-aufar / المرشح الأوفر). Overall, these lexical variations indicate that Al-Jazeera frames Prabowo through a critical lens, depicting him as an aging military figure characterized by irony and political ambiguity.

At the syntactic and discourse levels, the Al-Jazeera news text exhibits a critical framing that systematically highlights two primary dimensions of Prabowo Subianto's victory: his global-scale electoral legitimacy and the pragmatism of his political alliances. On the one hand, sentence construction is utilized to measure the scale of the mandate received by comparing massive yet slightly decreasing domestic voter turnout figures, as evidenced in the excerpt, "where the participation rate reached around 80% compared to around 82% in 2019" (حيث بلغت نسبة المشاركة نحو 80% مقابل نحو 82% في العام 2019). This domestic legitimacy is subsequently amplified in its geopolitical significance by framing his victory as the "eighth president of the world's largest Muslim-majority country" (سويانتو كئامن رئيس) (لأكبر دولة ذات أغلبية مسلمة في العالم). On the other hand, the subsequent clausal structures sharply juxtapose the candidate's historical contradictions. Al-Jazeera deliberately contrasts

Prabowo's past track record as a confrontational challenger who "refused to concede defeat on both occasions" (ورفض الاعتراف بهزيمته في كلتا المناسبتين) against the contemporary political reality, in which he has integrated into an "alliance despite differing political affiliations" (إلى تحالف رغم اختلاف الانتماءات السياسية). This metamorphosis and pragmatic compromise culminate in his current campaign strategy, which relies entirely on the pledge to "continue along Widodo's approach" (استمرار السير على نهج ويدودو). Through these comparative and contrasting clausal arrangements, Al-Jazeera frames the triumph not as an independent ideological victory, but rather as a manifestation of elite pragmatism and the co-optation of his predecessor's populist legacy to attain power.

Subject Lexical Selection: Militaristic Background

At the interpretation stage, Al-Jazeera's repetitive emphasis on military-dimensional lexicons such as "Former General" (al-jinral as-sabiq) and "Former Special Forces Commander" (qa'id al-quwwat al-khashah as-sabiq) constitutes a deliberate discursive strategy to contextualize Indonesian politics for a Middle Eastern audience. Drawing on Pintak (2011), the identity of contemporary Arab journalism is profoundly shaped by historical experiences with authoritarian regimes, wherein journalists frequently position themselves as watchdogs and agents of change with a heightened sensitivity toward the centralization of power. In this context, Al-Jazeera's use of military diction acts as a cultural shortcut; it instantaneously triggers a psychological resonance for an Arab audience that shares a collective trauma regarding narratives of junta governance, coups, or military strongman leadership post-Arab Spring in countries such as Egypt, Syria, or Sudan (Lynch, 2013).

The representation of this militaristic figure is crucial for Al-Jazeera in asserting its editorial line. Through this diction, Al-Jazeera articulates a skeptical view that democratic transitions frequently remain overshadowed by the repression of old structures. When compared to the discursive construction of Western news sources such as Reuters or The New York Times—which generally are more explicit in linking Prabowo Subianto's name with the phrase "past human rights abuses" in their reporting (see for example, The New York Times, 2024; Reuters, 2024)—Al-Jazeera opts for a structural approach. They foreground elite military ranks ("Special Forces Commander" and "Minister of Defense")

because, for the Arab audience, the primary threat to democracy is often not merely an individual's track record, but rather how the military power structure itself co-opts civilian space (Pintak, 2010).

Furthermore, when this military diction is juxtaposed with the phrase "the president's long-time rival" who is now joining the coalition, alongside the age attribute of "72 years old," Al-Jazeera implicitly presents a political analogy deeply familiar to the Arab world. They frame this reality as a form of pragmatic reconciliation among aging elites to secure the status quo, where former military figures and political rivals merge, effectively sidelining democratic idealism. Through these lexical choices, Al-Jazeera ideologically translates the phenomenon into a conceptual framework of authoritarianism and political pragmatism that is most comprehensible to a Middle Eastern audience.

Beyond creating psychological resonance for the Middle Eastern demographic, the militaristic labeling intensively attached to Prabowo Subianto also represents Al-Jazeera's geopolitical interests and editorial stance toward Indonesia. Within global political discourse, Indonesia occupies a highly strategic position in the eyes of the Arab and international world: it is the nation with the world's largest Muslim-majority population and is simultaneously recognized as a successful model of democratic transition following the collapse of an authoritarian regime in 1998 (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019) =. For Al-Jazeera, which has historically positioned itself as a proponent of pro-democracy movements and a sharp critic of military intervention in civilian politics within the Middle East (Miles, 2005; Zayani, 2005), Indonesian political dynamics serve as a crucial barometer to monitor.

