

Transitivity Analysis of CNN News Titles on the Israel-Palestine Ceasefire: Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach

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ABSTRACT

Language choices in news titles are never neutral. They systematically construct how readers understand who acts and who is affected. This study examines the transitivity structure in CNN news titles on the Israel-Palestine conflict following the ceasefire announced on January 19, 2025, using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as its theoretical framework. Data consist of 322 titles (669 clauses) published between January 19 and July 24, 2025, collected from CNN's Middle East section via the Internet Archive and annotated using UAM Corpus Tool 6. The analysis identifies the distribution of Process types, Participant functions, and Circumstantial elements across the corpus. Results show that Material Processes dominate CNN's titles construction (62.93%), followed by Verbal Processes (20.48%). In terms of Participant functions, Actor (30.93%) and Goal (27.79%) are the most frequent, yet CNN consistently employs ambiguous pronouns ('it', 'they') and passive constructions without explicit agents, reducing the identifiability of causal actors. Verbal processes frequently position Western and Israeli officials as primary Sayers, reflecting an editorial tendency toward diplomatic and institutional framing. Circumstantial elements are limited, with Location dominant (70.76%). These patterns indicate that CNN frames the conflict through procedural language in which events are reported without consistently traceable agents or explicit causal context.

ABSTRAK

Pilihan bahasa dalam judul berita tidak pernah netral, secara sistematis pilihan tersebut mengonstruksi bagaimana pembaca memahami siapa yang bertindak dan siapa yang terdampak. Studi ini mengkaji struktur transitivitas dalam judul berita CNN mengenai konflik Israel-Palestina pasca-gencatan senjata menggunakan Linguistik Fungsional Sistemik (SFL) sebagai kerangka teori. Data terdiri dari 322 judul (669 klausa) yang dipublikasikan antara 19 Januari hingga 24 Juli 2025, dikumpulkan dari seksi Timur Tengah CNN melalui Internet Archive dan dianalisis menggunakan UAM Corpus Tool 6. Analisis mengidentifikasi distribusi jenis proses, fungsi partisipan, dan elemen sirkumstansial dalam korpus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Proses material mendominasi konstruksi judul CNN (62,93%), diikuti Proses verbal (20,48%). Dalam fungsi Partisipan, Aktor (30,93%) dan Gol (27,79%) paling sering muncul, namun CNN secara konsisten menggunakan pronomina dengan referensi tidak jelas (it, they) dan konstruksi pasif tanpa agen eksplisit, sehingga keterlacakan pelaku tindakan berkurang. Proses verbal secara konsisten menempatkan pejabat Barat dan Israel sebagai Sayer utama, mencerminkan kecenderungan editorial ke arah bingkai diplomatik dan institusional. Elemen sirkumstansial terbatas, dengan Lokasi sebagai tipe dominan (70,76%). Pola-pola ini mengindikasikan bahwa CNN membingkai konflik melalui bahasa yang tidak

langsung dan prosedural, di mana peristiwa dilaporkan tanpa agen yang konsisten terlacak atau konteks kausal yang eksplisit.

Kata Kunci: Judul Berita; Ionflik Israel-Palestina; Linguistik Fungsional Sistemik; Transitivitas; Wacana Media.

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Introduction

Language is never completely neutral because through particular word choices and grammatical structures, the media can shape how people understand social reality (Fowler, 1991; Nani, 2024; van Dijk, 1988). In conflict reporting, language also influences how the public sees who is acting, who is positioned as the victim, and how political legitimacy is constructed within an event (Jamshaid et al., 2025; Richardson, 2007; Simpson, 1993). The Israel–Palestine conflict has become one of the most widely reported geopolitical conflicts in international media and continues to raise questions about the objectivity of news coverage (Ali & Riaz, 2024; Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2010; Skufca & Vaquera, 2026). After the ceasefire was announced on January 19, 2025, global media attention shifted toward diplomatic negotiations, humanitarian conditions in Gaza, and various political responses that followed (Mardiah et al., 2025). Philo and Berry (2004) explain that media narratives about this conflict strongly influence how the public views victims, aggressors, and political legitimacy (Philo & Berry, 2004). Meanwhile, Kempf (2007) argues that the way the media frames a ceasefire situation can affect global perception and diplomatic relations. Therefore, the post-ceasefire period has become an important yet still underexplored area in media discourse studies (Kempf, 2007).

