

IDEATIONAL REPRESENTATION OF AL JAZEERA ENGLISH'S DISCOURSE ON TRUMP'S VICTORY IN THE 2024 US ELECTION (A TRANSITIVITY ANALYSIS)

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Abstract: This study investigates the ideational representation of Donald Trump in Al Jazeera English's coverage of his victory in the 2024 U.S. presidential election using the transitivity framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, the study analyses three news articles published between November 2024 and January 2025. The findings reveal that Material Processes (50%) and Verbal Processes (23%) are the dominant process types. These patterns construct Trump primarily as an active political actor and a prominent communicator, while Relational Processes further reinforce his institutional legitimacy. Referential choices, including personal names, pronouns, and political titles, strengthen his representation as a personalized, normalized, and institutionally validated leader. Overall, Al Jazeera English represents Trump as agentive in action, authoritative in speech, and legitimate within formal political structures. These findings demonstrate how transitivity functions as a linguistic resource for constructing political representation in international news discourse.

Keywords: Transitivity, Ideational, Trump, Election, Al Jazeera

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 United States presidential election attracted global attention due to the re-election of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the United States. Beyond its domestic political significance, Trump's victory generated international debate because of his association with populist rhetoric, nationalist policies, and controversial foreign policy positions. As a result, the election became not only a national political event but also a global issue with potential implications for international relations and geopolitical stability.

Empirical research has shown that media framing significantly influences public perception and political polarization (Shadeed et al., 2019), particularly in highly mediated electoral contexts. News media do not simply report facts; they construct social reality through linguistic choices that influence how political actors, actions, and responsibilities are represented (Fairclough, 2003). Through news discourse, media can foreground particular actors, assign agency, and frame political legitimacy in ways that shape public interpretation.

Among international news organizations, Al Jazeera English (AJE) occupies a distinctive position. As a Qatar-based international broadcaster associated with Global South perspectives, AJE is often regarded as an alternative voice to dominant Western news networks (Figenschou, 2012; Figenschou 2013; Kraidy, 2022). The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (2024) notes the increasing transnational reach of non-Western media platforms, indicating a diversification of interpretative frameworks in global news consumption (Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, 2024). Nevertheless, AJE simultaneously operates within



Figure 1. US Presidential Election Results 2024 (Source taken from The Associated Press website; <https://apnews.com/projects/election-results-2024/?office=P>)

professional journalistic norms that intersect with dominant Anglo-American reporting standards. This dual positioning renders AJE a compelling site for examining how Western political actors are discursively constructed from a non-Western institutional vantage point.

To examine such representations, this study employs Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly the transitivity system proposed by Halliday & Matthiessen (2014). Transitivity analyzes how experience is represented through processes, participants, and circumstances (Eggins, 2007). Through these grammatical choices, news discourse can construct particular images of political actors, highlighting their agency, responsibility, legitimacy, and ideological positioning. Consequently, transitivity provides an effective framework for investigating the ideational representation of Donald Trump in media discourse.

Previous studies have extensively applied transitivity analysis in political discourse. Studies of presidential debates reveal the predominance of material processes in constructing political authority through action-oriented rhetoric (Fadilah & Kuswoyo, 2021; Kashif et al., 2022). Research on campaign speeches across diverse geopolitical contexts similarly indicates that material and relational processes are strategically deployed to establish legitimacy and ideological alignment (Guswita & Suhardi, 2020; Logogye & Ewusi-Mensah, 2021). At the level of media discourse, transitivity patterns have been shown to influence representations of political actors and geopolitical conflicts (El Houssine, 2022; Triana et al., 2020). These studies confirm that grammatical configurations are central to ideological meaning-making.

However, three substantive gaps remain in the literature. First, most transitivity-based analyses of Trump focus on his first presidency (2016–2020) or campaign rhetoric rather than the discursive construction of his 2024 re-election. Second, research on media representations of US elections predominantly centers on Western news institutions, leaving non-Western global media comparatively underexplored. Third, while prior studies frequently quantify process distributions, fewer provide a theoretically integrated account linking transitivity patterns to broader geopolitical positioning and cross-regional ideological mediation.

This study addresses these gaps by examining Al Jazeera English's coverage of Trump's 2024 electoral victory. Its novelty lies in three contributions: providing an updated analysis of Trump's representation during his second presidential term, examining how a non-Western international broadcaster represents a Western political leader, and integrating process types,

participant roles, and circumstantial elements to reveal how agency and ideological meanings are constructed in news discourse. So, the article extends transitivity analysis beyond descriptive categorization toward explanatory interpretation within global media studies.

Accordingly, this study addresses two research questions: (1) What processes of transitivity are represented in Al Jazeera English's news discourse regarding Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 US Presidential Election? and (2) How the ideational representation of Donald Trump was formed through the transitivity processes in Al Jazeera English's news discourse regarding Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 US Presidential Election? By analyzing processes, participants, and circumstances in selected Al Jazeera English news articles, this research seeks to reveal how grammatical choices contribute to the representation of Donald Trump and to broader ideological meaning-making in global journalism.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design based on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), particularly the transitivity system within the ideational metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). According to Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena in depth by focusing on meaning, process, and context rather than numerical measurement.