By consistently framing the winning candidate through the lexicons of "Former General" and "Special Forces Commander," Al-Jazeera is essentially projecting a discourse on democratic backsliding. This news coverage carries an editorial agenda to utilize Indonesia as a case study or cautionary tale for the Islamic world. Al-Jazeera has a vested interest in demonstrating that even in a Muslim country where the democratic process is considered highly established, past military structures and the compromises of elite oligarchies can re-emerge to dominate the stage of civilian power (Aspinall & Berenschot, 2019). Through this lens, the narrative of Prabowo's victory is not celebrated as an electoral triumph but is instead constructed as empirical evidence of Al-Jazeera's global narrative:

that the shadows of militarism, political nepotism, and the deep state remain a latent threat perpetually looming over developing nations and the Islamic world.

Subject Lexical Selection: Age (Political Maturity and Physical Vulnerability)

The foregrounding of the age attribute "72 years old" (*72 'aman / 72 عاما*) by Al-Jazeera in describing Prabowo Subianto is not merely a supplementary demographic detail, but rather a lexical strategy embedded with *discursive ambiguity*. This figure simultaneously represents two sides of the same coin within the discourse of political leadership: political maturity and physical vulnerability.

On the one hand, the mention of the age of 72 constructs the subject as a mature patronage figure possessing resilience and a long track record spanning various transitions in Indonesia's political eras. Within the political sociology context of Eastern societies, including the Arab audience, the phenomenon of gerontocracy (leadership by elderly figures) is frequently associated with wisdom, stability, and the domination of authority (Post, 2004). This number reinforces his position as the "Strongest Candidate" (*al-murasyah al-aufar*), asserting that he is a political survivor who has accumulated socio-political capital over decades. The age serves as legitimacy that his past failures have cultivated absolute patience and tactical maturity in the current election.

However, from the critical perspective of political journalism, the foregrounding of advanced age also functions as a deconstructive tool that highlights physical vulnerability and fitness for office. In political communication studies, highlighting an aging candidate is often utilized by the media to implicitly frame public doubts regarding a leader's stamina, cognitive capabilities, and operational endurance in confronting crises (Schill & Kirk, 2014) (Van Aelst dkk., 2012). Within the context of Al-Jazeera's text, the attribute of "72 years old" becomes a sharp antithesis to the phrase "Special Forces Commander," which is historically synonymous with valor, masculinity, and military vitality.

Through this lexical juxtaposition, Al-Jazeera is subtly deconstructing the *strongman* myth that has long been attached to the subject. The audience is confronted with the reality that the former commander is now an aging general whose physical fitness is steadily declining. This biological vulnerability subsequently amplifies the narrative of

the irony of political pragmatism discussed earlier: that in his twilight years, the general ultimately realizes he no longer possesses the solitary political vitality required to win, forcing him to rely on a transactional compromise with a much younger political force (Gibran Rakabuming Raka) and the power lineage of his former rival.

Subject Lexical Selection: From Rivalry to Coalition with Joko Widodo

At the lexical and semantic level, Al-Jazeera's selection of the phrase "long-time rival of former President Joko Widodo" (*munafisan qadiman lir-ra'is as-sabiq Joko Widodo* / منافسا قديما للرئيس السابق جوكو ويدودو) constitutes a discursive strategy laden with political irony. This attribution operationalizes what critical discourse analysis terms relational identification; wherein Prabowo's identity and position are not narrated as an independent entity, but rather constructed through his existence within the shadow of Joko Widodo (Leeuwen, 2008). By attaching the label of "long-time rival," Al-Jazeera deliberately evokes the readers' collective memory regarding the ideological polarization and fierce contestation that occurred during the two previous presidential elections (2014 and 2019). However, this historical reminder is specifically presented to expose a contemporary contradiction: that the primary rival must now form an alliance and partner with his competitor's own son to achieve victory.

Politically, this lexical construction sharply frames the discourse of pragmatism and elite cartelization. The status shift from a "rival" to a subordinate ally—materialized through the elevation of Gibran as vice president—demonstrates the dissolution of the ideological boundaries of opposition within the Indonesian democratic system. Drawing on Slater (2018) and Ambardi (2009), this phenomenon reflects the tendency of political elites to form an elite settlement to monopolize state power and resources, rather than cultivating a tradition of checks and balances. In this news text, the narrative of Prabowo's toughness as a "Former General" is seemingly dismantled by the reality that his victory relies heavily on the civilian political patronage of his former rival's family (Slater, 2018).

