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PRAGMATIC ACTS AND BILINGUAL AUDIENCE DESIGN: A CRITICAL PRAGMATICS ANALYSIS OF AL JAZEERA ARABIC AND ENGLISH IN THE 2026 IRAN–ISRAEL–US CONFLICT REPORT

Awliya Rahmi[1]*, **Mouna Bechlem Bouratoua**[2], **Aya Qasim Hasan**[3], **Jarot Wahyudi**[4], **Ahmed Shbair**[4]

[1] Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Padang, Indonesia
[2] Teachers Higher School Assia Djebbar, Constantine, Algeria
[3] Samarra University, Samarra, Iraq
[4] Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[5] Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey

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ABSTRACT

How a single media institution constructs divergent meanings for two linguistically distinct audiences constitutes a salient question in media studies, particularly where that institution operates at the intersection of Arab and international news. Al Jazeera's Arabic (AJA) and English (AJE) services have attracted considerable scholarly attention as paradigmatic instances of this phenomenon. Previous research has mostly approached both media through framing theory or critical discourse analysis, neglecting the pragmatic mechanisms that direct meaning for different readers. Jacob Mey's critical pragmatics, through its concept of the pragmatic act (*pract*), affords a more precise entry point into this gap. Employing this framework for comparative analysis, the study examines AJA and AJE coverage of the Iran-Israel-US conflict across five thematic events (February-June 2026). Twenty purposively sampled news articles were coded deductively using Mey's six pract categories: *alluding, implying, hinting, voicing, quoting,* and *echoing*. Both AJA and AJE rely most heavily on voicing and implying pract, but diverge in a distinctive secondary pract: AJA layers echoing pract onto this shared foundation, activating Arab collective memory and positioning readers within a solidarity-oriented frame, while AJE layers hinting pract, distributing epistemic authority through formally qualified attribution to cultivate critical consensus among a heterogeneous readership.

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*Corresponding author. Email: awliyarahmi@uinib.ac.id
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INTRODUCTION

Research on media representations of the Iran–Israel–US conflict has grown considerably over the past decade, and with remarkable consistency in its findings. Western outlets frame Iran as the aggressor through discursive strategies that foreground the official US–Israel narrative (Alibigloo & Alipoor, 2025; Mohammed et al., 2024; KhosraviNik, 2015; Khairunnisa et al., 2025). Trump's own discourse about Iran exemplifies the mechanism: the us-versus-them structure is constructed through negative evaluative strategies, with affective solidarity functioning as its binding agent (Makki & Ross, 2023; Makki & Zappavigna, 2022; Mortazavi et al., 2024). At the civilizational level, the Iran–Israel conflict has been read as an ultra-ideological confrontation in which foundational frames shape how even individual events are rendered intelligible (Roomi, 2023; Reflinaldi, 2018; Reflinaldi et al., 2021; Zardini et al., 2020). Extending the inquiry to cover the Israel–US–Palestine dimension further confirms the pattern: Arab and Western outlets diverge sharply on the framing of victims and moral accountability, with Al Jazeera occupying a pragmatic position that sets it apart from the BBC, CNN, and Fox News (El Damanhoury et al., 2025; El Damanhoury & Saleh, 2025; Amer, 2022; Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023; Hussain et al., 2026).

Despite the breadth of this scholarship, most studies examine a single outlet at a time. Al Jazeera, Al-Arabiya, CNN, and the BBC have each been analyzed in isolation, with findings that, however rigorous, illuminate only part of the picture. Al Jazeera is shown to reflect Qatar's geopolitical interests through biased lexicalization and shifting strategies of delegitimization calibrated to diplomatic pressures in the region (Alluhaidah, 2023; Muwafi et al., 2025; El Damanhoury et al., 2025; Abdelraouf, 2025). Al-Arabiya, in turn, reflects Saudi interests and, in doing so, makes visible the ideological contradictions between the two leading Arab outlets (Ajaoud & Elmasry, 2020; Kharbach, 2020; Tartory, 2020). CNN deploys a security frame that amplifies the threat posed by Hamas while marginalizing the Palestinian perspective (Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023; Alibigloo & Alipoor, 2025; Hussain et al., 2026; Khairunnisa et al., 2025), and the BBC, together with other Western outlets, has been shown to frame Israeli violence as self-defense (Amer, 2022; Malkawi et al., 2024; Elmasry, 2025; Kozman & Cozma, 2025). What remains comparatively understudied is the internal divergence within a single institution that publishes in more than one language.

Several theoretical frameworks have shaped this body of research. Framing studies drawing on Entman's model and Semetko and Valkenburg's typology show that conflict, responsibility, and national interest frames are selectively deployed by outlets in ways that reflect their geopolitical affiliations (Ajaoud & Elmasry, 2020; El Damanhoury & Saleh, 2025; Elmasry, 2025; Alibigloo & Alipoor, 2025; Hussain et al., 2026; Kozman & Cozma, 2025). Critical discourse analysis, particularly Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Wodak's Historical-Discourse Approach, has proven equally productive, tracing how lexical choices, intertextuality, and delegitimization strategies distinguish the editorial ideologies of outlets covering the same events (Alluhaidah, 2023; Amer, 2022; Ilyas et al., 2018; Tartory, 2020; El Damanhoury et al., 2025; Abdelraouf, 2025; Aloufi et al., 2026). What both approaches make clear is that conflict reporting is not simply an account of what happened but a structured act of ideological construction shaped by institutional interests.

