RESEARCH ARTICLE

Representation of the Self and Other of Saudi Female Athletes in Western and Arab Media

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ABSTRACT

The current study addresses the ideologies employed in the news discourse regarding Saudi female Olympians. It mainly examines the linguistic and ideological portrayal of Saudi female athletes in Western and Arab media. This study analyzes CNN and Al-Jazeera's news reports linguistically and ideologically. The primary objective of this article is to examine how both news agencies employ linguistic structures to highlight their ideology regarding the engagement of Saudi female athletes in the Olympics. To critically analyze these two channels' news discourses and assess their linguistic and ideological frameworks, Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square has been implemented to elucidate both channels' depiction of the "Self" (in-group) and the "Other" (out-group) regarding Saudi female Olympic participation. The linguistic analysis of each news report was conducted at two levels: global and local. At the global level, each report was analyzed to reveal the topics (themes) covered whereas at the local level, each report was analyzed in terms of lexical structures, syntactic structures and rhetorical devices. The global level findings indicate that the dominant topics (themes) in both channels' reports sought to challenge and alter stereotypical norms, as well as to empower women. The local level findings are consistent with the global level ones. The reports predominantly featured complex sentences that contain rich details. They also used a significant volume of lexical items and rhetorical devices related to the athletes' inaugural participation and struggles. Additionally, the ideological analysis of both channels reveals that both channels portray Saudi female athletes positively as the "Self" and simultaneously portray others opposing those female athletic participation negatively as the "Other".

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of few studies on Arab female athletes' representation. However, none of these studies match the current study's objectives and design. Moreover, the study's contribution lies in examining two distinct and well-

recognized media platforms. Analyzing their projected discourse linguistically and ideologically helps understand vital issues concerning women's participation in professional sports and bridges the gap in media coverage between male and female athletes.

1. Introduction

Language is the tool used by people to persuade others about certain representations of news events organized naturally and logically to reflect the views of the producer of the discourse and make such discourse common-sense knowledge (Fairclough, 1995). Moreover, language-in-use is always an integral part of particular social practices. These social practices impact political issues, including solidarity, status, and power (Gee, 1999). Therefore, language could be more influential when used by media (Figenschou, 2010). This is so because most of the world's population is affected by media discourse (Hassan, 2018; Talbot, 2007). Media shapes audience perception. Media content is often strategically produced to perpetuate and influence social relationships based on certain ideological perspectives (Hassan, 2018). By the same token, media and sports are interdependent and interrelated. Due to the way media represent male and female athletes, they are considered institutions that naturalize and give privilege to males in society (Dziubin´ski, Organista, & Mazur, 2018). Moreover, language, sports and culture are interconnected and intersected (Meân & Halone, 2010). In addition, sports provide a powerful site for forming identities via exposure to media discourse. In this respect, sports play a vital role in defining, understanding as well as demarcating gender and sexuality beyond common boundaries to a broader audience of diverse cultures. Essentially, sport is performed, structured, and perpetuated through language and other communicative practices that maintain and reflect particular cultural forms and their ideological bases (Meân & Halone, 2010).

Additionally, media can shape the beliefs of their audiences or indirectly shape reality. Thus, they encourage the representation of stereotypical male and female athletes via sports commentaries (Billings, Angelini & Duke, 2010). The extent of media coverage pertaining to female athletes plays a significant role in shaping societal perspectives of female athletes and broader perceptions of women. Sports media do not only mirror existing attitudes and values but also possess the potential to influence and establish societal norms regarding suitable and acceptable forms of sports participation for females. The choices made by media outlets regarding which sports to prioritize and the level of coverage allocated to them can reinforce preexisting notions among audience members regarding the significance of certain sports and athletes, thereby perpetuating stereotypes concerning women and sports (Davis & Tuggle, 2012). The present study will adopt a gendered analytic perspective in examining the relationship between media discourse, particularly sports media discourse, and how this discourse represents Saudi female athletes. In essence, this study seeks to determine how gender is represented in sports media, specifically within the context of Saudi female athletes and within the perspective of online coverage (*CNN* and *Al-Jazeera*) of the 2012 Olympic Games.

1.1. Research Objectives

i. To compare the linguistic devices (topics, lexical structures, syntactic structures and rhetoric devices) employed by *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera* in their discourses on Saudi female athletes in the 2012 Olympic Games.

ii.   To examine the representations of ''Self'' and ''Other'' by *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera* in their discourses on Saudi female athletes in the 2012 Olympic Games.

2. Literature Review

Given that the media continues to stereotype women and men, the literature on how females are covered in the news media emphasizes the significance of females' representation in media discourse. Consequently, researchers have examined instances of stereotyping, representation and discrimination against women. A careful review of the pertinent literature showed how these problems have been discussed. As for the depiction of female athletes in the media, numerous scholars have discovered that in sports media male athletes receive far more media attention than female athletes. Among those scholars are Xu, Billings, and Fan (2017), who revealed that prior studies on how athletes were portrayed in the media have shown that media attempted to depict both male and female athletes in accordance with hegemonic gender norms. Accordingly, sports media emphasize the masculine features of men, such as strength and power, and the feminine features, such as familial connections and physical appearance. Consequently, women have consistently been marginalized in the media.

Alexander (1994) examined seven British newspaper coverage of track and field athletics at two major championships, the 1991 World Athletics as well as the 1992 Summer Olympics, via adopting the quantitative analysis. The analyzed newspapers were *The Independent, The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Mail, The Express, The Sun* and *The Mirror*. He concluded that more time was devoted to males' sports. In addition, the most photographed category included males' photographs. The total number of photographs was 297 during the period of the Championships. 216 photographs out of 297 were devoted to males while 81 were for females. Moreover, reports of the studied Olympics were made by 81 reporters for the analyzed newspapers. Only one report was written by a woman about drug abuse, and 80 reports by men.

Furthermore, Tuggle and Owen (1999) investigated the amount of coverage females received by *NBC* at the 1996 Centennial Olympics. This study was done through content analysis, which revealed that extensive coverage was devoted to females. Still, that coverage focused more on sex-appropriate sports such as gymnastics, diving and swimming than team sports. Likewise, male team sports receive greater media attention than female team sports. In addition, most on-camera reports and event announcers were men.

