

**UNIVERSITY OF TARTU**  
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**REPRESENTATION OF DONALD TRUMP IN *THE NEW YORK*  
*TIMES*: A CORPUS-ASSISTED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE  
FIRST 51 DAYS OF HIS SECOND TERM**

**BA thesis**

**MARLEEN MARJAPUU**  
**SUPERVISOR: *Prof.* RAILI MARLING, PhD**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how *The New York Times* represents Donald Trump during the first 51 days of his second presidential term, with a focus on the portrayal of his early immigration-related decisions, using corpus-assisted discourse analysis. Trump's confrontational communication style and lasting conflict with traditional media, especially *The New York Times*, make this an important area of study. By analysing a period for which little academic research currently exists, the thesis provides new insight into how a major U.S. newspaper constructs its coverage of Trump and his early policy actions.

The first section of the thesis reviews research on media discourse, the representation of marginalised groups and previous studies on Trump and the media. The second section outlines the data and methodology. The analysis then examines how *The New York Times* portrays Trump as a political figure and his immigration decisions.

Keywords: corpus-assisted discourse studies, media discourse, Donald Trump

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	2
INTRODUCTION .....	4
1. MEDIA, POLITICS AND REPRESENTATION.....	6
1.1 Political discourse in media .....	6
1.2 Representation of marginalised groups in media .....	8
1.3 Donald Trump and the media .....	9
1.4 Institutional profile of <i>The New York Times</i> .....	14
1.5 Corpus-assisted discourse studies.....	15
2. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS .....	19
2.1 Methodology.....	19
2.2 Findings .....	22
2.3 Discussion.....	34
CONCLUSION .....	36
REFERENCES .....	39
RESÜMEE .....	42

## INTRODUCTION

Donald Trump is one of the most controversial politicians today, which makes it important to analyse how he is presented to the public, as media coverage helps to potentially create support to or criticisms of his policies. He often uses informal language and voice to speak directly to his supporters, in order to position himself as representing the “ordinary people”, not just political and social elites (Kjeldgaard-Christiansen 2024). In his use of language, Trump frequently relies on strong, emotionally charged expressions, and his rhetoric has become more confrontational over time (Savin and Treisman 2024). This aggressive style often appears in his interactions with the press, as Trump regularly portrays mainstream media as untrustworthy or hostile, which contributes to a tense and complicated relationship between him and major news outlets (Nacos et al 2020). Trump began his second presidential term on 20 January 2025, continuing a career marked by his use of strong language in political discussions, divisive decisions and frequent clashes with traditional media.

From the beginning of his first presidency, Trump has repeatedly accused traditional media of bias, often pointing to *The New York Times* (NYT) as an example of unfair and negative coverage of him. His hostility towards the outlet has even escalated into lawsuits, such as his most recent \$15 billion defamation case against the newspaper (Grynbaum 2025). For this reason, this study focuses on the NYT, a frequent target of Trump’s criticism, to analyse the ways Trump is represented in its reporting.

Immigration has been one of the central themes of Donald Trump’s political career and remains a defining issue in his second presidential term. From the start of his presidency, Trump’s rhetoric on immigration has been forceful, often portraying it as a threat to national security and the American economy (The White House 2025). His policies have focused on stricter border control, limiting asylum applications and increasing deportations, with the

administration reporting that more than 100,000 people have been deported since Trump's inauguration (The White House 2025). As immigration has been such a prominent and divisive topic in the USA during Trump's presidency, its coverage offers an important example of how major newspapers portray him and his decisions. Because of its visibility and connection to Trump's political agenda, immigration as a topic allows me to examine how the NYT reports on Trump's decisions in the early part of his second term.

The present thesis aims to analyse how Donald Trump is represented in *The New York Times* during the first 51 days of his second presidential term and, specifically, how Trump's early presidential decisions in relation to immigrants are represented. The thesis examines both how the newspaper presents Trump as a political figure and how it describes the immigration related actions he takes during this period. This makes it possible to determine whether the NYT represents Trump himself differently from the policies he introduces. Such research is important because the way the media portrays Trump can influence how the public views him and his choices, as well as immigration policy more broadly. At the time of writing this thesis, there is still limited research on how Trump's second term is portrayed in major newspapers. By analysing the NYT's language use, this thesis provides new evidence on how the newspaper constructs its coverage of Trump and his early immigration policies and how it represents the controversial and contested decisions of the president.

In order to achieve these aims, a corpus-based analysis will be conducted to identify recurring language patterns across the articles. Although corpus analysis is not free from bias, using a clearly defined sampling procedure helps reduce the selectivity that can often occur in qualitative analyses. A critical perspective will also be applied to interpret the results in context, ensuring that both quantitative findings and broader meaning are taken into account.

The thesis will first provide a literature review of media discourse and politics, with a special emphasis on the representation of immigration and media coverage of Donald Trump. It will also provide an overview of *The New York Times* and its reporting on the Trump administration. It will then introduce the methodology and data, followed by an analysis of the data and a discussion of the results.

## **1. MEDIA, POLITICS AND REPRESENTATION**

### **1.1 Political discourse in media**

Van Dijk's (1997: 12) simplest definition of political discourse covers politicians and political institutions and the texts and speeches they produce. However, van Dijk (1997) acknowledges that this view can be too narrow as political communication also involves other actors such as voters, stakeholders and the broad public, since political discourse takes place in the public sphere in which many people are active. Van Dijk writes at the time before the Internet and social media that have broadened the public sphere and the formats of political discourse. What has stayed the same is the focus on language as a key tool of political persuasion. Chilton (2004) also brings out that political activity is inseparable from language.

Political discourse in the media is a complex form of communication and a mix of three different forms: institutional, media and mediated public discourse (Fetzer and Lauerbach 2007). As institutional discourse it follows formal procedures and goals, unlike casual daily conversations. Media discourse by contrast is public and directed at the mass audience, setting it apart from other fields like law or education. As mediated political discourse emerges from the interactions between politics and media, political discourse

analysis studies the aims and practices of this hybrid discourse (Fetzer and Lauerbach 2007: 14-15).

In its early development, media discourse was understood mainly as written text, such as newspapers, with some work also on radio. Over time this view expanded, reflecting advances in technology and recognising the broader multimodal nature of media including speech, music, sound effects and images (Bell and Garrett 1998: 2-3). However, early research largely overlooked important aspects such as media text production and audience reception (Bell and Garrett 1998: 18-19). Research also mainly concentrated on news, as it was valued as the most important media genre (Bell and Garrett 1998: 4).

Unlike early media studies that often overlooked the role of audiences and production, today's research finds them to be very important in the present media climate due to the more dialogic nature of news in which audiences have the opportunity to react fast to emerging news, for example on social media. This has created an oversaturated media environment, where endless streams of information and countless voices compete for visibility (Filak 2022: 149-151). Since anyone can share news or opinions, people have more choices than ever, making it harder to grab their attention. Heitmayer (2024) brings out that this means journalists, politicians, and businesses must keep proving that they are reliable and valuable. In today's media landscape, capturing attention is what everyone is fighting for. Schroeder (2018) illustrates this by noting how Trump's provocative posts on X (formerly Twitter) allow him to dominate the media cycle, where news outlets locked in constant competition for market share prefer divisive content that keeps the audience, both supporters and critics of the president, on the platforms.