Systemic functional linguistics has contributed a third analytical strand. Transitivity analysis, appraisal theory, and Van Leeuwen's model of social actor representation have all demonstrated how grammatical construction and affective

evaluation position actors ideologically: Israel appears consistently as the dominant agent in material processes, while Palestine and Iran are pushed into goal or passive positions (Muwafi et al., 2025; Makki & Ross, 2023; Makki & Zappavigna, 2022; Mortazavi et al., 2024; Al-Ramahi & Rashid, 2024; Malkawi et al., 2024; Reflinaldi & Faisol, 2023). Galtung's peace journalism framework rounds out the picture by documenting how episodic reporting, elite framing, and actor demonization dominate coverage of regional conflicts, with notable variation across outlets (Bhowmik & Fisher, 2023; Kozman & Cozma, 2025; Hussain et al., 2026).

These frameworks offer a rich account of what is represented and how actors are positioned. Their limitations, however, are no less instructive. Both framing theory and CDA operate predominantly at the propositional-textual level: they identify what is constructed and how actors are described, but they cannot explain how meaning is produced through indirect communicative acts that bypass propositional content altogether. The SFL approach narrows its focus to grammatical features and consequently brackets the socio-institutional context that determines why particular linguistic choices are made for specific audiences. Perhaps most consequential, virtually all existing studies treat AJA and AJE as separate discursive entities rather than analyzing how their surface differences relate to deeper strategies of audience design within a single institution. Jacob Mey's critical pragmatics addresses precisely this gap. Its central concept, the pract, is a unit of analysis that goes beyond Austin and Searle's speech act by incorporating the socio-institutional constraints that govern the production and interpretation of meaning (Mey, 2023; Sbisà, 2021; KhosraviNik, 2022). Pract analysis can reveal how media institutions build solidarity, legitimacy, and ideological positioning through indirect strategies that escape conventional framing and CDA frameworks (Mey, 2023; Khater et al., 2024; Reyes, 2011; Entman, 2007).

No identified study has yet applied Mey's critical pragmatics comparatively to coverage of the Iran–Israel–US conflict, and none has approached AJA and AJE as two pract configurations of the same institution rather than as two separate outlets. The present study does both. Rather than cataloging the differences between the two services, the analysis examines the specific pragmatic mechanisms that produce them. Three research questions guide the inquiry: first, what configuration of pragmatic acts does AJA deploy in covering the Israel–US–Iran conflict, and how does that configuration build a solidarity-based ideological position rooted in collective Arab identity? Second, what pract configuration does AJE deploy in covering the same events, and how does it build critical consensus for a heterogeneous international readership? Third, how does the divergence between AJA and AJE pract configurations across five thematic events reveal Al Jazeera's institutional strategy of audience design in covering geopolitical conflicts that directly implicate the Arab world?

METHOD

The study adopts a qualitative interlingual comparative design, with critical pragmatic discourse analysis as the methodological framework. A comparative design was appropriate here because it enables stronger inferences about the mechanisms producing divergence than single-case studies can yield (Alejandro & Zhao, 2024; Yin, 2018; Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). The two data sources are the online news archives of Al Jazeera Arabic (AJA), founded in 1996, and Al Jazeera English (AJE), launched in 2006. Al Jazeera Network's position as one of the most established bilingual Arabic media institutions makes it a methodologically robust interlingual comparative unit for

examining pragmatic mechanisms in audience design. The network reaches over 430 million viewers in 150 countries through a staff of more than 3,000 professionals working under a single editorial structure, yet producing content for two fundamentally distinct linguistic communities. Because institutional affiliation is held constant, discursive divergence can be attributed to audience design rather than to differences in editorial mandate (Fu & Ho, 2022; Alejandro & Zhao, 2024).

The comparison is organized around five major conflict themes: the opening salvo and the construction of legitimacy; the Minab School massacre; the Strait of Hormuz crisis; the Islamabad ceasefire and negotiations; and a retrospective marking 100 days of the war. Articles were purposively selected based on event relevance and thematic representativeness, with each news document serving as the primary unit of analysis (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025; Morgan, 2022; Saldaña, 2021). The corpus balances event coverage with genre diversity, incorporating news reports, investigative reports, explainers, analytical articles, visual explanations, and live trackers. The final corpus comprises 20 items: 10 from AJA and 10 from AJE, presented in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Research Corpus on Al-Jazeera Arabic

Code	News Title	Date
AJA-1.1	أبرز أحداث اليوم الأول للحرب الأمريكية الإسرائيلية على إيران *Abraz aḥdāth al-yawm al-awwal lil-ḥarb al-amrīkīyah al-isrā'īlīyah ʿalá Īrān* 'Highlights of the first day of the American-Israeli war on Iran'	1 Mar
AJA-1.2	كم عدد قتلى الحرب الأمريكية الإسرائيلية على إيران؟ *Kam ʿadad qatlá al-ḥarb al-amrīkīyah al-isrā'īlīyah ʿalá Īrān?* 'How many people have been killed in the American-Israeli war on Iran?'	2 Apr
AJA-2.1	عراقجي أمام مجلس حقوق الإنسان: قصف مدرسة ميناب جريمة حرب وضد الإنسانية *ʿArāqjī amām Majlis Ḥuqūq al-Insān: Qaṣf Madrasat Mīnāb Jarīmat Ḥarb wa-Ḍidda al-Insānīyah* 'Araghchi before the Human Rights Council: The Minab School Bombing Is a War Crime and a Crime Against Humanity'	27 Mar
AJA-2.2	مقتل 85 طالبة وإصابة 92 في هجوم صاروخي إسرائيلي على مدرسة *Maqtal 85 ṭālibah wa-iṣābat 92 fī hujūm ṣārūkhī isrā'īlī ʿalá madrasah* '85 schoolgirls killed and 92 injured in an Israeli missile attack on a school'	28 Feb
AJA-3.1	بدء حصار موانئ إيران .أمريكا تحدد آلية التنفيذ وترمب :سندمّر السفن إذا اقتربت *Bad' ḥiṣār mawāni' Īrān. Amrīkā tuḥaddid ālīyat al-tanfīdh wa-Trāmb: sanudammir al-sufun idhā iqtarabat* 'Start of the blockade of Iran's ports: America defines the implementation mechanism, and Trump: "We will destroy the ships if they approach"'	13 Apr
AJA-3.2	حافة الانفجار .هكذا تدير أمريكا وإيران صراع الردع بمضيق هرمز *Ḥāfat al-infijār. Hākadhā tudīr Amrīkā wa-Īrān ṣirāʿ al-radʿ bi-Maḍīq Hurmuz* 'On the edge of explosion: How America and Iran manage the deterrence conflict in the Strait of Hormuz'	5 May
AJA-4.1	بعد إعلان وقف إطلاق النار ..ذهول في إسرائيل وحديث إيراني عن نصر تاريخي *Baʿda iʿlān waqf iṭlāq al-nār.. dhuhūl fī Isrā'īl wa-ḥadīth Īrānī ʿan naṣr tārīkhī* 'After the ceasefire announcement: Shock in Israel and Iranian talk of a historic victory'	8 Apr
AJA-4.2	إيران: وساطة باكستان لم تفشل ولن نستسلم للتهديد *Īrān: Wisāṭat Bākistān lam Tafshal wa-lan Nastaslim lil-Tahdīd* 'Iran: Pakistan's Mediation Has Not Failed, and We Will Not Surrender to Threats'	15 May
AJA-5.1	شهر على حرب إيران ..من اغتيال القادة إلى ضرب الخليج والطاقة *Shahr ʿalá ḥarb Īrān.. min ightiyāl al-qādah ilá ḍarb al-Khalīj wal-ṭāqah* 'A month into the Iran war: From the assassination of leaders to striking the	28 Mar