Moreover, in her examination of Sports Illustrated via using content analysis, Shaller (2006) examined 281 issues from January 2000 to November 2005. She concluded that female athletes received insufficient media attention in the sense that they were underrepresented and stereotyped in the printed media. Besides, they were portrayed in a sexualized manner. Along the same line, Vincent, Pedersen, Whisenant, and Massey (2007) implemented a qualitative textual analysis by studying the printed media coverage of professional female tennis players participating in the 2000 Wimbledon Championships. They examined 152 newspaper articles from *The Times*, *Daily Mail* and *The Sun* to reveal the dominant discourse used by the journalists writing about female tennis players. They concluded that females are stereotyped as being more sensitive and emotionally fragile in comparison to males. This claim is reinforced by Serena Williams' stance when Naomi Osaka defeated her; she said, "My heart broke", and days later, she sought the assistance of a therapist and did not feel prepared to pick up a tennis racket.

In addition, Jamal (2015) made a qualitative study when analyzing the linguistic choices employed by *The Star* newspaper in portraying female athletes during its coverage of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. She aimed to decipher the representation of female athletes by examining distinct linguistic features via employing CDA in the examination of a corpus consisting of 17 articles that were published in *The Star* newspaper between August 9, 2008, and August 22, 2008. She implemented Fairclough's three-dimensional framework in conjunction with Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics approach. She concluded that the linguistic components examined serve as indicators to uncover the ideological bias of the newspaper. The portrayal of female athletes in newspaper reports analyzed exhibits a promotion of gender discrimination, wherein numerous negative elements such as restricted physical prowess, sexual objectification and the underestimation of their accomplishments are prevalent. Female athletes are consistently portrayed as being of lesser quality or value in nearly all instances.

Besides, Burch, Eagleman and Pedersen (2012) implemented content analysis to measure the amount of gender reportage in the contents of online articles produced for the 2010 Vancouver Olympic websites: *NBC Olympics.com*, *Yahoo! Sports* and *USA Today.com*. They realized that inequalities still exist in female athletes' coverage quality. Moreover, the reinforcement of female athletes' reportage in gender-acceptable sports promotes the feminine gender ideology of sports and discourages involvement in sports that are perceived as masculine. Furthermore, they found that the amount of coverage devoted to male athletes exceeded that of women athletes, which is evident from their percentages, which are 64.5% and 35.5%, respectively.

Xu et al. (2017) used taxonomic-driven quantitative content analysis to explore how gender was depicted in Chinese Central Television's coverage of males and females' gymnastics during the 2016 Olympic games, providing potential insights into the role of gender in the Chinese Olympic coverage of gymnastics. They applied three methods through their analysis of male and female gymnastics coverage. The first method estimates the time specified for female and male gymnastics. The second method involved analyzing athletes' names mentioned by *CCTV* broadcasters. Athletic descriptions were the subject of the third method. The descriptor (as an adverb, adverbial phrase, adjective or adjectival phrase) commented by *CCTV* broadcasters served as the unit of analysis for this study. Moreover, all hours were formatted for (a) the athlete's ethnicity (Black, Asian or Middle Eastern), (b) the athlete's biological sex (woman or man), (c) the athlete's nationality (American or Chinese), (d) the announcer's biological sex (woman or man) and (e) the precise word-for-word descriptive phrase. They concluded that female athletes gained less media attention at the 2016 Olympic Games compared with male athletes. In addition, the emphasis in the *CCTV*'s broadcast of gymnastics was on their nonsport-related features. Following their study including 423 Chinese respondents to assess gender perspectives on 16 sports via the lens of Bandura's social cognitive theory, Xu, Fan, and Brown (2019) found that males generally perceive sports as significantly more masculine than feminine. Similarly, their findings categorized sports into four categories: masculine, feminine, neutral, and lifestyle.

As a result, the majority of studies have concentrated on gender inequality and how women are portrayed in the sports media. In addition, they did not compare two channels dealing with female athletes in the sports sector. Moreover, most of these studies neglect the analysis of Arab female athletes and concentrate on studying Western female athletes. Consequently, there is a scarcity of research comparing news discourses on Arab female Olympians in Arab and Western media to reveal their ideologies about the involvement of

Arab female athletes in the Olympic Games. In addition, the previous studies have provided insufficient information to explain the sports women's status in the media in the light of CDA perspectives. However, this motivates the researchers of the current study to analyze news outlets of two influential channels, *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera*, in the light of CDA perspectives mainly through implementing Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square.

3. Research Methods

This section examines the methodology of the study. It illuminates the study's research design, corpus, and data analysis procedures.

3.1. Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative approach for selecting and analyzing data. This approach helps to collect and analyze data for achieving the objectives of the study. The corpus includes two news reports, one from *CNN* and the other from *Al-Jazeera*. The researchers implement Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square to analyze these news reports linguistically and ideologically. In this respect, the linguistic analysis will be achieved by concentrating on analyzing the topics, lexical structures, syntactic structures and rhetorical devices of each news report. Moreover, the ideological analysis is carried out to highlight the ideological representations of the in-group and out-group.

3.2. Corpus of the Study

Relevance is the fundamental criterion for gathering and selecting data in a qualitative study, as stated by Flick (1998). In this respect, it was found that *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera* addressed a wide range of themes in their news coverage about Saudi female competitors at the London Olympics. These include patriarchal roles, female empowerment, power transmission and physical appearance and attire. Still, these themes are pertinent to the current study. Thus, the researchers chose news items from these two channels to highlight the Western and Eastern ideologies regarding the involvement of Saudi female athletes in the Olympic Games. Additionally, purposive sampling is used to select the study corpus because it meets the objectives of the study (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Qualitative researchers prefer purposely non-random sampling to focus on certain research areas and acquire unique data. This purposive sampling method generates and develops the relevant and required data (Zghayyir, 2016).

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures
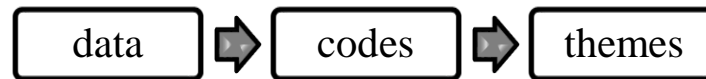
Data were analyzed using Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square. This model was utilized for data analysis to meet study objectives. The corpus of *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera* will be analyzed linguistically at the global and local levels, including topics, lexical structures, syntactic structures and rhetorical devices. Furthermore, the corpus of *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera* will be subjected to analysis to examine their ideological portrayal of the positive "Self" and the negative "Other" representation regarding the Saudi female athletes' participation in the London Olympic Games.

