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THE LANGUAGE OF DISAPPOINTMENT IN DIGITAL SPACES: FOOTBALL MATCH

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ABSTRACT: This research investigates the ways Indonesian internet users vent their collective disappointment when a beloved football team collapses on the pitch. The episode in question is the full replay of a crushing 6-0 defeat to Japan during the second-leg playoff for the 2026 FIFA World Cup-footage that quickly climbed to the top of YouTube's trending list. Ensuing comments act almost as a national mood ring, flickering through shame, sarcasm, stubborn pride, and outright anger. The study aims to decode the informal syntax of that mood ring. A qualitative lens, rather than big-data scraping, guides the analysis, and 15 emotionally charged entries from the Zona Juara Sports feed form the core sample. Selections hinge not on follower counts but on raw stylistic punch-symbols, misspellings, swift puns, the rogue capital letter that screams for attention. Manual collection groups the comments by theme before digging into pronoun shifts, idioms of defeat, emoji clusters, and hints of defiant humor. Analysis of the corpus uncovers five recurring motifs: raw disappointment coupled with a sense of national shame, caustic humor undercutting the team's performance, tactical and managerial second-guessing, side-by-side comparisons of Indonesian athletes and their foreign counterparts, and, surprisingly, steadfast proclamations of loyalty and pride. Posters lean on exaggeration, phonetic spellings, street slang, typographic repetition, even emojis, and stickers to give shape to whatever mood happens to strike them. In short, the online chatter frames a moment of public crisis using far more emotion-laden vernacular than a rational bullet-point summary. By documenting these linguistic choices, the project enriches the larger conversation about how digital forums can map collective sentiment, signal cultural identity, and turn moments of shared disappointment into repeated public dialogue. Even when comments are clipped and casual, they end up leaking the deeper social attitudes that circulate beneath the surface during days when the nation feels collectively flattened.

KEYWORDS: digital sociolinguistics, national identity, affective discourse.

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a vehicle for defining social practices, allowing users to create their own identities, associate with or disassociate from certain groups, and communicate ideological views (Al-Alawi, 2023; Allen, 2023; Yapp, 2024). Language becomes a pivotal tool for articulating collective sentiment (Carlson & Frazer, 2021; DeGloma, 2023; Purba et al., 2025; Rahardi et al., 2024). Indonesia's national football team's defeat against Japan sparked a wave of online comments ranging from disappointment to sheer national disgrace. Such comments reflect the newer forms of digitally mediated expression, demonstrating how online language serves as a semiotic resource to index emotional stances, critiques, and identity. The Indonesian vernacular employed in these posts is laden with informal, ironic, and humorous references that reveal the social anxieties surrounding a nation's perception alongside representation.

Within the realm of sporting activities, and football in particular, an area often rife with nationalist emotions(Basciani, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2022; Winarya, 2023). The online discourse of netizens voicing frustration captures more than personal frustration. It captures collective identity struggles of cultural inadequacy and belonging (Malli et al., 2023; Powell & Toppin Jr, 2021; Vaccaro & Newman, 2023). Such losses on a national scale enable looking at how language is wielded to perform acts of shame, critique governance, or reaffirm nationalism in the context of the digital public sphere. This study takes a sociolinguistic perspective rooted in three interconnected concepts: stance, indexicality, and language ideology, framed within the context of digital sociolinguistics. To start off, the concept of stance (Hernández-Campoy, 2016) is key to conceptualizing the ways speakers engage with the issue at hand emotionally and intellectually. Netizens deploy sarcasm, anger, disappointment, or resilience through linguistic stance-taking, aligning and misaligning with others within the shared digital space. Stances in this space are part of an ongoing interactive sequence and system.

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Additionally, the notion of indexicality (Swann, 2019) is important for understanding why specific linguistic features, such as hyperbole, repetition, or emotive slang, relate to social meanings. Consider the expression "*Bravo 6 telorrrrr*." It not only reports a scoreline; it also conveys humiliation and sarcasm, emulating collective disappointment. These types of indexical expressions serve as signs of sentiment that show and shape cultural evaluations of national identity and competence. This analysis is also informed by the language ideology theory, which examines how language beliefs mirror and enforce social norms and power relations (Cameron et al., 2018). Linguistic ideologies tend to surface during moments of national defeat, especially in the contexts of how "proper" Indonesians are expected to voice, embody, or perform patriotism.