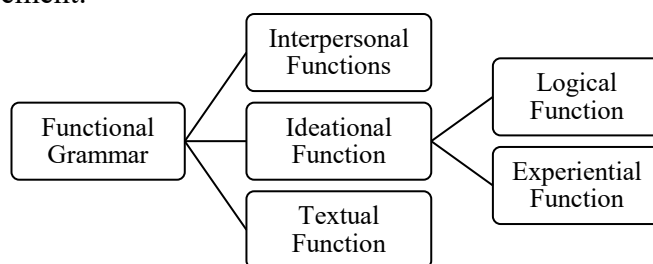


Figure 2 Functional Grammar Conceptual Framework

The primary unit of analysis in this study is the clause. Following Halliday & Matthiessen (2014), the clause is regarded as the central unit for examining experiential meaning through the transitivity system. Although the data are drawn from complete news articles as discourse units, the analysis is conducted at the clause level, where process types, participant roles, and circumstantial elements are identified and interpreted. Therefore, references to news discourse or articles in this study indicate the broader context from which the clauses are selected, while the clause remains the principal analytical unit. The analytical focus is on how grammatical structures encode agency, responsibility, and ideological positioning in international political news reporting.

The data of this study were drawn from news articles published by Al Jazeera English (AJE) concerning Donald Trump's victory in the 2024 United States presidential election. Using purposive sampling, three articles published between November 2024 and January 2025 were selected based on their relevance to Trump's electoral victory and its political implications. The selected articles were "*Donald Trump elected 47th US president (November 6, 2024)*", "*What did 2024 tell us about US voters? (December 27, 2024)*", and "*What has Donald Trump promised to do on day one of his second term? (January 18, 2025)*". These articles provide an appropriate corpus for examining the linguistic representation of Trump in news discourse.

Data were collected through documentation. The selected articles were obtained from the official Al Jazeera English website, archived, and converted into editable text files. The texts were then segmented into clauses following Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) principles, and clauses referring to Trump were identified for analysis. Then, the data were analyzed through data reduction, coding, and interpretation following Miles & Huberman (1994). Each clause was classified according to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) transitivity framework, focusing on processes, participants, and circumstances. The analysis aimed to identify dominant representational patterns and explain how transitivity structures construct Donald Trump's representation in the discourse.

RESULTS

The findings reveal six transitivity processes: Material, Mental, Relational (Attributive and Identifying), Verbal, Behavioral, and Existential. These processes collectively shape the ideational representation of Donald Trump in the discourse. The findings indicate varying frequencies across process types, with some occurring more prominently than others, revealing distinct patterns of representation. The distribution of transitivity processes is presented in the following tables.

Processes and Its Participants

In the transitivity system, the process is the core element that represents human experience through clause structures. Different process types, such as Material (*e.g.*, “attack”, “cancel”), Metal (*e.g.*, “believe”, “worry”) or relational verbs (*e.g.*, “consider”, “constitute”), shape how events are represented as actions, thoughts or feelings, or relational descriptions.

Table 1. Frequency of Occurrence in Processes

No	Processes	Sub Processes	f	(%)
1.	Material		107	50
2.	Mental		18	8
3.	Relational	Attributive	24	11
		Identifying	7	3
4.	Behavioral		2	1
5.	Verbal		50	23
6.	Existential		6	3
TOTAL			214	100

As presented in Table 1 above, 214 process occurrences were identified across the analyzed data. Material and Verbal Processes dominate the dataset, accounting for 50% and 23% of all occurrences, respectively. This distribution suggests that Trump is predominantly represented as an active political actor and a producer of political discourse. By contrast, the relatively low frequency of Mental, Existential, and Behavioral Processes indicates limited attention to his internal states, emotions, or personal experiences.

Table 2. Frequency of Occurrence in Participants

No	Processes	Sub Processes	Participants	f	(%)
1.	Material		Actor	87	21
			Goal	99	24

			Client	0	0
			Agent	0	0
			Recipient	5	1
			Range	3	1
2.	Mental				
		Senser	18	4	
		Phenomenon	18	4	
3.	Relational	Attributive	Carrier	24	6
			Attribute	24	6
	Identifying	Token	7	2	
		Value	7	2	
4.	Behavioral				
		Behaver	2	0	
		Behaviour	1	0	
5.	Verbal				
		Sayer	47	12	
		Receiver	11	3	
		Verbiage	47	12	
6.	Existent				
		Existent	6	1	
TOTAL				406	100

As shown in Table 2, 406 participants occurrences were identified across the analyzed data. The participant distribution is dominated by Goal, Actor, Sayer, and Verbiage. This pattern suggests that Trump is primarily represented through political actions and public statements. The frequent occurrence of Actor and Sayer positions him as an active agent and communicator, while Goal and Verbiage emphasize the actions and messages associated with him. The following section presents selected examples of each process type and its participant roles.