Moreover, the present study employs thematic analysis procedures to identify the prevailing themes throughout *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera*'s news items. The researchers adopt Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic coding analysis, which involves identifying,

organizing and interpreting patterns of meaning, known as themes, within a given set of data.

Figure 1 highlights that codes are derived from the data presented in the texts. Then themes are emerged from codes.

Figure 1: Thematic Coding

data ➡ codes ➡ themes

4. Results

This section presents the linguistic and ideological analyses of two news reports published by *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera*, utilizing Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square to reveal their view points about the engagement of Saudi female athletes in the Olympic Games.

4.1. Analysis of *CNN*'s News Item: Saudi Woman Approved to Wear Headscarf during Olympics Judo Competition
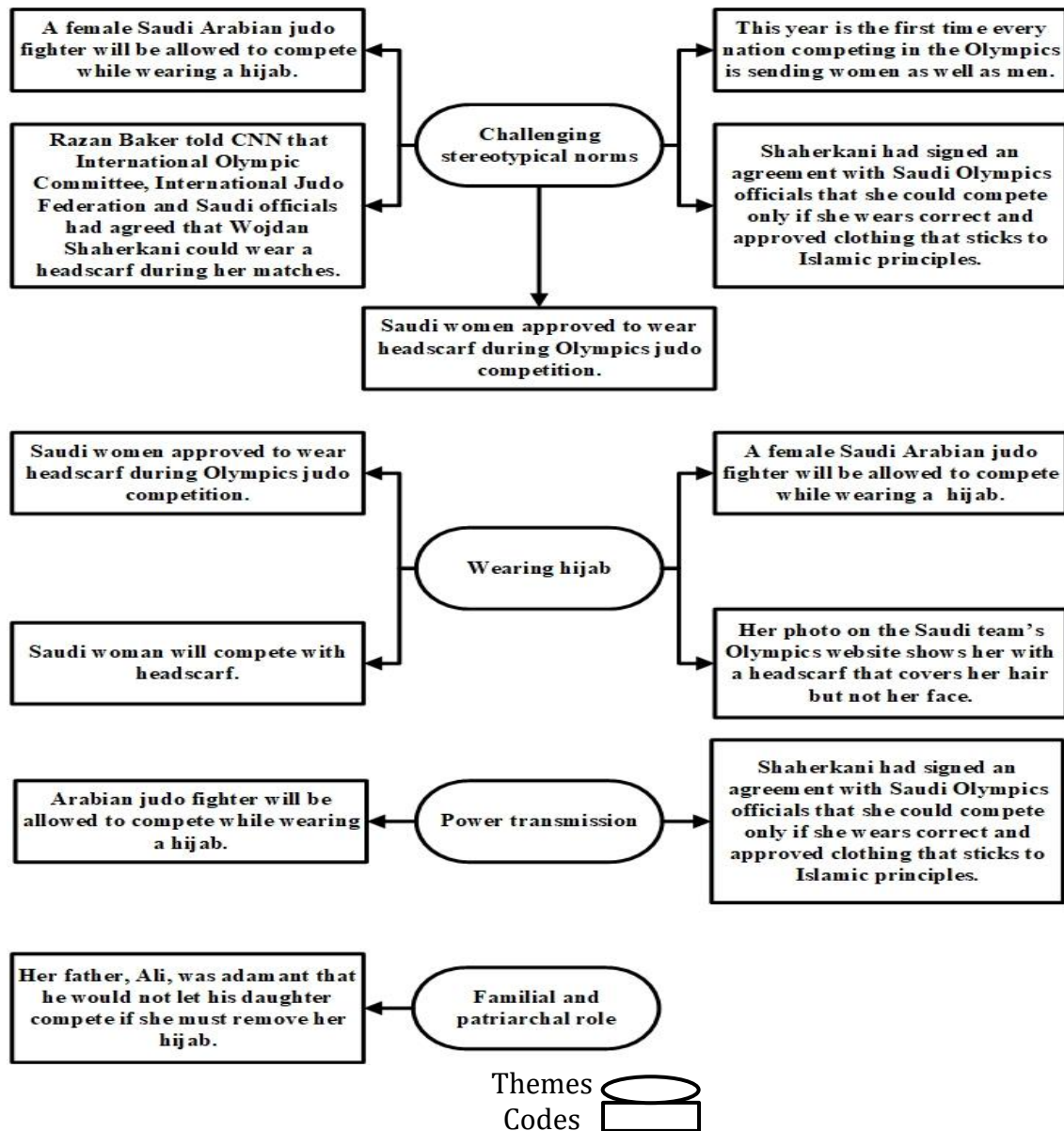
4.1.1. Topics

Topics can be derived from a series of sentences within a text and are analyzed at the global level of discourse. The topics covered in this news item will be analyzed to highlight major and minor themes. Beginning with the headline, *"Saudi woman approved to wear headscarf during Olympic judo competition"* (CNN, 2012), it presents valuable information to readers. It provides an overview of an Olympic scenario where a Saudi woman was allowed to wear a hijab during her Olympic Judo competition. It fulfills the criteria of the news headline formula by addressing the who, what and when the event occurred. "*Saudi woman*" is the subject of the passive voice sentence; hence, it answers "who", "*approved to wear headscarf*" answers what and "*during Olympic judo competition*" answers when. Therefore, by referencing these bits of information, readers are motivated to uncover all the specific circumstances. Thereby, the headline successfully achieves its primary goal. However, additional content is required to enlighten readers about the agent, location and the manner in which the occurrence occurred. Besides, the major concern of this *CNN*'s headline revolves around two important components:
i.   The participation of a Saudi female in the Olympic Judo competition.
ii. Wearing hijab through that Olympic competition.

Accordingly, the headline implies a change in the global and local stereotypical norms through such athletic participation. On the one hand, Judo competitors were not allowed to cover their heads before that participation. On the other hand, Saudi females were not allowed to participate in global athletic activities before the London Olympics. This implies that challenging global and local stereotypical norms is the central topic (theme) that captures the essence of the text.