Moreover, this paper considers the emerging digital sociolinguistics studies of (Tagg et al., 2017), which deal with the relationship between language and digital media. The online affordances of brevity, anonymity, and interactivity allow people to express many feelings instantly and to use language in creative ways. However, a few studies (Akano, 2024; Syaputri, Okilanda, et al., 2024; Syaputri, Revita, et al., 2024; Tenenboim-Weinblatt et al., 2022; Tileagă, 2012) discuss how users express national disappointment or national shame in digital socio-communicative contexts. Digital discourse analysis seems to emphasize topics like digital activism, celebrity culture, fandom, and what some scholars refer to as "celebratory nationalism." There is also some literature on the performativity of national identity during global sports events, like the FIFA World Cup or the Olympics, but there is very little attention to the regional or developing country perspectives from Southeast Asia.

This gap is significant as Indonesia is often regarded as a country where sports serve as a unifying factor for public sentiment. The range of utterances captured in this study from mourning to dry humor elucidates the processes through which citizens grapple with loss on a national scale, their position vis-a-vis global sporting culture, and the sense of loyalty they have towards the project of the nation. Looking at these performances from within the Indonesian digital realm sheds light on the interplay of language, emotion, and identity, thus, language and emotion, identity, and sociolinguistic praxis in a more sophisticated way through affect. It is within this context that the current study seeks to explore the ways in which Indonesian netizens articulate their national disgrace following a sports defeat and move beyond the immediate response to the event, situating it within identity politics, ideology, and frameworks of digital communication. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this study engages with digital disappointment not as a fleeting emotional reaction but as a structured response that embodies complex manifestations of belonging to a nation in contemporary times.

Method

The main data for the research were user comments posted under the YouTube video "*JEPANG (6) VS (0) INDONESIA FULLMATCH LEG 2 | KUALIFIKASI PIALA DUNIA 2026 R3,*" uploaded by Zona Juara Sports channel post-match. The video captures a controversial clash in the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 FIFA World Cup (2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifier: Japan vs Indonesia), wherein Indonesia faced Japan with a scoreline of 0-6. From this comment section, a total of 16 representative comments were purposively selected for qualitative analysis. The comments that were selected met the following criteria: emotional responses of disappointment, critique, or shame directed at the match; comments that showcased linguistic creativity, including the use of slang, code-mixing, rhetorical questions, repetition, humor, or sarcasm; and those that represented deeper ideological or emotional positions concerning national identity, cross-national sports rivalry, and institutional critique. For reasons of linguistic accuracy, all user comments were captured verbatim, including errors and informal phrasing. All users were rendered anonymous to adhere to ethical research guidelines.

This research was methodologically divided into four stages. As for the methods of data collection, they included traversing the comments section of YouTube videos of a given event and reading through them chronologically, as well as excerpting applicable comments using purposive sampling. Comments containing traces of sentiment (such as emoticons, interjections, and intensifiers), stance-taking, or national identity and affiliation were of primary importance. Afterward, identification of recurring linguistic and stance patterns was accomplished, and the data were thematically categorized. Some of the primary expressive categories were: explicit disappointment or national shame, sarcastic or humorous critique, resilient national pride despite defeat, comparative analysis of Indonesian players to Japanese or European players, and commentary on institutional or managerial inadequacies.

