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Diplomatic Framing in Digital Discourse: A Systemic Functional Analysis of US–Iran Official Ceasefire Tweets

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Abstract
Social media platforms such as Twitter/X and Truth Social have transformed diplomatic communication by enabling political leaders to communicate directly with global audiences. This study examines the intersection of language, technology, and geopolitics through a Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analysis of official social media posts concerning the US–Iran ceasefire. Drawing on Halliday's SFL framework, the study investigates contextual, semantic, and lexicogrammatical patterns employed by three key state actors: the United States, Iran, and Pakistan as mediator. Using a qualitative, descriptive, and analytical approach, it examines three official posts representing contrasting diplomatic positions. The findings reveal that the ceasefire is constructed differently across these texts. Trump employs first-person narration and typographic emphasis to portray the ceasefire as a unilateral achievement. Iran frames it as an act of defensive restraint through nominalization and conditional language, while Sharif presents it as a multilateral accomplishment through compound grammatical actors and politeness strategies. The study highlights how linguistic choices shape competing representations of geopolitical events. It contributes to Applied Linguistics, Media Studies, and International Relations by demonstrating that diplomatic language actively constructs political meanings rather than merely communicating decisions or events to audiences worldwide.

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1. Introduction

Digitalization and the advent of "Twiplomacy" (Lüfkens, 2012) have transformed the medium of world statecraft in International Relations, mediation and negotiation. Over the last decade, and particularly since 2020, social media platforms such as Twitter/X and Truth Social have emerged as substantial tools for diplomatic engagement, conflict resolution and geopolitical posturing (Bjola & Manor, 2022; Møller et al., 2024). Because of the emphasis placed on social media, this practice has been termed "Twiplomacy" (Lüfkens, 2012), a label that rightly signals a fundamental paradigm shift from closed-door and back-channel diplomacy to media discourse and open talk. Even

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so, Twiplomacy remains highly regulated by institutional instinct.

Within this context of digital diplomatic discourse, one of the most recent episodes of adversity and hostility witnessed by the world is the US–Iran conflict, the outcome of long-standing hostility between the two nations. It is among the most closely watched, mediated and asymmetrical clashes of the 21st century. Given the long-standing conflict and deep mistrust between them, direct, bilateral negotiation between the US and Iran has been extremely limited. Their diplomatic narratives, often exhibited on digital platforms, manifest as a form of digital proxy war, in which third-party mediators, whether regional or global, such as Qatar, Oman and Pakistan, play an important role in de-escalation (Almohsin et al., 2024).

In this context, diplomatic and military episodes such as a ceasefire in a high-stakes environment are not merely the cessation of kinetic violence; they are also acts of esteem and ideological constructs. They are highly contextualized and embedded within domestic politics, regional alliances and geopolitical rivalries. The rationale of this paper therefore lies in the fundamental, structural disruption that digital arenas have introduced into diplomatic talks. Conventionally, statecraft and international relations rely on joint communiqués couched in bureaucratic language, which synthesize opposing or agreeing geopolitical narratives into a single, uniform text that allows all stakeholders to "save face" (Manor, 2019). Digital discourse, however, has enabled state actors to bypass these diplomatic conventions altogether.

With the advent of Twiplomacy (Lüfkens, 2012), leaders are free not only to disseminate narratives but also to project and propagate self-serving realities, turning diplomatic communication into competing and rival narratives. Consequently, to comprehend modern diplomacy, it is essential to grasp not only the context being communicated in discourse but also the grammatical, linguistic and lexical dynamics through which power is enacted and realities are manipulated (Shi, 2024). The current study therefore asserts a pressing need to deconstruct how adversarial nations and neutral mediators enact and weaponize syntax and lexicon to accomplish their diplomatic narratives and victories within the limited characters of the micro text universally known as a tweet.

This attempt is significant because it bridges the macro level, i.e., geopolitical appraisal, with micro-level linguistic analysis. Although current political discourse research evaluates the strategic framing of digital diplomacy, there is a dearth of empirical linguistic studies examining how geopolitical narrative framing is realized at the clause level (Zhang, 2025). Through the triangulation of three narrative frames, i.e., US unilateral victory, Iran's defensive concession and Pakistani egalitarian collaboration, the study shows that lexis and grammar are proactive agents in statecraft and digital diplomacy. In addition, it seeks to create an interdisciplinary nexus between Applied Linguistics, Media Studies and International Relations. In this way, the current study demonstrates that global conflicts are not only contested on the ground but are also manifested through specific linguistic choices and grammatical patterns.

