

تحليل التعدية في التقارير الإخبارية حول انهيار نظام الأسد

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A Transitivity Analysis of News Reports of Al-Assad's Regime Collapse
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Abstract: This study deals with how Western and Middle Eastern media linguistically represent Al-Assad's regime collapse and how the reporters' ideologies play an essential role in showing this issue to the reader. This study aims first at demonstrating to what extent the linguistic representations differ in the journalists' reports of both Western and Middle Eastern media during the coverage of Al-Assad's collapse. Second, which types of transitivity processes are most frequently employed in the selected reports, and what ideological meaning do they convey. Third, how are the ideological stances towards the fall reflected through lexical choices and process types?

This study adopts a qualitative-quantitative descriptive research design grounded in the light of transitivity and the lexical selections of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The data were selected intentionally from the news reports published by Western and Middle Eastern media during the phase of extensive coverage of Al-Assad's regime collapse depending on thematic relevance and time-based immediacy of the event.

The research concludes that the reporters manipulate linguistic selections in order to influence readers' perceptions and views, and that some reporters support Al-Assad's regime collapse, considering it as the beginning of freedom for the Syrian people, while others see it as the beginning of freedom as well as the beginning of crises and an uncertain future without any regime at the same time. The study also concludes that the material processes, which contain verbs of doing and happening, are the most adopted choices and dominant in the coverage.



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المستخلص : تتناول هذه الدراسة الكيفية التي تقوم بها وسائل الإعلام الغربية والشرق أوسطية بتمثيل انهيار نظام الأسد تمثيلاً لغوياً، وكيف تؤدي أيديولوجيات الصحفيين دوراً أساسياً في عرض هذه القضية للقارئ. وتهدف الدراسة أولاً إلى بيان مدى اختلاف التمثيلات اللغوية في تقارير الصحفيين لدى كل من وسائل الإعلام الغربية والشرق أوسطية أثناء تغطية انهيار نظام الأسد. وثانياً، تحديد أنواع عمليات التعدي الأكثر استخداماً في التقارير المختارة، وما تحمله من دلالات أيديولوجية. وثالثاً، بيان كيفية انعكاس المواقف الأيديولوجية تجاه هذا الانهيار من خلال الاختيارات المعجمية وأنواع العمليات.

تعتمد هذه الدراسة منهجاً وصفيّاً يجمع بين التحليلين النوعي والكمي، مستنداً إلى نظرية التعدي والاختيارات المعجمية ضمن إطار اللسانيات الوظيفية النظامية. وقد جرى اختيار البيانات بصورة قصدية من التقارير الإخبارية المنشورة في وسائل الإعلام الغربية والشرق أوسطية خلال مرحلة التغطية المكثفة لانهيار نظام الأسد، وذلك استناداً إلى الصلة الموضوعية وحادثة الحدث زمنياً. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الصحفيين يوظفون الاختيارات اللغوية توظيفاً مقصوداً للتأثير في تصورات القراء وآرائهم. كما تشير النتائج إلى أن بعض الصحفيين يدعمون انهيار نظام الأسد، معتبرين إياه بدايةً للحرية بالنسبة للشعب السوري، في حين يرى آخرون أنه يمثل في الوقت ذاته بدايةً للحرية وبدايةً لأزمات ومستقبل غير مؤكد في ظل غياب أي نظام. كذلك توصلت الدراسة إلى أن العمليات المادية، التي تتضمن أفعال الإنجاز والحدوث، هي الأكثر استخداماً وهي السائدة في التغطية الإعلامية.

1. Introduction

The fall of long-standing regimes like Al-Assad's represented one of the important geopolitical disturbance events, which greatly affect the perception of the public according to the Western and Middle Eastern media discourse. In media, the underlying ideologies of people, the institutional orientations, and the political objectives are reflected through specific language choices in news reports, which have been presented differently by Western and Middle Eastern media outlets to create reality rather than just conveying facts.

Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which offers an analytical framework, is assigned for revealing how the ideational metafunction grasped through transitivity choices encodes experience and ideology. By investigating the linguistic representation of actions, events, participants, and circumstances, researchers can show implicit judgments and ideological views embedded in news discourse by using transitivity processes and lexical selections to show how reporters exploit linguistic resources to affect readers' views of the event. The problem of this study consisted in how selected Western and Middle Eastern news agencies linguistically embody the collapse of Al-Assad's

government. This study displays how news discourse forms conflicting narratives of emancipation, instability, and uncertainty by analyzing the power of specific process types.

To achieve the objectives of this paper, the following research questions are formulated:

- Which transitivity techniques are most commonly used, and what ideological implications do they convey?
- In what ways is the journalists' ideology toward Al-Assad's collapse stated in linguistic choices and process types?
- How do the Middle Eastern media differ from the Western media organizations in linguistic representations?

Selected news articles from the media coverage during the collapse of Al-Assad's rule make up the research sample because the political crises usually produce intensely ideologically charged language. They are intentionally chosen because they are reputable and widely read texts that have a big effect on public opinion both locally and globally.

The media institutions that were selected in this paper were specifically chosen to reflect two different geopolitical and ideological contexts in Western media and Middle Eastern media since they differ in terms of political alignment, audience orientation, and editorial policies.

This research can better clarify media bias and discourse manipulation by revealing how ideological positioning is linguistically encoded through transitivity and vocabulary choices to show the contrast between various media outlets.

Through the use of a transitivity-based analysis within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, this study emphasizes how language choices shape political narratives and impact readers' perceptions of regime collapse and its outcome.

As far as the analytical methodology is concerned, this study is based on systemic functional linguistics. In order to affirm the thematic relevance and temporal compatibility with the coverage of Al-Assad's regime collapse, several procedures are followed: The selected news reports are gathered and thoroughly examined; the clause is selected as the main unit of analysis, and the texts are divided into clauses; the sort of process—material, mental, relational, linguistic, behavioral, or existential—as well as the participants and situational aspects involved are identified for each clause; and the prominent patterns in Western and Middle Eastern media stories are found by quantitatively calculating the frequency and distribution of transitivity processes. Finally, a qualitative analysis is conducted to assess the ideological implications of the chosen methods and linguistic choices in light of the reports' sociopolitical

environment. Special attention is paid to material processes, especially verbs of doing and happening, to show how agency, responsibility, and causality are linguistically ascribed or concealed in order to identify parallels and discrepancies in ideological representation and discursive framing; the results from the two media environments are finally contrasted.

A thorough investigation of transitivity as a technique for identifying ideological bias in news reporting is presented to enhance the domains of media discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistics. By concentrating on the fall of Al-Assad's administration, the study offers fresh insights into how media organizations create conflicting narratives of political change while addressing a politically delicate and understudied event from a language standpoint. Furthermore, by connecting linguistic study with geopolitical and cultural aspects of discourse, the comparative analysis of Western and Middle Eastern media enhances current scholarship. Moreover, the relevance methodology of this study provides a reproducible analytical model that can be applied to different political events and media situations. Finally, this paper develops our knowledge of how language choices affect readers' views. It is also beneficial for scholars studying linguistics, media studies, political communication, and critical discourse analysis.

1. Literature Review

1.1 Transitivity System

Morley (2000) states, "The ideational function is the one whereby a speaker expresses the prepositional content elements of his or her utterance; in other words, communicates ideas" (p.11). The term 'ideational' derives from 'ideas,' which means people can express their ideas". In the ideational meta-function of language, the speaker refers to people, actions, states, events, objects (whether concrete or abstract), as well as circumstances such as time, manner, cause, and location (Butt, 2000, p. 46).

There are three parts in the clause within this ideational meta-function:

1. Participants refer to people, objects, etc. Nominal groups or prepositional phrases realize them.
2. Process refers to action, etc., which is realized by the verbal group. It is the center of the clause.
3. Circumstances provide additional information concerning (why, when, where, how). They are realized by adverbial groups, prepositional phrases, and rarely by nominals acting as adverbs.

People treat experiences in two ways: either consciously or unconsciously. Subsequently, the experiential meta-function is used to express either the external world (things, events, qualities, etc.) or our internal world (thoughts, beliefs, feelings, etc.). In this aspect, Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) agree with the Whorfian hypothesis that language provides us with structures for our

experience. Language determines the way we look at things (Thompson, 2014, p. 91).