Material Process

Based on Tables 1 and 2, Material Process is the most dominant process type, accounting for 107 occurrences (50%) of the dataset. This dominance indicates that the discourse primarily represents Trump through actions and political interventions, highlighting his role as an active political actor (Priyo Widodo et al., 2018). The following section presents selected examples of Material Processes.

Excerpt 1: “*The US president-elect takes office on January 20, after a campaign that featured dozens of promises of executive action.*”

<i>The US president-elect (Trump)</i>	<i>takes</i>	<i>office</i>
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
<i>on January 20,</i>	<i>after a campaign that featured dozens of promises of executive action.</i>	
Circ: Location: Time	Circ: Location: Time	

Excerpt 1 contains a Material Process realized by “*takes*,” with Trump as the Actor and “*office*” as the Goal. The accompanying temporal and contextual elements frame the action as the fulfillment of an electoral mandate, constructing Trump as a political actor moving from campaign promises to institutional power.

Verbal Process

Verbal Processes are the second most dominant process type in the dataset, accounting for 50 occurrences (23%). This finding suggests that Trump is prominently represented through speech, statements, and political claims. The following section discusses selected examples of Verbal Processes found in the data.

Excerpt 2: “*Washington, DC – United States President-elect Donald Trump has pledged to be a dictator – but only on “day one” of his upcoming term.*”

<i>Washington, DC –</i>	<i>United States President-elect Donald Trump</i>	<i>has pledged</i>
Circ: Location: Place	Sayer	Pr: Verbal
<i>to be a dictator –</i>	<i>but</i>	<i>only on “day one” of his upcoming term.</i>
Verbiage	-	Circ: Location: Time

In Excerpt 2, “*has pledged*” realizes a Verbal Process, with “*the United States President-elect*” as the Sayer and the reported statement as the Verbiage. By reporting the statement indirectly, the clause represents Trump as a prominent political speaker while allowing the news discourse to frame and contextualize his message.

Relational Process

Relational Processes represent states of being and are used to assign attributes or establish identities. They consist of Attributive Processes, which describe qualities, and Identifying Processes, which define the relationship between two entities. Based on Tables 1 and 2, the Relational Attributive Process is the most frequent subtype of Relational Process, occurring 24 times (11%). This pattern indicates that the discourse often represents Trump through the attribution of qualities or characteristics. The Identifying subtype appears less frequently and does not dominate, namely with only 7 occurrences (3%) being found. The following are some examples of the data displayed. The following examples illustrate this process type.

Excerpt 3: “*Trump has been more circumspect lately, as his second term approaches.*”

<i>Trump</i>	<i>has been</i>	<i>more circumspect</i>
Carrier	Pr: Relational Attributive (Intensive)	Attribute
<i>lately,</i>	<i>as his (Trump) second term approaches.</i>	
Circ: Location: Time	Circ: Contingency: Condition	

The clause “*Trump has been more circumspect lately*” realizes a Relational Attributive Process, with Trump as the Carrier and “*more circumspect*” as the Attribute. By linking this quality to the approach of his second term, the clause constructs Trump as a political leader who is becoming more cautious in preparing for future governance.

Excerpt 4: “*Part of Trump’s vision for his first days in office is reimagining the federal government.*”

<i>Part of Trump’s vision</i>	<i>for his first days</i>	<i>in office</i>
	Circ: Location: Time	Circ: Location: Place
Token/Identified		
<i>is</i>	<i>reimagining the federal government.</i>	
Pr: Relational Identifying	Value/Identifier	

The clause realizes a Relational Identifying Process, with Trump’s vision as the Token and “*reimagining the federal government*” as the Value. This identification constructs Trump as a political actor whose early presidency is closely associated with institutional reform and government restructuring.

Mental Process

Based on Tables 1 and 2, Mental Processes occur 18 times (8%), with Sensor and Phenomenon appearing equally across the dataset. These processes represent cognitive, affective, and perceptual experiences, reflecting how thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and perceptions are expressed in the discourse (Mukminin et al., 2024). The following examples illustrate the use of Mental Processes in the data.

Excerpt 5: “*However, his campaign, which has seen him demonise his political opponents, immigrants and many minorities, tapped into the frustrations of many voters in a bitterly polarised nation.*”

<i>However,</i>	<i>his campaign,</i>	<i>which</i>	<i>has seen</i>
-	Senser, Actor	-	Pr: Mental
<i>him (Trump)</i>	<i>Demonise</i>	<i>his political opponents, immigrants and many minorities,</i>	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
Phenomenon			
<i>tapped into</i>	<i>the frustrations of many voters</i>	<i>in a bitterly polarised nation.</i>	
Pr: Material	Goal	Circ: Location: Place	

This sentence combines Mental and Material Processes. The Mental Process portrays the campaign as recognizing social and political tensions, while the Material Process presents it as actively channeling voter dissatisfaction. Together, these processes construct Trump’s campaign as a politically strategic actor that both identifies and mobilizes public concerns.