Figure 2 shows that challenging global and local stereotypical norms is the main theme of this news item. Moreover, it reveals other minor relevant themes, such as wearing hijab, power transmission and familial role.

Figure 2: Themes Emerged from Codes in *CNN*'s News Item

A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab.

Razan Baker told CNN that International Olympic Committee, International Judo Federation and Saudi officials had agreed that Wojdan Shaherkani could wear a headscarf during her matches.

Challenging stereotypical norms

This year is the first time every nation competing in the Olympics is sending women as well as men.

Shaherkani had signed an agreement with Saudi Olympics officials that she could compete only if she wears correct and approved clothing that sticks to Islamic principles.

Saudi women approved to wear headscarf during Olympics judo competition.

Saudi women approved to wear headscarf during Olympics judo competition.

Wearing hijab

A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab.

Saudi woman will compete with headscarf.

Her photo on the Saudi team's Olympics website shows her with a headscarf that covers her hair but not her face.

Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab.

Power transmission

Shaherkani had signed an agreement with Saudi Olympics officials that she could compete only if she wears correct and approved clothing that sticks to Islamic principles.

Her father, Ali, was adamant that he would not let his daughter compete if she must remove her hijab.

Familial and patriarchal role

Themes
Codes

In the light of the preceding analysis, *CNN* constructs its ideological understanding of the "Self" and "Other" identities, reflecting its ideological view. *CNN* uses its news content to introduce two groups to its readers, one embodying a constructive "Self" ideology and the other embodying "Other" ideology, as seen below:

CNN's portrayal of the positive "Self" which is represented by:
  i.   The Saudi judo fighter.
  ii. Saudi women, namely Razan Baker, the spokeswoman for the Saudi Olympic Committee, and Sarah Attar, the second Saudi female Olympian.

This group is positively portrayed as their positive qualities are highlighted.

CNN's portrayal of the "Other" which is represented by:
  i.   International Olympic Committee (IOC).
  ii. International Judo Federation (IJF).
  iii. Saudi officials and Ali Shaherkani.

It is observed that this group is not portrayed negatively by *CNN*; instead, it is portrayed in a neutral manner since they did not oppose the Saudi female athlete's participation with hijab.

4.1.2. Lexical Structures

This *CNN*'s news item encompasses lexicons related to women's attire and athleticism. The following instances examine how *CNN* incorporates lexicons pertaining to women's attire and athletics in its portrayal of this Saudi female Olympian:

a. *"Saudi woman approved to wear headscarf during Olympic judo competition".* (CNN, 2012).
b. *"A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab"* (CNN, 2012).
c. *"International Olympic Committee, International Judo Federation and Saudi officials had agreed that Wojdan Shaherkani could wear a headscarf during her matches"* (CNN, 2012).
d. *"Shaherkani had signed an agreement with Saudi Olympics officials that she could compete only if she wears "correct and approved" clothing that "sticks to Islamic principles"* (CNN, 2012).
e. *"Her father, Ali, was adamant that he would not let his daughter compete if she must remove her hijab, he told the Saudi newspaper Al Watan on Monday"* (CNN, 2012).
f. *"Her photo on the Saudi team's Olympics website shows her with a scarf that covers her hair but not her face"* (CNN, 2012).

The utilization of the items related to Wojdan's headscarf and her judo competition and their referents in the same sentence demonstrates the connection between women's attire and athleticism lexicons to show that her Olympic participation is preconditioned with wearing suitable attire that adheres to Muslim women dress code, as exemplified above. The phrase "*wearing hijab*" is used in conjunction with the phrase "*during Olympic judo competition*" in extract (a) to emphasize this relation. Similarly, the underlined expressions in the examples above highlight this reliant relation between Wojdan's conservative attire and her Olympic participation.

4.1.3. Syntactic Structures

The main focus of this section is to analyze sentences to determine their types and ascertain whether they are in the active or passive voice, as shown in the extracted examples below:

a. *"Saudi woman approved to wear headscarf during Olympic judo competition"* (CNN, 2012).
b. *"Saudi woman will compete with headscarf"* (CNN, 2012).
c. *"A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab," a Saudi Olympic Committee spokesman said Monday"* (CNN, 2012).
d. *"Razan Baker told CNN that International Olympic Committee, International Judo Federation and Saudi officials had agreed that Wojdan Shaherkani could wear a headscarf during her matches"* (CNN, 2012).
e. *"Shaherkani had signed an agreement with Saudi Olympics officials that she could compete only if she wears "correct and approved" clothing that "sticks to Islamic principles," Baker said"* (CNN, 2012).

f. *"This year is the first time every nation competing in the Olympics is sending women as well as men"* (CNN, 2012).

g. *"Saudi Arabia was the last country to announce that it would send female athletes"* (CNN, 2012).

h. *"Her father, Ali, was adamant that he would not let his daughter compete if she must remove her hijab, he told the Saudi newspaper Al Watan on Monday"* (CNN, 2012).

i. *"Her photo on the Saudi team's Olympics website shows her with a scarf that covers her hair but not her face"* (CNN, 2012).

Extract (a) is a simple agentless passive voice sentence. The agency is not mentioned due to its insignificance. On the contrary, the concentration is shifted toward the action of allowing the Saudi judo competitor to wear a hijab during her Olympic competition. (b) is an active simple sentence written in the simple future form, "*will compete,*" indicating a future action. Furthermore, (c) is an agentless passive complex sentence containing the main clause, "*A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete*", and two minor clauses, "*while wearing a hijab*" and "*a Saudi Olympic Committee spokesman said Monday*". Besides, this sentence describes a future event "*will be allowed*". Similarly, extract (d) is an active voice, complex sentence consisting of three clauses: two minor, "*Razan Baker told CNN that*" and "*International Olympic Committee, International Judo Federation and Saudi officials had agreed that*" and one main, "*Wojdan Shaherkani could wear a headscarf during her matches*". Minor clauses cannot stand alone with a complete meaning whereas the main clause has a complete meaning. Moreover, the subordinating conjunction "*that*" is used to connect the minor clauses with the main clause. Extract (e) presents a further interesting complex sentence in which pieces of information are delivered in an embedded structure. The first part is the main clause, "*Shaherkani had signed an agreement with Saudi Olympics officials*" and the second part contains four minor clauses, "*that she could compete*", "*only if she wears correct and approved clothing*", "*that sticks to Islamic principles*" and "*Baker said*". These minor clauses provide information on the general meaning of the sentences in which they are included. The subordinating conjunction "*that*" introduces the first minor clause and is not separated from the main clause by a comma. This indicates that it is an essential clause since it gives essential information to the main clause. Moreover, the second minor clause begins with "*only if*" indicating that it is a conditional clause with a hypothetical reference. It is used in conjunction with the main clause, which outlines the potential consequences of the hypothetical scenario, which is "*she wears correct and approved clothing*". The third minor clause is an essential relative clause that delivers important information about the correct and approved clothing. "*Baker said*" is the fourth minor clause in this sentence.

