Analyzing Arabic and English Media Coverage of Attempt Assassination of Donald Trump

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study is concerned with how Arabic and English media report a security incident by former President Trump through Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics Halliday analysis in lexical features of mood and modality. It demonstrates differences in the cultivation and language of the narrative between countries and how these variations shape perceptions of the event. Through declarative and modal expressions, the study advances insights into how these media contexts avail authority, urgency, and control, influencing audience perceptions. This research adds to the study of media and cross-cultural communication, showcasing the extent to which language choices embody cultural and social values, even in politically high-stakes situations.

1. Introduction

Donald Trump's attempted assassination draws widespread attention, both in the United States and internationally. Because of the polarizing figure that Trump is, even mild incidents related to his security receive considerable media attention, and in this view, the current study aims to examine how different cultures report such events. With a particular emphasis on Arabic and English media, it explores how narrative framing and language choices vary across cultures, shaping public perceptions in different ways. Understanding the media's role in shaping public opinion is essential, particularly as information now spreads quickly across many platforms. Media framing, according to previous research media frames or tell some stories in ways that affect societal opinion and politics (Entman 1993).

As such, this study aims to uncover the differences in language and framing between Arabic and English coverage which can specifically shape audience understanding of the event (Hafez, 2002). Such an analysis advances not only media studies, but also cross-cultural communication. Importantly, there is increasing need for global narratives, however we need to be aware of these differences and what they represent if we wish to engage in dialogue. This investigation is situated in the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics using Halliday's (1994) approach to uncover the linguistic features of these media reports which are represented through the mood and modality and therefore how these linguistic choices reflect larger social values. This

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comparative research demonstrates the influence of media framing on social attitudes and political views, thus leading to a better understanding of the role of language in the interpretation of important events.

It is essential to understand the media's role in shaping public perception, particularly in an era where information is spread rapidly across many different platforms. A previous study has shown that media narratives can shape societal attitudes and political debate (Entman 1993). By comparing Arabic and English coverage, this research seeks to find out whether linguistic choices and framing differ among cultures. Hence speakers/Type setters try to lead their audience's interpretation of the event (Hafez, 2002).

The significance of this analysis lies not only in its contribution to media studies but also in its implications for cross-cultural communication. Understanding and integrating these differences in a globalized environment is the prerequisite for fostering dialogue or even mutual understanding between nation states of different cognitive cultures.

2. Systemic functional linguistics by Halliday (1994)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language developed by Halliday based on the idea that language is a social semiotic. It highlights the linkage of language to its use in communication especially through mood and modality.

2.1 Mood

Mood is a grammatical feature which indicates the kind of interaction between the speaker and the listener. It depends on speaker's intention and can be of three types: -

a. **The Declarative Mood:** which is for statements and assertions as in "***The sky is blue.''*** It expresses certainty and makes an announcement. Sentences in media coverage, especially the declarative ones which connote sharing of truth (as they usually already claim the facts or opinions are true) somewhat affect the audience worldview (Halliday, 1994).

b. **The Interrogative Mood:** this mood is used for a asking questions. For example: "***Is the sky blue?***" It encourages a response and sparks conversation. In media, interrogative

structures can stimulate consideration and engagement, presenting issues as up for discussion (Halliday, 1994).

c. **The Imperative Mood** : it is used for commanding or requesting someone to do something. For example: ***"Look up at the sky."*** It tells the listener what they are supposed to do. Across media contexts, imperative forms may call upon audiences to react to events or to perform specific acts, and in turn determine public conduct and views (Halliday, 1994).

Mood is important because it shows how individuals present the event and the attitude of the press toward it. Moods can influence audiences in such different ways with the interpretation of information and their engagement with narratives.

2.2 Modality

Modality is the way the speaker expresses that liability/reliability of the proposition. It consists of several definitions, which can be classified as:

a. **High Modality:** this means low certainty and high necessity. For instance, ***"The new policy will implement by the government."*** It conveys an unequivocal expectation and strengthens the position of the speaker (Halliday, 1994).

b. **Medium Modality**: this indicates a high degree of probability or likelihood. For example, ***the new policy might be implemented by the government***. This creates ambiguity and paves way for alternative interpretations (Halliday, 1994).

c. **Low Modality**: Weak degree of certainty or possibility. For example, "***The new policy might possibly adopt by the government."*** This shows a high degree of scepticism and allows for different interpretations of the statement (Halliday, 1994).