Existential Process

Based on Table 1, Existential Processes occur only 6 times (3%), making them one of the least frequent process types in the dataset. These processes are used to express the existence of an entity or event, typically through existential constructions (Noviyanti et al., 2023). The following examples illustrate the use of Existential Processes in the data.

Excerpt 6: “*There were many historic moments: from President-elect Donald Trump’s unprecedented conviction in his New York hush-money trial, to President Joe Biden’s surprise – and very much delayed – exit from the race, to two assassination attempts against the soon-to-be president-elect.*”

<i>There</i>	<i>Were</i>	<i>many historical moments:</i>	
-	Pr: Existential	Existent	
<i>from</i>	<i>President-elect Donald Trump’s</i>	<i>unprecedented</i>	<i>conviction</i>
	Goal		Pr: Material
Existent			
<i>in his New York hush-money trial,</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>President Joe Biden’s</i>	<i>surprise – and very much delayed</i>
Circ: Location: Place (Figurative)		Actor	
Existent			
<i>exit</i>	<i>from the race,</i>	<i>to two</i>	<i>assassination attempts</i>
Pr: Material	Circ: Matter		Pr: Material
Existent			
<i>against the soon-to-be president-elect.</i>			
Goal			
Existent			

The clause in Excerpt 6 realizes an Existential Process, with “*many historic moments*” as the Existent. By referring to events such as Trump’s verdict, Biden’s resignation, and Trump’s assassination attempt, the clause constructs the election period as one marked by major political developments.

Behavioral Process

Based on Table 1, Behavioral Processes are the least frequent process type, occurring only 2 times (1%) in the dataset. These processes represent behavioral actions performed by a participant rather than the existence of an entity. The following example illustrates a Behavioral Process identified in the data.

Excerpt 7: “*Trump has blamed his successor Biden for the deaths, though a 2023 report indicated both leaders bore responsibility. But **Trump** has persisted in pointing the finger elsewhere.*”

<i>Trump</i>	<i>has blamed</i>	<i>his successor Biden</i>	<i>for the deaths,</i>
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circ: Cause: Reason
<i>though</i>	<i>a 2023 report</i>	<i>indicated</i>	<i>both leaders bore responsibility.</i>
-	Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Verbiage
<i>But</i>	<i>Trump</i>	<i>has persisted</i>	<i>in pointing the finger elsewhere.</i>
-	Behaver	Pr: Behavioral	Behaviour

The clause “*Trump has persisted in pointing the finger elsewhere*” realizes a Behavioral Process, with Trump as the Behavior. By emphasizing the persistence of this behavior, the clause constructs Trump as a political actor who regularly redirects responsibility away from himself.

Circumstantial Elements

While Processes and Participants are the core elements of transitivity, Circumstances provide additional contextual information (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Circumstances help explain when, where, why, and how an event occurs (Thompson, 2014). In news discourse, these elements play an important role in shaping readers’ understanding of events and their contexts, thereby contributing to the framing of information and ideological meaning (Suparto, 2018).

Table 3 Frequency of Occurrence in Circumstances

No	Circumstances	Sub Circumstances	f	(%)
1.	Extent	Distance	0	0
		Duration	9	5
		Frequency	4	2
2.	Location	Place	42	22
		Time	60	31
3.	Manner	Relational	0	0
		Means	0	0
		Quality	7	4
		Comparison	8	4
		Degree	2	1
4.	Cause	Reason	8	4
		Purpose	14	7
		Behalf	0	0
5.	Contingency	Condition	5	3
		Concession	0	0
		Default	0	0
6.	Accompaniment	Comitative	8	4
		Addition	1	1
7.	Role	Guisse	6	3
		Product	0	0
8.	Matter		16	8
9.	Angle		1	1
TOTAL			191	100

As shown in Table 3, Time and Place are the most frequent circumstantial elements, followed by Matter and Cause. This distribution represents political events as context-dependent actions that are closely linked to specific settings, issues, and purposes. The following section discusses how these circumstantial patterns contribute to the representation of Trump in the discourse.

Circumstance of Location

Based on Table 3 above, it can be seen that location and time information (location circumstances) appeared most frequently in the new discourse. This indicates that Al Jazeera English's reporting places great emphasis on temporal and spatial context in reporting election events. Some of the findings of the data analysis are presented below.

Excerpt 8: *During a CNN town hall in May 2023, Trump said the war would be 'absolutely over' within '24 hours' of him taking office.*

<i>During a CNN town hall in May 2023,</i>		<i>Trump</i>	<i>said</i>
Circ: Location: Time		Sayer	Pr: Verbal
<i>the war</i>	<i>would be</i>	<i>“absolutely over”</i>	
Carrier	Pr: Relational Attributive	Attribute	
Verbiage			
<i>within “24 hours” of him taking office.</i>			
Circ: Location: Time			
Verbiage			

Excerpt 8 contains two Circumstances of Time: "*during a CNN town hall in May 2023,*" which situates Trump's statement within a specific political event, and "*within 24 hours of him taking office,*" which specifies the promised timeframe for action. These temporal elements not only locate the event chronologically but also reinforce Trump's representation as a political actor who presents concrete and time-bound commitments.