1.1 Context and Questions

The study analyses tripartite official microtext discourse, i.e., tweets by state officials from the US, Iran and Pakistan: Donald Trump, Abbas Araghchi and Shehbaz Sharif. These tweets were posted on X and Truth Social on 8 April 2026 during critical geopolitical events surrounding the US–Iran ceasefire. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do official microtexts, i.e., tweets from the US, Iran and Pakistan, construct distinct ceasefire narratives through field, tenor and mode?

2. Which semantic patterns, i.e., metafunctions, and lexico-grammatical choices, i.e., transitivity, mood and Theme, project the state actors' diplomatic framing of the ceasefire?

3. To what extent does a tri-stratal SFL analysis uncover ideological divergence among a global power, a regional opponent and a mediator?

2. Literature Review

Studies of diplomatic framing, especially in digital discourse, draw on three distinct fields of academic inquiry, i.e., digital public diplomacy, the application of SFL and geopolitical mediation, particularly in the recent US–Iran context. Recent scholarship has highlighted that digital discourse has dismantled conventional mechanisms of statecraft in International Relations. Manor (2019) and Sievers (2021) point out that the paradigm shift from closed-door diplomacy to Twiplomacy (Lüfkens, 2012) has turned geopolitical negotiation into a public and performative act. Digital platforms such as Twitter/X and Truth Social have enabled global leaders to broadcast their narratives through micro-texts, i.e., tweets, bypassing conventional diplomatic and bureaucratic norms. This practice goes beyond traditional protocol in order to persuade and influence both global and domestic audiences (Bjola & Zaiotti, 2021).

Hence, digital discourse is no longer a merely supplementary or supportive tool of negotiation or diplomatic communication; it has become a proactive agent in geopolitical dynamics. In this situation, state and geopolitical actors enact strategic narratives through lexico-grammar and lexis to justify their actions and decisions. They also use it to legitimize their rivalries and to frame their self-asserted regional, international and domestic identities (Cohen & Shamci, 2022; Garba, 2025). Within this context of digitalized discourse, the conflict between the US and Iran serves as an influential example of asymmetrical hostility. As direct diplomatic relations between Tehran and Washington do not exist, digital and social media platforms often serve as a bridge for proxy negotiation and strategic posturing (Jose, 2021).

Recent studies of Middle Eastern politics underline how hostile parties and combatants have used digital platforms

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to project, construct and propagate their respective foreign policies and strategic postures. Thomas (2024) argues that Iranian digital discourse and diplomacy rely heavily on resistance and defensive framing, portraying the nation as a protector of regional and national security and sovereignty, especially against what it presents as the imperialistic and expansionist policies of Israel and the West toward Iran. In contrast, US digital discourse relies on hegemonic narrative framing based on sanctions, deterrence and the enforcement of world security (Benouachan, 2021).

Notably, because there is currently no direct channel between the US and Iran, de-escalation is inherently reliant on a third party, i.e., a mediator such as Pakistan, Qatar or Oman. Although notable work has been carried out in Political Science and Strategic Studies to gauge the outcomes of such mediation for strategic dynamics, there is a scarcity of research that examines its linguistic, lexical and grammatical dimensions. The current study therefore analyses how the conflicting narratives of the US and Iran are negotiated and countered by a mediating party, i.e., Pakistan, particularly in relation to military episodes such as a ceasefire (Eslami & Al-Marashi, 2023). Moreover, where linguistic studies have addressed such issues, scholars have increasingly relied on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Hence, there is a dearth of SFL-based analysis, which the current study undertakes.

SFL is a rigorous framework initiated by Halliday (1985) and developed further by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014). This theoretical lens holds that ideological or narrative framing is not an abstract entity; rather, it is actively realized through specific lexico-grammatical patterns (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Several recent studies have applied it to digital political micro-texts to uncover the ideological construction of lexical and grammatical patterns. Darong (2022) shows how the interpersonal choices of political speakers, realized through mood and modality, position speaker and audience. Xu and Wang (2022) show how state-affiliated media use digital practices to project power and national positions. In addition, thematic progression and the textual metafunction have been shown to operate as tools for "face-saving", and Fasinu et al. (2024) underline how political leaders manage sensitive information in crisis communication to influence digital audiences.

2.1 Research Gap

Despite a growing trend toward SFL-based analysis of diplomatic and political discourse (Hussain, 2025; Ong'ong'a, 2025; Orhan, 2021; Ross & Caldwell, 2020; Zappavigna & Logi, 2024; Zappavigna & Ross, 2024), an important gap remains with respect to triangulated analysis across context, semantics and lexico-grammar, especially in relation to diplomatic framing. Moreover, most previous studies have focused either on a single state's rhetoric or on a binary narrative. Studies using a tri-stratal approach, i.e., context, semantics and lexico-grammar, to examine a shared geopolitical event from a tripartite perspective, i.e., that of the US, Iran and Pakistan, are rare. This tripartite perspective comprises the dominant combatant, i.e., the US, the resistant combatant, i.e., Iran, and the mediator, i.e., Pakistan. In light of the literature reviewed and the diplomatic dynamics synthesized above, the present study examines micro-level linguistic dynamics to decode how the grammatical structuring of tweets is used to contest, construct and mediate narratives of both war and peace.