Another complex sentence, (f), begins with the independent clause, "*this year is the first time every nation is sending women as well as men*", and the dependent clause, "*competing in the Olympics*". The main clause in extract (g) is "*it would send female athletes*", which conveys the principal meaning of this sentence. Moreover, the minor clauses are "*Saudi Arabia was the last country*" and "*to announce*", whose meanings are incomplete and need to be attached to the main clause to elaborate the meaning of that clause. Additionally, this sentence is written in the past since it shows a past occurrence. Extract (h) is a complex sentence containing four clauses, one main, "*he would not let his daughter compete*", and three minor clauses, "*her father was adamant*", "*if she must remove her hijab*" and "*he told the Saudi newspaper Al Watan on Monday*". The first minor clause shows that he was adamant. It does not provide a full explanation as it is not evident that adamant about what. However, for it to make sense, another clause is needed. An

appositive structure is employed to convey her father's name. A conditional clause starting with "*if*" makes up the second minor clause. It conveys a hypothetical or unrealistic future occurrence. It shows that he would not let her compete if she was obliged to remove her hijab. Similarly, the meaning of the last minor clause is inadequate on its own since it needs further information to address the question, "told the Saudi newspaper Al-Watan on Monday what?"

Moreover, the main clause in the complex sentence (i), "*her photo on the Saudi team's Olympics website shows her with a scarf*", delivers a complete meaning whereas the minor clause, "*that covers her hair but not her face*" provides essential information about the nature of her scarf covering only her hair. These two clauses are connected by the relative pronoun "*that*". Present simple is used in this extract since it presents factual information.

4.1.4. Rhetorical Devices

A number of rhetorical devices, including quotations, numbers and metaphors, are explained in this section.

Quotations
   a. "*A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab," a Saudi Olympic Committee spokeswoman said Monday"* (CNN, 2012).
   b. *"Shaherkani had signed an agreement with Saudi Olympics officials that she could compete only if she wears "correct and approved" clothing that "sticks to Islamic principles," Baker said"* (CNN, 2012).

Two quotations are employed in this news item. They represent the voice of the Saudi Olympic Committee spokeswoman. These quotations emphasize the optimistic and praiseworthy female Olympic participation. They demonstrate how a Saudi female judo competitor would compete at the Olympics while wearing a headscarf. Since covering one's head during judo competition is thought to be harmful to competitors, this was the first time a competitor had done so. The writer of the news item uses these quotes as facts to bolster and provide objectivity to his work.

Numbers

   a. "*A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab"* (CNN, 2012).
   b. *"This year is the first time every nation competing in the Olympics is sending women as well as men"* (CNN, 2012).
   c. *"Shaherkani, 16, is scheduled to compete Friday"* (CNN, 2012).
   d. *"Middle distance runner Sarah Attar is the only other woman on the 19-member Saudi team"* (CNN, 2012).

Numerical information is used in this news item to refer to the number of Saudi female judo fighters, the first time every country had female participants, the exact age of Wojdan Shaherkani as well as the number of Saudi athletes in the Saudi Olympic team as shown in the extracted examples above. In this respect, using numerical data confirms facts and approves objectivity.

Metaphor

   a. "*A female Saudi Arabian judo fighter will be allowed to compete while wearing a hijab," a Saudi Olympic Committee spokeswoman said Monday*" (CNN, 2012).

A metaphorical move is made by the Saudi Olympic Committee spokeswoman's quoted speech by using the term fighter in "*judo fighter*". Normally, judo competitors are referred to through the use of expressions like (judoka) or (judo player). In this quote, the speaker employed "*judo fighter*" to demonstrate the sense of fighting and strength in this sport, highlighting this Saudi female athlete's power. Moreover, the word "*fighter*" highlights the objective of winning.

In the light of the preceding analysis, it is revealed that *CNN* conveys its supportive and praiseworthy ideology for the Saudi female Olympic participation through regarding them as in-group participants of the public domain in general and sports domain in particular.