Excerpt 9: *"Results showed Trump beating Vice President Kamala Harris in a race far less tight than expected as he triumphed in key battleground states."*

<i>Results</i>	<i>showed</i>	<i>Trump</i>	<i>beating</i>	<i>Vice President Kamala Harris</i>
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Actor	Pr: Material	Goal
		Verbiage		
<i>in a race</i>		<i>far less tight than expected</i>		
Circ: Location: Place		Circ: Manner: Quality		
Verbiage				
<i>as</i>	<i>he (Trump)</i>	<i>triumphed</i>	<i>in key battleground states.</i>	
	Actor	Pr: Material	Circ: Location: Place	
Verbiage				

In Excerpt 9, "*Trump beating Vice President Kamala Harris*" realizes a Material Process. The Circumstances of Place, "*in a race*" and "*in key battleground states,*" frame the victory as occurring in electorally decisive contexts. By highlighting these strategic locations, the clause constructs Trump as an effective political actor capable of winning in the regions most crucial to securing presidential power.

Circumstance of Cause

Cause is the second most frequent Circumstance category, with Purpose and Reason as its dominant subtypes. Purpose indicates the intended goal of an action, while Reason explains

why the action occurs. This pattern suggests that the discourse frequently emphasizes the motivations and justifications behind political actions. The following examples illustrate these circumstantial elements.

Excerpt 10: “*Sitting at a town hall with host Sean Hannity, Trump used a question about whether he would abuse presidential power to pivot to his long list of day-one priorities.*”

<i>Sitting at a town hall</i>		<i>with host Sean Hannity,</i>	
Circ: Location: Place		Circ: Accompaniment: Comitative	
<i>Trump</i>	<i>used</i>	<i>a question about whether he would abuse presidential power</i>	
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	
<i>to pivot to his long list of day-one priorities.</i>			
Circ: Cause: Purpose			

In Excerpt 10, “*used*” represents a Material Process, with “*Trump*” as the Actor and “*a question about whether he would abuse presidential power*” as the Goal. The Circumstance of Cause: Purpose (*to pivot to his long list of day-one priorities*) indicating that the question was strategically used to redirect attention to his policy agenda.

Excerpt 11: “*He blames regulations for stymieing businesses and dumping excess costs on American consumers.*”

<i>He (Trump)</i>	<i>blames</i>	<i>regulations</i>	<i>for stymieing businesses and dumping excess costs on American consumers.</i>
Actor	Pr: Material	Goal	Circ: Cause: Reason

In Excerpt 11, “*blames*” realizes a Verbal Process, with Trump as the Sayer and “*regulations*” as the Verbiage. The Circumstance of Reason (“*for stymieing businesses and dumping excess costs on American consumers*”) legitimizes the accusation by providing a specific justification. This construction represents Trump as an actor who identifies causes of economic problems and assigns responsibility through political discourse.

Circumstance of Matter

Based on Table 3, Circumstance of Matter occurs frequently in the dataset, indicating a strong focus on particular topics and issues within the discourse. The following examples demonstrate its use in the analyzed data.

Excerpt 12: “*A new nongovernmental board he plans to set up – called the Department of Government Efficiency – has been charged with identifying regulations that can be rolled back.*”

<i>A new nongovernmental board</i>	<i>he (Trump)</i>	<i>plans</i>	<i>to set up</i>
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Phenomenon Goal	Senser	Pr: Mental	Phenomenon
Token/Identified			
– called	<i>the Department of Government Efficiency –</i>		<i>has been charged</i>
Pr: Relational Identifying	Value/Identifier		Pr: Material
<i>with identifying regulations that can be rolled back.</i>			
Circ: Matter			

In Excerpt 12, “*has been charged*” realizes a passive Material Process, with “*a new nongovernmental board*” as the Goal. The Circumstance of Matter (“*with identifying regulations that can be rolled back*”) defines the substance of the assigned task. This element foregrounds deregulation as a concrete policy priority, thereby representing Trump’s political agenda through institutional action rather than through direct personal intervention.

Circumstance of Manner

Based on Table 3, Circumstances of Manner appear moderately across the dataset. This indicates that the discourse not only focuses on political actions but also on how those actions are performed. The following examples demonstrate the use of Circumstances of Manner in the data

Excerpt 13: “*In the final count, Trump failed to win the support of a majority of US voters, taking 49.9 percent to Harris’s 48.4.*”

<i>In the final count,</i>	<i>Trump</i>	<i>failed to win</i>
Circ: Location: Time	Actor	Pr: Material (Negated)
<i>the support of a majority of US voters,</i>	<i>taking 49.9 percent to Harris’s 48.4.</i>	
Goal	Circ: Manner: Comparison	

In Excerpt 13, “*failure to win*” represents a Material Process, with “*Trump*” as the Actor and voter support as the Goal. The Circumstance of Comparison (*taking 49.9 percent to Harris’s 48.4*) compares Trump’s vote share with Harris’s, illustrating the electoral outcome.