To bridge this gap, the current study analyses the linguistic patterns that underlie diplomatic framing in digital discourse through the lens of SFL. Specifically, it examines a corpus of official tweets concerning the US–Iran ceasefire. The dataset consists of digital texts from the US President, the Iranian Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, i.e., the mediator. The study seeks to deconstruct how grammatical and lexical choices are used to enact power, emphasize geopolitical agency and mitigate institutional vulnerability. It applies Halliday's tri-stratal framework, i.e., context, semantics and lexico-grammar, and analyses how lexico-grammatical components such as transitivity, modality and thematic progression realize the interplay of the ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions.

This study compares three parties' points of view on a single event and addresses two major research gaps. First, it bridges a methodological gap in research on diplomatic framing through a tri-stratal SFL approach, i.e., context, semantics and lexico-grammar. Second, it goes beyond conventional two-way comparative studies by adopting a tripartite perspective, i.e., that of the US, Iran and Pakistan, in order to uncover non-binary diplomatic positions among regional and global opponents and mediating states.

3. Methodology

The study employs a qualitative, descriptive and analytical design grounded in Systemic Functional Linguistics. This design serves to reveal ideological motifs beneath syntactic and grammatical choices. The study requires microscopic, clause-based manual analysis to decode depths of meaning that cannot be fully captured through quantitative analysis alone. The corpus was collected from digital platforms, i.e., Twitter/X and Truth Social, using purposive sampling in order to analyze tripartite diplomatic and narrative framing. Three official tweets concerning the US–Iran ceasefire, posted by Trump, Sharif and Araghchi, were selected. They were chosen because they represent a triangulation of framing by their respective nations, i.e., Trump's tweet as that of the dominant combatant, Sharif's tweet as that of the mediating state and Araghchi's tweet as that of the resistant combatant. Although these tweets are short in terms of word count, they are highly concentrated and lexically and linguistically loaded, making them a micro sample of state rhetoric. Because the dataset was small, the corpus was analyzed manually, following the tri-stratal model of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics across the contextual, semantic and lexico-grammatical strata. Each tweet was analyzed to determine its register, i.e., field, tenor and mode. The semantic analysis was carried out through the metafunctions, i.e., ideational, interpersonal and textual. The lexico-grammatical analysis

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covered transitivity, i.e., participants such as Actor, Senser and Goal, and process types; mood and modality, i.e., modal verbs (e.g., must, will), conditional "if" clauses and typography such as capitalization; and Theme, realized as marked and unmarked Theme.

3.1 Sampling Criteria

To ensure systematic data selection, the study applied purposive sampling criteria based on source authenticity, temporal boundaries and thematic relevance. Only verified official tweets were extracted for analysis, and only tweets announcing the ceasefire were considered. The dates, source links and original screenshots of the tweets are provided in the Appendix.

3.2 Researcher Bias

Systemic Functional Linguistics was adopted as the theoretical approach because it is a rigorous framework that helps to limit the researcher's subjective bias. SFL is a highly structured theoretical lens that bases textual interpretation on linguistic evidence and specified criteria, such as register, transitivity, metafunctions, mood, modality and Theme. Hence, the framework discourages arbitrary readings and promotes analytical rigor. However, subjective interpretation on the part of the researcher remains possible, especially in narrative- or stance-based studies in discourse analysis. Therefore, rather than claiming total objectivity, it is safer to assert that SFL functions as a structured constraint that ensures transparent, explicit and traceable analysis of narrative framing in the texts.

4. Theoretical Framework

The current study is based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, initially developed by M. A. K. Halliday (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL views language as a social semiotic through which meaning is made in specific sociocultural contexts. In diplomatic and digital discourse, SFL holds that grammatical and lexical choices are never objective or neutral; rather, they are ideological and proactive tools for framing reality. To examine diplomatic stance in digital discourse, Halliday's tri-stratal model is applied. Context is realized through register. Field concerns what the text is about; tenor determines the nature of the relationships among participants; and mode indicates the role that language plays in the tweet. The semantic analysis is carried out through the metafunctions. The ideational metafunction deals with "who does what to whom"; the interpersonal metafunction concerns how language enacts social relationships; and the textual metafunction concerns how language is organized in a text. Finally, lexico-grammatical choices are analyzed through transitivity, i.e., choices of processes, participants and circumstances; through mood and modality, i.e., degrees of obligation and certainty; and through Theme and Rheme, i.e., how information is organized in a text.