Modality is shown with modal verbs (for example: will, might, could), adverbs, and other grammatical pathways. The power of modality is important to investigate in this context because it reflects the degree of commitment a media narrative has to the information that is being constructed. News articles, for instance, using high modality may frame a situation as life and death, while using low modality may present it as low priority.

A study of mood and modality in media coverage can also extract some of the rhetorical devices utilized in reporting to shift public perception and frame political discourse. Choices in language

can shape how audiences view events, frame issues, and interact with political discourse. For example, a news outlet that uses a lot of high modality, will likely create a sense of urgency and seriousness surrounding an event; whereas, one that uses high modality will likely create the opposite and imply that the event is less serious or less certain.

3. Previous Studies

Prior research has investigated the concept of media framing, which is known to play a vital role in shaping public perception. And Entman (1993) explains that what is framed is not the reality but certain aspects of a perceived reality and that this making salient in the communicating text will in turn shape the way audiences view the events. This process in turn shapes both our own understanding and societal narratives at large.

Additional research shows that media framing is deeply cultural and context related. According to Hafez (2002), it is important to recognize that culture and how events are covered is often influenced by these norms and values. Media in collectivist cultures, for example, may focus on the needs of the community or social harmony, while media in individualistic cultures may focus on personal achievement and individual rights. This means the same event might shape up the perceptions of the public differently, clearly asserting the need the cultural context to be taken into consideration with media analysis.

Media framing and cultural context are important determents of public information processing. Future research needs to keep exploring these dynamics to better understand how they play out in relation to media consumption and public discourse.

3. Methodology

This study draws upon data collected from an official event held by Donald Trump in North Carolina. Five extracts were consciously gathered from the campaign's websites to serve as primary sources. The selected data points present authentic dialog from real legal cases, offering a natural lens through which to view the evasive language employed.

A mixed methodology is applied, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research strategies. Qualitatively, key attributes and unfolding situations are illuminated. Meanwhile,

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statistical treatment is also used to substantiate or dispute hypotheses. As illustrated in Figure 1, the integrated model brings various analytic lenses together for rigorous examination. The data undergoes close scrutiny through this balanced framework, aiming to achieve nuanced insights into the rhetorical tactics on display.

Figure (1) The Model of The analysis
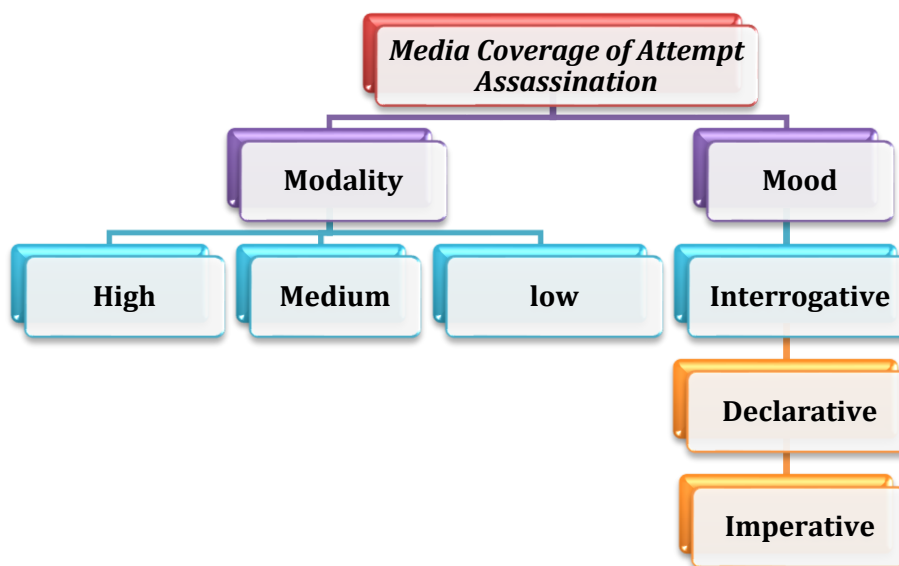
3.1 Data Analysis

A. The Analysis of English Data

Extract No. 1

"*Donald Trump says he's safe and well after reports of gunshots described to have been fired in his vicinity. Local officials in Palm Beach in Florida say it happened in the grounds of his golf course while he was playing. An assault rifle has apparently been recovered, and a man is in custody.*"

Using the declarative mood, this extract creates an informative account of what has occurred claiming that Trump is safe, interspersed with rich detail including where this event took place and to what extent law enforcement had been involved. The purpose of this is to convince everyone that Trump is all right while also creating a feeling that law enforcement has already addressed the issue. The use of the medium modality "apparently" allows for some uncertainty

and room for other interpretations about the exact status of the details involved, but not exactly asserting them.