Excerpt 14: “*Perhaps more frustratingly for Democrats, voters in three states – Arizona, Missouri and Montana – supported enshrining abortion in their state constitutions, while simultaneously voting for Trump.*”

<i>Perhaps</i>	<i>more frustratingly</i>	<i>for Democrats,</i>
-	Circ: Manner: Quality	Recipient
<i>voters</i>	<i>in three states – Arizona, Missouri and Montana –</i>	<i>supported</i>
	Circ: Location: Place	Pr: Material
	Actor	
<i>enshrining abortion in their state constitutions,</i>		<i>while simultaneously</i>
Goal		Circ: Location: Time
<i>voting</i>	<i>for</i>	<i>Trump</i>

Pr: Material	-	Goal
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In Excerpt 14, “*Perhaps more frustratingly for Democrats*” functions as a Circumstance of Manner: Quality. By foregrounding the Democratic response, it frames the event as politically consequential and reinforces the significance of Trump’s electoral success.

Excerpt 15: “*During a news conference in December, Trump went further, pledging to cut 10 regulations for every new one added.*”

<i>During</i>	<i>a news conference</i>	<i>in December,</i>	<i>Trump</i>
	Circ: Location: Place		Sayer
	Circ: Location: Time		Actor
<i>went further,</i>	<i>pledging</i>	<i>to cut</i>	<i>10 regulations</i>
Circ: Manner: Degree	Pr: Verbal	Pr: Material	Goal
		Verbiage	
	<i>for every new one added</i>		
	Circ: Contingency: Condition		
	Verbiage		

In Excerpt 15, “*went further*” functions as a Circumstance of Manner: Degree, strengthening the commitment expressed in Trump’s pledge. This construction reinforces his representation as a decisive and committed political actor.

Circumstance of Accompaniment

Based on Table 3, Circumstances of Accompaniment occur in the forms of Comitative and Addition. These elements help frame actions by indicating accompanying participants or by adding information beyond the main process. The following examples are presented

Excerpt 16: “*But with nearly 60 day-one promises and up to 100 executive orders expected, Trump’s workload as he re-enters the White House is set to be particularly hefty.*”

<i>But with nearly 60 day-one promises and up to 100 executive orders expected,</i>	<i>Trump’s workload</i>
Circ: Accompaniment: Comitative	Carrier
<i>as he (Trump) re-enters the White House</i>	<i>is set to be</i>
Circ: Location: Time (Event)	Pr: Relational
	Attributive
	Attribute

In Excerpt 16, “*Trump’s workload*” functions as the Carrier and “*particularly hefty*” as the Attribute. The Circumstance of Accompaniment (“*with nearly 60 days of promises and up to 100 executive orders expected*”) foregrounds the scope of planned actions, constructing Trump as a political actor associated with an ambitious and demanding policy agenda.

Excerpt 17: “*Trump has indicated he plans to pursue a wide-ranging deregulation programme when he re-enters office as well.*”

<i>Trump</i>	<i>has indicated</i>	<i>he</i>	<i>plans</i>
Sayer	Pr: Verbal	Senser	Pr: Mental
		Verbiage	
<i>to pursue a wide-ranging deregulation programme</i>	<i>when he re-enters office</i>	<i>as well</i>	
Phenomenon	Circ: Location: Time	Circ: Accompaniment: Addition	
Verbiage			

In Excerpt 17, “*has indicated*” represents a Verbal Process, with “*Trump*” as the Sayer. The projected Material Process “*to pursue a wide-ranging deregulation program*” portrays him as the Actor of the intended action. The Circumstance of Time (“*when he re-enters office*”) connects the action to his return to power, while “*as well*” expands it beyond a single policy proposal. Together, these elements represent Trump as an active political leader with a broad policy agenda.

Circumstance of Role

Based on Table 3, Circumstances of Role are primarily realized through the Guise subtype. These elements identify individuals by their professional or institutional roles, helping to contextualize and legitimize the information presented. The following examples are shown below.

Excerpt 18: “*Donald Trump has been elected to return to the White House as the 47th United States president.*”

<i>Donald Trump</i>	<i>has been elected</i>	<i>to return to the White House</i>	<i>as the 47th United States president.</i>
Goal	Pr: Material	Circ: Cause: Purpose	Circ: Role: Guise

In Excerpt 18, “*has been elected*” realizes a passive Material Process, with Trump as the Goal. The Circumstance of Role: Guise (“*as the 47th United States president*”) frames his return in an official political capacity, reinforcing his representation as an institutionally validated and legitimate political leader.