5. Data Analysis

5.1 Contextual Analysis

Table 1: Contextual (register) analysis of the three tweets

Register	Trump	Sharif	Araghchi
Field	Announcing the suspension of military strikes and declaring US victory; recounting strict conditions for a "double sided CEASEFIRE!"	Announcing a comprehensive multilateral ceasefire and offering a formal diplomatic invitation to the Islamabad Talks	Declaring a conditional halt to "defensive operations" and outlining a diplomatic timeline to justify compliance without appearing weak
Tenor	Highly asymmetrical and dominant; positioned as the supreme global arbiter of violence and peace; speaks down to Iran and projects Pakistan as a petitioner	Egalitarian and deferential; positioned as a humble, neutral mediator, elevating the status of the US and Iran through respect	Fraternal and legalistic, drawing on institutional authority; warm and brotherly toward Pakistan; cold and conditional toward the US
Mode	Highly personalized, idiosyncratic style, mixing formal statecraft with digital "shouting"	Highly polished and traditional; mimics a formal press release	Formal state-level communication, i.e., date, location and signature

5.2 Semantic Analysis

Table 2: Semantic (metafunctional) analysis of the three tweets

Metafunction	Trump	Sharif	Araghchi
Ideational	Unilateral victory; peace as a concession granted by the US; Iran framed as defeated and shown as submitting proposals	Peace as a joint and mutual achievement; conflict is abstracted; Pakistan as an influential anchor of stability	Iran as a magnanimous actor responding to "requests"; US actions are "attacks", Iranian actions are "defensive operations"
Interpersonal	Authoritarian dominance; claiming total victory; seeking gratitude from the world	Positive politeness through complimenting the combatants; soothes egos and advances diplomatic cooperation	Reclaims agency; frames the US as an eager negotiator making "requests"
Textual	Narrative of benevolent authority: "they requested that I hold off …"	Systematic diplomacy through fact, invitation, praise and hope	Legal defense through justification, conditions and the correction of facts

5.3 Lexico-grammatical Analysis

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Table 3: Lexico-grammatical analysis of the three tweets

Lexico-grammar	Trump	Sharif	Araghchi
Transitivity	First person: "I agree to suspend …" (material process); "they requested" (verbal process); subordinate participant: "We received a 10 point proposal from Iran"	Compound participant: "the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America … have agreed"; positive processes: "Both parties have displayed remarkable wisdom"	Passive voice for the US: "If attacks … are halted"; active voice for Iran: "our Powerful Armed Forces will cease"; relational process for the Strait: "will be possible"
Conditionality and modality	Lexical juxtaposition, i.e., "destructive force" vs. "consummated"	Elevated lexis: "the greatest humility", "earnestly hope"	Conditional clause: "If attacks … are halted"; nominalization: "the request by the U.S."; fraternal lexis: "dear brothers"
Theme and Rheme	Marked Theme front-loads a 52-word span containing foreign "requests" before the Subject ("I")	Marked Theme of deference: "With the greatest humility …"; progression from "I" (mediator) to "Both parties" to "We"	Marked Theme front-loads a 47-word span containing Pakistan's and the US's "requests", backgrounding Iran's concession

6. Findings and Discussion

6.1 Trump's Tweet Analysis: Contextual Analysis

In Systemic Functional Linguistics, context is realized through register, i.e., field, tenor and mode. Field concerns what is going on. Here, the tweet announces the suspension of an imminent attack and bombing on Iran. In addition, it lists strict conditions regarding the Strait of Hormuz and projects the accomplishment of US military objectives. It frames the ceasefire as a step toward "Longterm PEACE" made possible by the productive involvement of Pakistan's political and military leadership. Tenor concerns those involved in the exchange. In the post, as in the war, the relationship is highly asymmetrical: Trump positions himself as the "supreme global authority" and the arbiter of both peace and destruction.

In addition, he addresses Iran as an adversary, Pakistan as a facilitator and the global public as his audience. A notable feature of the tenor is the elevation of his stature beyond that of US President to that of someone who also represents "the Countries of the Middle East". Mode concerns the role language plays in the text, i.e., digital discourse in the form of a tweet. Trump's tweet blends diplomatic framing, through references to an agreement, a proposal and a ceasefire, with his highly personal and idiosyncratic typographic style, i.e., unconventional punctuation, capitalization and exclamation marks, as in COMPLETE, IMMEDIATE, SAFE OPENING, CEASEFIRE, PEACE and DONALD J. TRUMP, and the "!" after CEASEFIRE.