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Third, a linguistic analysis of the selected data was performed using tools from stance theory (Johnstone & Andrus, 2024), indexicality (Silverstein, 2021), as well as digital sociolinguistics (Tagg et al., 2017). The analysis scrutinized vocabulary selection, syntax, pragmatics, emoji use, orthographic stylization (e.g., all-caps, letter repetition), hyperbole, and semiotics to evaluate how speakers indexed emotions and ideology. This stage addressed how such linguistic choices demonstrated shared affective labor, collective identity, and culturally constructed shame and failure. In the end, the comments were analyzed in relation to Indonesia's sociocultural and sporting ecosystem. The comments were situated within a larger discourse on national representation, digital citizenship, and emotional expression in Southeast Asia and framed as part of a constructed digital public sphere. This reasoning illustrates how individual expressions through language contribute to wider societal discourses on nationalism, pride, and national performance. While the data was gathered from a publicly accessible digital forum, all identifying information was redacted to observe ethical standards. The study complies with general ethical policies related to the use of online content for research, focusing on the language used rather than the identities of the commenters.

Result

This research focused on the user-generated comments responding to the viral YouTube video depicting the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifier between Japan and Indonesia, in which Indonesia suffered a 6–0 defeat. This video comment section had 15 comments, and they were all included in the analysis. Participants' comments were analyzed for the presence of affective stance, identity negotiation, and language ideology. In the next section, I will show the results of the analysis in a table format. Table 1 provides a summary of the thematic categories and illustrative examples.

Picture 1. Users' comments on YouTube

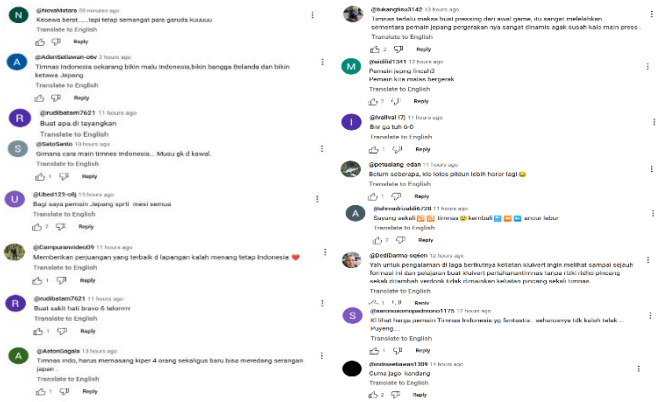


Table 1. Thematic Categorization of User Comments

No.	Kutipan Komentar (Bahasa Indonesia)	Comment Excerpt (English Translation)	Thematic Category	Linguistic Features
1	*Kecewa berat.....tapi tetap semangat para garuda kuuuuu*	Deeply disappointed… but still spirited, my Garudas!	Disappointment + Resilience	Ellipsis, vowel lengthening
2	*Timnas Indonesia sekarang bikin malu Indonesia, bikin bangga Belanda, dan bikin ketawa Jepang*	The Indonesian team now embarrasses Indonesia, makes the Dutch proud, and the Japanese laugh.	National Shame + Comparative Irony	Repetition, parallelism, and irony
3	*Buat apa. di tayangkan*	What's the point of broadcasting this?	Dismissal + Institutional Critique	Rhetorical question, fragmented syntax