	Gulf and energy'	
AJA-5.2	100 يوم هزت العالم.. لماذا فشلت أمريكا في هزيمة إيران؟	7 Jun
	100 yawm hazzat al-ʿālam.. limādhā fashilat Amrīkā fī hazīmat Īrān?	
	'100 days that shook the world: Why did America fail to defeat Iran?'	

Table 2. Research Corpus on Al-Jazeera English

Code	News Title	Date
AJE-1.1	US, Israel Bomb Iran: A Timeline of Talks and Threats Leading up to Attacks	28 Feb
AJE-1.2	US-Israel Attacks on Iran: Death Toll and Injuries Live Tracker	1 Mar
AJE-2.1	Al Jazeera Investigation: Iran Girls' School Targeting Likely 'Deliberate'	3 Mar
AJE-2.2	US Responsible for Deadly Attack on Iranian School: Amnesty International	16 Mar
AJE-3.1	How Iran Defied Trump Threats to Emerge as Strait of Hormuz Gatekeeper	18 Mar
AJE-3.2	Iran Reasserts Control over Hormuz Strait as Deal with US Remains Elusive	30 May
AJE-4.1	Trump Announces Two-Week Ceasefire as Iran Agrees to Reopen Hormuz Strait	8 Apr
AJE-4.2	Pakistan Scrambles to Salvage US-Iran Diplomacy as Ceasefire Faces Collapse	12 May
AJE-5.1	How the US-Israel War on Iran Unfolded in Its First Four Weeks	28 Mar
AJE-5.2	Iran War 100 Days: How the Conflict Impacted Iran and the World	7 Jun

Data were collected through systematic keyword searches of the AJA archive (aljazeera.net) and the AJE archive (aljazeera.com/news) covering the five conflict themes for the period February–June 2026. Analysis proceeded in three sequential stages. The corpus was first read in full to establish familiarity with each text and to mark candidate pract segments. Deductive coding then applied Mey's six pract categories as an a priori scheme to each text unit, operationally defined as a clause, sentence, or headline segment carrying a single identifiable communicative function (Mey, 2001; Schreier, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2021). In the third stage, a cross-issue pract configuration analysis identified patterns of divergence between AJA and AJE. Coding was applied at two analytical levels: the micro-linguistic level, to identify lexical and rhetorical markers of pract operationalization, and the macro-pragmatic level, to establish dominant configurations per event theme and per language service.

RESULT

Identification of data within the corpus yielded findings on the frequency and distribution of each pragmatic act category in AJA and AJE. Based on these results, both outlets are dominated by voicing pract and implying pract. The detailed data are presented in Table 3. The subsequent analysis is structured around the five conflict themes and presented in detail, with data descriptions that address the formulated research questions.

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Pragmatic Acts in AJA and AJE Coverage

No.	Pract Categories	AJA		AJE	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Voicing	37	41.1%	29	34.1%
2	Implying	25	27.8%	21	24.7%
3	Quoting	9	10.0%	13	15.3%
4	Hinting	6	6.7%	15	17.6%
5	Alluding	7	7.8%	6	7.1%
6	Echoing	6	6.7%	1	1.2%
Total		90	100.0%	85	100.0%

Opening Strike and the Construction of Legitimacy

The US-Israeli military offensive against Iran on February 28, 2026, marked the opening of the first full-scale conflict among the three actors. Coverage of that first day established the interpretive frame each outlet would sustain across the weeks that followed, making this issue the earliest and most concentrated point of legitimacy construction in the entire corpus. The following data illustrate the divergence.

AJA-1.1 بين ساعة الصفر للهجوم الأمريكي الإسرائيلي على إيران وإعلان ترمب مقتل المرشد الإيراني وإقرار طهران بوفاته بعد ذلك بساعات...

Bayna sāʿat al-ṣifr lil-hujūm al-amrīkī al-isrāʾīlī ʿalá Īrān wa-iʿlān Trāmb maqtal al-murshid al-Īrānī wa-iqrār Ṭihrān bi-wafātih baʿda dhālika bi-sāʿāt...

'Between the zero hour of the American-Israeli attack on Iran and Trump's announcement of the killing of the Iranian Supreme Leader — acknowledged by Tehran hours later'.