In order to express these experiences, there is a need for a channel or helping tool. The channel for this meta-function is called 'transitivity' (Bakuuro, 2017). Transitivity is the grammatical realization of the clause. It is a powerful tool for language analysis that shows how grammar and meaning are linked (Eggins, 2004, p. 207). Such 'transitivity' is a frame for arranging participants, processes, and circumstances. Transitivity no longer determines whether the verb is transitive or intransitive; it refers to the clause as a whole, including participants, verbal groups, and circumstances. It is simply a type of process that expresses our experiences. It is a scale of different processes. Since experiences are endless, there are many experiences. Thus, there are different types of processes. They express these experiential meanings (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p.217)

Liping (2014) notes that: Material, relational, mental are the three main types of processes. They are the 'principal' types in that they are the cornerstones of the grammar in its guise as a theory of experience, they present three distinct kinds of structural configuration, and they account for the majority of all clauses in a text. The other three processes are located at each of the boundaries. Behavioral processes share the characteristics of material and mental processes; verbal processes share those of mental and relational processes, while existential processes are between relational and material processes (p.133).

1.2. Processes of Transitivity

1.2.1 Material Process

The first process in the ideational metafunction is the material process (henceforth, MT.P.). It is the clause doing and happening. Material causes a change in the flow of events, and sometimes this change requires energy. It includes physical actions (such as running, throwing, scratching, cooking, sitting down, and so on) (Martin, 1997, p. 103).

In MT. P., the parts and their elements are named and distributed in this way

:

<u>Parts</u>	<u>Name of elements in the part</u>
Participants	actor, goal, range, beneficiary.
Processes	doing, happening.
Circumstances	location, manner, cause, accompanied, matter, what.

The first part (participants) has an element called the 'actor', which is inherent in the clause. It is the doer of action and responsible for the performance. The second element is 'goal', which is affected by the action. The 'range' is similar to the cognate object, in which the object is driven by the verb. The 'beneficiary' is

the recipient of the action, i.e., to whom something is given or done (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 226-227).

The second part includes the verb, which expresses 'doing' process, where there is a change in the state or a new outcome. This implies 'X does something to Y.' It is called 'creative, transitive, or intention' process. The verb part can also express 'happening' process, in which there is no outcome. This implies, 'There is something that happened to X.' It is called 'transformative or voluntary' (Thompson, 2014, pp. 96-97).

The third part, which is (circumstance), is optional. It appears just to explain the environment of experience. It expresses the location: when and where. The circumstances express the reasons behind the action. It expresses the matter, which is the action about what. In addition, it expresses accompanied (with whom) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp.226-227).

Additionally, when 'creative' is used, the actor brings something into existence that has not been found before. Certain verbs are used in this process (paint, produce, create, emerge, build, write, draw, etc.). If 'transformative' is used, then the actor no longer brings something. However, the role of an actor is to transfer something that already exists in the world to something else (Thompson, 2014, p. 97). Nevertheless, Simpson (1993) has referred to the difficulty of separating MT. P. types. It is not clear whether the participants move to do things or not or whether certain processes are intentional or not. (Pp.83-84)

1.2.2. Mental Process

The mental process (henceforth, MN. P.) focuses on mental consciousness. It refers to the changes in the flow of events inside our consciousness. Either these events emerge from the person's consciousness or they impinge on the person. The experience in MN. P. is 'sensing.' From a semantic perspective, there are clear differences between something that goes on in the external world and something that goes on in the internal world of the mind; this is the main difference between material and mental. There are many verbs that refer to these processes (thinking, imagining, liking, wanting, seeing, etc.). (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 245).

There are three sub-categories of MN. P.: cognitive (recognizing, analyzing, arguing, clarifying, deciding, knowing, understanding); emotive (loving, hating, liking, wanting); and perceptive (seeing, hearing, etc.) (Lock, 1996, p. 107). The three parts of MN. P. are

Parts	<u>Name of elements in this part</u>
Participants	senser, phenomenon.
Process	sensing.
Circumstances	location, manner, cause, accompanied, matter, what.