4.2. Analysis of *Al-Jazeera*'s News Item: Warm Welcome for Saudi's First Female Athlete

4.2.1. Topics

The topics covered in this news item will be investigated in this section. *Al-Jazeera* conveys the main topic or theme through the summary (the headline and the lead):
Headline: "*Warm welcome for Saudi's first female athlete*" (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
Lead: "*Sarah Attar becomes the first woman from Saudi Arabia to compete in the athletics at the Games after running in 800m*" (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
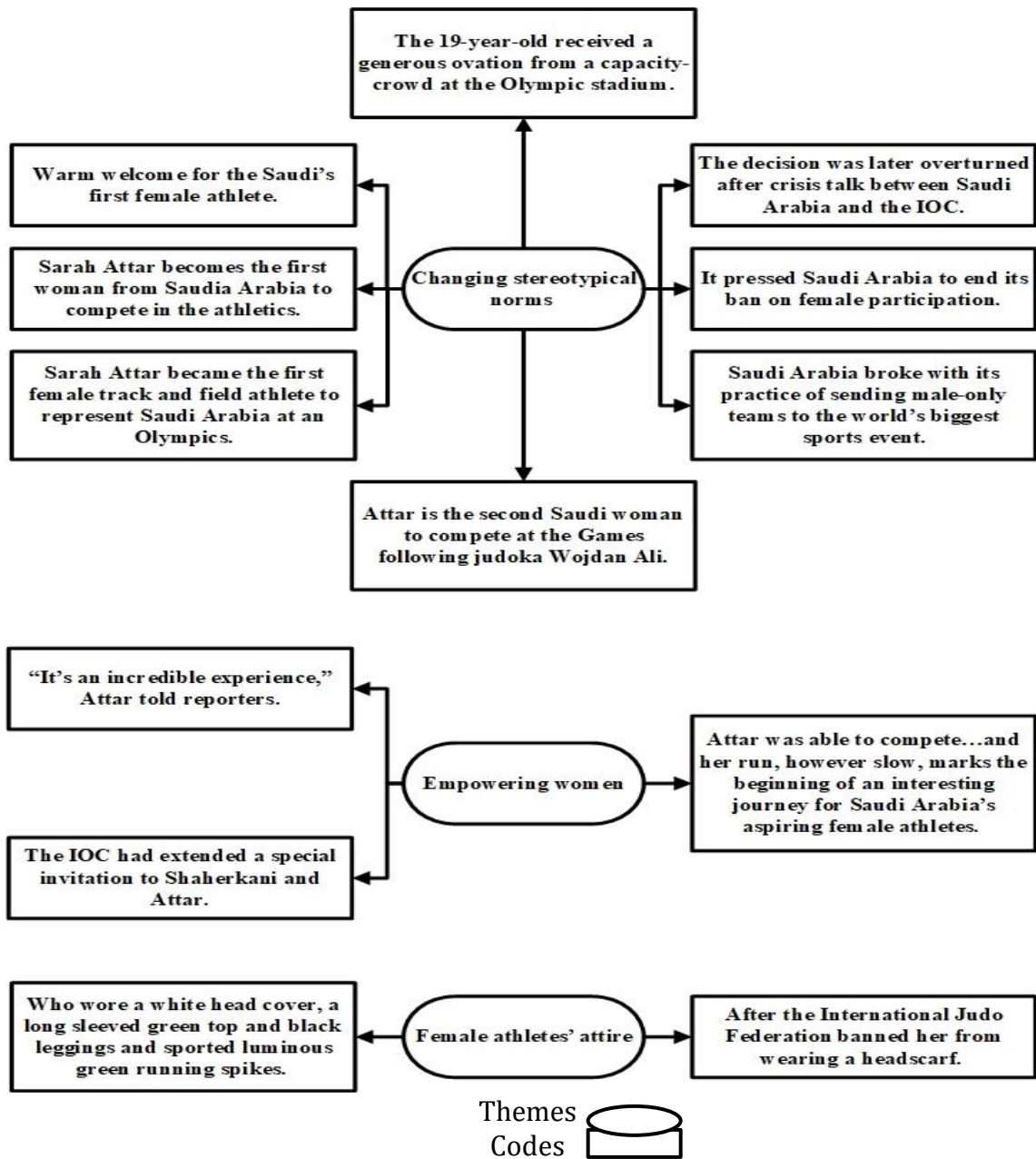
The headline and the lead summarize the news item as they encompass many issues within the limited space. This implies that they provide a concise synopsis of the news story, which captivates readers and encourages them to peruse the whole content. *Al-Jazeera*'s summary effectively summarizes the news event as follows:
   i.   A Saudi female athlete participated in a global sports event for the first time.
   ii.   She was welcomed warmly.
   iii. Warm reception indicates a transformation in the stereotypical norms.

Accordingly, the summary demonstrates that her Olympic participation was highly appreciated, and she was welcomed warmly. While not explicitly stated, it is clear that the agent was the Saudi sports authorities and the Saudis. Therefore, the summary emphasized *Al-Jazeera*'s positive portrayal of the Saudi female Olympian, positioning her as an esteemed part of the athletic community, which is evident from the deliberate selection of positive lexicons as well as the use of the possessive s in "*Saudi's first female athlete*".

Figure 3 shows that thematic structures in this news item are arranged hierarchically, starting with the most significant topic, changing stereotypical norms. Subsequently, other relevant topics are presented throughout the text, including empowering women and female athletes' attire.

Figure 3: Themes Emerged from Codes in *Al-Jazeera*'s News Item

4.2.2. Lexical Structures

This section shows how *Al-Jazeera* used positive and negative lexicons to portray Saudi women competing in the Olympics.

a) Registers of Positive and Negative Lexicons

Table 1 and Table 2 show the positive and negative lexicons used by *Al-Jazeera*. Regarding the participation of female athletes from Saudi Arabia at the Olympics, Table 1 and Table 2 show more positive lexicons than negative ones. The headline draws attention to the exceptional and first-ever participation of Saudi women in the Olympics, highlighting that she was received warmly after her return to her hometown. Furthermore, Table 1 reveals that the heavy use of favorable expressions highlights the in-group or good portrayal of Saudi female Olympians. In contrast, Table 2 has only one negative expression,

highlighting the conservative Saudis' perspective toward female Olympic engagement. Thus, as an Arabic media channel, *Al-Jazeera* effectively advances the idea of empowering Arab women and their involvement in the public sphere to create a culture where gender equality is appreciated.

Table 1. Positive Lexicons in *Al-Jazeera*'s News Item

No.	Positive lexicons
1.	Warm welcome for Saudi's first female athlete.
2.	Sarah Attar becomes the first women from Saudi Arabia to compete in the athletics at the Games.
3.	Sarah Attar became the first female track and field athlete to represent Saudi Arabia at an Olympics.
4.	The 19-year-old, ..., received a generous ovation from a capacity-crowd at the Olympic stadium.
5.	"It's an incredible experience," Attar told reporters.
6.	Attar, ..., is the second Saudi woman to compete at the Games following judoka Wojdan Ali Shaherkani.
7.	Attar...marks the beginning of an interesting journey for Saudi Arabia's aspiring female athletes.

Table 2. Negative Lexicons in *Al-Jazeera*'s News Item

No.	Negative lexicon
1.	Some conservative Saudis had criticized their countrywomen's participation in London.