AJA-1.2 بحسب منظمة هرانا الحقوقية، قُتل 3519 شخصا منذ اندلاع الحرب، بينهم 1598 مدنيا، من ضمنهم 244 طفلا على الأقل

Biḥasab munaẓẓamat Hrānā al-ḥuqūqīyah, qutila 3519 shakhṣan mundhu indilāʿ al-ḥarb, baynahum 1598 madanīyan, min ḍimnihim 244 ṭiflan ʿalá al-aqall

'According to the rights organization HRANA, 3,519 people have been killed since the outbreak of the war, including 1,598 civilians, among them at least 244 children'.

AJE-1.1 *This regime will soon learn that no one should challenge the strength and might of the United States Armed Forces," he said.*

AJE-1.2 *At least 3,468 people have been killed in US-Israeli attacks on Iran since February 28, according to Iran's Ministry of Health. At least 26 Israelis have been killed and 7,835 wounded.*

In the first issue, AJA's meaning-making rests on a voicing-led foundation, attributing casualty figures and battlefield claims to named military and media sources, overlaid with a recognizable instance of alluding pract at the level of diction selection and agency framing. The phrase *al-ḥarb al-amrīkiyyah al-isrāʾīlīyyah ʿalā Īrān* 'the American-Israeli war on Iran', used from the first title onward, functions not merely as an event label but as a pract that definitively establishes the subject-object configuration, casting the United States and Israel as agents of war and Iran as the target. This formulation evokes in Arab minds the idea of unconditional American support for Israel, and it is precisely here that this support appears to come at the expense of its Gulf allies. Casualty figures from human rights monitors carry their own implying pract. HRANA's count of 3,519 dead, including 244 children, is cited without further commentary, yet the framing of a cumulative civilian toll concentrated among minors implies a unilateral and disproportionate impact on Iran. That framing conveys the evaluative position that Iran is the object of systematic violence without any explicit editorial statement to that effect. Casualty figures at this stage of an active conflict are

inherently provisional and contested across sources; in the present analysis, such figures are treated as discursive data points rather than verified totals.

AJE approaches the same events through voicing pract organized within a structure of historical causality. Article AJE-1.1 situates the attack within a timeline of talks and threats, a construction that distributes agency by presenting the conflict as the product of failed negotiations. Trump's statement is quoted directly without editorial commentary, but its placement within the account of collapsed Geneva negotiations allows readers to draw their own inferences about proportionality. In AJE-1.2, quoting pract prevails: figures are attributed to Iran's Ministry of Health and to Israeli casualty counts within the same tracker, a juxtaposition that positions both sets of claims side by side rather than privileging either. The contrast with AJA is precise. Where AJA presents casualties as a unilateral implicature of impact, AJE distributes epistemic weight more evenly across the parties to the conflict.

The divergence on this issue turns on how agency is established before any narrative content is absorbed. AJA uses alluding pract through lexical framing, designating the aggressor in the title itself and presuming readers who already bring an evaluative framework regarding US-Israeli conduct in the region. AJE builds that framework through attributive chronology, placing readers in the position of observers of bilateral armed conflict rather than witnesses to aggression. The two outlets arrive at different reader positions, not through different facts but through different configurations of indirect pragmatic acts.

Minab School Massacre and the Construction of Accountability

The attack on the Minab Girls' Primary School in Hormozgan on February 28, 2026, killing at least 85 schoolgirls, became the single event in the corpus that most sharply concentrated the question of accountability. Both outlets responded with intensive investigative coverage, but the pragmatic pathways they used to construct accountability were fundamentally different. The data below capture the key divergences.

AJA-2.1 قال عراقجي إن "مقتل أكثر من 175 طالبا ومعلما في مدرسة ميناب يمثل أفظع تجليات الاعتداء الأمريكي الصهيوني على البلاد"، معتبرا الهجوم "جريمة حرب وجريمة ضد الإنسانية"

Qāla ʿArāqjī inna ʻmaqtal akthar min 175 ṭāliban wa-muʿalliman fī madrasat Mīnāb yumaththilu afẓaʿ tajalliyāt al-iʿtidāʾ al-amrīkī al-ṣahyūnī ʿalá al-bilād', muʿtabiran al-hujūm 'jarīmat ḥarb wa-jarīmah ḍidda al-insānīyah'

'Araghchi said that "the killing of more than 175 students and teachers at the Minab school represents the most horrific manifestation of the American-Zionist aggression against the country," describing the attack as a "war crime and a crime against humanity".'

AJA 2.2 وثّقت مصادر صحفية أن الجيش الإسرائيلي أنشأ "خلية ضربات خاصة" لاستهداف المدارس بشكل منهجي، مصنّفاً إياها باعتبارها "مراكز ثقل"

Waththaqat maṣādir ṣuḥufīyah anna al-jaysh al-isrāʾīlī anshaʾa "khalīyat ḍarabāt khāṣṣah" li-istihdhāf al-madāris bi-shakl manhajī, muṣannifan iyyāhā biʿtibārihā "marākiz thiqal"

Journalistic sources documented that the Israeli army established a 'special strike cell' to systematically target schools, classifying them as 'centers of gravity'.

AJE-2.1 *The fact that the school building was directly targeted and was previously part of the IRGC compound raises concerns that US forces may have relied on outdated intelligence and failed in their obligation to do everything feasible to verify that the intended target was a military objective.*

AJE 2.2 *This points to a failure by US forces to take feasible precautions to avoid civilian harm in carrying out the attack, which is a serious breach of international humanitarian law.*

The Minab issue produces the most intensive concentration of pract in the AJA corpus. AJA-2.1 reports Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi's address to the UN Human Rights Council, naming the school attack a 'war crime and a crime against humanity' and holding Washington directly responsible. The phrase *jarīmat ḥarb wa-jarīmah ḍidda al-insānīyah* is a layered alluding pract: rather than describing the event, it invokes the register of international legal condemnation reserved for the gravest violations, activating the reader's prior moral framework instead of building one from physical evidence. Araghchi's framing of the war as built on *nazwāt al-Wilāyāt al-Muttaḥidah wa-Isrāʾīl* 'the whims of the United States and Israel' is an implying pract that casts the attack as wanton rather than strategic, denying the adversary even the justification of military necessity. The two practs work in tandem: one elevates the killing to the register of international atrocity, the other strips the perpetrators of rational motive, establishing accountability through diplomatic voice rather than forensic argument.

