

The 2025 Sumatra Flood in Al Jazeera Arabic Coverage: A Critical Discourse Analysis Based on Teun A. van Dijk's

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Abstract

This study aims to examine Al Jazeera Arabic's coverage of the 2025 floods in Sumatra, as presented on its YouTube channel, and to analyze the discourse representation through the lens of Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on the live broadcasts reported by Sohaib Jazeem from the affected areas in Aceh. Data were collected through listening, note-taking, and translation, and subsequently analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The results indicate that the coverage emphasizes issues of environmental crisis, the impact of the disaster, and the conditions of the victims. At the macro level, the main theme relates to the environmental crisis, while at the superstructure level, comparisons are drawn with the 2004 tsunami to build audience understanding and provide an introductory overview of the natural destruction, which nearly matched the scale of the tsunami event. At the micro-structural level, the emphasis on victim data and aid distribution reveals a specific focus on three aspects: 1) the nature of the environmental damage, 2) the lack of accountability among authorities, and 3) the government's inadequate response to flood victims. In addition to these three aspects of the text structure, this study is also informed by social cognition or social class position and social context—specifically, the prevailing knowledge or values within society—which also influence the analytical perspective. This study demonstrates that media coverage helps shape the public's perspective on disaster events.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Teun Van Dijk, Al Jazeera Arabic, Sumatra Floods.

INTRODUCTION

Inadequate drainage systems that are unable to accommodate water volume can lead to the accumulation of large-scale water flows, commonly referred to as flooding (Montika, 2025). Indeed, floods occur in various forms, and one of the most destructive and socially disruptive types is flash flooding. Such disasters not only cause public anxiety but also force affected communities to face shortages of basic necessities in order to sustain their daily lives under normal conditions (Ismail et al., 2022).

High rainfall intensity is a primary factor contributing to flooding. Even rainfall lasting approximately three hours can rapidly generate large water flows, which may also recede within a similarly short duration (Sabriyanti & Hadi, 2022). Furthermore, Indonesia is geographically situated in a tropical rainfall region (Prasetyaningrum et al., 2025), making it more prone to precipitation compared to other regions. In addition to environmental factors, human activities significantly contribute to flooding, particularly land-use changes such as deforestation. These activities alter natural water flow patterns, thereby increasing the likelihood of flash floods (Montika, 2025). Although illegal logging is subject to legal sanctions, stronger enforcement of existing regulations remains necessary (Rachmah et al., 2024).

Similarly, the floods that occurred in Sumatra have been perceived by the public as more than just a natural disaster. The prolonged flooding, which persisted from December 2025 to January 2026, has been associated with environmental crises, reflecting a lack of human responsibility toward nature. This extended disaster, lasting approximately two months, is often interpreted as a wake-up call for greater environmental awareness (Asin, 2025). Additionally, the floods have been linked to weak governmental oversight in spatial planning policies, inconsistencies in land-use permits, and ineffective law enforcement (Zein et al.,

2025). These policy shortcomings have also been felt by affected communities, particularly in the form of delayed emergency responses and uneven distribution of aid (Saputra et al., 2026). In reality, many victims—especially children—urgently depend on such assistance (Putri et al., 2026).

The issue becomes even more complex when the disaster is covered by international media. The Arabic news outlet Al Jazeera Arabic reported on the flood by assigning its correspondent to conduct on-site coverage in Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. In addition to documenting the immediate conditions of the flood, the media also reported on the Indonesian government's response to the disaster, which was perceived as slow and received negative reactions from the public (Husodo, 2026)

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an approach that examines discourse circulating in the public sphere, not merely as a linguistic structure but as a social practice embedded in power relations and ideology (Sagala et al., 2026; Suryakusuma et al., 2026). Discourse, in this sense, functions as a form of global communication that frames issues according to particular perspectives and objectives. Therefore, it must be analyzed critically in order to uncover the implicit meanings behind the symbols and narratives presented to the public. As emphasized by Teun A. van Dijk, such analysis is essential for understanding how discourse is constructed and disseminated within society.

Previous studies have addressed similar issues. For instance, (Hutapea et al., 2026) examined the implementation of a five-day school policy in North Sumatra using van Dijk's CDA framework. Their findings revealed that the policy was constructed by the media as a means of reinforcing moral values and emphasizing the role of family in education. Similarly, (Dharmika & Widaswara, 2025) analyzed media framing in Kompas.com regarding floods in Sumatra, concluding that the media tended to frame flooding not merely as a result of high rainfall but also as a consequence of environmental mismanagement and public policy issues.