Circumstance of Extent

Based on Table 3, Circumstances of Extent appear less frequently than other circumstantial categories. This suggests that the discourse places greater emphasis on situating events in terms of time and place rather than highlighting how long or how often actions occur. The following examples are presented below.

Excerpt 19: “*The year may be coming to an end, but the extraordinary political events of the United States election season will cast a long shadow into 2025 and beyond.*”

<i>The year may be coming to an end,</i>	<i>but</i>	<i>the extraordinary political events of the United States election season</i>
Circ: Extent: Duration	-	Actor
<i>will cast</i>	<i>a long shadow</i>	<i>into 2025 and beyond</i>

Pr: Material	Goal	Circ: Extent: Duration
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In Excerpt 19, “*will cast*” realizes a Material Process, with the election events as the Actor and “*a long shadow*” as the Goal. The Circumstances of Duration (“*into 2025 and beyond*”) extend the effects of the election into the future, constructing Trump’s victory as an event with lasting political significance.

Excerpt 20: “*Harris had repeatedly warned that Trump, if elected, would work with Republicans to pass a federal abortion ban.*”

<i>Harris</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>repeatedly</i>	<i>warned</i>	<i>that</i>
Sayer Actor	-	Circ: Extent: Frequency	Pr: Verbal	-
<i>Trump,</i>	<i>if elected,</i>		<i>would work</i>	
Receiver	Circ: Contingency: Condition		Pr: Material	
	Verbiage			
<i>with Republicans</i>		<i>to pass a federal abortion ban.</i>		
Circ: Accompaniment: Comitative		Circ: Cause: Purpose		
Verbiage				

In Excerpt 20, “*warned*” realizes a Verbal Process, with Harris as the Sayer. The Circumstance of Frequency (“*repeatedly*”) reinforces the warning by presenting it as a recurring message, emphasizing the perceived significance of the issue in political discourse.

Circumstance of Contingency

Based on Table 3, Circumstances of Contingency are limited to the Condition subtype and occur only rarely. This pattern indicates that the discourse tends to present political events directly rather than through hypothetical conditions. The following example is presented below.

Excerpt 21: “*All eyes are on how he will wield his authority once back in the White House.*”

<i>all eyes</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>on how</i>	<i>he (Trump)</i>	<i>will wield</i>
Carrier	Pr: Relational Attributive		Actor	Pr: Material
			Attribute	
<i>his authority</i>		<i>once back in the White House.</i>		
Goal		Circ: Contingency: Condition		
Attribute				

In Excerpt 21, “*wield*” realizes a Material Process, with Trump as the Actor and “*his authority*” as the Goal. The Circumstance of Condition (“*once back in the White House*”) frames the use of authority as dependent on institutional office, reinforcing Trump’s representation as a political actor whose power is tied to formal presidential status.

Circumstance of Angle

Based on Table 3, Circumstances of Angle occur least frequently in the dataset. This element is used to indicate the source or perspective of information, showing from whom a statement or claim originates. The following example illustrates its use.

Excerpt 22: “*The Republican candidate has won at least 277 Electoral College votes, per The Associated Press.*”

<i>The Republican candidate</i>	<i>has won</i>
Actor	Pr: Material
<i>at least 277 Electoral College votes,</i>	<i>per The Associated Press.</i>
Goal	Circ: Angle

In Excerpt 22, “*has won*” realizes a Material Process, with “*the Republican candidate*” as the Actor and “*at least 277 Electoral College votes*” as the Goal. The Circumstance of Angle: Source (“*the Associated Press*”) grounds the claim in an authoritative source, constructing Trump’s victory as a legitimate and officially validated electoral outcome.

Referential Strategies in Representing Trump

In addition to transitivity patterns, referential strategies contribute to the representation of Donald Trump in the discourse. Trump is referred to through direct nomination, pronouns, and institutional titles, which foreground either his personal identity or his political authority (Fairclough, 2013; Van Leeuwen, 2008). These referential forms interact with transitivity structures to shape his agency and positioning within the news texts. Given the dominance of Material and Verbal Processes, the analysis focuses on how Trump is represented as an Actor and a Sayer in these processes. The distribution of these referential forms is presented in the following table.

Referential Strategies in Material Processes Dominance

Table 4 Distribution of Trump as Participants in Material Process

Data Source	Type of Participants	Pronoun/Noun	Frequency
News 1	Actor	<i>Trump</i>	4
		<i>He</i>	3
		<i>Him</i>	1
		<i>The former president</i>	1
		<i>The Republican candidate</i>	1
		<i>Who</i>	1
	Goal	<i>Trump</i>	2
		<i>Donald Trump</i>	2
	Recipient	<i>the Republican candidate</i>	1
News 2	Actor	<i>Trump</i>	2
	Goal	<i>He</i>	2
		<i>President-elect Donald Trump’s</i>	1
		<i>Trump</i>	2
		<i>Trump and Harris</i>	1

News 3	Actor	<i>Trump</i>	16
		<i>He</i>	9
		<i>The US president-elect</i>	1
	Recipient	<i>Him</i>	1
TOTAL			51

Based on Table 4, Donald Trump is predominantly represented through direct nomination in Material Processes. The frequent use of “*Trump*” as Actor indicates that he is primarily positioned as the initiator of political actions rather than as an affected participant. Indirect references, including pronouns and institutional titles, also appear and contribute to positioning him within specific political and grammatical roles. Overall, these referential strategies reinforce Trump’s representation as a central and active political agent in the discourse.