Extract No. 2

"What is clear so far, Clive, is that this happened 3 hours ago as Donald Trump was playing golf. He was said to be between holes at his private course on West Palm Beach in Florida. Law enforcement officials say that multiple gunshots were heard at that moment, and the Secret Service detail that was protecting him at the time returned fire. There was a suspect that was seen and then seemed to flee from the scene."

While declarative statements still document events in order of layout, indirect introduction of the interrogative mood occurs with the phrase "what is clear so far". It suggests that there are some things as yet mysterious, which leaves one wondering what comes next. This indicates a medium to low modality from "seemed to flee," suggesting that it may not be safe to outright prove what the suspect did, hinting that the suspect in question may still be able to be proven innocent by other means.

Extract No. 3

"Now law enforcement officials say they have recovered a weapon and a scope from the scene there, and they are at the moment around a wooded area on the edge of that golf course. Separately, the local sheriff in West Palm county says they closed the interstate highway after this, trying to find what they described as a suspect. They have stopped a car and detained a person that they say is of interest."

The declarative mood again dominates, providing updates on law enforcement actions to reinforce a sense of authority and control. Also, the **high modality** in "they have recovered" expresses certainty about the recovery of evidence, which may reassure the public of investigative progress. The phrase *"person of interest"* has medium modality; while it avoids making an explicit claim about the detainee, it leaves such an interpretation open and allows it to unfold.

Extract   No.4

"What had been unclear until a few moments ago is whether or not Donald Trump was the intended target of this apparent shooting. Some US media were reporting unnamed law enforcement officials saying that he was the intended target, but that matter seems to have been cleared up in the last few minutes as the FBI has put out a very short statement saying that they are investigating this as an attempted assassination."

This extract combines both **interrogative and declarative moods** to discuss the ongoing investigation, indicating that certain details are still unfolding. Furthermore, the phrase *"What had been unclear"* uses an interrogative tone to address prior uncertainty, which is quickly resolved by the FBI's confirmation. Add to this, the **high modality** in *"investigating this as an attempted assassination"* shifts the tone from ambiguity to seriousness, framing the event as significant and lending weight to the report. Their choice of words here really highlights the severity of the incident and the need to investigation them.

Extract No.5

"Donald Trump himself has given a short statement in a campaign fundraising email. He has said there were gunshots in my vicinity, but before the rumors spiral out of control I wanted you to hear this: I am safe and well. Nothing will slow me down. He says, 'I Will Never Surrender.'"

Trump statements in this excerpt employ high modality, in the form of strong declarations such as "I am safe and well" and "I Will Never Surrender" These are defiant statements meant to present Trump as tough and unbroken. It's that command form that makes his audience see him as a leader who stands triumphantly unscathed by adversity, which is essentially the phrases is motivate to rally around his supporters. Trump then uses a declarative mood to again refract attention away from uncertainty by stating that nothing will happen to his campaign because of the incident.

B. The Analysis of Arabic Data

Extract No.1

" يرفع نسبة الإجراءات الأمنية "
"Increasing the level of security measures."

This short phrase is in the declarative mood, stating that security measures are being tightened. Use of high modality — with "increasing" — indicates a need for immediate action, cementing the security response as firm and inflexible. This language implies that the escalation of security is a natural and justified reaction to the matter.

Extract No. 2

" ما نفهمه أيضا أنه حتى في دولوير حيث يتواجد الرئيس الأمريكي بايدن "
"What we understand as well is that even in Delaware, where U.S. President Biden is present."

The use of the phrase "ما نفهمه" (what we understand) shows low modality tone and thus indicates some uncertainty and/or distance from a definitive claim. The indirect phrasing concedes some fluidity and evolution. Even the declarative mood remains, but the exact phrasing softens any blanket claim about Biden being okay. It ties the assertion to an evolving timeline.