The similarity between the study conducted by (Hutapea et al., 2026) and the present study lies in the type of data, both of which use news texts as their data source, as well as the analytical approach, namely Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis. However, the former study does not address the issue of flooding in Sumatra. In contrast, the study conducted by (Dharmika & Widaswara, 2025) also examines the 2025 Sumatra flood using news data from a media outlet; however, unlike the present study, their data source is a local media platform rather than an international one, namely Al Jazeera Arabic, which reports on a local event from an external perspective. The presence of international media in narrating environmental realities in Indonesia does not merely function as a source of global information but also shapes global perspectives on environmental conditions and on how the government manages natural resources and responds to disasters. Such international narratives inevitably influence Indonesia's position, legitimacy, and image within global environmental discourse (Anas & Idris, 2025).

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the 2025 Sumatra flood as reported by Al Jazeera Arabic, employing Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis as its analytical framework, as well as examining how Al Jazeera Arabic emphasizes the narrative of a "second tsunami" as an initial depiction of the destruction affecting communities in Sumatra, particularly in the three impacted regions, thereby creating a "hook" and distinguishing this disaster narrative from typical flood events..

As a researcher, I am interested in examining the coverage of the 2025 Sumatra flood reported by Al Jazeera Arabic, as this media outlet provides direct reporting that enables the rapid and intensive construction of reality before a global audience. The decision to employ Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis is based on the intention to uncover how textual structure, social cognition, and social context operate in representing disaster events in Indonesia from the perspective of Arab media. Thus, this study not only examines the content of the news but also highlights how international media such as Al Jazeera Arabic shape global perspectives that may influence Indonesia's position in the international arena, particularly within global environmental discourse. In this context, Arab media frame the reality of Indonesia through lexical choices, narrative emphasis, and the potential presence of underlying ideologies embedded in the presentation of the live coverage.

This research is based on the assumption that media coverage, including that produced by Al Jazeera Arabic, is a form of discursive construction shaped by processes of selection and organization of information. Through the lens of Teun A. van Dijk's framework, it is assumed that textual structure, social cognition, and social context interact in producing meaning for the audience. Thus, the reporting of the 2025 Sumatra flood is understood not merely as a presentation of factual events but as a constructed representation of reality, shaped by linguistic choices, emphasis, and perspective, which ultimately influence public perception.

This study has two main objectives. First, it aims to examine in depth the coverage presented by Al Jazeera Arabic regarding the flood and environmental damage in Sumatra, Indonesia. Second, it seeks to analyze how the event is represented through Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly in relation to the interplay between textual structure, social cognition, and social context in shaping meaning. Ultimately, this study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how international media construct the reality of disaster events in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as it is based on field-oriented research aimed at uncovering the realities of flood events and other natural disasters accompanied by environmental damage in Sumatra, Indonesia. The primary data source is a news report produced by Al Jazeera Arabic, broadcast on December 5, 2025, with a duration of approximately 3 minutes and 8 seconds, which can be accessed via the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETWbBOKsTEM>. The report covers the flood event in Sumatra by featuring an on-site correspondent, Sohaib Jazeem, who delivers a live broadcast from the affected area. Through direct reporting, he demonstrates the persistence of strong water currents even ten days after heavy rainfall, which had swept away residential areas across thousands of villages.

In this study, data were collected by listening to the explanations delivered by the correspondent during the live broadcast, specifically from Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province, Indonesia. The researcher then transcribed and translated the data to facilitate analysis using Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis approach. The data analysis follows the model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which consists of three main stages: (1) data reduction, involving the identification and selection of relevant data; (2) data display, which refers to the systematic description and organization of the identified data; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification. The verification process is conducted by re-examining the data and comparing the findings with relevant theories as well as previous studies. This process ensures that the results of the analysis are valid and can be academically justified.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The critical discourse analysis of lexical choices used by the reporter in delivering news at the site of the event, particularly in the coverage by Al Jazeera Arabic regarding the flood and environmental damage that occurred in Sumatra, Indonesia, in 2025, is examined in this study. Through Teun A. van Dijk's approach by analyzing the news through macrostructure, superstructure, and microstructure—this study demonstrates that news reporting functions not merely as the delivery of up-to-date information, but also as a means of constructing ideology and shaping public understanding (Dijk, 2008), particularly in the international context concerning social conditions and government policies in addressing the situation.