4	*Gimana cara main timnes Indonesia... Musu gk d kawal.*	How is Indonesia even playing… The opponent isn't marked.	Tactical Critique + Informality	Slang, ellipsis, informal orthography
5	*Bagi saya pemain Jepang sprti mesi semua*	To me, Japanese players are like Messi, all of them.	Hyperbolic Praise of Opponent	Simile, intertextuality
6	*Memberikan perjuangan yang terbaik di lapangan, kalah menang tetap Indonesia* ❤	They gave their best on the field, win or lose, still Indonesia ❤	National Solidarity	Dual stance, emotive emoji
7	*Buat sakit hati bravo 6 telorrrrr*	Heartbreaking—bravo, six eggs (goals) lollllll	Sarcastic Critique + Hyperbole	Irony, syllable elongation
8	*Timnas indo, harus memasang kiper 4 orang sekaligus baru bisa meredang serangan japan.*	Indonesia should use four goalkeepers at once to stop Japan's attacks.	Exaggerated Tactical Commentary	Humor, numerical exaggeration
9	*Timnas terlalu maksa buat pressing dari awal game... pemain Jepang sangat dinamis*	The team forced high pressing too early… Japanese players were very dynamic	Analytical Tactical Observation	Analytical stance, code-mixing
10	*Pemain jepng lincah2. Pemain kita malas bergerak*	Japanese players are agile. Ours are lazy to move.	Direct Comparison + Critique	Repetition, informal register
11	*Bnr ga tuh 6-0*	Is it really 6–0?	Disbelief + Emphasis	Rhetorical question, numerical shock
12	*Belum seberapa, klo lolos pildun lebih horor lagi* 😂	This is nothing, if we qualify for the World Cup it'll be even more horror 😂	Humorous Pessimism	Hyperbole, emoji, predictive stance
13	*Sayang sekali* 🔁🔁 *timnas* 😳 *kembali* 🔙⏪← *ancur lebur*	What a pity 🔁🔁 the team 😳 returns 🔙⏪← shattered	Emotional Collapse + Symbolic Devices	Multimodal (emoji), repetition, metaphor
14	*Yah... keliatan timnas tanpa Rizki Ridho dan Verdonk pincang sekali*	Yeah… without Rizki Ridho and Verdonk, the team was really crippled.	Analytical Loss Framing	Player-specific critique, lexical metaphor
15	*Kl lihat harga pemain Timnas Indonesia yg fantastis.. seharusnya tdk kalah telak ... Puyeng....*	Seeing how expensive the players are… we shouldn't lose this badly… Dizzying…	Performance vs. Value Critique	Ellipsis, irony, emotive interjection
16	*Cuma jago kandang*	Only strong at home	National Sarcasm	Idiomatic expression, ellipsis

The sociolinguistics of YouTube comments shows how digital disappointment is socially constructed through five interconnected thematic categories: (1) expressions of national shame and disappointment, (2) sarcastic and humorous critiques, (3) tactical and institutional criticism, (4) comparative evaluations, and (5) resilient expressions of national pride. These clusters demonstrate how language, in the context of online public spaces, serves broader functions beyond the expression of feelings and serves to articulate sentiments, ideological stances, and identity politics. These comments reveal a great deal of emotive intensification. For example, comment #2— "*Timnas Indonesia sekarang bikin malu Indonesia, bikin bangga Belanda dan bikin ketawa Jepang* (The Indonesian team now

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embarrasses Indonesia, makes the Dutch proud, and the Japanese laugh)"—uses repeated verbs to evoke strong feelings and critique emotively. The use of the verb bikin (make) in a parallel syntactic construction amplifies the affective expression. The construction emphasizes the emotional burden of the defeat while drawing on global geopolitics and postcolonial imaginaries by invoking consideration of former colonizers and current competitors. The articulations of shame here are deeply ideological, navigating the affective realm by abstracting loss as a failure of national representation on the geopolitical stage.

The use of humorous parody and sarcasm emerged simultaneously, as users addressed and vented their frustrations over the defeat through exaggeration, repetition, and irony. Indonesian netizens often blend humor and lament, as seen in comments such as "*Bravo 6 telorrrrr* (bravo, six eggs (goals) lolllll)" and "*harus memasang kiper 4 orang.* (should use four goalkeepers)" The use of elongation in the words and outlandish suggestions such as employing four goalkeepers serve as a release for pent up emotions. This style of digital interaction denotes discontent while providing a socially acceptable outlet for frustration.

Comment #9 perceives, "*Timnas terlalu maksa buat pressing dari awal game… pemain Jepang sangat dinamis* (The team forced high pressing too early… Japanese players were very dynamic)" applies amateur analytic discourse. Users readily adopt a more informal lexicon and hybrid syntax to voice their discontent toward coaching and managerial decisions. With this remark, the user displays both the understanding of gameplay mechanics and critique ineffective strategy simultaneously. Comment #14 also critiques the system when offering to commercially evaluate players, linking their value to expectations of performance, implying a lack of return on investment. These statements express skepticism toward institutions, thus broadening the critique beyond players to systemic issues in national sports management.