There are two main participants. The first one is 'senser' while the second is 'phenomenon.' The senser in MN. P. must be human or something that has human qualities. The second participant, which is the 'phenomenon,' can be human or non-human (Thompson, 2014, p. 99).

1.2.3 Relational Process

The relational process (henceforth, RL. P.) is realized by the verbs 'be' and 'have' in simple or past tense. The 'being' and 'having' experiences are constructed. The function of RL. P. is simply to indicate the existence of the relationship. There is no process in the mode of 'something happening.' Though there are two concepts of relational process, one on each side of the relationship, in fact, there is only one participant in the real world (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 259). RL. P., is different from the MT. P., in which there is no outcome at all. It is also different from MN. P. in which there is no phenomenon. RL. P., refers to a fact that cannot be treated as a phenomenon but only as a type of relationship. The participants do not affect each other (Thompson, 2014, pp. 102-103)

The parts and elements of this type are below:

<u>Parts</u>	<u>Name of elements in the part</u>
Participants	carrier, attribute.
Processes	being, having.
Circumstances	location, time, cause. etc.

There are two elements or modes of RL. P. in the scope of grammatical difference: the attributive mode and the identifying mode. In attributive, there are two parts; the first one is called 'carrier,' while the second is called 'attribute.' Secondly, the identifying mode is to identify one entity in terms of another one (Thompson, 2014, p. 102). The process of identifying is equivalent in a way to the equal sign '='. In addition, the process of identifying is reversible in the sense that (if $x = y$, then $y = x$). The idea of identification is to relate a specific entity to the most general category. Identifying the entity adds realization to the entity. The specific participant is called 'identifier,' while the general participant is called 'identified.' Consequently, the general idea is called 'value,' while the specific is called 'token.' The direction will be from specific to general or vice versa (Thompson, 2014, p. 103).

1.2.4 Verbal Process

The experience expressed through the verbal process (henceforth, VR. P.) is 'transformation of the message through language.' VR. P. clauses are frequently used to develop dialogue models based on what 'x' said, then 'y' said. The main verb used in this process is 'tell' with its synonyms like 'talk,' 'reply,' 'say,' and 'counter.' These verbs reflect characteristics of dialogic exchange. The VR. P. is also called the 'saying' process (Thompson, 2014, pp. 106-108). There are three participants in VR: P., the sayer, the receiver, and the verbiage. The sayer is

responsible for the process. The 'sayer' is the inherent participant. The 'receiver' is the entity to which the process is addressed. The receiver is typically human (Thompson, 2014, p. 107). Sometimes, the receiver does not remain in the clause. The receiver is an 'oblique' participant, and it appears in a prepositional clause. The 'verbiage' is a nominalized statement of the verbal process. The verbiage is a process that is summarized in nominal groups (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp. 304-305).

1.2.5 Existential Process

In the existential process (henceforth, EX. P.), there is no action. It expresses something that exists. It is indicated by the verb 'be' in the present or past; other verbs that usually express existentiality are 'exist,' 'arise,' and 'occur.' EX. P. expresses 'existing' experiences. It is also called 'representational' because it introduces phenomena into the material world. There is only one participant, called 'existent,' which represents the object or event that is being said to exist (Fatima, 2018, p. 9). The word 'there' obligatorily occurs in existential, but it has no function. It is located because any clause requires a subject (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p. 307). In EX. P., the speaker renounces the chance to represent the participant.

1.2.6 Behavioral Process

The behavioral process (henceforth, BH. P.) is psychological. It does not have any unique characteristics of its own. Instead, it is partly material and mental. The first participant seems to be a conscious, like mental, whereas the action is like material. Therefore, the action is expressed by conscious being. BH. P. expresses the experience of 'behaving.' There are certain verbs that come with process like 'breathing', 'sleeping', 'looking at', and 'coughing'. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, pp.301-303). There is only one participant, which is called 'behavior.' It is usually a conscious being. Additionally, there is another participant, which has the function of complement. It is called 'behavior.' This participant is not real. It just adds specification (Thompson, 2014, p. 109).