Text Structure

a. Macrostructure

At the macrostructural level, the main topic of the news reflects the global meaning or overarching theme. This main theme represents the core message of the news reported by Al Jazeera Arabic, namely the flood disaster that occurred in Sumatra, Indonesia, and the government's response in handling the disaster. The main topic can be identified in the news headline (Setiawan et al., 2022) specifically in the on-screen text that appears at the beginning of the video during the transition from the central studio reporter to the field reporter in Sumatra, supported by the lexical choices of the central reporter.

كارثة فيضانات جزيرة سومطرة في يومها العاشر والحكومات المحلية تكاد تعجز عن التعامل مع آثاره

“The flood disaster on the island of Sumatra has entered its tenth day, and local governments are nearly unable to handle its impacts.”

The excerpt above serves as the news headline and represents the main topic. It explains that the flood affecting communities in Sumatra has reached the tenth day after the event, along with the limited response from the government as perceived by the affected communities. In addition to the main topic, there is also a subtopic, which provides further elaboration on the main theme (Prमितاساري & Khofifah, 2022). The subtheme in the Al Jazeera Arabic report further explains, describes, and illustrates the environmental damage and the various crises experienced by the community following the flood. Moreover, in the latter part of the body and the closing section, there is a stronger emphasis on the government's slow response in handling the disaster.

b. Superstructure

At the superstructural level, the news is organized hierarchically and logically into three parts. This superstructure demonstrates the coherence between the topic and subtopic at the macrostructural level (Setiawan et al., 2022), consisting of the opening, body, and closing sections, which also include a conclusion. The superstructure elaborates in detail on the crises experienced by the community and the social conditions ten days after the flood, while also incorporating explanations regarding the response and policies of the local government, particularly in the closing section.

1. Opening

The opening section presents factual information that reflects objectivity. In this section, the reporter and correspondent from Al Jazeera Arabic describe the affected victims and provide a general overview of the current conditions, recorded ten days after the flood occurred, particularly in Aceh Province, thereby evoking the collective memory of the 2004 tsunami.

وقد أسفرت عن دمار آلاف القرى، كما ارتفعت حصيلة الضحايا في ثلاثة أقاليم في الجزيرة إلى 836 قتيلاً، فيما اعتُبر أكثر من 800 شخص في عداد المفقودين.

“This disaster has caused the destruction of thousands of villages. The death toll in three regions on the island has risen to 836, while more than 800 people are still reported missing.”

The excerpt above provides a general description of the victims affected by the flood in Sumatra, namely 836 fatalities and more than 800 missing persons, as well as the severe destruction of thousands of villages. From a superstructural perspective, this opening segment functions to illustrate the severity of the disaster through the presentation of statistical data and factual descriptions, thereby reinforcing the credibility and urgency of the news report.

فعلاً، اليوم حاكم إقليم آتشيه، وهو من الأقاليم الثلاثة المتضررة من هذه الفيضانات، وصف هذه الكارثة بأنها الجزء الثاني من التسونامي. ونستذكر جميعاً التسونامي الأول أو السابق الذي وقع في آتشيه عام 2004

“The Governor of Aceh Province, one of the three regions affected by these floods, described this disaster as the ‘second tsunami.’ We all recall the first tsunami that occurred in Aceh in 2004.”

This excerpt explains that the Governor of Aceh, as a representative of one of the affected regions, associates the current disaster with the 2004 tsunami, thus referring to it as a “second tsunami.”

فهو يقول بأنه رغم أن عدد القتلى أقل ممن قتلوا ولقوا حتفهم في التسونامي الأول، فإن الضرر واسع من الناحية الجغرافية

“He stated that although the number of fatalities is lower than in the previous tsunami, the damage is geographically extensive.”

This excerpt clarifies the difference from the 2004 tsunami, indicating that although the number of casualties is lower, the severity and extent of environmental damage—unlike typical flood events—are sufficient to evoke the collective memory of the 2004 tsunami.