## 1.2 Representation of marginalised groups in media

Media plays a crucial role in shaping societal attitudes and personal identities and the effect of these attitudes is especially strongly felt by marginalised groups. Saleem et al. (2025) conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis, consisting of 49 articles on the media representations of outgroups. Since some articles contained more than one study, a total of 60 studies were analysed. After analysing 56 studies that focused on negative representations, it was found that negative portrayals of marginalised groups led to more unfavourable assessment of those belonging to the outgroup (Saleem et al. 2025: 17). Out of the 60 studies, 24 also examined positive representations and it was established that “/.../ positive depictions of minoritized groups led to more positive group evaluations” (Saleem et al. 2025: 17). The results were consistent across all different outgroups, categorised into four subgroups (African American/Black, Immigrant/Refugee/Foreign, Latinx and MENA/Muslim), as well as across types of media. Mastro (2015) also brings up in her research that racial and ethnic groups are often depicted in a belittling way, reinforcing and contributing to societal biases, for example Black individuals in the media being portrayed as criminals.

There have also been studies analysing how Trump and his rise to presidency have affected the media representation of minority groups. In their study, Papakyriakopoulos and Zuckerman (2021) studied over 54 million online news articles over the period of 2013-2019 published in the U.S media. The study focused on the following issues: immigration, identity politics and Latino people (grouped under the term “Mexicans”). The study found that there was a shift in media coverage and narratives around these issues, as the number of media reports on migration and the use of the related terminology increased (Papakyriakopoulos and Zuckerman 2021: 472). Compared to African Americans, Asian Americans and Jewish Americans, the label “Mexicans” was associated with more negative stereotypes and

prejudices in media articles. The authors pointed out that “/.../ in terms of word embeddings associations, that the most stereotyped group concept in media were the "Mexicans," who were usually reported in articles on migration, trafficking and cartels” (Papakyriakopoulos and Zuckerman 2021: 474-475). Importantly, the research concluded that media coverage on the topics studied did not appear to be influenced by real world factors, such as economic conditions and immigration levels, suggesting that the U.S online news media seemed to pick up and spread Trump’s political messaging (Papakyriakopoulos and Zuckerman 2021: 476).

Block et al. (2023) conducted three studies to examine how Trump’s 2016 election and failed 2020 re-election affected groups, who felt targeted negatively by Trump’s campaign messages. The first two studies were conducted in January 2017 around his first inauguration and involved mainly women and LGBTQ+ participants, while the third study consisted mostly of people of colour and took place before or right after the 2020 election (Block et al. 2023: 440). Across the three studies, Trump’s election decreased the feeling of belonging and increased the fear of discrimination in marginalised groups. In the first two studies the participants “/.../who felt their social group was targeted by Trump’s campaign rhetoric tended to report lower social fit, as well as greater social identity threat, and expectations of discrimination” and had higher expectations of discrimination compared to the Obama era (Block et al. 2023: 457). In the third study participants stated that they would have felt a stronger social fit after Trump’s loss and Clinton’s victory, though expectations of discrimination persisted (Block et al. 2023: 457-456).

### **1.3 Donald Trump and the media**

Donald Trump is a polarising public figure and the relationship between him and the media has been studied across mainstream media and social media platforms, such as X

(formerly named Twitter), showing patterns of populism and discriminatory messaging in Trump's rhetoric.

Kreis's (2017) findings highlight how Trump's posts on X construct a binary worldview: a "homogenous people" (his supporters, Americans) versus a "dangerous other" (immigrants, media, opponents). Trump promises that under his presidency Americans will come first, implying that before they were treated unfairly. He pledges to create more jobs for the American people, thus excluding immigrants and foreigners (Kreis 2017: 612). Trump also combines negative other-presentation with positive self-presentation, often shifting blame to the previous administration and calling traditional media fake and untrustworthy. At the same time, he presents himself as popular with the people and as a leader fighting corrupt elites on behalf of the common Americans (Kreis 2017: 614).

Coe and Griffin (2020) found in their study that used coding of references to a marginalised group as neutral, positive, negative or mixed in posts made by Donald Trump on X during his first two years as president that 41.3% of Trump's posts in relation to marginalised groups on X are negative in tone.

Traditional media's coverage of his controversial posts gives Trump more publicity, regardless of the attitudes expressed in the texts, as all reactions increase attention given to his messages (Schroeder 2018: 63). Trump is also very aware of how this dynamic works and explains in his book that he uses media attention to his advantage. He argues that being outspoken and provocative guarantees coverage, provides him with free publicity and creates what he sees as a mutually beneficial relationship between himself and the press (Trump 2015: 10-11).

Yet, in his posts on X, Trump still frequently labels outlets displaying criticism against him as "fake news" (Nacos et al 2020). Nacos et al (2020) also bring up Trump's

selective praise of media outlets that support him (e.g. One America News Network), while actively pursuing legal action against ones criticising him (e.g. Washington Post).

Trump's second presidential term has lasted less than a year at the time of writing this thesis, therefore no academic studies have yet been published analysing his representation in the media. However, there are studies that have analysed Trump's media representation in the beginning of his first presidential term.

A Pew Research Center (2017) study analysed 24 different media channels across different mediums (radio, television and web sources) and over 3,000 news reports from Donald Trump's first 100 days of his first presidential term. The media channels were rated based on their media bias and placed into one of three groups: left-leaning audience, mixed audience or right-leaning audience. It was found that all groups report on comparable topics in relation to Trump, the main five (Trump's political skills, immigration, appointments and nominations, U.S-Russia relations, health care) making up 66% of all stories reported. The stories also were mostly centred around Trump's personality and management skills, rather than his political agenda and policies (Pew Research Center 2017: 4-7). The Pew Research Center (2017: 8) study further concluded that ".../ only about one-in-ten stories (11%) delivered an overall positive assessment of the administration's words or actions. Four times as many (44%) offered a negative assessment, while the remaining 45% were neither positive nor negative." The biggest contrast was seen in channels with a left-leaning audience, the coverage being 56% negative and only 5% positive, and channels with a mixed audience with 47% negative and 6% positive assessments. Channels with a right-leaning audience had the largest share of positive coverage at 31% and only 13% of their stories had a negative assessment. It was noted that channels with a right-leaning audience did not experience any steady changes in their assessment over the 100-day period, while the other two groups' assessments became less negative and more neutral, although not in any way

more positive. Channels with a left-leaning or a mixed audience were also more likely to disprove statements made by Trump (Pew Research Center 2017: 18-22). These findings are important because they reveal that early coverage of Trump was largely negative and that this negativity differed depending on the outlet's political leaning. This highlights broader patterns in how the media has reported on him. Understanding this context matters even though my study does not directly compare first-term and second-term coverage, because it provides a clearer sense of the media environment in which Trump has been reported on in the past. This background provides important context for my analysis and makes it easier to understand whether current coverage follows earlier media patterns or takes a different approach.