Extract No. 3

" إلمعلومات من الصحفيين المرافقين له بأنه تم التحفظ عليهم داخل الحافلات وكإجراء وقائي "
("Information from accompanying journalists indicates that they were kept in buses as a precautionary measure.")

This extract employs the declarative mood to describe actions related to security protocols. In the word "indicates," sort of moderate formality is used that signals an indirect affirmation,

maintaining an arm's length between the reporter and an endorsement of the events themselves. The statement categorizes the measure as "precautionary," making the response sound cautious, but needful, and suggesting that this is standard operating procedure on these matters.

Extract No.4

طبعا في مثل هذه الحوادث هناك ردود فعل تلقائية تقريبا من المصالح الأمنية المختلفة سواء المحلية أو الفيدرالية لاتخاذ
إجراءات إضافية ''
"Of course, in incidents like these, there are almost automatic reactions from various security agencies, both local and federal, to take additional measures."

By describing the response as "almost automatic," it uses the declarative mood to make the response sound like something that is habitual. The use of high modality in ''ردود فعل تلقائية'' (automatic reactions) renders the actions automatic and instinctual, suggesting a natural and collaborative reaction from various bodies. This point out how efficient and well-prepared security services are and that this incident is under control.

Extract No.5

''على رغم من أن الرجلين معا يتمتعان بحماية الأمن الرئاسي أو الخدمة السلية''
("Despite both men receiving presidential or Secret Service protection."

This is a simple and declarative statement that makes it clear that both the Trump and the Biden are secured by high-level security wafes. The medium modality of "يتمتعان" (receiving) suggests a more permanent quality of protectiveness but one that can vary and indirectly admitting that no strong security is infallible, which is elaborated on later. This sets listeners up for a history of some of the trouble with protecting presidents.

4. Results and Discussion

This section is aimed to sum up the findings of the analysis of *Media Coverage of Attempt Assassination of Donald Trump* in Arabic and English that can illustrated as follows:-

4.1 Similarities between English and Arabic Languages

1. The Arabic and English media often use declarative in order to state facts and create a factual story. It assists you in bringing in a tone of authority which tells the audience that they are at a right position possibly feeling stable and secure.

2. Both languages highlight the upgraded security measures immediately following the event. This sets an air of procedural discipline and quick response from law enforcement agencies, designed to comfort citizens that safety and order shall soon be restored.

3. Both Arabic and English media used high modality words in important statements. For instance, English uses the word "will"—and in Arabic the wording implies direct/definitive actions, which emphasizes the immediacy and severity of the security response.

4.2 The differences between English and Arabic Languages

1. In English, individuals tend to use idioms that put the incident in the overall U.S. political state with Trump enduring and being portrayed as a divisive yet strong personality. Arabic outlets have a much drier and dispassionate focus, almost exclusively on procedural updates and collective security rather than individual stories.

2. English reports display a more nuanced modality; 'apparently', 'seemed' that indicates a future development in the course of the story. Whereas Arabic media, employs straightforward declarative language that is far less modal in nature thereby implying more control and reducing ambiguity.

3. Arabic articles cite historical precedents, like the founding of the Secret Service following the assassination of President Lincoln, to lend legitimacy to the security measures being performed. The English-language media days took a closer look at the likely repercussions of what had happened, and not as much the historical context surrounding it.

5. Conclusion

This study examines the media coverage of the attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump in Arabic and English through Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analysis, focusing on the differences in narrative framing and language choices between

countries, and how these variations shape public perceptions. It demonstrates the influence of media framing on social attitudes and political views, leading to a better understanding of the role of language in the interpretation of important events. Understanding and integrating these differences in a globalized environment is the prerequisite for fostering dialogue or mutual understanding between nation states of different cognitive cultures.

The analysis reveals that Arabic and English media use declarative language and high modality to convey control and authority over security events. However, narrative style and modality differ, reflecting different cultural orientations. English media often uses emotionally charged language and qualifications, attracting speculation. Arabic media, on the other hand, emphasizes procedural updates and avoids ambiguity, placing incidents within a controlled space. These differences highlight how cultural surroundings influence media stories and the need for culturally correct communication in a global media environment.

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