2. Body

The body section constitutes the argumentation of the initial overview presented in the opening. In the superstructure, the body explains that the disaster in Sumatra is not merely a flood; rather, it also involves environmental damage and ecological crises experienced by the community, which give rise to various problems, including limited communication, limited availability of clean water, and shortages of basic necessities. It also describes the three main affected regions in Aceh. In addition, this section addresses the government’s response in perceiving and positioning the disaster within a global scale, leading to debates regarding its recognition in the global arena.

فمن الناحية الجغرافية، أصاب الضرر محافظات أكثر واتسع في مختلف المحافظات الوسطى والشرقية والشمالية في إقليم آتشيه. وتحدث عن ثلاثة ملايين متضرر هنا في آتشيه، وكذلك في سومطرة الغربية وسومطرة الشمالية

“Geographically, the damage has affected more districts and has spread across the central, eastern, and northern regions of Aceh Province. It is estimated that three million people have been affected in Aceh, as well as in West Sumatra and North Sumatra.”

This excerpt explains the three affected regions in Aceh, namely Central, Eastern, and Western Aceh, as impacted by the 2025 Sumatra flood.

إحدى الإشكالات التي أفرزتها هذه الفيضانات هي انقطاع التواصل مع العديد من القرى. هذه القرية التي خلفنا على الضفة الأخرى من النهر لا يمكن الوصول إليها إلا على متن قوارب. القارب هنا قارب واحد للشرطة جاءوا به ويتم النقل فيه بالتناوب للوصول إلى تلك القرية، وبالتالي الوصول إلى كثير من القرى ليس بالأمر السهل.

“One of the problems caused by these floods is the disruption of communication with many villages. The village behind us, across the river, can only be reached by boat. There is only one police boat here, which is used alternately to transport people to that village. Therefore, reaching many villages is not an easy task.”

This excerpt explains the disruption of communication between villages and relates it to the setting of Sohaib Jazeem as a correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic, where the presence of a single boat serves as an alternative means of transportation between villages. This situation significantly hinders communication among affected communities.

وهذا طبعاً مرتبط بتوفر المياه. حتى مياه الشرب ليست متوفرة لديهم، لأن الوحل أو الطين قد غمر كل البيوت والمنازل والآبار. وتحدث عن الحاجة إلى الوقود والطعام والدواء وغير ذلك. المساعدات بدأت بالوصول لكنها ما زالت قليلة وشحيحة، وهناك الكثير من الأماكن ما زالت بحاجة إلى مساعدات.

“This is, of course, related to water availability. Even drinking water is not available, as mud has covered and buried houses and wells. People are in need of fuel, food, medicine, and other necessities. Aid has begun to arrive, but it remains limited and insufficient, and many areas are still in need of assistance.”

In addition to communication constraints, another major difficulty is the mud that has covered and buried houses and wells, which serve as sources of clean water, resulting in a lack of clean water, particularly for drinking. Considering the various crises and shortages experienced by the people of Aceh, this indicates that they are in urgent need of various forms of assistance to sustain their lives temporarily.

وهناك جدل واسع في الأوساط السياسية حول إعلان هذه الكارثة واعتبارها كارثة وطنية، لأن لذلك اعتبارات مالية وأسلوباً مختلفاً في التعامل مقارنة باعتبارها كارثة إقليمية.

“There is a broad debate in political circles regarding whether this disaster should be declared a national disaster, as such a decision involves financial considerations and different mechanisms of response compared to classifying it as a regional disaster.”

Given the highly concerning social conditions of the communities in Sumatra, the Al Jazeera Arabic correspondent ultimately presents the government's response, indicating that even in such circumstances, the Indonesian government continues to debate whether the flood disaster should be positioned at the national level or considered merely a regional disaster.

3. Closing

The closing section presents the conclusion of the news report delivered by Sohaib Jazeem as a correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic, by adding that landslides have occurred in the area where he is located, as well as highlighting the response of the local government, which is still debating responsibility for the disaster and showing reluctance to involve foreign assistance.

في الطرف الآخر المشهد هنا مختلف. نرى كيف أن الدمار أصاب هذه المنطقة، وحصلت انهيارات أرضية. كانت هنا مجموعة من البيوت والمنازل في هذه المنطقة، وقد أزالها الفيضان بشكل كامل.

“On the other hand, the situation at this location presents a different picture. We can see how destruction has affected this area and that landslides have occurred. There used to be a number of houses in this area, but they have been completely swept away by the flood”

In the excerpt above, the correspondent explains the social conditions in the area, which appear different from the general depiction of other regions. In addition to the large volume of water that has swept away residential houses, the destruction is also triggered by landslides.