3. Methodology

To achieve the main aims of this study and to answer the research questions, a qualitative and quantitative descriptive research design is adopted based on systemic functional linguistics. The qualitative dimension is used to get a full examination of how linguistic choices construct ideological meanings in news reports, while the quantitative dimension is adopted to support the identification of dominant transitivity patterns through frequency analysis. In other words, this mixed approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how transitivity processes are employed to represent this event across different media contexts.

As far as data selection is concerned, a number of selected news reports published by both Western and Middle Eastern media during the peak period of coverage of Al-Assad's regime collapse were used and analyzed. The reports

were chosen based on thematic relevance and temporal proximity to the event and their prominence in shaping public perception. i.e., only hard news reports were included to maintain genre consistency and analytical reliability. These two types of various media represent two distinct ideological and geopolitical contexts, which help the researcher to compare analytically how the same event is linguistically constructed. Moreover, this selection affirms the fact that the variations in transitivity choices can be attributed to ideological positioning rather than differences in genre or reporting style.

The basic unit of analysis in this work is the clause since it forms the fundamental unit for realizing experiential meaning within the transitivity system. Each clause is examined independently to identify its process type, participant roles, and circumstantial elements. Also, both independent and embedded clauses are included in the analysis to contribute to the representation of the regime collapse. The analytical framework of the current study is based on Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) model of transitivity within systemic functional linguistics. This edition is more extensive than the previous ones. It is more understandable and aims to cover all details about different text types that are suitable for meta-functions.

The framework categorizes clauses into six main process types: material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioral, and existential. Each process type is analyzed in terms of its associated participant roles, such as actor, goal, senser, phenomenon, carrier, and attribute, and the circumstantial elements that accompany it. Special attention is given to material processes, particularly those expressing doing and happening, according to their central role in constructing agency, responsibility, and causality in political discourse. Lexical choices associated with each process type are also examined to identify evaluative and ideological meanings embedded in the reports.

Several systemic stages have been followed to do the analysis according to quantitative dimension: 1) The selected news reports are compiled and carefully read to check their relevance and contextual coherence. (2) The text is segmented into clauses, and each clause is annotated to identify its participants, processes, and circumstances. (3) The dominant patterns of each process are calculated across the two media groups. Whereas, a qualitative interpretation of representative clauses, focuses on how linguistic choices assign or obscure agency, foreground or background actors, and frame the collapse either as liberation, crisis, or uncertainty. Finally, similarities and differences between Western and Middle Eastern media representations are highlighted.

The data sets have 8 samples that are taken from headlines of newspapers, the beginning of the report, and the end of the newspaper report because the readers are mostly focused on these parts when they read any report quickly. Many readers do not have time to read all the details of the news, so they depend on

these parts to get a brief idea of the content of the report. At these three positions, the reporter becomes more careful to insert his/her internal ideology and beliefs.

4. Data Analysis

This section is devoted to study a transitivity-based analysis of selected news reports covering the collapse of Al-Assad's regime. The analysis focuses on how different transitivity processes are employed to construct ideological meanings, assign agency, and frame the collapse either as liberation, crisis, or uncertainty. The data are grouped into thematic data sets based on dominant process types and representational strategies.

4.1 Data Set 1: Material Processes and the Construction of Regime Brutality

The clauses below reveals a strong dominance of material processes, particularly processes of doing that foreground violent and oppressive actions:

1. "Assad's policemen threatened to bury the reporter and their reporting."
2. "Assad's policemen limited movement and freedom."

https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/dec/09/bashar-al-assad-syria-flee-newspaper-front-page-wrap?CMP=share_btn_url.

3. "The dictatorship dragged thousands of civilians into prisons."
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-under-assad-torment-and-torture-60-minutes/>.

4. "They raped women."

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14197581/Syrian-dictator-Assad-issues-statement-toppled-Denies-planned-flee-country-insists-wont-resign.html>.

5. "They have killed five million people from 2011 till 2024."

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/04/18/bashar-al-assads-war-crimes-exposed>.