AJE constructs accountability through a different epistemic pathway, combining hinting pract and voicing pract. The word 'likely' in the AJE-2.1 headline is the most measurable instance of hinting pract in the AJE corpus: it guides the reader toward a conclusion of deliberateness while preserving epistemic distance compatible with international journalistic attribution norms. The phrase 'may have relied on outdated intelligence' reinforces this pattern, implying institutional negligence without asserting direct intent. In AJE-2.2, voicing pract predominates as Amnesty International and independent legal experts are cited as the epistemic authorities reaching the conclusion that the attack violated international humanitarian law. Delegating that judgment to external authority gives AJE institutional distance from the claim while conveying, at the pragmatic level, a conclusion substantively equivalent to AJA's.

The Minab issue thus marks the sharpest pract divergence in the corpus while also revealing that the two outlets arrive, by different routes, at closely related constructions of accountability. AJA reaches accountability through alluding to collective memory and implying systemic intentionality, operating directly on the affective and cognitive reservoirs of Arab readers. AJE reaches a comparable conclusion through epistemically qualified hinting and the authority of Amnesty International and legal experts. The difference reflects distinct presuppositions about the audience: AJA presumes readers who already hold an evaluative framework regarding Israel's pattern of conduct,

whereas AJE constructs that framework procedurally through a chain of external attribution.

The Strait of Hormuz and the Construction of a Global Energy Crisis

The US naval blockade of the Gulf of Oman in April 2026 and Iran's response of asserting control over the Strait of Hormuz elevated the conflict to a global economic register. This issue offers a structurally clean comparison: both outlets cover the same geopolitical event but frame it through pract that address audiences with markedly different primary concerns. AJA addresses who owns Hormuz; AJE addresses what Hormuz means for the world.

AJA-3.1 وفور دخول تهديده حيّز التنفيذ، توعّد ترمب السفن الإيرانية التي ستقترب من الحصار، بالقضاء عليها على الفور، مضيفاً أنه سيجري التعامل معها بالأسلوب ذاته الذي تستخدمه بلاده ضد "تجار المخدرات"

Wafūr dukhūl tahdīdih ḥayyiz al-tanfīdh, tawaʿʿada Trāmb al-sufun al-Īrānīyah allatī sataqtarib min al-ḥiṣār bil-qaḍāʾ ʿalayhā ʿalá al-fawr, muḍīfan annahu sayajrī al-taʿāmul maʿahā bil-uslūb dhātih alladhī tastaʿmiluhu bilāduh ḍidda "tujjār al-mukhaddarāt"

'Upon it taking effect, Trump threatened Iranian ships that approach the blockade with immediate destruction, adding they would be dealt with in the same manner used against 'drug traffickers'.

AJA-3.2 حافة الانفجار.. هكذا تدير أمريكا وإيران صراع الردع بمضيق هرمز

Ḥāfat al-infijār.. hākadhā tudīr Amrīkā wa-Īrān ṣirāʿ al-radʿ bi-Maḍīq Hurmuz

'On the edge of explosion.. This is how America and Iran manage the deterrence conflict in the Strait of Hormuz'.

AJE-3.1 *Iran has effectively proven that it dictates the terms of passage through the strait. They have now shown they are the gatekeeper of this important chokepoint," said Andreas Krieg, an associate professor in Security Studies at King's College London.*

AJE 3.2 *The management of the Strait of Hormuz is exercised with full authority by the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran," the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters said in a statement. "All ships, commercial vessels, and tankers are only required to travel through the designated routes and obtain permission from the IRGC Navy.*

AJA's implying pract on this issue operates around a lexical contrast that mobilizes sovereignty indignation. In AJA-3.1, citing Trump's comparison of Iranian vessels to *tujjār al-mukhaddarāt* 'drug traffickers' implies that a sovereign state is being treated on a par with criminals, a construction likely to activate an evaluative frame of indignation among Arab readers. In AJA-3.2, the title *ḥāfat al-infijār* 'on the edge of explosion' is a metaphor-based implying pract that evokes an existential crisis without reference to any

specific collective memory. Paired with *ṣirāʿ al-radʿ* 'deterrence conflict', the framing positions Iran and the United States as parties of equal agency, a shift from the single-aggressor frame that dominated the first issue.

AJE approaches Hormuz through voicing pract grounded in independent and institutional sources. Andreas Krieg's assertion that Iran has emerged as 'the gatekeeper of this important chokepoint' lends legitimacy to Iran's position for international readers through academic authority rather than editorial evaluation. The same article frames Iran's control of the strait as its 'most potent form of leverage', an implying pract in which the word 'leverage' casts Hormuz as a rational negotiating instrument rather than an act of aggression, repositioning Iran from aggressive actor to strategic respondent. A companion article extends this voicing pract through a different register: a statement from the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters asserting full authority over the strait is quoted directly, allowing the claim to register as institutional fact rather than AJE's own assessment.

Both outlets pragmatically legitimize Iran's position on Hormuz, but through registers calibrated to different audiences. AJA appeals to the inherent sovereign right; AJE appeals to recognized strategic rationality. The convergence in pragmatic outcome despite the divergence in register is the most significant finding of this issue and will be taken up in the discussion.