The hyperbolic aggrandizement of one's opponent and severe self-critique both serve as a motif of comparative evaluation, which recurs throughout the text. "*Pemain Jepang seperti Mesi semua* (Japanese players are like Messi, all of them.)" is an example of mythologization of the opponent—commenters associate Japanese players with one of the greatest footballers in history. This form of argumentation concedes defeat while simultaneously critiquing the Indonesian side's relative lack of prowess. More critical assessments, like "*Pemain kita malas bergerak* (Ours are lazy to move.)" (#10), shift the focus from skill to effort and abandon any pretense of subtlety. These forms of comparison often serve as acts of collective introspection, reflecting on a perceived national inadequacy.

In contrast to these critical perspectives, a smaller yet significant portion of the comments expresses resilience and fellowship. These comments tend to interweave the sentiments of emotional suffering with affirmations of a shared national identity. Comment #1 illustrates this dynamic very well: "*Kecewa berat……tapi tetap semangat para garudakuuuu.* (Deeply disappointed… but still spirited, my Garudas!)." The transition from *kecewa berat* to *tetap semangat* is meaningful both emotionally and ideologically. The phonological elongation of garudakuuuu acts as an affective intensifier while symbolizing emotional intimacy with the team. In the same way, Comment #6 asserts: "*kalah menang tetap Indonesia* (win or lose still Indonesia)" framing defeat not as a rupture, but as part of a larger story of enduring national perseverance. These positions demonstrate the ability of digital language to enable emotional modulation and collective reaffirmation in the face of public failure.

Lastly, the multimodal and stylistic features of the comments section accentuate their thematic functions. Comment sections display characteristics of digital vernaculars such as code-switching (pressing), phonetic spelling (*jepng* for Jepang), caliper ellipsis, and expressive punctuation. Emoji use is particularly noteworthy as in Comment #13 (😵, 🔂, 🔙), where the visuals convey sorrowful regression and emotional collapse. These semiotic resources enhance the emotive impact and allow users to perform their stance visually, illustrating emotion and embedding it directly into the language. Such creativity cannot be dismissed as mere decoration; it is essential to the digitally situated sociolinguistic spaces where feeling, critique, and identity are intertwined and co-constructed.

Discussion

This research investigated the linguistic expressions of disappointment, national shame, and emotional self-management by Indonesian netizens after their national football team lost 6-0 to Japan in a 2026 World Cup qualifying match. The analysis identified five primary themes: national shame and disappointment, sarcastic and humorous critique, tactical and institutional criticism, comparative

evaluation, and resilient expressions of national pride. These patterns fit within the sociolinguistic paradigms that have been developed around the digital communication genres focused on emotion, sociolinguistic layering, personal reflection, relationship dynamics, and indexicality. However, the sociolinguistic implications of these results are multilayered and paradoxical. Analyzing both the advantages (pros) and disadvantages (cons) of these conclusions helps to build a richer perspective on digital discourse regarding a nation's sporting embarrassment.

The information supports the application of sociolinguistic theories, such as Johnstone & Andrus ' (2024) stance triangle and Silverstein's (2021) indexical order, to commentaries on the Internet. The emotionally charged remarks "*bikin malu Indonesia, bikin bangga Belanda, dan bikin ketawa Jepang,* (embarrasses Indonesia, makes the Dutch proud, and the Japanese laugh) illustrate how linguistic parallelism acts as an emotional intensifier while also indexing more profound historical and geopolitical resonances. In the same vein, comments that utilize humor and hyperbole like "*Bravo 6 telorrrrr* (bravo, six eggs (goals) lollllll)" or "*memasang kiper 4 orang sekaligus,* (four goalkeepers at once)" provide evidence for digital sociolinguistics that humor acts as a means of emotional coping and group solidarity (Holmes & Marra, 2002, 2002; Lewin-Jones, 2015a, 2015a, 2015b; Mak, 2014; Mullan, 2020). The use of hybrid registers, such as informal syntax and tactical jargon (e.g., "*pressing*," "*formasi*"), demonstrates a way through which digital users assume multiple identities as fans, analysts, and citizens. Such hybridity strengthens the notion that digital spaces are sites of creative, multimodal, affective citizenship and popular critique.