In all clauses above, Assad's police function as the actors, while civilians, reporters, or abstract entities such as freedom function as goals. Assad's police are the doers of the action and happening. They are responsible for killing, threatening, preventing, and raping. This means that Al-Assad fighters represent the negative attitude in Syria. The police are described as merciless, barbaric, heartless, and bloody. The actors in all processes are in plural form to indicate the collective crime done in Syria. In the fourth sentence, Daily Mail declares that Assad's policemen are not only bloody criminals but also immoral fighters. The two processes, raping and killing, are nonhuman crimes that are committed by policemen against the civilians. These newspapers give an active role to policemen; in principle they are responsible for protecting civilian people and making them feel safe. But here the role is the opposite of helping and supporting: raping and killing the civilians. The actor is representing the bad

part, while the goals consistently represent the oppressed population, reinforcing a binary opposition between perpetrator and victim, and the newspaper tries to show different types of crimes that are done by Al-Asaad's regime.

4.2 Data Set 2: Passive Material Processes and the Erasure of Agency News

The second data set draws on reports from Time, CBS News, and CBN News and is characterized by the frequent use of passive material processes:

1. "I was arrested many times."
2. "Five million people have fled, leaving the country largely depopulated."
[https:// CBS. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-under-assad-torment-and-torture-60-minutes/](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-under-assad-torment-and-torture-60-minutes/)
3. "Many people have been lost during decades of dictatorship."
4. "Many homes were burned down during the civil war."
5. "I was watching the country ripped apart."
[/time.com/7201451/syria-assad-hts-russia-israel-us-explainer/a](https://time.com/7201451/syria-assad-hts-russia-israel-us-explainer/a).

Most of these clauses are written in passive MT transitivity to highlight the state of the goal or receiver of the actions. The processes of happening and doing are carefully selected to declare all types of persecution, oppression, and destruction done by Al-Assad's regime. In sentence (3), the reporter tries to show the continuity of oppression from father to son by using two actors at the same time (Bashar and his father Hafidh); the receivers of their illegal action are many people. In addition, the reporter mentions the period of their dictatorial regime by using circumstantial (half century). This reflects the stereotypical image of Al-Assad's police and regime as brutal and oppressive.

4.3 Data Set 3: Mental Processes and Emotional Alignment with Victims

The set of clauses below predominantly employs mental processes, particularly emotive and cognitive types:

1. "People want the world to be reminded of what has taken place."
2. "Syria is looking toward its future."
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/syria-news-what-happened-1.7405087>.
3. "I felt the world had forgotten us."
4. "I never imagined this actually happened."
5. "I did not really think that would bring about change."
https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/dec/09/bashar-al-assad-syria-flee-newspaper-front-page-wrap?CMP=share_btn_url.

The processes in these sentences are MN. P. The reporters focus on the psychological side to gain the world's attention. The first two sentences are emotive mental processes in which the senser is "people and I," while the phenomenon is the world in both. The emotive verbs "felt" and "want" are highly selected. These two verbs may have great significance on the addressee's hearts. The phenomenon is "world" acts as if the writer of the article addresses

the world to sympathize with Syria. He tries to arouse the people's hearts against the Al-Assad regime. The other points include cognitive mental processes. The writer tries to address the people's minds, not hearts, by using the cognition process. The presentation of the events is a way used by the reporter to combine himself with readers to affect the readers' point of view by sharing his emotional situations with the readers.

4.4 Data Set 4: Relational and Verbal Processes and the Discourse of Identity

The following data set combines relational and verbal Processes:

1. "I am back; I am free."

https://www.theguardian.com/media/2024/dec/09/bashar-al-assad-syria-flee-newspaper-front-page-wrap?CMP=share_btn_url .

2. "Syria will be ready for all of us to come back."

3. "Syria has neither color no identity."

4. "They will not talk with anyone who wants to discuss the presidency."

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/04/18/bashar-al-assads-war-crimes-exposed>.

The first three sentences are RL.P. In the first sentence, the carrier is the pronoun "I," and the attribute is the free. The writer tries to shed light on the negative image between the free and the civilian people during Al-Assad's regime. In the second and third clauses, the identifier is "Syria," while the identifier is "us." The reporter reflects the image of Syria in ourselves. The reporter uses the plural pronoun "us" to intentionally invite the reader to join him. The fourth sentence is VR. P., in which the sayer "they" refers to Al-Assad's police.