For Middle Eastern and international audiences, this attribution transmits a discourse concerning the emergence of dynastic politics and neo-patrimonialism. Al-Jazeera frames the notion that the supremacy of procedural democracy has ultimately been

hijacked by the pragmatic interests of old oligarchies willing to mutually co-opt one another. The phrase *munafisan qadiman* (long-time rival) serves as a linguistic monument that harshly satirizes the death of the opposition; it implies that within the Indonesian political landscape, even the fiercest of competitions will eventually succumb to power compromises and kinship succession.

Syntactic Construction: Electoral Superiority

At the level of syntactic construction, the theme of electoral superiority and support base is constructed through statistical quantification and geopolitical amplification. This is distinctly evident in two primary sentence constructions that frame the scale of the mandate received by Prabowo Subianto.

First, in the sentence highlighting the voter turnout rate: "where the participation rate reached around 80% compared to around 82% in 2019" (حيث بلغت نسبة المشاركة نحو 80% مقابل (نحو 82% في العام 2019). The comparative syntactic construction utilizing the preposition *muqabil* (مقابل / compared to) possesses a dual discursive function. On the one hand, the mention of the "80%" figure serves to provide robust electoral legitimacy; asserting that the victory was achieved with a massive majority support base and exceptionally high public participation by global democratic standards. On the other hand, juxtaposing this figure with the "82% in 2019" achievement injects a critical nuance. This decline in the participation rate can implicitly be read as an indicator of democratic fatigue or a form of passive protest (voter abstention) from a segment of the electorate in response to election dynamics marred by legal controversies and elite pragmatism.

Second, this domestic legitimacy is subsequently amplified to a global scale through the sentence construction: "Subianto as the eighth president of the world's largest Muslim-majority country" (سوبيانتو كثمان رئيس لأكبر دولة ذات أغلبية مسلمة في العالم). In this sentence, Al-Jazeera does not merely refer to Indonesia as a standard nation-state entity; rather, it employs the superlative phrase *akbar dawlah* (أكبر دولة / the largest country) attached to the identity of *aghlabiyyah muslimah* (أغلبية مسلمة / Muslim majority). This construction is highly crucial to Al-Jazeera's editorial line. By situating Prabowo's victory within the framework of the "Islamic World," the media shifts the discourse of electoral superiority from a mere national

achievement to a monumental geopolitical event. For the Middle Eastern audience, this sentence construction asserts that Prabowo now holds control over the world's largest Muslim mass base, a position that demands the attention and political calculation of the international community.

Overall, the combination of these two syntactic constructions reveals Al-Jazeera's strategy in framing Prabowo's electoral superiority: a democratic mandate whose numbers are massive and strategically valuable in the eyes of the Islamic world, yet, at the same time, harbors a subtle underlying narrative regarding the decline in public participation enthusiasm compared to previous eras of political contestation.

Syntactic Construction: Relationship with Joko Widodo

At the level of syntactic construction, Al-Jazeera critically highlights Prabowo Subianto's political branding strategy, which repositions him as the successor to Joko Widodo's developmental legacy. This narrative is constructed through three sentence structures that sequentially demonstrate contradiction, pragmatism, and the continuity of leadership discourse (Lilleker, 2006).

First, Al-Jazeera evokes historical memory through the sentence, "and he refused to concede defeat on both occasions" (ورفض الاعتراف بهزيمته في كلتا المناسبتين). This sentence functions as a **discursive anchor** that reminds the audience of Prabowo's initial identity as a fierce and uncompromising opposition to Jokowi's legitimacy in the past. However, this historical position is dramatically deconstructed by the second sentence, which forms the core of his winning campaign: "continuing along Widodo's approach" (استمرار السير على نهج (ويودو)). The juxtaposition between fierce past rejection and the present promise of adherence exposes an extreme degree of electoral pragmatism.

This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Aspinall and Berenschot (2019), who note that electoral politics in Indonesia are heavily influenced by elite opportunism and pragmatism, wherein the ideological boundaries of the opposition can be easily dissolved for the sake of power. Al-Jazeera implicitly demonstrates that Prabowo recognizes the strength of Jokowi's political legacy and his high public approval rating at the end of his tenure (Bland, 2020). Consequently, the only logical method to win the election was not

by acting as an antithesis, but rather by co-opting his rival's populist narrative and dissolving his own oppositional identity to gain electoral incentives (Mujani & Liddle, 2021) (Mujani & Liddle, 2021).