وهذا الحطام، نلاحظ أن الحطام الخشبي هو لأشجار الغابات التي تم قطعها في أعالي الجبال، وجرفت الفيضانات نحو هذه المنطقة ومناطق كثيرة.

“We can also observe a large amount of wooden debris originating from trees that were cut down in mountainous forest areas, which were then carried by the floods to this region and many other areas.”

The excerpt above indicates that the landslides are suspected to have been caused by extensive illegal logging in forest areas, particularly in mountainous regions, as evidenced by the abundance of wooden debris on the flood surface.

وهناك جدل ساخن في البرلمان الإندونيسي وبين المسؤولين الإندونيسيين حول من المسؤول عما حصل، وعن قطع هذه الأشجار في الغابات التي تعد محميات طبيعية تحمي السكان في مناطق السهول.

“There is currently an intense debate in the Indonesian parliament and among officials regarding who is responsible for what has occurred, particularly concerning the cutting of trees in forest areas that are actually protected zones intended to safeguard communities in lowland regions.”

This excerpt explains that, despite the occurrence of the flood and other natural disasters along with the resulting environmental damage, the government continues to debate responsibility for the disaster, including issues related to negligent deforestation practices.

إلى اليوم هناك جدل حول هذا الأمر، وكذلك هناك جدل أيضاً حول السعي لطلب معونة من الخارج. الحكومة الإندونيسية ما زالت تقول إنها قادرة على التعامل مع هذه الكارثة، وأنها ليست بحاجة إلى معونة من الخارج.

“To this day, the debate is still ongoing, including discussions about the possibility of requesting assistance from abroad. However, the Indonesian government continues to state that it is capable of handling this disaster and does not require foreign aid.”

This final excerpt from the Al Jazeera Arabic correspondent indicates that the Indonesian government is reluctant to accept foreign assistance for the flood disaster and environmental damage in Sumatra, while also continuing to debate whether the disaster should be positioned within a global or merely a regional scope.

c. Microstructure

1. Semantic

a. Background

From the flood disaster affecting communities in Sumatra, Al Jazeera Arabic chose to conduct direct coverage from one of the three affected regions in Aceh, namely Bireuen Regency in Aceh Province.

معنا من محافظة بيريون بإقليم أتشيه في إندونيسيا مراسل الجزيرة صهيب جاسم

“Bersama kami dari Kabupaten Bireuen di Provinsi Aceh, Indonesia, wartawan Al Jazeera, Sohaib Jassim.”

This excerpt explains the current position of Sohaib Jazem as a correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic. It also indicates that the flood conditions shown on screen are located in Bireuen Regency, including the situation in which residents rely on boats to reach villages across the river.

b. Detail

The detailed description or direct quotation regarding the background of the social conditions of this flood disaster is reflected in the statement of the Governor of Aceh, who, upon observing the current situation in Aceh, relates it to the 2004 tsunami, thereby referring to the present disaster as a “second tsunami.”

فعلاً، اليوم حاكم إقليم أتشيه، وهو من الأقاليم الثلاثة المتضررة من هذه الفيضانات، وصف هذه الكارثة بأنها الجزء الثاني من التسونامي. ونستذكر جميعاً التسونامي الأول أو السابق الذي وقع في أتشيه عام 2004. فهو يقول بأنه رغم أن عدد القتلى أقل ممن قتلوا ولقوا حتفهم في التسونامي الأول، فإن الضرر واسع من الناحية الجغرافية

“The Governor of Aceh Province, one of the three regions affected by the flood, described the disaster as a ‘second tsunami.’ We all still remember the first tsunami that struck Aceh in 2004. He stated that although the number of fatalities is lower compared to the previous tsunami, the extent of the damage is geographically widespread.”

c. Intention

Based on the background and details presented, the coverage by Al Jazeera Arabic indicates an intention to emphasize the severity of the flood disaster in Aceh through direct reporting from the affected location, namely Bireuen Regency. The presence of Sohaib Jazem as a field correspondent functions

not only as a conveyor of information but also as a reinforcement of visual and factual reality, demonstrating the conditions experienced by affected communities, such as the use of boats for mobility due to high water levels. This provides a sense of immediacy and authenticity of information to the audience.