The study additionally compared Trump's early news coverage with the past three administrations, since the research center has been analysing the media reporting on administrations starting from 1993. For this comparison, a smaller timeframe and number of outlets were used but it was still concluded by Pew Research Center (2017: 34) that roughly 62% of the news coverage during Trump's first 60 days in office portrayed his statements or actions negatively. In contrast, during the first 60 days of the Clinton, Bush and Obama presidencies, negative coverage was much lower, at 28% for Clinton and Bush and 20% for Obama. The positive assessment of Trump was also lower at 5% in comparison to his predecessor Obama's 42% (Pew Research Center 2017: 34).

A study conducted by Kenix and Manickam (2021), analysing a smaller number of news outlets (4) over a longer period at the start of Trump's first term, has similar findings. The authors found that the overall assessment of Trump in the sample was largely negative at 41.3% or neutral at 53.8%, positive assessment making up only 4.9% of the sample. The difference between liberal and conservative outlets was also noted, as liberal channels had a

higher likelihood of giving Trump a negative assessment than the conservative ones (Kenix and Manickam 2021: 182-186).

Patterson (2017) also analyses Trump's first 100 days in office during his first presidential term, focusing on how news media reported on him. The study analysed the coverage from three major U.S. newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*), the main newscasts of four U.S. television networks (CBS Evening News, CNN's The Situation Room, Fox's Special Report and NBC Nightly News) and three leading European outlets (*Financial Times*, BBC and ARD) (Patterson 2017: 3-4). The data came from Media Tenor, a company that collects and codes news content. Mentions of Trump were included if they were longer than five lines in print or five seconds on television and coders recorded the source, subject and tone of each report (Patterson 2017: 4).

In Trump's first 100 days, U.S. media focused most on immigration, health care, terrorism and Russia's election interference (Patterson 2017: 6). Print outlets focused more on immigration, while television focused more on health care. European media also highlighted immigration but paid more attention to trade, military and foreign policy. Only 3% of U.S. coverage looked directly at Trump's fitness for office, while European outlets questioned it more (Patterson 2017: 7). U.S. news coverage of Trump's first 100 days was largely negative across all topics, with immigration receiving the most negative coverage as negative stories outnumbered positive ones by more than 30 to 1 (Patterson 2017: 11).

Overall, the literature review suggests that media is an important participant in political discourse and in representing and shaping public perceptions, especially through the ways it represents political actors and marginalised groups. The representations, however, are dependent on the worldview of the media outlet. Research on Donald Trump highlights his polarising communication style, his strategic use of media attention and the

largely negative coverage he received during his first presidential term. However, no studies have yet examined how Trump is represented during his second term. The present study, which analyses how *The New York Times* portrays Trump during the first 51 days of his second presidential term, seeks to start filling this gap.

#### **1.4 Institutional profile of *The New York Times***

*The New York Times* (NYT) was founded in 1851 and has evolved into one of the most influential newspapers in the world, well known for its rigorous journalism and global reach. The newspaper has over 11 million readers, most coming from digital subscriptions and covering 230 countries and territories. Their mission is “to seek the truth and help people understand the world” (The New York Times Company 2025).

*The New York Times* exhibits a liberal bias, particularly in its selection of topics, as demonstrated in Puglisi’s (2011) study analysing data from the newspaper’s front-page coverage from 1946 to 1997. The paper gives more coverage during the presidential campaign “to topics [such as civil rights and social welfare] that are favourable to the Democratic party, but only so when the incumbent president is a Republican” (Puglisi 2011: 2). In contrast, when the incumbent president is a Democrat, coverage of Democratic issues does not increase with the start of the presidential campaign (Puglisi 2011: 2). No more recent academic studies could be found at the time of writing, but nonpartisan news monitoring organisations report similar findings. For example, Ad Fontes Media rates *The New York Times* as “skews left” in political bias and places it in the “reliable, analysis or fact-reporting” category, indicating that the paper is generally factual but leans toward a liberal perspective in its coverage (Ad Fontes Media 2025).

In *The New York Times* March 2025 article *You Asked, We Answered: How The Times Is Reporting on the Trump Administration*, the paper outlines its editorial philosophy and

practical approach to covering President Trump and his administration. The NYT emphasises a commitment to fact-based journalism, especially when reporting on misleading or controversial claims. Their reporters are expected to check information thoroughly, cite sources clearly and avoid speculation, to ensure that coverage remains grounded in evidence. The newsroom routinely points out exaggerations, falsehoods and misinformation using fact-checks and news articles, opting for terms like "false statement" and "falsehood", which it considers strong and accurate without assuming motive. The newspaper also maintains a clear separation between its news and opinions sections, acknowledging that while editorial pieces may express strong criticism of Trump's rhetoric or policies, the news reporting is held to strict standards of neutrality and fairness. The paper recognises the challenges posed by Trump's frequent use of provocative language and personal attacks, so the newsroom has strengthened its internal review processes to help journalists report in a way that informs readers without amplifying misinformation. The article also addresses reader concerns about perceived bias, reaffirming the newspaper's commitment to holding power accountable through independent journalism, regardless of political affiliation (The New York Times Trust Team 2025).

### **1.5 Corpus-assisted discourse studies**

Corpus-assisted discourse studies (CADS) analyses discourse by working with large digital text collections that are known as corpora (Gillings et al 2023: 1). CADS lets researchers look at the whole corpus instead of just a few texts, like in qualitative studies, that might, intentionally or not, only seek support for a predetermined idea (Gillings et al 2023: 1).

CADS emerged from corpus linguistics, which McEnery and Wilson (2001: 1) describe as “/.../ the study of language based on examples of 'real life' language use.” Corpus linguistics combine both quantitative and qualitative analysis, making it possible to analyse language on a deeper level (Biber et al. 1998). Although corpora have long been used in linguistics, their popularity grew in the 1980s as technology advanced and computers became more widely available (Baker 2023).

CADS has also created links with Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), an approach that focuses on showing how language reflects and reinforces power and inequality, often starting from a critical idea about bias or ideology (Baker 2023). CADS works alongside CDA by using corpus tools to check and explore these ideas in large collections of texts. In this way, CDA provides the critical perspective, while CADS adds the broad evidence needed to support or adjust those interpretations (Gillings et al 2023: 5-8).

CADS has been used in several previous studies, found by searching research databases, to research the representation of immigration and political discourse in the media, and these studies helped to develop the approach used in the present thesis. Baker et al. (2008) studied how refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants and migrants were represented in UK newspapers from 1996-2005 by combining corpus linguistics (CL) with Critical Discourse Analysis. They compiled a 140-million-word corpus of news articles and used CL methods such as frequency counts, collocations and concordance to identify common patterns and representative texts (Baker et al 2008: 273). CDA was then applied to interpret these patterns in their social and political context, focusing on metaphors, word choices and arguments that revealed underlying attitudes (Baker et al 2008: 281). Together, CL mapped the prevalence of negative portrayals, while CDA explained how these were constructed, showing that tabloids tended to be more hostile whereas broadsheets sometimes offered more balanced perspectives (Baker et al 2008: 289-290).