In addition, phrases of solidarity like "*kalah menang tetap Indonesia,* (win or lose still Indonesia)" or "*tetap semangat para garudakuuuu,* (still spirited, my Garudas!)" demonstrate the coexistence of critique alongside resilience. This complicates the view that online discourse is wholly negative. Rather, it showcases an entire array of national sentiment where disappointment does not cancel out allegiance but, more often than not, reaffirms it via emotional investment and narrative construction. Therefore, these conclusions are still consistent with the literature on postcolonial nationalism, where national anxiety and pride over representation manifest in sport.

Nonetheless, some contradictions and limitations also arise. To start, the brevity and lack of contextual framing of the comments could result in their over-interpretation. Some linguistic elements, such as the use of ellipses and emojis, while meaningful, are sensitive to context and may serve a wide range of purposes depending on the commenter's desires or audience alignment. Assigning ideological significance to succinct statements in the absence of comprehensive sociolinguistic profiles (age, location, education) of the users runs the risk of essentializing the data. Additionally, while 16 comments may be a reasonable sample size for a qualitative micro-analysis, in the context of public opinion—particularly on YouTube, where visibility is algorithmically filtered based on likes and recency—this number does not capture sufficient diversity. This introduces a platform bias where heightened engagement, not representativeness, dominates visibility. Another important problem emerges in the ethical conflict of shaming on a public level and affective expression. While humor and sarcasm do serve a purpose as a means of collective coping for loss, they can also cross the line into harsh ridicule or player-targeted mockery as observed in exaggerative or belittling comments. This raises questions of how digital nationalism, at times, fuels punitive or exclusionary discourse, especially in contexts where national identity is tied to a certain performance. In such cases, legitimate criticism and cyberbullying diverge and blend.

There is also a sociopolitical issue regarding the distribution of blame and how it is linguistically allocated. Several comments specifically allocate blame not just to athletes, but to institution(s), coach(es), as well as other systemic decision-making structures, which indicates an emerging discourse of accountability. Yet, others rely on well-established stereotypes of national laziness and ineptitude that seem to undermine reform or constructive dialogue. This bifurcation reflects that digital spaces are both liberating and constraining.

Conclusion

This research focused on the sociolinguistic aspects of national disappointment in user comments on a YouTube video showcasing Indonesia's 6–0 defeat to Japan in a 2026 FIFA World Cup qualifier. Within the framework of digital sociolinguistics, stance theory, and indexicality, the study identified five major discursive patterns: national shame and pride, humor and scorn, tactical and institutional critiques, comparative framing, and resilient affirmations of national pride. These categories demonstrate that commenting on events online goes beyond mere reporting; it involves

performing stances, negotiating identity, and navigating complex emotions within the public digital sphere. The analysis showed that disappointment is not a singular experience. Rather, it is refracted through irony, humor, exaggeration, and stylized forms of Indonesian digital vernacular. Users constructed layered meanings with ellipsis, repetition, code-mixing, emojis, and informal spelling to position themselves as critical yet emotionally connected constituents of a national community. This illustrates the dual nature of digital spaces: as sites for unfiltered public conversation as well as points where nationalism, emotion, and critique come together in creative language. Embracing multiple perspectives on sociolinguistics, this specific study does present some limitations. For example, the individual video and single platform source used for the dataset lacks sampling representation of netizens and public upload discourse. It also fails to account for the potential discursive harm, including ridicule and exclusion, which showcase the ideological conflicts that lie beneath the digital expressions of national failure. In any case, the overarching conclusions retrieved from the study reinforce their stance to involve sociolinguistics in the analysis of contemporary language as a tool of sentiment shaping in the public domain. Some of the key findings include the perception towards collective disappointment and the identity of a nation, along with the use of language to articulate the emotion in question. An expanded scope of research that is needed could address the temporal and comparative dimension of the gendered regional dynamics of fan discourse, or study the impact of such discourse on narratives of nationhood in Southeast Asia's digitally-oriented cultures.

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