Islamabad Ceasefire and Negotiations

Trump's announcement of a two-week ceasefire on April 8, 2026, followed by Pakistan-mediated negotiations in Islamabad, marked the first turning point in the conflict. The same event generated opposed constructions of meaning across the two outlets, making this issue the point at which audience design most clearly determines the construction of diplomatic agency.

AJA-4.1 اعتبر مجلس الأمن القومي الإيراني قرار ترمب "انتصاراً تاريخياً لطهران" التي قال إنها قبلت بهذا الوقف المؤقت للقتال بناء على نصيحة المرشد الأعلى مجتبى خامنئي، في حين سادت حالة من الذهول داخل إسرائيل

Iʿtabara Majlis al-Amn al-Qawmī al-Īrānī qarār Trāmb "intiṣāran tārīkhīyan li-Ṭihrān" allatī qāla innahā qabilat bi-hādhā al-waqf al-muʾaqqat lil-qitāl bināʾan ʿalá naṣīḥat al-murshid al-aʿlá Mujtabá Khāminiʾī, fī ḥīn sādat ḥālah min al-dhuhūl dākhil Isrāʾīl

'Iran's National Security Council considered Trump's decision 'a historic victory for Tehran', which it said accepted the temporary ceasefire based on the advice of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, while a state of shock prevailed inside Israel'.

AJA-4.2 قال وزير الخارجية الإيراني إنه ليس هناك أي حل عسكري، وإن بلاده لن تستسلم تحت الضغط والتهديد

Qāla wazīr al-khārijīyah al-Īrānī innahu laysa hunāka ayyu ḥall ʿaskarī, wa-inna bilādahu lan tastaslim taḥta al-ḍaghṭ wal-tahdīd

'Iran's foreign minister said there is no military solution, and that his country would not surrender under pressure and threats.'

AJE-4.1 *Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have argued that the offensive was necessary to eliminate Iran as a regional threat and prevent it from obtaining a nuclear weapon. But legal experts have described the offensive as an unprovoked attack, in violation of international law.*

AJE 4.2 *Pakistan scrambles to salvage US-Iran diplomacy as ceasefire faces collapse. Jaffery said the ceasefire had been "practically violated" once the US imposed its naval blockade, although both sides have since sought to avoid a return to full-scale war.*

AJA's coverage of the ceasefire issue rests on a voicing-led foundation, attributing the terms of the truce to the National Security Council and to Foreign Minister Araghchi directly, overlaid with a substantial reliance on implying pract and a single but pointed instance of echoing pract, together building a narrative of Iranian victory. In AJA-4.1, the headline places *dhuhūl fī Isrāʾīl* 'shock in Israel' in parallel with *intisār tārīkhī* 'historic victory'. The contrast reads as a description of both parties' reactions rather than an editorial verdict, but its pragmatic effect frames the ceasefire as a defeat for one side and a victory for the other. A later article from the same negotiation period extends this echoing pract through Foreign Minister Araghchi's statement that Tehran *lan tastaslim taḥta al-ḍaghṭ wal-tahdīd* 'would not surrender under pressure and threats', paired with five sovereignty conditions, recognition over Hormuz, international guarantees, sanctions relief, compensation, and frozen funds, that recast Iran as the party setting terms rather than receiving them. The recurrence of non-surrender language across the ceasefire period anchors the steadfastness frame of AJA-4.1 within Iran's own diplomatic voice.

AJE approaches the ceasefire through voicing and implying pract that frame the negotiation process as a fragile diplomatic crisis rather than a resolution. In AJE-4.1, Trump and Netanyahu's claims that the strikes were necessary are juxtaposed with international legal experts' characterization of the offensive as an unprovoked violation of international law. The juxtaposition is a balanced quoting pract that critiques the official US narrative through legal authority without AJE asserting that critique as an editorial judgment. In AJE-4.2, the word 'scrambles' in the headline operates as implying pract, constructing Pakistan's mediation as a reactive emergency response rather than a structured diplomatic process. Jaffery's statement that the ceasefire was 'practically violated' is a voicing pract that positions international readers as observers of an unresolved and deteriorating situation.

On this issue, the divergence in the construction of diplomatic agency is most visible. AJA positions Iran as the party that sets conditions rather than accepts them; AJE positions the ceasefire as a multilateral crisis management problem with an uncertain outcome. AJA readers occupy the position of witnesses to a historic victory; AJE readers occupy the position of observers watching two powers attempt to avoid a return to full-scale conflict.

100 Days of War and the Construction of Conflict Memory

Retrospective coverage at the one-month mark (March 28) and the 100-day mark (June 7, 2026) constitutes the most deliberate act of memory construction in the corpus. Unlike the earlier issues, which responded to specific events, retrospective coverage requires each outlet to select, sequence, and frame past events into a cumulative

meaning. These choices most clearly reveal how each outlet's pract strategies operated across the entire arc of the conflict.

AJA-5.1 شهر على حرب إيران.. من اغتيال القادة إلى ضرب الخليج والطاقة

Shahr ʿalá ḥarb Īrān.. min ightiyāl al-qādah ilá ḍarb al-Khalīj wal-ṭāqah

'One month of the Iran war: from the assassination of leaders to striking the Gulf and energy'.

AJA-5.2 قوة إقليمية واحدة، تهدد ممرا مائيا واحدا، تمكنت من التأثير على جيوب المستهلكين وحسابات الحكومات في جميع القارات، محولة الترابط الاقتصادي نفسه إلى سلاح

Quwwah iqlīmīyah wāḥidah, tuhaddidu mamarran māʾīyan wāḥidan, tamakkanat min al-taʾthīr ʿalá juyūb al-mustahlikīn wa-ḥisābāt al-ḥukūmāt fī jamīʿ al-qārrāt, muḥawwilatan al-tarābuṭ al-iqtiṣādī nafsahu ilá silāḥ

'A single regional power, threatening a single waterway, managed to influence consumers' pockets and governments' calculations across every continent, turning economic interdependence itself into a weapon'.