4.2.3. Syntactic Structures

This section discusses the arrangement of words in sentences to show how *Al-Jazeera* uses these structures to reveal its ideological representation of Saudi female athletes' Olympic participation:

a. *"Warm welcome for Saudi's first female athlete"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
b. *"Sarah Attar becomes the first woman from Saudi Arabia to compete in the athletics at the Games after running in 800m"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

Extract (a) is a noun phrase (NP) that denotes the enthusiastic reception of the Saudi female athlete who achieved the historic milestone of becoming the first woman from Saudi Arabia to participate in the Olympics. The agency's identity is concealed, especially the agent who greeted her. This grammatical structure is unlikely to have any negative ideological connotations. Nevertheless, the writer deliberately crafts it in a captivating way to entice readers to read the entire story and discover the underlying reasons behind this warm reception. However, her country was so conservative and impeded women's participation in public life. Moreover, in extract (b), the verb "*become*" is used in the simple present tense to convey factual information succinctly. It demonstrates that Sarah, from Saudi Arabia, made history as the first female athlete from her country *to participate* in the Olympic events by competing in the 800m race. Therefore, more information about her position as the first Saudi woman is presented in the form of "*to + infinitive*". Moreover, another information is delivered through the use "after + present participle" form of the verb "*after running in 800m*". In this context, the writer presents the information gradually. The purpose of this style is to captivate the readers and enhance their enthusiasm to read the whole news report.

c. *"Sarah Attar became the first female track and field athlete to represent Saudi Arabia at an Olympics when she competed in the 800 metres heats on Wednesday"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

d. *"The 19-year-old, who wore a white head cover, a long sleeved green top and black leggings and sported luminous green running spikes, received a generous ovation from a capacity-crowd at the Olympic stadium as she trailed in last of the eight runners"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

e. *"It's an incredible experience," Attar, who has dual United States citizenship and is a student at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles, told reporters"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

f. *"Attar, who clocked two minutes 44.95 seconds – over 43 seconds behind heat winner Janeth Jepkosgei Busienei of Kenya, is the second Saudi woman to compete at the Games following judoka Wojdan Ali Seraj Abdulrahim Shaherkani"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

g. *"The judoka was caught up in early controversy at the Games after the International Judo Federation banned her from wearing a headscarf"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

h. *"However, the decision was later overturned after crisis talks between Saudi Arabia and the International Olympic Committee (IOC)"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

i. *"Some conservative Saudis had criticised their countrywomen's participation in London after Saudi Arabia broke with its practice of sending male-only teams to the world's biggest sports event"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

j. *"However, Attar was able to compete on Wednesday and her run, however slow, marks the beginning of an interesting journey for Saudi Arabia's aspiring female athletes"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

Extract (c) is a complex sentence beginning with the main clause, "*Sarah Attar became the first female track and field athlete*", followed by two minor clauses, "*to represent Saudi Arabia at an Olympics*" and "*when she competed in the 800 metres heats on Wednesday*". The first minor clause is a non-finite to-infinitive clause used as a postmodifier for the noun phrase "*the first female track and field athlete*" as it provides information about this noun phrase. Besides, the second minor clause begins with the subordinator "*when*" means (*at the time that*). The complex sentence (d) consists of one main clause and two minor clauses. The main clause is "*The 19-year-old received a generous ovation from a capacity-crowd at the Olympic stadium*". It has an extra-information relative clause: "*who wore a white head cover, a long sleeved green top and black leggings and sported luminous green running spikes*". This embedded relative clause delivers additional information about the appearance and attire of this female athlete. Therefore, it is separated from the main clause by commas. The second minor clause is the clause of reason, beginning with the subordinator "as" which means because. Moreover, extracts (c) and (d) are written in the past simple tense to show a past occurrence.

The complex sentence (e) begins with the main clause, "*It's an incredible experience,*" which has a complete meaning. It shows Sarah Attar's opinion about her Olympic experience. Moreover, this sentence has two minor clauses, "*Attar told reporters,*" and "*who has dual United States citizenship and is a student at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles*". Similarly, (f) is another complex sentence whose main clause, "*Attar is the second Saudi woman*", is followed by the minor to-infinitive clause "*to compete at the*

Games following judoka Wojdan Ali Seraj Abdulrahim Shaherkani" that is used as a postmodifier of the noun phrase "*the second Saudi woman*". Additionally, the main clause has an embedded relative clause, "*who clocked two minutes 44.95 seconds – over 43 seconds behind heat winner Janeth Jepkosgei Busienei of Kenya*". It is an extra information relative clause since it gives extra information about Sarah Attar.

Extract (g) is a passive voice complex sentence whose main clause is "*The judoka was caught up in early controversy at the Games*", and the minor clause is "*after the International Judo Federation banned her from wearing a headscarf*". Moreover, the past simple passive "*was caught up*" is employed to concentrate on the passive voice subject, "*The judoka,*" by giving her the initial place and neglecting the unnecessary active actor, "*the International Judo Federation*". The past simple passive sentence (h) starts with the contrastive connector "*However*", which serves to introduce a statement that presents a contrasting viewpoint to the previous one. In this regard, the decision of her ban from wearing a hijab, which is mentioned in sentence (g), was overturned. Furthermore, the main clause in the complex sentence (i) is "*Some conservative Saudis had criticised their countrywomen's participation in London*" while the minor clause is "*after Saudi Arabia broke with its practice of sending male-only teams to the world's biggest sports event*". Using the subordinator "after" in conjunction with various tense forms expresses the chronological order of occurrences. Consequently, Saudi Arabia's decision to deviate from its usual practice is expressed in the past simple, which happened prior to the criticism from some conservative Saudis, described in the past perfect.

Extract (j) is a compound sentence that begins with the contrastive connector "*however*". This sentence has two main clauses, "*Attar was able to compete on Wednesday*" and "*her run, however slow, marks the beginning of an interesting journey for Saudi Arabia's aspiring female athletes*", linked by the coordinator "*and*". Besides, the second main clause has an embedded appositive form, "*however slow*", which offers additional information about her run, which was slow. Moreover, this appositive form starts with the contrastive connector "*however,*" signifying that although her run was slow, she symbolizes the start of a captivating journey for Saudi Arabia's ambitious female athletes.

4.2.4. Rhetorical Devices

This section highlights *Al-Jazeera*'s implementation of rhetorical devices to strengthen its ideological view about Saudi females' engagement in the Olympic Games. Quotations, numbers and parallelism are highlighted in this news item.