In addition, the use of the Aceh Governor's statement referring to the disaster as a "second tsunami" reflects an effort to construct a broader interpretation of the flood event. The term functions not only as a description but also as an emphasis on the scale of the destruction by linking it to the collective memory of the 2004 tsunami. Thus, the intention of this news presentation is not merely to convey information about the disaster, but also to shape audience perception that the event has significant impacts and requires serious attention.

2. Syntax

Overall, the sentences used are predominantly in the active voice. The use of active sentences is considered more effective in news texts (Apriati & Siagian, 2024), as they are easier to understand and help clarify meaning (Efendi & Rahayu, 2022).

3. Stylistics (Lexical Choice)

The use of past tense (*fi'il māḍī*) in the news delivery by the Al Jazeera Arabic correspondent, Sohaib Jazeem, is employed when describing the natural disasters that have occurred. Meanwhile, the use of present tense (*fi'il muḍāri'*) is applied when explaining the social conditions that can be directly observed at the location where he is reporting. In this context, Sohaib Jazeem does not arbitrarily select the words he uses; rather, his lexical choices are carefully considered so that the information conveyed can be held accountable in terms of its accuracy.

4. Rhetoric

The most prominent rhetorical device employed by the Al Jazeera Arabic correspondent, Sohaib Jazeem, is the metaphor conveyed by the Governor of Aceh, namely the phrase "second tsunami." This expression is introduced in the opening section, thereby creating a distinctive appeal in presenting the news of the devastating flood that affected thousands of villages. The use of the phrase "second tsunami" indicates that the flood is not an ordinary flash flood; rather, its severity approaches that of a tsunami. Consequently, the impact extends beyond the mere submergence of houses by water and mud, leading to widespread destruction and devastation. In this context, metaphor as a rhetorical device serves as a particular strength and distinctive feature (Syas & Rusadi, 2021), making the message more memorable for attentive audiences.

Social Cognition

Social cognition examines how media capture and interpret social reality based on the ideology, values, and knowledge they possess. Therefore, the ability to understand social conditions is essential in interpreting news through Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly within Teun A. van Dijk's framework. Several forms of ideology reflected in the coverage by Al Jazeera Arabic of the 2025 Sumatra flood can be identified in the following aspects:

1. Construction of Collective Memory in the "Second Tsunami" Metaphor

The use of the term "second tsunami" indicates that the flood disaster in Sumatra in 2025 is not merely a natural event that swept away residential houses; rather, its crisis impacts remain visible even ten days after the occurrence. The severe environmental damage and the diverse and complex forms of deprivation experienced by affected communities highlight a particular perspective that this is not an ordinary flood. Aceh is one of the regions that was previously affected by the 2004 tsunami. Indeed, that disaster resulted in a significant number of casualties and widespread destruction of both the natural environment and built structures within the community. Considering the severity of the impacts caused by the flood event, the use of the term "second tsunami" is deemed appropriate, especially given that it occurred in the same region and resulted in similar patterns of destruction and devastation.

The term "second tsunami" contains elements of collective memory, as conceptualized by (Halbwachs, 1992) as a pioneer of this theory. He argues that collective memory is a social construction formed by society and the nation collectively, and it serves as a symbolic representation of a collective identity, particularly in situations of hardship, trauma, or suffering. Therefore, the magnitude of suffering, loss, and destruction experienced during the 2004 tsunami is recalled when observing the destruction and

various forms of crisis faced by communities affected by the 2025 Sumatra flood, especially in the Aceh region. Similarly, according to (Volf, 2021), collective memory represents the preservation of trauma and suffering experienced collectively by a particular group (Sinaga & Tambunan, 2025) Thus, the flood event becomes a symbol of the re-emergence of past trauma and suffering within the memory of individuals (Wahyu & Sukirno, 2025).

2. Implications of Differing Perspectives in Determining Disaster Status

Differences in perspective in determining disaster status indicate divergent viewpoints between the media and the government in assessing the scale and urgency of a disaster. In the coverage by Al Jazeera Arabic, the flood event in Sumatra is constructed as a crisis with extensive and serious impacts, both in terms of environmental damage and the condition of affected victims. Meanwhile, from the government's perspective, the absence of a national disaster designation suggests that the event is still considered within the capacity of regional management. These differing perspectives demonstrate that the reality of a disaster is not singular but is constructed through varying viewpoints and interests.