AJE-5.1 *Trump said he would "obliterate" Iran's power plants if it failed to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours, but he later extended the deadline by five days and then for 10 more days.*

AJE 5.2 *According to an Al Jazeera tally, at least 146 countries have reported increases in petrol prices since late February... Asian countries, which import some 60 percent of their oil from the Gulf, are facing the highest cost at the petrol station.*

AJA's retrospective coverage builds conflict memory through systematic alluding pract. The narrative sequence in AJA-5.1, moving from *ightiyāl al-qādah* 'assassination of leaders' to *darb al-khalīj* 'striking the Gulf' to *al-ṭāqah* 'energy', pragmatically constructs a pattern of escalation by the aggressor through the sequencing of events rather than through any explicit evaluative statement. The sequence activates the Arab reader's schema of the familiar trajectory of US-Israeli intervention: from political targets to civilian and economic ones. In AJA-5.2, the retrospective's closing assessment, that a single regional power controlling a single waterway proved sufficient to turn economic interdependence into a weapon felt across every continent, is placed as the interpretive close of the 100-day narrative. The positioning implies that Iran's leverage over the conflict, anchored in geography rather than military parity, held firm from the first day to the last.

AJE's retrospective relies on voicing pract organized around quantitative evidence and the authority of international institutions. Casualty counts, oil price statistics, and economic projections function as the primary epistemic anchors, a strategy that reconstructs the conflict as a measurable global humanitarian and economic crisis accessible to an ideologically heterogeneous readership. In AJE-5.1, the juxtaposition of Trump's threat to obliterate Iran's power plants within a 48-hour ultimatum against the deadline's repeated extensions, first by five days and then by ten more, is an implying

pract that signals dissonance between the official rhetoric of imminent decisive action and the observable pattern of deferral. In AJE-5.2, data from 146 countries reporting fuel price increases presents a statistically grounded voicing pract that frames the conflict as a global phenomenon rather than a bilateral one.

On the retrospective issue, the pract divergence reflects each outlet's approach to conflict memory. AJA shapes memory through accumulated narrative sequence and consistent sovereignty rhetoric, constructing Iran as a party that held its ground through 100 days of aggression while maintaining an unwavering position. AJE shapes memory through global data and the dissonance between official claims and ground realities, reading that endurance against the US narrative of decisive military success. The pattern is consistent with the overall corpus: AJA builds solidarity by casting Iran as a power that refused to yield, while AJE builds critical consensus through epistemic authority and factual contradiction.

DISCUSSION

Across the five issues analyzed, AJA and AJE share the same primary pract configuration: both outlets rely most heavily on voicing pract, anchoring claims in external authorities and institutional sources, followed by implying pract, which conveys evaluative positions through framing and implicature instead of explicit statement. Their secondary pract is where the two services part ways. AJA shows a distinctive reliance on echoing pract, working through polarized lexicalization and terminology that resonates with Arab resistance traditions. AJE shows a distinctive reliance on hinting pract, working through formally qualified attribution that preserves epistemic distance while guiding readers toward conclusions of accountability. The only issue that yields substantive pragmatic convergence is issue 3, where both outlets legitimize Iran's position on Hormuz through different registers: AJA through inherent sovereign right, AJE through recognized strategic rationality. This divergence sits at the level of secondary pract, in what each outlet layers onto a shared voicing-implying foundation, and reflects institutionally designed audience-specific strategies executed at the level of pragmatic act configuration.

AJA's pract configuration reflects the operationalization of what Mey (2023) describes as social acts tied to institutional and audience contexts. Like AJE, AJA relies most heavily on voicing pract, anchoring claims in officials, institutions, and named sources, and on implying pract, conveying evaluative positions through framing rather than explicit statement. AJA stands apart through a secondary but consistent reliance on echoing pract: terminological choices in issues 2, 3, and 4 resonate with Arab resistance traditions, a pattern Khater et al. (2024) describe as contextualization through collective repertoires. AJA's implying pract operates through conventional and conversational implicatures that, as Sbisà (2021) demonstrates, go beyond the propositional while remaining anchored in the social context that licenses inference. Alluding pract, although present, appears only intermittently across the corpus. The dominant effect is an ideological solidarity built on the voicing-implying foundation the two outlets share, overlaid with echoing pract that activates the audience's existing cognitive schema instead of constructing one from scratch.

AJE's pract configuration likewise rests on voicing pract, delegating epistemic authority to external actors to build implicit consensus, a strategy Reyes (2011) calls legitimacy through voices of expertise and one structurally equivalent to Mey's (2023) voicing pract, paired with implying pract that conveys evaluative positions through

juxtaposition and framing. AJE stands apart through a secondary but consistent reliance on hinting pract: formally qualified attribution, through words such as 'likely' or 'may have', guides readers toward conclusions of accountability without foreclosing epistemic doubt. Quoting pract plays a smaller but recognizable role, operating what Makki & Zappavigna (2022) call ambient affiliation, positioning readers to choose their own evaluative stance based on evidence presented in parallel. The configuration speaks to an international readership that lacks the pre-existing evaluative framework for regional conflict that AJA presupposes in its audience. In place of the collective memory AJA's echoing pract activates, AJE substitutes institutional and expert attribution qualified by explicit epistemic caution.