Shchinova (2025) uses CADS to analyse the use of *populisme/populiste* in French and *populismo/populista* in Spanish media as a part of the TrUMPo project, which investigates populism discourses across European democracies. The corpora consisted of 3,175 articles published in 2019 that contained the token *populis*, collected from the websites of four types of media outlets in each country: an established source, a serious-popular source, a free daily and a public-owned outlet (Shchinova 2025: 75-76). Using frequency, distribution and collocation analysis, the study concluded that French and Spanish media in 2019 used *populism* and *populist* mainly as negative labels, with French outlets focusing more on international and Spanish outlets on national politics.

Siiner and L'nyavskiy-Ekelund (2017) used CADS to study how language policy debates in Estonia media were shaped after Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The corpora, one in Estonian and one in Russian, were compiled from Delfi (Estonian online news portal) articles published between August 2013 and March 2015. Articles were chosen using keywords about language policy, such as integration, citizenship and Russian schools, resulting in 210 articles in Russian and 289 in Estonian (Siiner and L'nyavskiy-Ekelund 2017: 33). The study combined frequency counts, keyword and collocation analysis with qualitative interpretation. Siiner and L'nyavskiy-Ekelund (2017) found that after Crimea's annexation in 2014, Narva became the main focus of Estonian media debates. Narva was mentioned almost twice as much as before, mainly in connection with borders, loyalty, separatism and language competence, often through politicians and public figures rather than local residents (Siiner and L'nyavskiy-Ekelund 2017: 37-39). Russian Delfi moved from talking about integration to focusing on loyalty, while Estonian Delfi portrayed Narva as a "danger zone" or "buffer zone" (Siiner and L'nyavskiy-Ekelund 2017: 39).

The studies highlighted show that CADS can reveal patterns in media language, which is relevant for examining how Trump is represented in news coverage. It is also

demonstrated that CADS can identify how politically sensitive issues are discussed, which supports my aim of analysing how Trump's early decisions are presented in relation to immigrants. Specifically, like Baker et al (2008) I will also use frequencies, collocations and concordance analysis to identify patterns and will then interpret them with discourse analysis. Siiner and L'nyavskiy-Ekelund (2017) provided another example of how to perform a qualitative analysis. Shchinova (2025) helped me to think about how to identify negative and positive evaluations. As illustrated by the research in this section, CADS makes it possible to examine patterns in representations of political debates and to analyse them from a critical perspective. The present thesis will also employ tools commonly used in CADS research, such as frequencies, collocations and concordance analysis.

CADS is useful because it combines quantitative corpus methods with qualitative discourse analysis. By using corpus methods to identify recurring language patterns and discourse analysis to interpret how they function within wider social and political contexts, CADS enables researchers to notice language features that would be difficult to detect through close reading alone (Baker 2023). Tools like frequency lists, keywords and collocations can reduce researcher bias and support more evidence-based interpretations (Baker 2010). However, CADS also has limits. A corpus is only a sample of texts, shaped by decisions about what to include, so it cannot fully represent wider public discourse and remains influenced by researcher choices (Baker 2023). Quantitative patterns also do not explain themselves, as statistical results still need careful interpretation through close reading and contextual knowledge (Baker 2023). Because this interpretive stage depends on the researcher's own perspective, CADS cannot remove subjectivity, even if it makes it more transparent (Baker 2023). Overall, CADS helps reveal common patterns, associations and ways of representing people or issues, giving researchers a solid evidence base and a reliable way to study how meaning is created across large sets of texts.

## 2. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

### 2.1 Methodology

In order to build the corpus for this thesis, online articles from *The New York Times* news archive were collected. The articles were accessed in August and September 2025 and the time period of publication was from 20 January 2025 until 11 March 2025, totalling 51 days. The period was chosen to analyse Trump's media representation at the beginning of his second presidential term. The original plan was to analyse the first 100 days of his second presidency, but once I started collecting data, I realised it would take too long to gather and clean that many articles by myself as a first-time corpus builder. Therefore, the period was shortened to the first 51 days. After setting the time period, I searched for the keyword *Trump*. I did not use the full name *Donald Trump*, as he is often referred to in the media as just *Trump* or *President Trump*. In the archives you can also filter the articles by type and section. For type, only *articles* were chosen in order to maintain consistency within the corpus. No filters were placed on section as it would be interesting to see in what areas the discourse about Trump is developed. Using these filters, 3598 results were found. The next step was to manually check if the articles were actually about Donald Trump, since the keyword *trump* could also bring up articles regarding his relatives or the verb 'to trump'. The filter did not work on all articles, hence I had to manually remove newsletters, podcast transcriptions, opinion letters, online conversations, etc. The keyword search also yielded flawed results, as it retrieved articles that did not explicitly mention Trump. This was due to the presence of an embedded information box titled *Trump Administration: Live Updates*, which appeared in the body of numerous articles and caused irrelevant search results during the collection process. This final corpus consisted of 832 cleaned articles, totalling 906,048 words. All the articles were initially transferred to Google Docs, where unrelated content

such as advertisements and informational boxes were removed. The cleaned texts were then converted into plain text (.txt) for analysis.

The corpus for this study was compiled and the subsequent analysis was conducted using Sketch Engine. Sketch Engine was developed in 2003 and is a corpus tool and text analysis software, used for corpus building and management. The programme refers to two things: the web service and the core software. Both include an extensive number of “ready to use” and pre-loaded corpora, as well as different tools for personal corpus creation. Sketch Engine has many helpful features, such as word sketch, concordance and wordlist (Kilgarriff et al. 2014). Word sketch provides a one-page summary of a word’s grammatical and collocational patterns within a corpus. Concordance is a tool that can search for words, phrases, tags, documents, text types or corpus structures and displays them with context as concordance lines. The wordlist tool generates different types of frequency lists.

The word sketch is the primary analysis tool because it provides a clear overview of the key collocational and grammatical patterns surrounding a word. This allows me to see how the term is typically used and what kinds of meanings commonly surround it, which supports my aim of analysing repeated patterns in the discourse. The concordance then helps me to look at the discourse side of the analysis and enables me to link these patterns to specific examples of usage, helping me check my interpretations in context and examine how the term functions within the wider discourse.

Frequency was also examined to show how often words occur. Keyness was also checked to explain the frequency results by comparing word use in my corpus with a reference corpus. Keyness is a way of finding out which words are unusually frequent or infrequent in one corpus compared to another (Pérez-Paredes 2024: 48-49). It shows what a text or corpus is about by highlighting the words that stand out statistically (Pérez-Paredes

2024: 48-49). To calculate keyness, one has to compare one's corpus to a reference corpus, which provides information about how often words normally occur (Pérez-Paredes 2024: 48-49). A large, general reference corpus is useful because it provides a broad baseline against which the patterns in a smaller, specialised corpus can be interpreted (Baker 2023). For this reason, the English Web 2021 (enTenTen21) corpus was chosen as the reference corpus. It is an all-purpose English corpus, consisting of 52,268,286,493 words, that spans a wide range of genres, topics, text types and web sources, recommended for both general and specialised language use. Its size and broad coverage make it a reliable baseline for everyday language use, allowing me to identify which words in my corpus stand out. Since there is a large size difference between the corpora, the normalised frequency has to be calculated in order to compare the two. Normalised frequency shows how often a word occurs in relation to the size of the text (McEnery and Hardy 2011). The base of normalisation for this study is per 100,000 words, since the focus corpus size falls below one million words. The following equation is used to calculate normalised frequency (*nf*) (McEnery and Hardy 2011):

$$nf = (\text{number of examples of the word in the whole corpus} \div \text{size of corpus}) \times (\text{base of normalisation})$$

In Sketch Engine, simple maths keyness score compares a word's normalised frequency in the focus corpus with its normalised frequency in the reference corpus (Sketch Engine 2025). The following equation is used to calculate the simple maths keyness score (Sketch Engine 2025):

$$keyness = (\text{normalised frequency of the focus corpus} + N) \div (\text{normalised frequency of the reference corpus} + N)$$

$N$  is a smoothing parameter (default 1), so a keyness score below 1 indicates that the word is less frequent in the focus corpus than in the reference corpus, while a score above 1 indicates that it is more frequent (Sketch Engine 2025).