The transformation from an opposition figure to an heir is subsequently finalized through the third sentence construction: "and it is expected that Prabowo will take over the presidency following the end of Widodo's term in October" (ومن المنتظر أن يتولى برايوو الرئاسة (عقب انتهاء ولاية ويدودو في أكتوبر/تشرين الأول). Syntactically, this sentence employs the temporal conjunction "following the end of" (عقب انتهاء), which narrates a smooth, stable, and meticulously planned succession. This sequence of sentences effectively erases any impression of a disruptive transition of power, replacing it with a frame of **continuity**. This constitutes a form of image management that successfully shifts the perception of Prabowo from a challenger figure to a continuator of the *status quo* (Lilleker, 2006).

Overall, through these three syntactic constructions, Al-Jazeera frames the "continuing Jokowi" branding not as a natural ideological alignment from the outset, but rather as a calculative tactic of political adaptation and metamorphosis. Prabowo is constructed as a figure willing to shed the memory of his past resistance in order to secure a power transition that relies heavily on the overarching shadow of his predecessor's legacy.

To encapsulate the critical discourse analysis of Al-Jazeera's coverage regarding Prabowo Subianto's election, the following table summarizes how lexical selections and syntactic constructions were utilized to frame specific ideological narratives:

Table 1. Lexical Selection and Syntactic Data

Linguistic	Textual Evidence (Al-Jazeera)	Critical Discourse / Ideological Framing
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Dimension	Excerpts)	
Lexical: Militaristic Background	"الجنرال السابق" (<i>Former General</i>) "قائد القوات الخاصة السابق" (<i>Special Forces Commander</i>)	Functions as a cultural shortcut for Arab audiences; projects a warning of democratic backsliding and the latent threat of military shadows.
Lexical: Age Attribute	"72 عاما" (<i>72 years old</i>)	Creates discursive ambiguity: simultaneously validates political maturity while deconstructing the <i>strongman</i> myth by highlighting physical vulnerability.
Lexical: Relational Identity	"منافسا قديما للرئيس السابق جوكو ويدودو" (<i>Long-time rival of former President Joko Widodo</i>)	Exposes extreme political pragmatism; signifies elite cartelization and the erosion of ideological opposition in Indonesian democracy.
Syntactic: Electoral Mandate	"82% مقابل نحو 80%" (<i>around 80% compared to around 82%</i>) "أكبر دولة ذات أغلبية مسلمة" (<i>largest Muslim-majority country</i>)	Amplifies geopolitical significance while subtly indicating domestic democratic fatigue through the comparative decline in voter turnout.
Syntactic: Political Succession	ورفض الاعتراف " بهزيمته في كلتا المناسبتين" (<i>refused to concede defeat on both occasions</i>) with current pledge to "استمرار السير على نهج ويدودو" (<i>continue along Widodo's approach</i>)	Frames the transition not as natural ideological alignment, but as calculative image management and opportunism to secure the <i>status quo</i> .

CONCLUSION

Based on the application of Roger Fowler's Critical Discourse Analysis model, this

study concludes that Al-Jazeera's reporting on Prabowo Subianto's electoral victory transcends standard objective journalism, operating instead as a critical framing of Indonesian democratic realities. Through deliberate lexical selections and comparative syntactic constructions, Al-Jazeera constructs a narrative that is fundamentally skeptical of procedural democracy when it is co-opted by elite pragmatism. Prabowo is not merely portrayed as a victorious democratic candidate, but rather framed as an aging military figure whose triumph relies heavily on transactional compromises, elite cartelization, and the patronage of his former political rival.

Furthermore, this discursive construction is highly tailored to the psychological and geopolitical resonance of Al-Jazeera's Middle Eastern audience. By emphasizing militaristic lexicons, dynastic tendencies, and the death of ideological opposition, Al-Jazeera implicitly utilizes the Indonesian election as a *cautionary tale*. It projects a global narrative that even in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation—often lauded as a model for democratic transition—the shadows of past military structures and oligarchic compromises remain a potent threat to civilian democratic ideals. Ultimately, the discourse reveals that contemporary political victories are frequently achieved not through ideological supremacy, but through the calculative metamorphosis and pragmatic alliance of the ruling elites.

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