6.2 Semantic Analysis

Semantic features are realized through the metafunctions in Systemic Functional Linguistics. The ideational metafunction construes reality. In the tweet, Trump constructs a reality in which peace is not a natural outcome of de-escalation but a "concession" granted by Trump, or the US, to Iran. The US, through Trump, is framed as an absolute authority with a license to use violence. Pakistan is represented as a petitioner asking for restraint, while Iran is projected as a defeated party and Trump, or the US, as victorious. At the interpersonal level, the tweet is replete with dominance, authority and ultimate force. Through the capitalization of COMPLETE, IMMEDIATE and SAFE, the author presents his demand as "non-negotiable".

In addition, the tone shifts from that of a threatening and destructive force to that of a triumphant peacemaker who deserves honor and the gratitude of his audience, i.e., the world. The textual metafunction concerns the organization of the tweet. The tweet is organized to frame a narrative of "benevolent power", unfolding logically to display the author's political strength while protecting his standing. First, the author, i.e., Trump, states that he was asked by a mediator, i.e., Pakistan, to stop the strike. Second, the tweet suggests that Iran has yielded to his demand. Third, he presents himself as having stopped the bombing because he has achieved his military objectives, and, finally, as bringing peace to the world.

6.3 Lexico-grammatical Analysis

This level reveals specific linguistic choices through transitivity, mood and modality, and Theme–Rheme. Transitivity realizes ideational meaning through processes, participants and circumstances. In the tweet, Pakistan is portrayed as a petitioner: Trump grants Pakistan verbal agency, but only as the party asking a favor on Iran's behalf, as in "wherein they [Sayer] requested [verbal process] that I hold off…". Iran is projected as subordinate rather than as a co-negotiator; it is not shown acting as an equal but as the source of a proposal awaiting US approval: "We [Actor] received [material process] a 10 point proposal [Goal] from Iran". Trump presents himself as the ultimate actor, foregrounding material power through a first-person narrative: "I [Actor] agree to suspend [material process] the bombing and attack of Iran [Goal]". Finally, the US is constructed as victorious: "we [Actor] have already met and exceeded [material process] all Military objectives [Goal]". Grammatically, this ensures that the ceasefire cannot be read as a defeat or retreat but only as a success.

Mood and modality realize interpersonal meaning. In the digital discourse examined here, capitalization functions as a form of typographic emphasis that signals obligation and certainty. By capitalizing CEASEFIRE, COMPLETE, IMMEDIATE and SAFE OPENING, Trump displays non-negotiable and absolute authority. This effect is heightened by lexical juxtaposition: "destructive force", "bombing" and "attack" belong to a lexicon of extreme violence, whereas "definitive Agreement", "consummated" and "workable basis" belong to a lexicon of bureaucratic

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diplomacy. This juxtaposition presents Trump as the holder of both "hard" and "soft" power. In the final sentence of the tweet, "On behalf of the United States of America, as President, and also representing the Countries of the Middle East…" extends Trump's interpersonal authority to its limits; linguistically, he includes the nations of the region to legitimize his decision.

Theme–Rheme realizes textual meaning. The Theme is the point of departure of the clause. The opening sentence of the tweet begins with a lengthy, 52-word marked Theme consisting of circumstantial and dependent elements: "Based on conversations with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif … and subject to the Islamic Republic of Iran agreeing to the COMPLETE … OPENING of the Strait of Hormuz …". Only then does "I agree to suspend" appear, which textually shields Trump from appearing weak, defeated or in retreat. The tweet thus presents the ceasefire as a response to external requests rather than as an American retreat. The Theme then becomes first-person, and in the middle of the tweet there is a shift from "I" to "we", i.e., "we have already met …" and "We received …", which keeps agency firmly with America and Trump.

7. Sharif's Tweet Analysis

Sharif's tweet offers a contrast to Trump's tweet analyzed above. Whereas Trump's tweet projects a unilateral narrative of dominance, Sharif's tweet is a fascinating text that uses similar linguistic resources to construct a multilateral narrative of mediation.

7.1 Contextual Analysis

The field analysis reveals that the tweet functions as a formal declaration of a complete ceasefire between the US and Iran, along with their allies, including in Lebanon. The tweet also serves as the Prime Minister's invitation to diplomatic peace talks, i.e., the "Islamabad Talks". As far as tenor is concerned, Sharif's tweet positions him, and Pakistan, as a neutral mediator between the US and Iran on the global stage. Unlike Trump's tweet, the relationship between the author and the parties, i.e., the US and Iran, is framed with considerable reinforcement, respect and positive deference. The audience of the tweet is, again, the global community. The mode of the tweet is highly polished and resembles a conventional press release, drawing on the elevated lexicon of traditional statecraft. It also uses capitalization to assert the urgency of the matter.