This analysis combines quantitative and qualitative approaches as it provides a statistical overview of the data while checking the accuracy of interpretations against specific contexts of use. When necessary for analysing the discourse, a whole sentence is extracted from the text, in addition to the section shown in concordance as at times the crucial discursive moves happen at the sentence level. This will be used in the case of representations of immigration, the focus of the present analysis.

## 2.2 Findings

Looking at the metadata, the largest number of articles (392 articles, 47.1%) were grouped under the section *politics*. Altogether, the articles were spread across 30 different sections, with most sections making up less than 3% of the total. The sections making up more than 3% were *opinion* with 121 articles (14.5%), *Europe* with 65 articles (7.8%), *U.S.* with 48 articles (5.8%) and *business* with 31 articles (3.7%). Together with *politics*, these five sections account for 78.9% of all the articles in the corpus. This aligns with earlier research indicating that Trump-related coverage tends to appear mainly in political and politics-adjacent sections.

The first stage of the analysis examined frequency, using the word list feature. When compiling the word list only lexical words, such as adverbs, adjectives, nouns and main verbs were used, as those words primarily convey the meaning of the vocabulary, while grammatical words, such as pronouns, determiners, auxiliary verbs, prepositions and

conjunctions, mainly express the structural relation within a sentence (Greenbaum 1996: 431).

The most frequent lexical word in the corpus is *be* (Figure 1), appearing in the corpus 27,046 times. The second and third most frequent words, as seen in Figure 1, are *mr.* with 13,778 occurrences and *Trump* with 13,334 occurrences.

The 20 most frequent words in the NYT corpus					
	Word	Frequency		Word	Frequency
1	be	27,046	11	administration	2,338
2	mr.	13,778	12	tariff	2,222
3	trump	13,334	13	make	2,012
4	have	12,622	14	government	1,949
5	say	8,126	15	U.S.	1,913
6	not	5,787	16	country	1,897
7	president	5,073	17	also	1,871
8	do	3,591	18	federal	1,695
9	united	2,545	19	take	1,606
10	states	2,436	20	other	1,583

**Figure 1.** The 20 most frequent words in the NYT corpus

This was to be expected, as the corpus is compiled from articles about Trump, where he is often referred to as Mr. Trump, rather than Donald Trump or President Trump. This claim is supported by using the concordance tool with *mr.* that shows it mostly appears as a modifier to the word *Trump*. The word *president* is the seventh most frequent word, appearing 5073 times in the corpus, while *Donald* has only 235 occurrences. The word *mr.* has more occurrences than *Trump*, since it is also used to address other public figures such as Mr. Musk and Mr. Zelensky. The 20 most frequent words in the corpus can essentially be categorised into two groups: words that convey actions and states (*be, say, have, not, do, make, also, take* and *other*) and words related to politics (*mr., Trump, president, united, states, administration, tariff, government, U.S., country* and *federal*). Since news is usually reporting on current state of events on different subject matters, it is to be expected that the

corpus covers mostly political matters, as Trump is a politician. This is also supported by metadata, as 47.1% of articles in the corpus were categorised under the *politics* section in NYT.

Looking at the most frequent words reveals that immigration related terms do not appear, but *tariff* does. The high frequency of *tariff* in the corpus suggests that trade and economic issues were a major focus of *The New York Times* during the first 51 days of Trump's second presidency. Looking at the concordance, many stories discussed Trump threatening, raising or changing tariffs on countries like Mexico and Canada. Since decisions relating to tariffs had an immediate effect on the economy, the topic constantly got ongoing reactions from consumers, businesses and foreign governments, generating frequent coverage. Thus Trump's actions on tariffs were reported on regularly and appeared across many different articles, making the word much more common than terms related to immigration at the beginning of Trump's presidency, despite the prominence of immigration in campaign rhetoric.

Keyness score was also calculated to compare the frequency results for *Trump*. First, the normalised frequency in the focus corpus was calculated:  $(13,334 \div 906,048) \times 100,000 \approx 1471.67$ . For comparison, the normalised frequency of Trump in the reference corpus was also calculated:  $(4,153,701 \div 52,268,286,493) \times 100,000 \approx 7.95$ . The resulting keyness score is therefore  $(1471.67 + 1) \div (7.95 + 1) \approx 164.54$ , showing that *Trump* appears far more often in the focus corpus than in general language. This matters because a high keyness score indicates that the word is unusually prominent and therefore important for the analysis.

Because *immigrant* did not appear high in the frequency list, a keyness score was also calculated to see how important the word is in the corpus. The normalised frequency in the focus corpus is about 32.23, while in the reference corpus it is only about 2.80. This

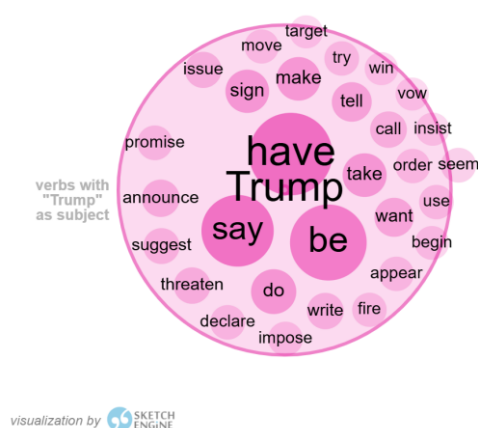
results in a keyness score of roughly 8.74, showing that immigrant is still noticeably more frequent in the focus corpus than in general language use, even if it does not appear among the top keywords. This suggests that Trump's immigration rhetoric was present in the coverage, even if it did not get the same attention as tariffs which were unexpected in the context of accepted economic knowledge and global trade practices of past 50 years. This also shows why it is useful to use different corpus tools, as keyness analysis brings out patterns that might be missed if only frequency analysis is used.

The word sketch analysis shows that *Trump* appears as a noun 13,325 times in the corpus. The noun is used the most (5805 times) together with the modifier *Mr.*, which is to be expected, as shown by the frequency analysis conducted before. The other more prominent modifiers are *President* (973) and *Donald* (153). So, it can be seen that *The New York Times* uses formal titles when referring to Trump in their articles, keeping the tone neutral. The references to Trump are similar to those used for other presidents and other public figures.

The noun *Trump* acts as a modifier most frequently (674) to *administration*, which is to be expected as each president works with his administration to govern the country. Other more frequent nouns *Trump* modifies are words that are also connected to his work as a president (*official, appointee, aide, team*). Additionally, some less frequent nouns refer to elections and voters (*campaign, supporter, ally, voter*), since the corpus starts after the presidential election ended and when Trump took office.