This difference can be understood as part of social cognition that influences how an event is represented to the public. The media tend to emphasize the crisis dimension in order to build awareness and attract audience attention, while the government considers policy aspects, response capacity, and broader implications in determining disaster status. The implications of this difference not only affect how the public understands the severity of the disaster but may also influence perceptions of governmental accountability and what is considered an adequate response in emergency situations.

Social Context

Social context examines how social class plays a role in shaping public opinion presented by the media, as an opinion cannot stand independently without being grounded in the social structure of a society. In addition, social context is also influenced by textual structure and social cognition.

1. Deforestation Practices in the Context of Environmental Governance

The deforestation practices highlighted in the coverage by Al Jazeera Arabic indicate that the flood disaster is not merely understood as a natural phenomenon but is also related to human activities in environmental management. Illegal or uncontrolled logging reduces the soil's capacity to absorb water, thereby increasing the risk of flooding during periods of high rainfall. In this context, the coverage positions deforestation as a significant factor that exacerbates the impact of the disaster, thus constructing an understanding that environmental degradation has direct consequences for community life.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, the emphasis on deforestation practices can be understood as part of a discursive construction that directs attention toward issues of environmental governance. The narrative developed not only describes field conditions but also links them to policies and oversight related to land use. Thus, the disaster is represented as the result of the interaction between natural factors and human policies, encouraging audiences to recognize the importance of sustainable environmental management in preventing similar crises in the future.

2. Critique of Land Management from a Structural Perspective

The critique of land management presented in the news reflects a focus on the role of the government in regulating and overseeing the use of natural resources. In the coverage by Al Jazeera Arabic, the government's response to the disaster, as well as the uneven distribution of aid, become part of the narrative. This indicates that the disaster is not only viewed in terms of its impacts but also in terms of how land management systems and existing policies contribute to increasing or reducing the risks involved.

Within the framework of Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, this critique can be understood as a reflection of structural issues within governance, such as bureaucratic complexity, inter-agency coordination, and the effectiveness of implemented policies. Thus, the slow response and imbalance in disaster management are not merely interpreted as technical constraints but also as part of broader systemic mechanisms. Ultimately, this coverage shapes the understanding that disaster management is strongly influenced by the quality of governance, making structural improvements essential in reducing the impact of future disasters.

Theoretical Elements	Components	Analysis Results	
Text Structure	Macrostructure	Topic	The 2025 Sumatra flood and the government's response
		Subtopic	Environmental damage and the crises experienced by the community following the flood, as well as the slow governmental response in handling affected residents
	Superstructure	Opening	The affected victims and a general overview of the current condition, specifically on the tenth day after the flood, including the three affected regions in Aceh
		Body	Various problems experienced by affected communities, including shortages of clean water and other basic necessities, as well as difficulties in communication, along with debates regarding whether the disaster should be classified as a national or merely a regional disaster
		Closing	The occurrence of landslides in the area where the reporter is located, as well as the local government's response, which is still debating responsibility for the disaster and showing reluctance to involve foreign assistance.
		Microstructure	1. Semantics
		Background	The news is set in Bireuen Regency, Aceh Province
		Detil	A statement from the Mayor of Aceh indicating that the environmental damage in Aceh evokes the collective memory of the 2004 tsunami, thereby framing the 2025 Sumatra flood as a "second tsunami"
		Maksud	
		2. Syntax	Syntactically, the news text by Al Jazeera Arabic predominantly uses active sentences. The use of active sentences in news reporting facilitates audience comprehension.
	3. Stylistics	Precision in lexical choice is demonstrated by Sohaib Jazeem as the reporter. He uses <i>fi'il māḍī</i> (past tense) when describing past flood events, and <i>fi'il muḍāri'</i> (present tense) when explaining current social conditions.	
	4. Rhetoric	Sohaib Jazeem explains the 2025 Sumatra flood by quoting the Mayor of Aceh, who refers to the disaster as a "second tsunami," thereby evoking the audience's collective memory of the 2004 Aceh tsunami.	
Social Cognition	<p>Construction of Collective Memory in the "Second Tsunami" Metaphor</p> <p>The use of the metaphor "second tsunami" reflects the media's effort to activate collective memory of a major disaster in Aceh. This shapes audience perception that the flood is not an ordinary event but a large-scale crisis with extensive impacts.</p>		

Implications of Differing Perspectives in Determining Disaster Status

The difference between media and government perspectives in assessing the scale of the disaster reflects differing constructions of social cognition. The media tend to frame the event as a major crisis, while the government views it within a regional management framework, thereby influencing public perception of the disaster's urgency.