Referential Strategies in Verbal Processes Dominance

Table 5 Distribution of Trump as Participants in Verbal Process

Data Source	Type of Participants	Pronoun/Noun	Frequency
News 1	Sayer	<i>Trump</i>	1
		<i>He</i>	1
News 2	Sayer	<i>Trump</i>	1
	Receiver	<i>Trump</i>	1
News 3	Sayer	<i>Donald Trump</i>	1
		<i>He</i>	8
		<i>Trump</i>	20
		<i>United States President-elect Donald Trump</i>	1
TOTAL			34

Based on Table 5, Donald Trump is predominantly represented through direct nomination in Verbal Processes, primarily as the Sayer. This pattern positions him as an active speaker who articulates political statements and narratives. The findings from Tables 4 and 5 further indicate that referential choices shape his representation in the discourse. Direct nomination foregrounds his personal identity, pronouns normalize his presence, and institutional titles emphasize his political legitimacy. Together, these forms construct Trump as a personalized and institutionally recognized political actor.

DISCUSSION

Discursive Positioning of Trump

Donald Trump is predominantly represented through Material and Verbal Processes, with lower frequencies of Relational and Mental Processes. This pattern constructs him as an active political actor and authoritative communicator. Material Processes position him primarily as Actor, foregrounding agency in political actions, although some instances indicate institutionally mediated authority. Verbal Processes consistently assign him the role of Sayer, highlighting his participation in the production of political discourse through speeches and

policy statements. Relational Processes function to legitimize his institutional role, while Mental Processes are largely limited to the expression of political viewpoints rather than affective or cognitive states. Overall, the discourse constructs Trump as an active, authoritative, and institutionally legitimate figure, with minimal representation of passivity or emotionality due to the marginal presence of Behavioral and Existential Processes.

Ideological Implications of Representation

The findings suggest a pattern of discursive moderation in Al Jazeera English's representation of Trump. Although he is portrayed as a powerful political actor through action-oriented and speech-related processes, his authority is consistently framed within institutional and geopolitical contexts. This representation avoids both glorification and delegitimization, constructing Trump as an influential yet institutionally bounded leader. Consistent with Fairclough (1992) and Van Dijk (1997), the ideological stance emerges through structural linguistic choices rather than explicit evaluation. Moreover, the discourse emphasizes broader issues such as voter polarization and global political consequences, shifting attention from personality-centered narratives to systemic political dynamics. Consequently, Trump is represented as (1) agentive in action, (2) authoritative in speech, (3) legitimate within institutional structures, and (4) politically consequential at the global level. This configuration avoids extreme polarization and instead produces a moderated discursive stance that sustains journalistic credibility while maintaining critical distance.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that Al Jazeera English predominantly represents Donald Trump through Material and Verbal Processes, positioning him as both an active political actor and a primary source of political discourse in the news about his re-election in the 2024 United States presidential election. Material Processes foreground his actions, decisions, and interventions, while Verbal Processes emphasize his role in producing political statements, promises, and claims. Relational Processes further reinforce his institutional legitimacy by linking him to formal political roles and authority. In contrast, the relatively limited use of Mental and Existential Processes minimizes attention to his personal thoughts, emotions, and subjective experiences. The analysis also shows that circumstantial elements, particularly Time and Place, systematically situate Trump's actions within specific political and geopolitical contexts. As a result, Trump is represented not as an abstract political figure, but as an actor whose actions and statements are embedded within broader institutional and historical settings.

Overall, the findings confirm that transitivity choices function as linguistic mechanisms for constructing political meaning. Through recurring patterns of process selection, participant roles, and circumstantial framing, Al Jazeera English represents Trump as an agentive, communicative, and institutionally legitimate political figure. At the same time, his power is framed within institutional and contextual boundaries rather than through explicit evaluation. This suggests that ideological meaning is constructed through grammatical choices that shape how political actors, actions, and authority are represented in news discourse. From a media studies perspective, objectivity is often understood as neutrality and balance; however, scholarship acknowledges that complete neutrality is rarely achievable (Mustika, 2017; Zulham et al., 2024).

This study contributes to critical media discourse analysis by demonstrating how transitivity structures operate as resources for ideological representation in international

journalism. However, the findings are limited to a small corpus from a single media outlet. Future research may expand the dataset, compare multiple news organizations, or incorporate other metafunctions of Systemic Functional Linguistics to provide a broader understanding of political representation across media contexts.

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