*Trump* acts as a subject most commonly with neutral verbs such as *have* (1,058), *be* (840) and *say* (708). This is to be expected as these are overall frequent verbs in English. Other words are related to usual presidential functions (*announce, declare, issue*) and show that the newspaper covers different aspects of political decision making and uses neutral

vocabulary. However, the word sketch also shows that the noun *Trump* is also used with more emotional verbs such as *threaten* (55 times) and *target* (31). These less frequent words convey conflict and aggression. The same can be said about other verbs that stress decisive action (e.g., *impose* or *fire*). Although the verbs highlight the president's assertiveness and even aggressiveness, they are not in themselves negative. To see whether the words are given any specific negative or positive angles, the word sketch analysis has to be complemented with discourse analysis on the basis of the concordance.



**Figure 2.** 30 most frequent verbs with *Trump* as subject.

Concordance analysis shows that *threaten* is used often in the context of Trump threatening to impose tariffs on products from neighbouring countries, such as Mexico and Canada, if the countries do not do more to stop the flow of migrants and drugs to the USA. In these contexts, Trump is portrayed as demanding, even though such tariffs could negatively affect Americans as well, as they increase the price of many products on the U.S. market. At the same time, he is depicted as indecisive, for example in the article from March 10 his actions are described changing repeatedly as “Over the past few weeks, Mr. Trump has threatened, imposed, suspended and resumed tariffs on America's largest trade partners”. Here the full sentence shows an important discursive device, a list of verbs. By listing the verbs (*threatened, imposed, suspended, resumed*), the writer highlights inconsistency and

lets the series of actions imply that Trump's actions are unstable, without labelling it directly. These kinds of patterns can only be found in concordance analysis, and they show why discourse analysis complements the use of traditional corpus tools.

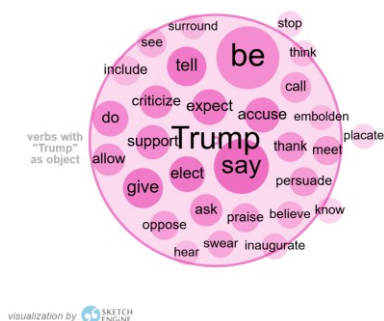
In a few instances, Trump also threatened to withdraw aid to Ukraine, if the country did not meet his demands. For example, the emotionally charged verb *berates* appears and Trump is described acting emotionally. The word is very expressive and unusual in the usually restrained discourse of international diplomacy. The infrequency of the word in general usage also calls attention to the unusualness of Trump's rhetoric. This can be seen in another sentence from the same text: "With his voice raised and temper flaring, Mr. Trump threatened to abandon Ukraine altogether if Mr. Zelensky did not go along". While the word sketch already drew attention to the verb *threaten*, the concordance analysis shows how other, less frequent words, help to build a more emotional and potentially negative picture of the president as the references to him being unable to control his temper may be read as creating doubt about his leadership and negotiation skills. The analysis of the full sentence also shows that the strong emotional evaluation is placed in an auxiliary clause that affects how the sentence as a whole is evaluated.

Looking at concordance, the word *target* appears the most in relation to Trump targeting individuals, countries or agencies who he thinks disagree with him. For example, in an article from March 4 it is brought up that many countries have retaliated against the tariffs Trump has imposed as "the list of countries targeted by Mr. Trump has continued to grow". The word *target*, in this context, is interesting as it, especially when applied to individuals, hints at Trump's vindictive nature. This can be seen also in the way Trump's responses to the reactive tariffs have been represented. For instance "he has mocked Canada as the 51st state and called its prime minister, Justin Trudeau, a "governor"", belittling the

country. In this instance, the newspaper only cites Trump, but the chosen direct quote also suggests behaviour that is unusual in international diplomacy.

Articles also bring up that during the last hours of his presidency, Biden used his powers to pardon and protect individuals from Trump, fearing he might target them. An article from January 20 writes that “Mr. Biden effectively turned the president's constitutional power of forgiveness into a protective shield against what he maintained would be politically motivated vengeance”, adding that “no other president has employed executive clemency in such a broad and overt way to thwart a successor he believes would abuse his power”. Here the full sentence helps to build a picture of the threat of Trump not just to the people Biden pardoned but perhaps to the American political system as a whole. This suggests that Biden did not trust Trump, seeing him as someone who might misuse presidential power to go after his perceived opponents. Although the distrust is attributed to President Biden, the choice to include the information portrays Trump as someone who often vindictively directs his criticism or actions toward people and entities he views as not supporting him. The very strong phrase, *abuse of power*, emphasises the message.

*Trump* acts as an object also most commonly with neutral verbs such as *be* (83), *say* (60), *give* (27).



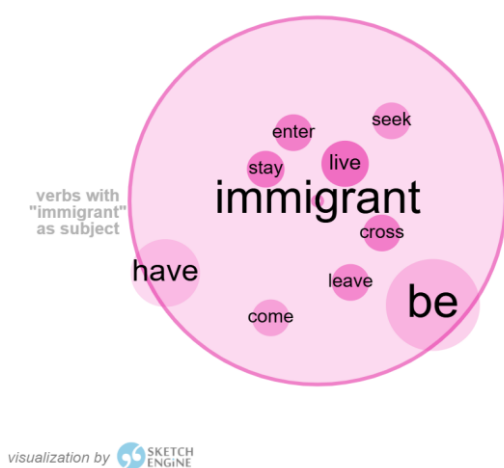
**Figure 3.** 30 most frequent verbs with *Trump* as object.

The verb *criticize* (16 times) stands out as one of the more negative verbs. When looking at the context around the word *criticize*, one can see that it is mostly used either when talking about people criticizing Trump or, in contrast, when people have avoided criticizing him directly. For example, in an article published February 2 the paper reports that “Mr. Bacon did not criticize Mr. Trump outright, but he tried to offer some carefully worded advice.” This choice suggests that Trump does not respond well to criticism and that this leads people who have to deal with him to self-censorship.

The word *immigrant* appears as a noun 292 times and the word *immigration* as a noun 414 times in the corpus. The noun *immigrant* is used the most (67 times) with the modifier *undocumented*. This modifier is considered less offensive than using the modifier *illegal*, as Cambridge Dictionary (2025) notes that the term *illegal immigrant* is considered offensive by many, advising people to use *undocumented immigrant* instead. The noun *immigrant* is modified by the word *illegal* less often (11 times, but it is still the third most frequent collocation for *immigrant*), suggesting that the NYT tries to avoid offensive language, though it has not stopped the use of *illegal* entirely. Out of the 11 occurrences, three involved the phrase *illegal immigrant* in direct quotations and in one of those cases it was used to single out a specific person, Elon Musk. The more neutral *unauthorized* also appears as a modifier of *immigrant* 13 times. The noun *immigrant* is modified by the more positive modifier *legal* only twice. Looking at concordance, it can be seen that the context around the term is still negative, for example in the article from January 23 it is brought up that “The administration is likely to renew efforts to discourage legal immigrants from receiving aid”, explaining that the efforts would have made it harder for immigrants using benefits like Medicaid or food stamps to gain permanent residency. The overall focus of the story, however, is the overall effect of Trump’s policies on the benefits to all Americans. The verbs used in the sentence are also very soft, as the immigrants are not prevented from

receiving aid, but just discouraged to do so, as if it were the choice of the immigrants. Thus, while the newspaper uses polite vocabulary in relation to immigrants, it does not take an assertively pro-immigrant stance.