Social Context

Deforestation Practices in the Context of Environmental Governance

News coverage highlighting illegal logging indicates that the disaster is understood not only as a natural phenomenon but also as a consequence of weak environmental governance related to land-use policies.

Critique of Land Management from a Structural Perspective

Criticism of the government's response reflects issues within the governmental structure, such as complex bureaucracy and suboptimal coordination. This indicates that disaster management is influenced by systemic mechanisms, not merely technical factors in the field.

International news portals frequently produce coverage that focuses on environmental issues and climate change across various parts of the world (Brimicombe, 2022). This has contributed to increasing public awareness of the urgency of environmental protection (Wei, 2025). In line with this, Al Jazeera Arabic also reported on the flood event in Sumatra in 2025. This study reveals a tendency to emphasize environmental crisis issues within the coverage, accompanied by a focus on parties considered responsible for illegal logging practices. Such actions are viewed as having influenced water absorption patterns, so that during periods of high rainfall, water flows not only inundate residential areas but also cause damage to various structures. In addition, the coverage also presents the government's response in a manner that tends to be unbalanced.

From a theoretical perspective, within the framework of (Dijk, 2008) Critical Discourse Analysis, at the macrostructural level, the reporting presents a main theme of environmental crisis related to the impacts of flooding that persisted up to the tenth day. At the level of superstructure, Al Jazeera Arabic constructs the news schema by introducing a comparison between the flood and the 2004 tsunami. This comparison functions not only as an opening but also as a strategy to build the audience's initial understanding. This is consistent with the findings of (Gunay et al., 2025), which state that international media tend to present more specific and intensive portrayals when reporting events. From the perspective of social cognition, the association with the tsunami utilizes collective memory of large-scale disasters and massive destruction, thereby directing audiences to interpret the flood as an event with extensive and unusual impacts.

In the body section of the superstructure, Al Jazeera Arabic highlights preliminary statistical data regarding the number of affected victims as well as the crisis of unmet needs that have not been evenly addressed across regions. Furthermore, the government is presented as a dominant actor within the social context, yet not fully optimal in the distribution of aid and still engaged in debates regarding responsibility. Meanwhile, in the closing section, the report reiterates the extent of the damage and the inadequacy of aid distribution. Thus, the overall discourse structure demonstrates a tendency to emphasize environmental crisis issues accompanied by a focus on the government's response. This finding is also consistent with (Bailon et al., 2025), who emphasize that media not only convey information but also construct public narratives that can influence audience perceptions of an event.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis of the 2025 Sumatra flood coverage by Al Jazeera Arabic, it can be concluded that the constructed discourse is not neutral, but rather reflects a particular framing tendency. Through the approach of Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, it is evident that at the macrostructural level, the main theme concerns the flood disaster and the government's response, while the subthemes address environmental damage following the flood and the slow governmental response. At the superstructural level, various forms of environmental damage are described, including the assumption that the flood was also caused by illegal logging, as well as the various shortages and crises experienced by the

affected communities. In addition, ongoing governmental debates regarding the disaster have contributed to the suboptimal distribution of aid funds to the affected population. Meanwhile, at the microstructural level and within the discourse content—encompassing the established background, lexical choices, and other linguistic aspects, as well as the rhetorical style employed—these elements reflect particular intentions in the news delivery by Al Jazeera Arabic.

Within the framework of Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis, social cognition and social context are interrelated in shaping the meaning of the news presented by Al Jazeera Arabic. At the level of social cognition, the use of metaphors such as "second tsunami" as well as the emphasis on the scale of the crisis indicate a constructed perspective that directs the audience to understand the flood event as an extraordinary and large-scale disaster. Meanwhile, within the social context, this narrative is inseparable from broader realities, such as deforestation practices and land management issues related to environmental policies in Indonesia. The interconnection between these dimensions demonstrates that news reporting does not merely reflect events but also contributes to shaping public understanding of the relationship between natural disasters and structural factors in environmental management, as well as the government's response to such situations.

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