7.2 Semantic Analysis

At the ideational level, the tweet encodes a reality founded on cooperation and respect. It frames the ceasefire as a mutual, joint achievement rather than the one-sided outcome projected in Trump's tweet. Unlike Trump's lexicon, Sharif's tweet makes no mention of "bombing" or "destructive force"; instead, it speaks of "the cause of peace and stability". A key point at the ideational level is that Sharif's tweet projects Pakistan as an indispensable geographical, geopolitical and diplomatic anchor committed to bringing peace to the region. At the interpersonal level, the tweet relies heavily on a strategy of "positive politeness". Sharif deliberately lowers his own stature at the beginning of the tweet through "the greatest humility" in order to elevate the stature of the US and Iran. He also uses complimentary language to validate both the US and Iran, through expressions such as "remarkable wisdom" and "sagacious gesture". These strategies position him as a facilitator working to maintain agreement and peace at a time when the region was on the verge of grave consequences. In terms of its textual organization, the tweet is structured chronologically and factually. It opens like breaking news, presenting the ceasefire as a "fact"; it then offers a reaction and an invitation to the "Islamabad Talks"; it praises the actors, i.e., the US and Iran; and, finally, it looks to the future by keeping "hope" alive.

7.3 Lexico-grammatical Analysis

The transitivity analysis reveals that Sharif's tweet treats the US and Iran as absolute equals through lexical and grammatical means, placing both actors on an equal footing: "the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America [Sayer] … have agreed to [verbal process] an immediate ceasefire [Verbiage]". Unlike Trump, Sharif combines both nations into a compound grammatical participant, presenting them as acting as a single entity. Notably, Iran is listed first, which may help to construct a geopolitical balance from the perspective of a non-Western mediator. In addition, the tweet projects positive agency: "Both parties [Actor] have displayed [material process] remarkable wisdom and understanding [Scope]". The agency attributed to the combatants is entirely constructive and positive. Unlike Trump, Sharif uses "I" as mediator and facilitator: "I [Sayer] … invite [verbal process] their delegations [Receiver] to Islamabad [Circumstance]". Here, Sharif's processes encode facilitation, welcome and hope, which are typical gestures of a mediator, in contrast to Trump's commanding tone.

At the level of mood and modality, Sharif's tweet uses an elevated diplomatic lexis. The tweet is replete with formal, conventional diplomatic vocabulary, such as "deepest gratitude", "greatest humility", "earnestly hope", "constructively engaged" and "sagacious gesture". This lexicon creates an atmosphere of careful statecraft and acts as a proactive tool for soothing tension through linguistic courtesy. Like Trump, Sharif also uses typographic emphasis through capitalization, as in EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY; unlike Trump's threatening and unilateral narrative, however, here it functions as a stamp of urgency, celebration and bureaucratic formality. The tweet also uses a naming strategy in "'Islamabad Talks'". Through capitalization and quotation marks, Sharif presents a planned future event as a historic, recognized proper noun, which also signals Pakistan's esteemed role in the forthcoming peace talks.

Regarding Theme–Rheme, i.e., textual meaning, the tweet opens with a marked Theme of humility. It begins with a prepositional phrase placed before the Subject: "With the greatest humility [marked Theme], I am pleased to announce [Rheme]". Placing humility at the point of departure signals that, unlike Trump, Sharif is not claiming

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victory. It also supports a collaborative tone that is not only non-threatening but highly diplomatic. In terms of thematic progression, the tweet moves from the individual "I" of the mediator to the acting combatants and then to the collaborative goal expressed by "we". In sentence 1, the tone is established with "the greatest humility"; in sentence 2, "I" acts as the inviter; in sentence 3, Sharif praises the parties, i.e., the US and Iran, through "Both parties …"; and the final sentence projects collaborative hope through "We".

8. Araghchi's Tweet Analysis

Araghchi's tweet offers a fascinating counter-narrative to Trump's tweet analyzed earlier. In diplomatic discourse, it is a clear instance of "saving face" and "reclaiming agency". Its lexico-grammatical patterns construct the ceasefire as a reality in which Iran is projected as a magnanimous actor and a formidable rival, and the US as the party making requests. In doing so, it mirrors the tone and lexicon that Trump uses to present the US as the "absolute authority".

8.1 Contextual Analysis

In terms of field, the tweet is an official statement declaring Iran's acceptance of a two-week ceasefire, complemented by the conditional opening of the Strait of Hormuz. The tweet sets out a diplomatic timeline in order to justify Iran's stance rather than appear weak. Araghchi invokes absolute institutional authority by speaking "on behalf of Iran's Supreme National Security Council". The tenor of the tweet shifts according to its addressee: it is legalistic, cold and conditional toward the US, but fraternal and warm toward Pakistan. The mode of the tweet is highly formal and bureaucratic, like Sharif's tweet. Despite being digital discourse, it observes diplomatic norms through its reference to PM Sharif and its formal layout, with a date, location, heading and conventional sign-off.