4.5 Data Set 5: Material Processes and the Discourse of Uncertainty

Reports from international organizations and policy-oriented outlets heavily employ material processes to construct uncertainty, as in the following clauses:

2. "Can the United States "stay out of Syria?"

3. "Assad's regime falls -what will happen next?"

["https://www.mei.edu/events/fall-assad-future-syria-and-region-redrawn"](https://www.mei.edu/events/fall-assad-future-syria-and-region-redrawn)

1. Syria faces uncertain future of the regime's collapse amid humanities. (United nation).

4. The national conference council should rebuild the broken country. (BBC News).

5. The United States have asserted control over the Middle East." (XIN HUNET)

<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/how-collapse-assads-regime-will-impact-syrias-mixed-migration-dynamics>

All of these clauses are MT. P.; the reporters have a negative attitude about the situation in Syria at this time. They are worried about Syria since there is a

vague future. In the first sentence, the actor is "Syria," and the goal is "future," which is preceded by the significant adjective "uncertain," selected to emphasize the doubt about Syria's future. In the second sentence, the reporter puts "Syria" as a goal to the United States. The reporter precedes this clause by the word "can" to arouse the reader's critical thinking about Syria's future. In the third sentence, there is happening MT. P., in which the reporter just tells the reader about the situation of the regime and asks the reader to guess what, will happen in the future. The message is covered by linguistic choices to reveal the hidden future in Syria. In the fourth sentence, the actor is "conference," and the goal is "country," which is preceded by two words, "broken" and "individual," to express the sadness in this country. The word "individual" is used by the reporter to indicate that Syria is alone; no country stands with it. In the last clause the "actor" is United States while the "goal" is the Middle East. The reporter warns the reader as well as Syrian people from other countries that have the intention to control their country.

4.6 Data Set 6: Material Processes and Appeals for International Responsibility

The following data emphasizes global responsibility through material processes:

1. "How will the collapse of Assad's regime impact Syrian migration?" (RW Newspaper)
2. "The rebels who defeated Assad work to distribute power." (NPR News)
3. "The whole country is destroyed." (BBC News)
4. "International community should contribute to Syria's stability." (RW Web)

<https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/how-collapse-assads-regime-will-impact-syrias-mixed-migration-dynamics>

<https://www.npr.org/2024/12/27/g-s1-40181/syria-sdf-kurdish-coalition-isis>

Here the reporter has negative attitude about events in Syria. He tries to give reasons for his point of view. In the first sentence, he puts "migration" as the goal to raise the crises of Syria. The reporter in an indirect way demands solutions from the reader toward the crises. He explains that Syrians may lose control in this country. In the second sentence, he raises another problem by making "rebel" the actor and "Assad" the goal, although the rebels achieve victory, but there are many problems among them. The third sentence is happening at MT. P. It is explained what happened to Syria. In the last sentence, the reporter sends a message to the world to help Syria by making "Syria" the goal and the "international community" the doer of the action. The reporter makes himself as responsible for Syria or as a talker of this country.

4.7 Data Set 7: Mental and Existential Processes and Regional Anxiety

The following clauses combine mental and existential processes:

1. "Iraqis understand the situation of Syrians today." (Brookings).
2. "Iran wants a renewed presence in Syria." (English news CN)

3. "There remains a strong sense of uncertainty about future." (MEI)

[https://english.news.cn/20241211/f5e96f925ed84890bcbc084542453994/c.ht](https://english.news.cn/20241211/f5e96f925ed84890bcbc084542453994/c.html)

[ml](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-assad-regime-falls-what-happens-now/)

[https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-assad-regime-falls-what-happens-](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-assad-regime-falls-what-happens-now/)
[now/](https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-assad-regime-falls-what-happens-now/)

The first and second sentences have MN. P. In the first clause is cognitive MN. P., while the second is emotive MN. P. The first sentence "Iraqis" is the senser, while "Syrians" is the phenomenon. The reporter tries to explain that Syria will face the same fate as Iraq after the fall of a brutal regime when there is occupation and terrorism. The second sentence is emotive MN. P., in which "Iran" is the senser and "Syria", is the phenomenon. The reporter prohibits Syrians from other countries. The last sentence has EX. P., in which there is the word "there" and the existence is a "strong sense." The reporter is not sure about Syria's messy future. Therefore, he tries to make the reader as well as Syrians share with him this messy situation.