CNN, founded in 1980, is recognized as one of the Western media institutions with strong influence in reporting Middle Eastern conflicts (Aday et al., 2005; Deprez & Raeymaeckers, 2010; Johnson & Fahmy, 2008). This study specifically focuses on news titles because titles are usually the first and most frequently read part of a news article (Liu, 2023). Bell (1991) states that titles are often read more frequently than the articles themselves, meaning that readers commonly build their understanding of an event only from the title. In addition, titles are not simply neutral summaries because every word choice, grammatical structure, and decision to mention or omit certain actors may reflect the ideological position of the media (Bell, 1991; van Dijk, 1988). Ifantidou (2009) explains that the pragmatic structure of titles can shape certain assumptions in readers' understanding (Ifantidou, 2009). Similarly, Machin and Mayr (2012) and Richardson (2007) show that even short and compressed title structures can reveal ideological patterns through process type selection and participant representation. Therefore, titles become an important object to analyze through the transitivity approach (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Richardson, 2007).

To examine these representations, this study uses the Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) framework developed by M.A.K. Halliday (1994) and M.A.K. Halliday and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen (2013), particularly the transitivity system. In SFL, transitivity is used to examine how experience is represented through six process types: Material, Mental, Relational, Verbal, Behavioural, and Existential, each involving specific participant functions and circumstantial elements (Eggins, 2004; Halliday, 1994; Thompson, 2013). Because these structures are closely related to the representation of actions and social experiences, transitivity analysis has been widely used in critical media discourse studies (Fowler, 1991; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Triana et al., 2020). Several previous studies have also applied transitivity analysis to different kinds of media and political texts, such as Lastari (2023), Hassan (2018), Abdulameer et al. (2019) (Abdulameer et al., 2019; Hassan, 2018; Kadek et al., 2023). However, no previous study has

specifically analyzed CNN news titles about the Israel–Palestine conflict during the post-ceasefire period using the transitivity approach. Therefore, this study aims to identify the dominant process types, participant functions, and circumstantial elements found in CNN news titles after the January 19, 2025 ceasefire and to explain how these structures construct experiential meaning in conflict reporting (Sarwar & Muhammad Qasim, 2025).

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with corpus-based analysis grounded in the Functional Language Structure (FLS) transitivity framework developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013). The research design combines systematic quantitative annotation with qualitative interpretation: frequency distributions across the three components of transitivity serve as a foundation for identifying and interpreting recurring patterns of representation in CNN news title constructions, rather than as an end in themselves (Egins, 2004; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013).

The data consists of 322 CNN news titles (669 clauses) collected from the CNN Middle East section (<https://edition.cnn.com/world/middle-east>) via the Internet Archive (<https://web.archive.org/>), covering the period from January 19 to July 24, 2025, beginning precisely at the time the Israel-Palestine ceasefire took effect at 11:15 a.m. local time. To be included, each news title had to explicitly mention the Israel-Palestine Conflict. News titles containing only a phrase without a complete verb phrase were excluded.

Each title was segmented into clauses using the finite verb group as the primary clause boundary, following M.A.K. Halliday and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen's (2013) principle that the clause is the minimal unit of transitivity analysis. Embedded and projected clauses, such as in "Netanyahu says Israel is now dividing up Gaza," were segmented and annotated independently, with each clause assigned a unique code (e.g., CNN26.C.01) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). Annotation was conducted in UAM CorpusTool (O'Donnell, 2008), which enables systematic corpus annotation combining quantitative frequency distribution with qualitative interpretive analysis across three layers: (1) Process type (Material, Verbal, Relational, Mental, Behavioural, Existential); (2) Participant function (Actor, Goal, Sayer, Verbiage, Receiver, Target, Senser, Phenomenon, Carrier, Attribute, Identified, Identifier, Existent); and (3) Circumstantial element (Location, Cause, Manner, Accompaniment, Extent, Role, Contingency, Matter, Angle).

All annotations were manually reviewed and corrected. Ambiguous cases were resolved using M.A.K. Halliday and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen (2013) and cross-checked with Geoff Thompson (2013). Frequency counts and percentage distributions were generated using the Statistics feature in UAM CorpusTool and used to identify dominant patterns for qualitative interpretation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013; Thompson, 2013).