8.2 Semantic Analysis

At the ideational level, the tweet constructs a reality of "defensive strength" and "regional fraternity". It asserts that Iran is merely responding to the polite "requests" of Pakistan and the US rather than capitulating. Iranian military action is framed as defensive, while US attacks are implicitly presented as unprovoked. In terms of the interpersonal metafunction, the tweet portrays two contrasting relationships. Toward Pakistan, the relationship is framed as regional and Islamic through "my dear brothers", while toward the US, the tweet seeks to dismantle Trump's unilateral narrative of dominance, presenting the US as an equal, or even an eager, "negotiating partner" making requests. The textual metafunction reveals an organization resembling a legal defense. The tweet conveys diplomatic power and justification, implying that Iran is acting at the request of its brothers. It emphasizes factual precision and culminates in a formal declaration of the specific conditions of the ceasefire.

8.3 Lexico-grammatical Analysis

The transitivity analysis reveals how the tweet reclaims Iranian agency and redefines violence. Violence is framed as follows: "If attacks against Iran [Goal] are halted [material process], our Powerful Armed Forces [Actor] will cease [material process] their defensive operations [Goal]". This construction is asymmetrical, because US actions are termed "attacks", i.e., aggression, while Iranian actions are labeled "defensive operations" as a means of justification. In addition, attacks on Iran are presented in the passive voice, which obscures the US and its allies as actors, while the Iranian military is presented in the active voice. Moreover, the tweet reverses the proposal narrative. Unlike Trump, Araghchi refers to "the request by the U.S. for negotiations … as well as announcement by POTUS about acceptance".

Whereas Trump's tweet claimed that Iran had submitted a proposal, Araghchi reverses this through nominalization, i.e., turning verbs into nouns such as "request", "negotiations" and "acceptance", which fixes US actions as completed facts. He presents the US as seeking acceptance, which places Iran in a position of strength. The tweet also constructs a conditional maritime agency through "safe passage … [Carrier] will be [relational process] possible [Attribute] via coordination with Iran's Armed Forces [Circumstance]". In response to Trump's demand for the opening of the Strait, the tweet replaces a material process such as "we will open the Strait …" with the relational "will be possible …", creating a conditional state that is subject to Iranian coordination. In terms of mood and modality, the tweet combines the language of fraternity with bureaucratic language.

The tweet uses a highly emotive and relational lexicon for Pakistan, i.e., "dear brothers" and "brotherly request", whereas the tone and lexis used for the US are cold and bureaucratic, relying on abbreviations such as "POTUS" and "the U.S.". This presents Iran as part of a supportive regional family while distancing the US. The tweet also foregrounds conditionality: "If attacks … are halted" enacts a power play that shifts the burden of compliance from Iran to the US. The phrase "with due consideration of technical limitations" then introduces a bureaucratic qualification that lowers the modality of the commitment. Diplomatically, this leaves room for restrictions in the Strait of Hormuz to be attributed to "technical limitations" rather than to a breach of the ceasefire. Finally, the performative verb in "I hereby declare …" projects strong institutional authority, in contrast to the personal authority projected by Trump's "I".

Regarding Theme–Rheme, i.e., the realization of textual meaning, the second paragraph of the tweet contains an extensive marked Theme. The Subject and main verb, "I hereby declare …", appear only at the end of a 58-word sentence, after a 47-word preposed span. In Systemic Functional Linguistics, the Theme, i.e., the beginning of the clause, is the point of departure of the message. By placing the requests of both Pakistan and the US in this marked Theme, Araghchi foregrounds them and

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backgrounds the actual concession, i.e., the ceasefire. In other words, readers are led to absorb the context first, namely that Iran is stepping back from hostilities as an act of diplomatic grace rather than out of weakness, before they reach the declaration itself.