4.8. Data Set 8: Relational Processes and post –Collapse Risk

1. "Israel and Turkey will be more active in Syria." (BBC News).

2. "It was a moment of risk and danger." (BBC News).

3. "Syrian refugees are still fearful." (BBC News).

4. "The question is what comes next." (NBC News).

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c791dye1z2lo>

All the clauses are relational processes. In the first one, "Israel" and "Turkey" are the carrier, and "active" is the attributive. The reporter pluralizes the carrier to add more stress to the situation. There is a relation between Turkey, Israel, and Syria, a relation that may become worse after the fall of Al-Assad's regime. The word "more" is intentionally selected to state that it is not only active as before, but after the fall of the regime, it will be more. In the second sentence, the carrier is "it," and the attributive is "risky and dangerous." In the third sentence, the carrier is "refugees." The reporter describes the situation of refugees; the word "still" is selected to maintain that the fear is still before and after the fall of the regime as if there is no change. In the fourth sentence, "the question" is the carrier, and the wh-clause is the attributive.

5. Conclusions

By analyzing the selected news reports, the current study has demonstrated that media discourse does not merely reflect political reality but actively shapes it through strategic grammatical and lexical choices. In addition to that, it revealed the hidden side of media by manipulating particular lexical items. In other words, people have to know how the media's choices affected the audience's perception concerning a specific issue. The investigation depends on SFL (Systemic Functional Linguistics) through the transitivity system. These results may help to shed light on the implied assumption of the press. The ideational

metafunction is unequally distributed, and the MT. P. and MN. P. are more used than others are. The findings reveal a clear dominance of material processes, particularly those expressing doing and happening, which are employed to foreground actions, violence, and consequences associated with the regime and its security forces. In other words, this is because there are many actions and doings that are observed when reporters uncover Al-Assad's issue. Readers follow reporters in their actions, feelings, sensing, and possessing experiences. Some reporters depict the collapse as positive because it is the end of oppression and killing of civilians. However, others depict the ending of this regime as the beginning of another crisis, such as migration, refugees, and occupation.

Through active material clauses, agency and responsibility are explicitly assigned to Assad's police and institutions, constructing a discourse of brutality, repression, and systemic human rights violations. In contrast, passive material processes are frequently used to background agency and foreground victims' suffering, thereby intensifying the representation of loss, destruction, and displacement.

Mental processes play a significant role in aligning readers emotionally and cognitively with Syrian people. By foregrounding emotions such as fear, hope, and uncertainty, journalists invite readers to share the psychological experience of the collapse, transforming political reporting into moral and humanitarian narrative.

Relational and existential processes further contribute to the construction of post-collapse identity, uncertainty, and geopolitical instability, framing Syria as a space of risk, vulnerability, and contested future.

The comparative analysis highlights notable differences between Western and Middle Eastern media representations. While some outlets frame the collapse primarily as a moment of liberation and renewed identity, others emphasize its simultaneous role as the beginning of prolonged instability, humanitarian crises, and regional power struggles. These contrasting representations reflect the ideological orientations and geopolitical positions of the media institutions involved.

Moreover, the study confirms that transitivity choices function as powerful ideological tools in news discourse. By manipulating agency, responsibility, and perspective, reporters influence readers' perceptions of political events and their consequences. The findings underscore the value of systemic functional linguistics as an effective framework for uncovering hidden ideological meanings in media texts.

Finally, this paper contributes to media discourse studies by offering a systemic replicable model for analyzing political news through transitivity. Future research may extend this approach by incorporating other metafunctions of

language, such as interpersonal and textual meanings, or by examining multi-discourse to provide a more comprehensive understanding of media representation in times of political transformation.

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