Finding and Discussion

This section presents the results of an analysis of transitivity structures in 322 CNN news titles comprising 669 clauses, published between January 19 and July 24, 2025, following the announcement of the Israel-Palestine ceasefire. The analysis covers the three main components of transitivity within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as outlined by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013), namely process type, participant function, and circumstantial elements (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013).

Types of Processes in CNN News Titles

Process type is central to transitivity analysis because it determines how an event is grammatically constructed. Table 1 below presents the distribution of the six process types found in 669 CNN news titles.

Table 1. Distribution of Process Types in CNN News Titles

| Process Type | CNN Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Material | 421 | 62,93 |
| Verbal | 137 | 20,48 |
| Relational | 58 | 8,67 |
| Mental | 52 | 7,77 |
| Existential | 1 | 0,15 |
| Behavioral | - | - |
| Total | 669 | 100 |

Material Process

Material processes are the most dominant type of process in CNN news titles appearing 421 times, or 62.93% of the time. These processes describe physical actions and real-world events, answering the questions “who did what” and “what happened” (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). The high proportion of material processes is consistent with previous research findings on conflict news discourse, namely that hard news is naturally constructed through concrete actions (Hassan, 2018; Kadek et al., 2023).

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <i>CNN1.C.01</i> | <i>Senate Democrats</i> | <i>block</i> | <i>International Criminal Court sanctions bill</i> |
| | Participant | Proses | Participant |
| | Actor | Material | Goal |

Example (1): Material Process in CNN

| | | | | |
|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>CNN2.C.01</i> | <i>US envoy</i> | <i>gives</i> | <i>Israel and Hamas</i> | <i>new proposal</i> |
| | Participant | Process | Participant | Participant |
| | Actor | Material | Recipient | Goal |

Example (2): Material Process in CNN

In example (1), Senate Democrats are explicitly identified as the actors who blocked a bill. Meanwhile, in example (2), the U.S. envoy acts as the actor in the process of presenting a proposal to the two conflicting parties. These two examples demonstrate CNN’s tendency to highlight Western diplomatic actors in the material process.

In addition to active clauses, CNN also frequently uses passive constructions without an explicit agent in its reporting. These constructions, as in the title “Israeli reserve forces disbanded,” omit the actor responsible for the action. This pattern is identified as a grammatical strategy that reduces the traceability of causality, meaning readers cannot immediately identify who performed the action (Fowler, 1991; Simpson, 1993).

Verbal Process

Verbal processes ranked second, with a frequency of 137 clauses, or 20.48%. Verbal processes refer to communicative activities, that is, the ways in which meaning is conveyed through language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013).

The high proportion of verbal processes in CNN news reports following the ceasefire is directly related to the prevailing situational context. During the ceasefire period, the intensity of physical violence on the ground decreased, so reporting focused on diplomatic activities, official statements, and negotiations. CNN, as a media outlet targeting a Western audience, more frequently frames the conflict through statements by officials or public figures rather

than through direct events on the ground.

| | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>CNN3.C.01</i> | <i>Trump</i> | <i>says</i> | <i>US 'will take over' Gaza</i> |
| | Participant | Process | Participant |
| | Sayer | Verbal | Verbiage |

Example (3): Verbal Process in CNN

In example (3), Trump is positioned as the Sayer, that is, the party engaging in verbal activity, while the content of his statement is constructed as Verbiage. This pattern reflects CNN's editorial tendency to cite official sources and powerful figures as the primary narrators of the conflict. By positioning Western and Israeli officials as the dominant Sayers, CNN systematically elevates institutional and diplomatic perspectives as the primary framework for understanding the conflict (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Richardson, 2007).

Relational Process

Relational processes were found in 58 clauses, or 8.67%, ranking third in the distribution of CNN process types. This process describes the relationship between two entities, whether in terms of attribution or identification (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). In the context of conflict reporting, CNN uses relational processes to define the ongoing situation or condition, without necessarily referring to specific actions or agents.

The use of the relational process alongside the verbal process indicates that CNN tends to frame conflict as an existing condition or state, rather than merely as a series of actions carried out by a specific party. This pattern contributes to the "distance" effect in news coverage, where events appear as situations unfolding autonomously without clearly identified agents.