9. Conclusion

Departing from standard statecraft and diplomatic discourse, Trump's tweet uses the first-person "I", material processes, typographic "shouting" and marked Themes to frame the ceasefire as a unilateral, conditional "pardon" granted by an omnipotent and victorious leader, i.e., the US. It demonstrates how digital discourse on social media platforms such as X and Truth Social bypasses conventional diplomatic norms and softening gestures to display "raw power" to a global audience. Unlike Trump, Sharif constructs Iran and the US as compound participants in positive relational and material processes, as in "have displayed remarkable wisdom". He graciously uses an elevated diplomatic lexicon to project peace as a mutual and collaborative achievement. Araghchi's tweet, meanwhile, is an excellent example of a counter-narrative to Trump and the US. It reverses both the "proposal" narrative and the framing of violence, and it asserts conditional maritime agency over the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump's tweet uses material processes, categorical assertions and typographic emphasis to project the ceasefire as an Iranian surrender, whereas Sharif's tweet uses compound subjects and an elevated lexicon to construct the ceasefire as a mutual triumph of diplomacy. Araghchi's tweet, in contrast, uses conditional clauses, marked Themes and a fraternal lexicon to project the ceasefire as an act of Iranian grace in response to US requests. This triangulation of framing suggests that, in digital diplomacy, the ceasefire itself can become secondary to its lexico-grammatical packaging. It also highlights that digital discourse does not merely report or announce a ceasefire; rather, it actively constructs, frames and even weaponizes the semantics of peace in pursuit of victory. Finally, it shows that digital discourse allows leaders to present self-serving realities to their followers.

The study concludes that the digital discourse of diplomacy is not merely a vehicle for international relations; it constructs reality. The battle for narrative supremacy is fought through lexicon, clauses and wordplay. A single geopolitical event is projected as three disparate realities: the US, through material processes, frames peace as unilateral; Iran, through nominalization, reframes the ceasefire as a defensive concession; and Pakistan, through compound participants, constructs it as an egalitarian and mutual collaboration. Textually, thematic progression in the tweets enables the hostile actors, i.e., Iran and the US, to present the ceasefire as diplomatic face-saving. These tweets also project diverse geopolitical identities: a unilateral victor in the US, a multilateral mediator in Pakistan and a "magnanimous defender" in Iran. This is reflected in the contrastive foregrounding of first-person forms, such as Trump's "I agree to suspend …", Sharif's collaborative "We" and Araghchi's institutional "our Powerful Armed Forces …", which display differing stances and institutional authority.

10. Limitations

Although the study offers valuable insights into diplomatic discourse through a tri-stratal SFL analysis, several limitations must be acknowledged, and they point to avenues for future research. First, the corpus is restricted to microtext tweets from only two platforms, i.e., Truth Social and X, so corpus and platform limitations are inherent in the study. Second, the dataset is very small, consisting of only three tweets. Third, the temporal scope is confined to the ceasefire tweets of Donald Trump, Abbas Araghchi and Shehbaz Sharif and excludes discourse surrounding back-channel talks and negotiations. Fourth, because the dataset is leader-centric and the leaders have distinctive posting styles, tones and diction, personal style may be difficult to separate from conventional diplomatic posturing. Fifth, the study relies on a qualitative method, which is itself a methodological limitation, as stance-based analysis is open to subjective interpretation.

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Appendix

Screenshots of the three official posts analyzed in the study (captured by the authors).

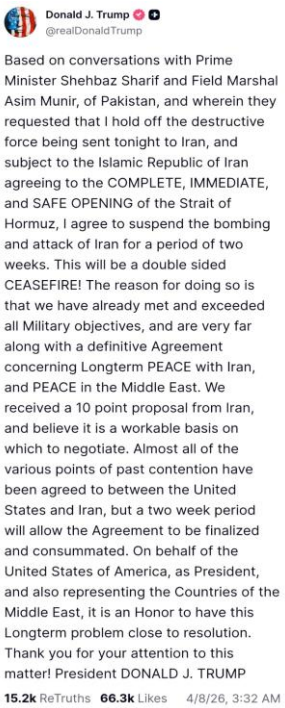


Figure 1: Donald J. Trump, Truth Social, 8 April 2026. https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/116365796713313030



Figure 2: Shehbaz Sharif, X (@CMShehbaz), 8 April 2026. https://x.com/CMShehbaz/status/2041665043423752651

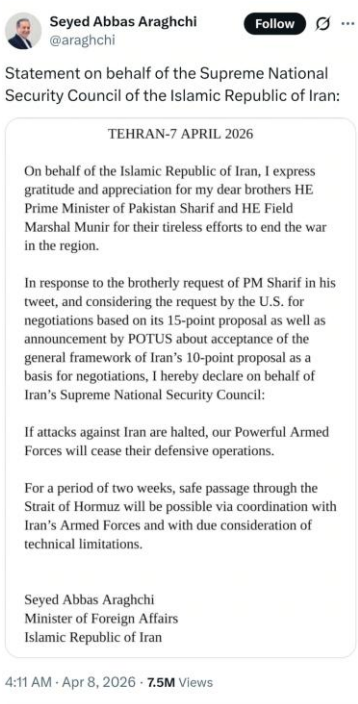


Figure 3: Seyed Abbas Araghchi, X (@araghchi), 8 April 2026. https://x.com/araghchi/status/2041655156215799821

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