Several of these findings align with prior scholarship. The systematic divergence between AJA and AJE is consistent with Muwafi et al. (2025), who reported comparable divergences in the representation of the Russia–Ukraine conflict using transitivity analysis. AJE's voicing pract of delegating judgment to external authorities parallels El Damanhoury et al.'s (2025) finding that AJE maintained a more balanced citation pattern than other Arab outlets in covering the 2023 Gaza war. AJA's use of a lexicon that mobilizes Arab solidarity is consistent with Alluhaidah's (2023) findings on AJA's Yemen coverage and Kharbach's (2020) findings during the Gulf crisis, suggesting that solidarity lexicalization is a structural feature of AJA rather than an ad hoc response to particular events. The pragmatic convergence on issue 3 also has a precedent: Ajaoud & Elmasry (2020) identified moments of convergent framing between ideologically opposed Arab outlets when shared regional interests were at stake.

The findings differ from prior work in several noteworthy ways. CDA studies drawing on Fairclough (El Damanhoury et al., 2025; Amer, 2022) locate AJA-AJE divergence primarily in grammatical agency and negative lexicalization. The present analysis finds that the more decisive divergence operates through indirect pragmatics. AJA and AJE can construct equivalent active sentences yet produce opposing reader positions because what differs is not sentence structure but the pract configuration that activates different interpretive frames. Where Malkawi et al. (2024) treat active sentence construction as an ideological marker in itself, the present study treats sentence construction as a surface feature, with the driving mechanism located in pract operating beyond the grammatical level. The analysis also departs from Alibigloo & Alipoor's (2025) characterization of partisan coverage as a simple reflection of state ideology.

The study contributes to three areas of the literature. For critical pragmatics methodology, it is the first demonstration that Mey's six pract categories can be operationalized in a bilingual Arabic-English media corpus and yield consistent patterns of differentiation across event issues, extending critical pragmatic methodology beyond the European-language media studies in which it has been developed (Mey, 2023; Sbisà, 2021). For bilingual Arabic media studies, the analysis introduces the concept of institutional pract configuration, a consistent pattern of pract combinations deployed by a single institution toward distinct audience groups. The pragmatic convergence on issue 3 challenges the assumption that AJA and AJE always construct opposed reader positions (Muwafi et al., 2025; El Damanhoury & Saleh, 2025; Kharbach, 2020) and introduces the concept of situational pract convergence as a phenomenon meriting further investigation. For conflict journalism studies, the findings show that viewers who consume only AJA or only AJE coverage of the same conflict derive fundamentally different evaluative frames not because they encounter different facts but because

different pract configurations activate different interpretive contexts, a finding with direct implications for discussions of media bias and institutional responsibility.

CONCLUSION

AJA and AJE consistently deploy the same primary pract pairing, voicing and implying, across all five issues. AJA layers onto this foundation a secondary, distinctive reliance on echoing pract, terminology that resonates with Arab resistance traditions, constructing a solidarity frame in which Arab-speaking readers are positioned as members of a collective standing with Iran as it resists a far stronger adversary. AJE layers onto the same foundation a secondary reliance on hinting pract, formally qualified attribution that guides readers toward conclusions of accountability without foreclosing doubt, alongside a recognizable role for quoting pract that juxtaposes competing claims. That configuration builds critical consensus through epistemic procedures suited to an audience without a pre-existing evaluative framework for the conflict. Across the five issues, Al Jazeera channels the same events through pragmatic mechanisms, rather than through differences in facts or sources, into two fundamentally different reader positions. The two outlets share their foundation and diverge only in which secondary pract each attaches to it. The institution practices what might be described as bilingual audience design at the level of pragmatic act configuration.

Several limitations qualify these conclusions. Twenty news items support in-depth qualitative analysis, but cannot sustain statistical generalization to Al Jazeera's overall reporting strategy. Future work could expand the corpus and apply frequency-based corpus analysis to test whether the pract configurations identified here are statistically representative. The study is also limited to Arabic and English; Al Jazeera Network produces content in Turkish and Balkan languages as well, and testing whether pract configurations correlate with specific linguistic communities or with more universal institutional strategies would require extending the analysis to those services. The analysis is textual and does not engage the dimensions of production or reception. Integrating newsroom ethnography or audience response analysis with the kind of textual analysis conducted here would yield a more complete picture of how pract configurations are institutionally produced and differentially received. Finally, the study is limited to a single conflict within a single period. Comparative testing across conflicts would allow verification of whether the identified institutional pract configurations are stable features or situational adaptations.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author led data collection and provision, designed the analytical instruments, conducted the data analysis, and drafted the manuscript. The second and third authors contributed critical feedback that sharpened the manuscript's clarity and overall quality. The fourth author collected and translated the Arabic-language data. The fifth author contributed feedback from a journalism perspective.

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AUTHORS' SHORT BIODATA

Awliya Rahmi is a lecturer in the Department of Arabic Language and Literature at the Faculty of Adab and Humanities, Imam Bonjol State Islamic University, Padang, Indonesia. Her research covers the fields of semantics, pragmatics, and discourse analysis. Email: awliyarahmi@uinib.ac.id.

Mouna Bechlem Bouratoua is a Professor in the Department of Arabic Language and Literature at the Teachers Higher School Assia Djebbar, Constantine, Algeria.

Her research covers the fields of Modern and contemporary literature, cultural studies, and comparative studies. Email: m.bechlem@gmail.com.

Aya Qasim Hasan is a lecturer in English Language at the English Department of Samarra University, Baghdad, Iraq. Her research covers the English language in general, including critical discourse analysis, stylistics, pragmatics, and semantics. Email: aya.qasim@uosamarra.edu.iq.

Jarot Wahyudi is a lecturer in the Department of Arabic Language and Literature at the Faculty of Adab and Cultural Sciences, State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia. His research covers Arabic language and literature, Qur'anic studies, and Islamic history and civilization. Email: jarotwahyudi@uin-suka.ac.id.

Ahmed Shbair is a Ph.D. student in Journalism at the Faculty of Communication, Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey. His research covers journalism, political communication, social and intercultural communication, and sociology of new media. Email: ahmedshbairpal@gmail.com.