Mental Process

Mental processes were found in 52 clauses, or 7.77%, of CNN news titles. Mental processes describe inner experiences involving perception, cognition, emotion, or desire, with the senser as the participant experiencing these processes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013).

The high proportion of mental processes in CNN indicates that this media outlet more frequently constructs conflict through psychological and perceptual perspectives—that is, what the figures in the news feel, think, or desire. This aligns with CNN's editorial tendency to present events through the prism of actors' responses and interpretations, rather than through directly observable actions.

Participant Functions in CNN News Titles

The analysis of participant functions aims to identify who performs the action (Actor), who is affected (Goal), and what roles are assigned to various entities within the clause. Table 2 presents the distribution of participant functions found in 669 CNN clauses.

Table 2. Distribution of Participants' Roles in CNN News Titles

| Participant Function | CNN Frequency | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|----------------------|---------------|----------------|------|
| Actor | 207 | 30,93 | 1 |
| Goal | 186 | 27,79 | 2 |
| Sayer | 137 | 20,48 | 3 |
| Carrier | 58 | 8,67 | 4 |

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|------|---|
| Senser | 52 | 7,77 | 5 |
| Others (Verbiage, Attribute, etc.) | 29 | 4,34 | 6 |

Actor and Goal: Who Takes Action, Who Is Affected

“Actor” is the most dominant participant function in CNN news titles, with a frequency of 207 occurrences or 30.93%, followed by “Goal” with 186 occurrences or 27.79%. Grammatically, the high proportion of “Actor” and “Goal” indicates that CNN generally constructs clauses in transitive structures involving the agent and the target of the action.

However, the crucial finding of this analysis lies in who fills the role of the Actor. Contrary to initial expectations, the Actor in CNN news titles following the ceasefire is more often filled by abstract or non-human entities, such as “ceasefire,” “negotiations,” or “deals,” rather than by specifically identified human actors. A representative example is the clause “negotiations will continue,” where “negotiations” functions as the Actor in the material process, so that the actual human actors conducting the negotiations are not visible.

| | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <i>CNN4.C.03</i> | <i>negotiations</i> | <i>will continue</i> |
| | Participant | Process |
| | Actor (Abstract) | Material |

Example (4): Abstract Actor in CNN

Within the SFL framework, the clear and specific identification of the actor is one of the primary grammatical mechanisms that allows readers to determine who is responsible for an event. When the Actor position is filled by an abstract entity or a pronoun with an unclear reference, such as “it” or “they,” readers have difficulty identifying the party responsible for an action (Fowler, 1991; van Dijk, 1988). In the context of conflict reporting, this pattern creates a situation where the causal chain of an event becomes grammatically untraceable, thereby obscuring accountability for the reported action in the reader’s eyes.

The distribution pattern of the Actor in CNN news titles can be further examined through the 10 entities that most frequently occupy the Actor position. Table 3 presents this data based on frequency of occurrence.

Table 3. Top Ten Actors in CNN News Titles

| No. | Actor (CNN) | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-----|-------------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | Israel | 19 | 5,12 |
| 2 | it (pronoun, ambiguous reference) | 14 | 3,77 |
| 3 | (Israel) elipsis | 9 | 2,43 |
| 4 | Hamas | 7 | 1,89 |
| 5 | Netanyahu | 4 | 1,08 |
| 6 | Gaza truce | 4 | 1,08 |
| 7 | they (pronoun, ambiguous reference) | 3 | 0,81 |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------------------|---|------|
| 8 | Trump | 3 | 0,81 |
| 9 | he (pronoun, ambiguous reference) | 3 | 0,81 |
| 10 | Israeli military | 3 | 0,81 |

The data in Table 3 reveal a significant pattern. Israel ranks first as an Actor with 19 occurrences (5.12%). More interestingly, the ambiguous pronouns “it” and “they” together appear 17 times (4.58%), nearly matching Israel’s frequency as an Actor. This means that nearly one-third of all occurrences of these ambiguous pronouns occupy the Actor position without a reference that readers can immediately identify. Additionally, the 9 occurrences of the ellipsis (Israel) indicate that CNN also frequently omits the grammatical subject of the clause, so that the agent of the action can only be inferred from the context of the title as a whole. A similar pattern is observed in the use of the abstract entity “Gaza truce” (4 occurrences) as the Actor in material clauses, making the “ceasefire” appear to act on its own without a concrete human agent.