Looking at word sketch, verbs with *immigrant* as subject do not seem negative at first (Figure 4), most frequent being *be* (23) and *have* (11). These are frequent verbs in general and hence not particularly telling in the present context.



**Figure 4.** Verbs with *immigrant* as subject.

However, when looking at the concordance and context, it can be seen that Trump’s actions against immigrants are portrayed as negative and legally questionable. An article published on his inauguration day, January 20, titled “Trump has promised an immigration crackdown as his first order of business” reports that Trump plans to revive his earlier immigration agenda that includes stricter asylum limits, increased deportations and even directing the military towards border security.

In an article published on February 20, the NYT highlights and examines the bigger actions Trump has taken in his first presidential month. In relation to immigrants, the actions by Trump include “moved to end birthright citizenship for the children of undocumented migrants”, “sent migrants to Guantánamo Bay”, “threatened to take funds from cities that

don't cooperate with federal immigration enforcement" and "restarted the death penalty, including for cases in which an undocumented immigrant is charged with murder". The actions of the administration appear as decisions by the President alone, helping to present him as an assertive leader, which is not necessarily negative. Yet the actions presented are controversial, like sending immigrants to the prison used to incarcerate terrorists or restarting death penalty specifically for immigrants.

The more significant journalistic decision comes from many references that question the legality of these actions. For example, the corpus contains the following phrases: "blocked by several judges," "advocates for immigrants have sued" and "San Francisco and other cities have sued". By listing the immigration-related measures Trump has taken and immediately pairing them with such phrases, the article frames these actions as legally uncertain and potentially overreaching. In particular, the corpus reveals a developing conflict between Trump and the states, as the decisions cannot necessarily be made at the federal level. This pattern signals to readers that Trump's immigration moves are not only controversial but also frequently contested, supporting a portrayal of these actions that presents them as questionable or outside established legal norms.

The paper shows patterns of positive support for immigrants. For example in an article published on January 29 the reporting notes that "While the crimes have gained national attention, Mr. Trump has a long history of inflating immigrants' criminality, and homeland security officials working across both Democratic and Republican administrations have acknowledged that most migrants crossing the border are fleeing poverty or persecution". Here a whole sentence was extracted from the concordance to analyse the argument in full. The point is made by contrasting Trump's rhetoric, described as inflated (but not outright called a lie) and professionals in the field of immigration enforcement. This contrast presents Trump's claims as exaggerated and part of a wider pattern of

overstatement. By bringing up the agreement of homeland security officials from both Democratic and Republican administrations, the article presents their view as more credible and not politically biased. Through constructing a sympathetic representation of immigrants by emphasising their reasons for migrating (*poverty, persecution*), the NYT shows immigrants as vulnerable rather than dangerous. The article further cites research, noting that “For the past 150 years, immigrants overall have been less likely to commit crimes than people born in the United States, a 2023 study concluded”. Here the full sentence creates credibility by appealing to a long period of history, to contextualise the present situation. By including research, the article reinforces its challenge to Trump’s claims and strengthens the discourse that presents immigrants as being misrepresented in political rhetoric, while also promoting a positive, evidence-based view that counters narratives depicting them as a threat.

In an article published on February 20, it is reported that “Mr. Trump and others have asserted that undocumented immigrants are a drain on federal resources that should be going to Americans.” The sentence here provides Trump’s claim, but by indicating that it is his assertion, they also hint that they do not think this is factually correct. The NYT counters this by noting that federal law has long blocked undocumented immigrants from receiving most federal benefits, on the basis of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, and brings out the fact that “The lack of federal benefits for undocumented immigrants is one reason some cities across the country have been struggling to support an influx of people who crossed the border illegally in recent years”. Through putting Trump’s claim against the legal and practical facts, the NYT presents Trump’s statement as misleading or oversimplified, portraying him as someone who talks about immigration in ways that do not fully align with existing policies, existing legislation or the challenges faced by local governments.

The NYT also reports on struggles immigrants face in the wake of Trump's policies, highlighting it with phrases like *chill sets in* and *fearing roundups*. The latter phrase is especially emotional, as it is usually used for cowboys gathering animals or for catching people involved in criminal activities. The use of the term stresses the violence of the action, but also suggests that these actions have economic consequences for people other than immigrants. The article reports that "Construction, agriculture, senior care and hospitality employers say labor shortages will worsen". This is a point that is suggestive, as the NYT is not just criticising the actions of the government but also showing how these have an impact on American economy and thus the lives of all residents of the country. Very different jobs are mentioned, including those that prevail in states where Trump won (like agriculture), showing that Trump's supporters would be harmed as well, although this is not stated outright.

Overall, the NYT tends to show Trump's immigration policies as questionable, while portraying immigrants in a more sympathetic light. The reporting highlights when his actions face legal challenges, counters claims about immigrant criminality or federal costs and shows how his policies create fear and practical problems for immigrants and cities. Examining the verbs that take *immigrant* as their object shows a similar pattern as analysed before, with terms like *deport* (16) and *detain* (6) appearing most often alongside the more neutral verb *be* (10). Both *deport* and *detain* describe the actions of the government neutrally, but the forcefulness of the verbs nevertheless also presents the violence attendant in the process. The verbs include several examples of actions related to the criminal justice system (*accuse, arrest, charge*) that further stress the forcefulness of government action. By doing this, however, the paper continues to associate immigrants with law enforcement and breaking the law. The word sketch shows a clearly negative pattern from the start, even before looking at the wider context (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Verbs with *immigrant* as object.

Looking at the context around the verbs, it can be seen that the words mostly occur in relation to Trump promising to detain and deport all immigrants from the U.S. An article published February 13 has the title “For Trump and Fox News, New Policies Are Simply ‘Common Sense’”. The text thus cites the perspective of Trump and his supporters accurately and also reports on the results of a *New York Times* and Ipsos poll from January, highlighting that “Deporting all illegal immigrants, a cornerstone of Mr. Trump's immigration policy, has a slim majority of support, with 55 percent backing the idea”. This, again, reports the facts that show public support to the policies, but they also add that the majority is *slim*, that is, that the support is not as great as the administration may be suggesting.

### 2.3 Discussion

The findings show that *The New York Times* represents Donald Trump during the first 51 days of his second presidential term through a mix of neutral and more critical descriptions of his actions, especially in relation to his leadership style and immigration, reflecting the paper's stated commitment to fact-based, carefully worded reporting highlighted in the literature review.

Throughout the corpus, Trump is regularly referred to using formal titles such as *Mr. Trump* and *President Trump*. Using these titles presents him as a president without adding any judgment. When looking at the verbs and contexts connected to Trump, some more critical patterns also emerge. Most of the verbs linked to Trump are neutral ones like *say*, *have* and *be*, but less frequent verbs such as *threaten* and *target* also appear in contexts involving conflict and tension. These verbs occur in stories about tariffs, foreign relations or disagreements with other political actors. These patterns match earlier research showing that media coverage of Trump often focuses on conflict and controversy.