Quotation

   a. *"It's an incredible experience," Attar, who has dual United States citizenship and is a student at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles, told reporters"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012)*.*

The quotation above represents the Saudi female Olympian's voice showing her feelings about her Olympic experience, which she deemed to be an incredible experience. This highlights her optimistic and favorable stance. This quotation serves to introduce *Al-Jazeera*'s supportive ideology to the Saudi females' Olympic participation objectively and unbiasedly. Moreover, this quotation can be deduced to have originated from a personal interview with the Saudi female runner, as shown by the transitive verb "*told*".

Numbers

    a. *"Warm welcome for Saudi's first female athlete"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
    b. *"Sarah Attar becomes the first woman from Saudi Arabia to compete in the athletics at the Games after running in 800m"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
    c. *"Sarah Attar became the first female track and field athlete to represent Saudi Arabia at an Olympics when she competed in the 800 metres heats on Wednesday"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
    d. *"The 19-year-old, …, received a generous ovation from a capacity-crowd at the Olympic stadium as she trailed in last of the eight runners"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
    e. *"It's an incredible experience," Attar, who has dual United States citizenship and is a student at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles, told reporters"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).
    f. *"Attar, who clocked two minutes 44.95 seconds – over 43 seconds behind heat winner Janeth Jepkosgei Busienei of Kenya, is the second Saudi woman to compete at the Games following judoka Wojdan Ali Seraj Abdulrahim Shaherkani"* (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

Undoubtedly, the inclusion of numerical accounts as a rhetorical device enhances the credibility and accuracy of the news item. *Al-Jazeera*'s inclusion of precise facts indicates an excessive focus on Saudi female athletes and the broader Olympic event. Furthermore, it demonstrates that the task of acquiring these data and statistics is intricate and necessitates a substantial amount of effort and time to gather them from several sources of information.

Parallelism

    a. "*Sarah Attar becomes the first woman from Saudi Arabia to compete in the athletics at the Games after running in 800m. Sarah Attar became the first female track and field athlete to represent Saudi Arabia at an Olympics when she competed in the 800 metres heats on Wednesday*" (Al-Jazeera, 2012)*.*
    b. "*Attar beams after becoming the first Saudi Arabian woman to compete in athletics. Sarah Attar becomes the first woman from Saudi Arabia to compete in the athletics at the Games after running in 800m*" (Al-Jazeera, 2012)*.*

Parallelism enhances or intensifies the specific message that *Al-Jazeera* intended to communicate. The above extracts amplify the significance Sarah Attar as being the first Saudi woman to compete in the athletics at the most important athletic event. Consequently, this shows *Al-Jazeera*'s positive perspective towards this Saudi female's involvement in the sports sphere.

4.3. Comparison: *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera*'s about Saudi Female Olympians

This section compares *CNN*'s and *Al-Jazeera*'s news items regarding the involvement of Saudi female athletes in the 2012 Olympics. This comparison demonstrates that the views of these two channels are communicated through both linguistic and ideological strategies. Analyzing both channels' linguistic structures and ideological representations will explain how they utilize language patterns to convey their underlying ideologies in

media messages to readers on athletic activities. The following are the headlines of the two news items:

> "*Saudi woman approved to wear headscarf during Olympics judo competition*" (CNN, 2012).

> "*Warm welcome for Saudi's first female athlete*" (Al-Jazeera, 2012).

Both news agencies' headlines support Saudi female athletes' Olympic participation. The headlines of both news agencies promote and support the involvement of Saudi female athletes in the Olympics. These news organizations promote their favorable ideology toward Saudi females' athletic involvement by purposefully selecting linguistic structures and lexicons. Therefore, they have similar ideological positions. Nevertheless, there are distinct disparities between these headlines. *CNN* focuses on the authorization granted to a Saudi female judoka to wear a hijab during her Olympic participation while *Al-Jazeera* emphasizes the warm reception that the Saudi runner received when returning to her country after the Olympics. *Al-Jazeera*, as an Arabic agency, aims to represent the Arab population's perspective on the involvement of female athletes in sports, with the goal of promoting the empowerment of women in this traditionally conservative country. In this regard, both headlines highlight the theme of changing stereotypical norms and empowering women.

CNN and *Al-Jazeera* effectively utilized their linguistic structures to promote their ideological viewpoints on the involvement of Saudi female athletes in the Olympic Games. Both agencies aim to showcase endorsement for such engagement, which is perceived to be a positive or in-group portrayal. Simultaneously, individuals and organizations that were against the involvement of those athletes in the Olympics are portrayed negatively. Both channels showcased the defiance of prevalent gender stereotypes by women in Saudi Arabia from an ideological standpoint. Therefore, both agencies promote Saudi female athletes as belonging to the public domain.

5. Conclusion

The main objective of the current study is to provide the portrayal of Saudi female athletes who participated in the 2012 Olympics in selected news reports from *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera* by conducting critical discourse analysis, namely Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square. In accordance, the researchers aim to objectively demonstrate *CNN* and *Al-Jazeera*'s utilization of linguistic devices to highlight their ideological perspectives and representation of the positive "Self" and the negative "Other" regarding Saudi female Olympians in the 2012 Olympic Games.

The study has demonstrated the reliability of the implemented theory in assessing news reports objectively and systematically. It allows readers to acquire a comprehensive and profound comprehension of the occurrences. In this vein, the study has proved the efficiency of the Ideological Square theory in examining linguistic devices to show how news agencies offer the positive "Self" and the negative "Other" ideologies. Moreover, the study has revealed how these linguistic devices were implemented by both news agencies to reveal their ideology about Saudi female athletes' Olympic participation.

The most important findings of this study revealed that both news agencies, despite representing different orientations, support Saudi female athletes' participation in the

sports sphere by presenting them in a favorable light as "Self" and people, organizations and stereotypical norms that impede their athletic participation in an unfavorable light as "Other". It is undeniable that *Al-Jazeera*, as an Arabic agency, was more biased towards supporting those athletes as it is part of its mission to endorse the concept of female empowerment and participation in the public sphere to change the traditional view about Arab society. Consequently, Arab female athletes were represented as strong and independent individuals.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

Not applicable.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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