In addition to the use of abstract actors, CNN also consistently uses ambiguous pronouns such as “it” and “they” that refer to entities mentioned much earlier in the sentence. This grammatical strategy creates epistemic distance, meaning readers must make additional inferences to identify who is being referred to, thereby making the relationship between the action and its agent indirect.

| | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| <i>CNN5.C.02</i> | <i>it (group)</i> | <i>will deliver</i> | <i>aid</i> | <i>to Gaza</i> |
| | Participant | Process | Participant | Circumstance |
| | Actor | Material | Goal | Location-place |

Example (5): Ambiguous Pronouns in CNN

Sayer: Who Gets the Voice

The Sayer function was found 137 times, or 20.48%, in line with the total occurrence of verbal processes. The most significant finding in CNN's Sayer function analysis was the distribution of entities filling the Sayer position. Table 4 presents the ten Sayers that appeared most frequently in CNN news titles, along with their frequency and percentage of the 129 Sayer tokens identified.

Table 4. Top Ten Sayers in CNN News Titles

| No. | Sayer (CNN) | Frequency | Percentage(%) |
|-----|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1 | Israel / (Israel) — included ellipsis | 19 | 14,73 |
| 2 | Netanyahu / (Netanyahu) | 12 | 9,30 |
| 3 | Trump | 11 | 8,53 |
| 4 | Hamas / (Hamas) | 11 | 8,53 |
| 5 | health ministry / health officials | 7 | 5,43 |

| | | | |
|----|---|----|-------|
| 6 | Israeli military | 2 | 1,55 |
| 7 | official / officials | 2 | 1,55 |
| 8 | Human Rights Watch | 1 | 0,78 |
| 9 | Rights group / UN / Western nations | 1 | 0,78 |
| 10 | others (aid workers, residents, families, etc.) | 13 | 10,08 |

The data in Table 4 reveals a clear pattern of Sayer dominance. Israel (including ellipses) ranks first with 19 occurrences (14.73%), followed by Netanyahu (12 occurrences, 9.30%), Trump (11 occurrences, 8.53%), and Hamas (11 occurrences, 8.53%). Cumulatively, these four entities account for more than 41% of all Sayer tokens in the CNN corpus. It is noteworthy that three of the four dominant Sayer entities represent actors from Israel and the United States, while the only representation of the Palestinian side is Hamas, the armed group, rather than a civilian entity or the Palestinian government. This pattern indicates an editorial tendency that places Western and Israeli institutional perspectives as the primary sources of authority in reporting on the conflict. Within the SFL framework, this disproportionate selection of Sayer reflects what Van Dijk (1988) calls elite access, namely the media's systematic tendency to grant greater speaking space to actors perceived as possessing institutional legitimacy (van Dijk, 1988). As a result, readers are consistently exposed to a version of the conflict framed through the eyes of those geographically and ideologically closer to CNN as an institution (Philo & Berry, 2004; Richardson, 2007). The voices of Palestinian civil society, independent humanitarian organizations, and perspectives from those directly affected are minimally represented in this corpus.

Circumstantial Elements in CNN News Titles

Circumstantial elements provide additional context regarding when, where, why, and how a process occurs. The total number of circumstantial elements found in CNN news titles was 236, which is relatively small compared to the total of 669 clauses analyzed. Table 5 presents the complete distribution.

Table 5. Distribution of Circumstantial Elements in CNN News Titles

| Circumstantial Element | CNN Frequency | Percentage (%) | Rank |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------|
| Location | 167 | 70,76 | 1 |
| Manner | 27 | 11,44 | 2 |
| Cause | 26 | 11,02 | 3 |
| Accompaniment | 12 | 5,08 | 4 |
| Role | 1 | 0,42 | 5 |
| Contingency / Matter / Angle | - | - | - |
| Total | 236 | 100 | - |

Location: Broad Geographic Context

Location is the most dominant circumstantial element in CNN titles, with 167 occurrences, or 70.76%. This dominance of location elements aligns with expectations in conflict journalism, namely that readers need information about where events are taking place (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). However, there are significant qualitative differences in how CNN uses location elements. CNN tends to use broader and more distant geographic references, such as "in the region," "in Israel," or "in the Middle East," rather than more specific and granular references. This pattern reflects CNN's positioning of Western audiences who are geographically and emotionally distant from conflict zones, where the use of general geographic references is still sufficient to convey context to them.

| | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| CNN6.C.01 | <i>the clock</i> | <i>ticks down</i> | <i>on the Gaza ceasefire</i> |
| | Participant | Process | Circumstances |
| | Actor | Material | Location-place |

Example (6): Location in CNN

Cause: Lack of Explicit Causality

The "Cause" element was found in 26 clauses, or 11.02%, of CNN titles. This is a relatively limited number, indicating that CNN rarely includes explicit cause-and-effect relationships in its title construction. When the "Cause" element does appear in CNN titles, the explanation tends to be general and non-specific. For example, the clause "Israeli military chief of staff resigns over failure" includes a cause element through the phrase "over failure," but fails to explain the nature of the failure, who is responsible, or the context behind it. Compare this with more explicit constructions, where "Cause" is not only present but also specifically identifies the entity responsible.

| | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| CNN7.C.01 | <i>Israeli military chief of staff</i> | <i>resigns</i> | <i>over failure</i> |
| | Participant | Process | Circumstances |
| | Actor | Material | Cause-reason |

Example (7): Cause Circumstance in CNN

The lack of an explicit "Cause" element in CNN titles contributes to a phenomenon that can be conceptualized as causal ambiguity. Without adequate causal explanations, conflict events appear to stand alone, lacking context to enable readers to understand their background or underlying dynamics.

The findings of this study generally confirm and extend the arguments put forward in previous research on the grammatical construction of conflict news discourse. The dominance of material processes (62.93%) in CNN news titles aligns with the findings of Hassan (2018) and Lastari (2023) that hard news tends to be constructed through concrete actions, but with its own uniqueness: the actors occupying material positions in the CNN corpus are more often diplomatic and abstract entities than physical actors directly involved in the field (Hassan, 2018; Kadek et al., 2023). This pattern aligns with Richardson's (2007) view that grammatical choices in news titles are not neutral reflections of reality, but rather the result of editorial orientation, the intended audience, and the institutional position of the media outlet in question (Richardson, 2007). The high proportion of verbal processes (20.48%) also indicates that in the post-ceasefire period, CNN shifted its reporting focus from physical events on the ground to the realm of diplomatic statements and negotiations, in line with the situational

context that places diplomatic activity as the primary arena of conflict. Sayer's unequal distribution, with Israel, Netanyahu, and Trump dominating more than 32% of Sayer's positions, strengthens Van Dijk's (1988) argument about elite access in media discourse, while also demonstrating that the voices of Palestinian civil society and independent humanitarian organizations remain largely marginalized in the grammatical representation of conflict news (van Dijk, 1988).

The implications of these findings are relevant for the development of critical media literacy, particularly in understanding how seemingly technical grammatical choices, such as the choice of actors, the type of process, and the completeness of circumstantial elements, can systematically shape readers' understanding of who acted, who was affected, and why an event occurred (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Philo & Berry, 2004). The lack of explicit Cause elements and the absence of Matter and Angle elements in CNN titles result in narratives lacking causal context, making it difficult for readers to independently explore the underlying dynamics of the conflict. Future research is recommended to expand the corpus to a longer period and encompass different phases of the conflict, for example, the active escalation phase versus the negotiation phase, to test whether the grammatical construction patterns found in this study are stable or change with the dynamics of the situational context. Furthermore, multimodal analysis that integrates visual elements with the linguistic construction of titles has the potential to provide a more comprehensive picture of how experiential meaning is constructed overall in armed conflict reporting

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the grammatical constructions in CNN news titles covering the post-ceasefire Israel-Palestine conflict are not neutral but rather reflect a systematic editorial orientation through the selection of process types, participant functions, and circumstantial elements. Within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, these patterns collectively form a representation of the conflict that highlights diplomatic and institutional dimensions, obscures the agents of action through abstract actors and passive constructions, and grants disproportionate voice to certain parties. These findings confirm that transitivity analysis is a productive tool for unpacking the ideologies at work behind language choices in conflict journalism, while reminding readers that every news title is a construction of meaning, not merely a summary of events.

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