When looking specifically at Trump's early decisions relating to immigrants, although the newspaper uses less offensive modifiers such as *undocumented* and *unauthorised* when referring to immigrants, the wider contexts often highlight how strict, far-reaching and legally uncertain Trump's immigration policies are. Articles describe actions such as limiting asylum access, increasing deportations and proposing changes to birthright citizenship. These actions are often discussed together with questions about legality or criticism from judges, states and advocacy groups. These patterns suggest that the newspaper presents Trump's immigration agenda as controversial and widely debated.

At the same time, immigrants themselves are generally portrayed in a more sympathetic way. The reporting routinely challenges claims about immigrant criminality or immigrants using too many federal resources by citing research, legal background or statements from officials. Articles also describe the practical and emotional effects of Trump's policies, such as fear of deportations and labour shortages caused by immigrants avoiding public spaces in fear of being detained.

Although the quantitative parts of this analysis (frequency, keyness and word sketches) rely on statistical measures and can be repeated by other researchers, the

qualitative stage was more interpretive. When I looked at concordance lines and decided what certain patterns might suggest about Trump's representation, my own perspective inevitably influenced the interpretation. This kind of subjectivity is unavoidable in any kind of interpretive research, but it still needs to be acknowledged. To limit its effect, I discussed my interpretations in detail, to show my line of reasoning in each case. I also aimed to be transparent by basing my interpretations on recurring patterns across several examples and by checking my qualitative observations against the quantitative results from Sketch Engine.

## CONCLUSION

On 20 January 2025, Donald Trump began his second presidency, continuing his political career that is marked by direct language, strong and often controversial opinions, and frequent disputes with major news organisations. Throughout his time in office, from the start of his first presidency in 2017 and continuing now in his second term, he has repeatedly criticised outlets such as *The New York Times* for what he sees as negative and biased reporting. Immigration has played a central role in the tensions, with Trump's strong views and policy choices gaining constant media interest and being a part of ongoing public debate, because of the ways in which the decisions of the Trump administration have challenged existing laws and practices.

This thesis set out to analyse the representation of Donald Trump in *The New York Times* during the first 51 days of his second presidential term, focusing especially on how the newspaper reports on his early immigration-related decisions. For that purpose, a corpus was compiled from *The New York Times* articles reporting on Trump, starting from 20 January 2025 until 11 March 2025. The corpus consists of 832 articles, totalling 906,048 words. The corpus was compiled and analysed using the Sketch Engine corpus tool. The data

was analysed with the help of corpus-assisted discourse studies to detect patterns of representation and to discuss them in their discursive contexts.

The findings show that *The New York Times* takes a mostly balanced approach in its coverage of Donald Trump during the first 51 days of his second term. The reporting is formally written, using titles like *Mr. Trump* and *President Trump*, but more evaluative meaning appears through more nuanced language choices. Verbs and contexts linked to conflict, tension or legal disputes present some of Trump's actions as forceful but also contested, reflecting patterns noted in earlier research on Trump's representation in the media. When covering immigration, the newspaper uses more neutral terms for immigrants than the administration does but often also links Trump's policies to legal pushback and criticism from advocacy groups, presenting these measures as far-reaching and highly debated. At the same time, immigrants are portrayed more sympathetically through references to research, official statements and descriptions of the social and emotional effects policy changes have. Overall, the paper keeps a calm and factual tone, yet subtle choices in language and context still add some nuance, without forcing one clear interpretation on the reader.

Further research could expand this study in several different directions. A longer period could be examined to gather a larger dataset and to see if the patterns identified in this thesis remain consistent or change as Trump's term advances. Another approach would be to analyse two different periods in *The New York Times* side by side to explore how the tone or framing of coverage changes over time. *The New York Times* could also be compared with another, right-leaning news outlet to identify similarities and differences in how Trump is represented, offering insight into how media ideology shapes reporting. Finally, future work could also focus on how his decisions are portrayed in relation to other groups or

policies, for example LGBT+, in order to see whether the patterns found in immigration coverage also appear in other contexts.

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## RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL  
ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

**Marleen Marjapuu**

**Representation of Donald Trump in *The New York Times*: a corpus-assisted discourse analysis of the first 51 days of his second term**

**Donald Trumpi kujutamine ajalehes *The New York Times*: korpusepõhine diskursuseanalüüs tema teise ametiaja esimesest 51 päevast**

Bakalaureusetöö

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Lehekülgede arv: 44

Annotatsioon:

Bakalaureusetöö eesmärk on uurida, kuidas *The New York Times* kujutab Donald Trumpi tema teise presidendiks valimisperioodi esimesel 51 päeval, pöörates erilist tähelepanu varastele immigratsiooniga seotud otsustele. Trumpi vastanduv kommunikatsioonistiil ning pikaajalised pinged traditsioonilise meediaga, eriti *The New York Times*iga, muudavad selle teema oluliseks uurimisvaldkonnaks. Immigratsioon on olnud üks kesksemaid ja polariseerivamaid teemasid Trumpi poliitilises tegevuses.

Töö esimeses osas antakse ülevaade meediadiskursuse uurimisest, marginaliseeritud rühmade kujutamisest ning varasematest Trumpi ja meedia suhteid käsitlevatest uuringutest. Teises osas kirjeldatakse andmestikku ja kasutatud meetodeid. Analüüsi keskmes on see, kuidas *The New York Times* esitab Trumpi poliitilise tegelasena ning kuidas ajaleht kajastab tema immigratsioonialaseid otsuseid.

Töö jaoks koostati korpus *The New York Times* artiklitest, mis käsitlesid Trumpi ajavahemikus 20. jaanuarist kuni 11. märtsini 2025 (832 artiklit, 906 048 sõna) ning see koostati ja analüüsiti Sketch Engine'i abil. Tulemused näitavad, et *The New York Times* kasutab Trumpi kajastamisel üldjoontes tasakaalukat lähenemist. Keelekasutus on formaalne, kuid hinnangulisemad tähendused ilmnevad sõnavaliku ja konteksti nüanssides. Konflikti, pinget või õigusvaidlusi väljendavad tegusõnad näitavad osa Trumpi tegevustest jõuliste ja vastuolulistena, mis haakub varasemates uuringutes täheldatud muustritega. Immigratsiooni käsitledes kasutab ajaleht neutraalsemaid termineid, kuid seob Trumpi poliitikat sageli õiguslike vaidluste ja kriitikaga. Samal ajal kujutatakse immigrante pigem kaastundlikult, viidates uurimistöodele, ametlikele seisukohtadele ning kirjeldades poliitikamuudatuste sotsiaalseid ja emotsionaalseid mõjusid. Kokkuvõttes säilitab ajaleht rahuliku ja faktipõhise tooni, kuid keelelised ja kontekstuaalsed valikud lisavad kajastusele nüansse, ilma et need suunaksid lugejat ühe kindla tõlgenduse poole.

Märksõnad: korpusepõhine diskursuseanalüüs, meediadiskursus, Donald Trump

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