An Ideational Metafunction Analysis of Iraqi Investigative Journalistic Discourse

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Abstract

Investigative journalism is crucial in exposing social and political issues, especially in regions facing governance challenges. This study examines the linguistic structures of investigative journalistic discourse using Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, focusing on the ideational metafunction. The research specifically investigates the transitivity system in Arabic investigative reports published by the Network of Iraqi Reporters for Investigative Journalism (NIRIJ). The study hypothesizes that NIRIJ reports use material processes to emphasize actions and events, diverse participant roles to depict societal actors, and circumstantial details to provide contextual clarity. Through qualitative analysis, the research systematically dissects clauses from selected NIRIJ reports, identifying the processes, participants, and circumstances that shape investigative discourse. The findings suggest that investigative reports rely heavily on action-based language, multiple perspectives, and detailed contextualization to enhance reader comprehension and engagement. The study contributes to linguistic research, journalism studies, and media discourse analysis, encouraging further exploration of language use in investigative journalism across different cultural and linguistic contexts.

Keywords: Investigative Journalism, SFG, Ideational metafunction, Halliday, discourse analysis

تحليل الوظيفة الفكرية في الخطاب الصحفي التحقيقي العراقي

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الملخص

الصحافة الاستقصائية ضرورية في كشف القضايا الاجتماعية والسياسية، خصوصًا في المناطق التي تواجه تحديات في الحوكمة. تدرس هذه الدراسة البُنى اللغوية للخطاب الصحفي الاستقصائي باستخدام قواعد النحو الوظيفي النظامي لهاليدي، مع التركيز على الوظيفة الأيديولوجية (التمثيلية). تبحث الدراسة تحديدًا في نظام العبور (transitivity) في التقارير الاستقصائية العربية التي تنشرها شبكة الصحفيين العراقيين للتحقيقات (NIRIJ). وتفترض الدراسة أن تقارير NIRIJ تستخدم العمليات المادية لتسليط الضوء على الأفعال والأحداث، وأدوارًا متنوعة للمشاركين لتصوير الفاعلين في المجتمع، وتفاصيل ظرفية لتوفير وضوح سياقي. ومن خلال التحليل النوعي، تقوم الدراسة بتحليل الجُمل من تقارير مختارة لـ NIRIJ بشكل منهجي، وتحديد العمليات، والمشاركين، والظروف التي تُشكّل الخطاب الاستقصائي. وتشير النتائج إلى أن التقارير

الاستقصائية تعتمد بشكل كبير على اللغة المبنية على الأفعال، وتعدد وجهات النظر، والتفصيل السياقي لتعزيز فهم القارئ وتفاعله. وتُسهم الدراسة في أبحاث اللسانيات، ودراسات الصحافة، وتحليل الخطاب الإعلامي، وتُشجع على المزيد من الاستكشاف لاستخدام اللغة في الصحافة الاستقصائية في سياقات ثقافية ولغوية مختلفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصحافة التحقيقية ، النحو الوظيفي ، الوظيفة الفكرية ، هاليداي ، تحليل الخطاب

1.1 Introduction

In an era where the integrity of information is important, investigative journalism serves as a crucial pillar of democratic societies. Its purpose is to uncover hidden facts, often relating to wrongdoing or controversial topics, through in-depth research which often relies on data, documents, and interviews; seeks to reveal new information or truths.

Investigative journalism has its roots in the 19th century with the rise of newspapers revealing corruption and social issues through a movement known as muckraking. In Arab countries, investigative journalism has faced significant challenges due to restriction and political repression, yet courageous reporters have sought to uncover corruption and human rights abuses, especially during the Arab Spring in nations like Egypt and Tunisia.

In Iraq, the scene of investigative journalism has been shaped by the post-2003 invasion environment, with journalists working to expose corruption and violence, often at great personal risk. Organizations like the Network of Iraqi Reporters for Investigative Journalism (henceforth, NIRIJ) play a vital role in promoting accountability and transparency in a country still facing the legacies of war and unrest. NIRIJ, founded on May 9, 2011, is the first organization of its kind in Iraq, dedicated to supporting investigative journalists through financial, editorial, and advisory assistance (https://nirij.org/).

This rich history of investigative journalism, particularly in the context of Arab countries and Iraq, can be analyzed through Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), specifically focusing on the ideational metafunction, which examines how language represents experience and conveys meaning, allowing journalists to articulate the complexities of societal issues and power dynamics in their reporting. Transitivity system involves examining the relationships between participants (such as subjects and objects) and processes in a clause. It looks at how actions or processes are carried out and who or what is affected by those actions. SFG pays attention to the functions of different elements in the clause, considering not only the verb but also the participants, circumstances, and the overall structure of the clause.

1.2 Hypotheses

The current study hypothesizes the following:

1.   NIRIJ investigative reports mainly use material processes to highlight the actions and events related to social and political issues.

2.   The language in NIRIJ investigative journalism often involves various participants, such as actors and goals, to represent the different people and groups involved in the issues being covered.

3.   NIRIJ investigative reports frequently include circumstantial details, like time and place, to provide important context that helps readers understand the events being discussed.

1.3 Research Questions

1.   How do NIRIJ investigative reports use material processes to represent actions and events related to social and political issues?

2.   How does the language in NIRIJ investigative journalism employ various participants, such as actors and goals, to represent the different people and groups involved in the clause unit?

3.   How do NIRIJ investigative reports use circumstantial details, such as time and place, to provide essential context for understanding the events being discussed as far as clause is concerned?

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study is that there is little understanding of how language is used in investigative journalistic discourse. Although the work of investigative reporters is crucial for exposing social and political issues, there is not enough research on the specific language choices they make in their reports. This study tries to fill this gap.

1.5 Aims of the study

The study aims to explore how language is used in investigative journalistic discourse by focusing on the ideational metafunction of SFG. It analyzes the choices journalists make in representing actions, participants, and circumstances. This research seeks to enhance the understanding of how language and context work together to create meaning in investigative journalism.

1.6 Data Collection and Analytical Procedure

The data to be analyzed in this study are selected Arabic investigative journalistic reports downloaded from the official website of NIRIJ (https://nirij.org/). The chosen reports are broken down into smaller extracts. Then, within each extract, the clauses, as the core units of analysis, are analyzed following Halliday's (1985) Systemic Functional Grammar, specifically, the ideational metafunction wherein three components collaborate to produce the overall meaning of the clauses in

question: the process itself, participants in the process, and circumstances associated with the process. The process component, also called Transitivity system, includes six types of processes, namely: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential. The study employs a qualitative method approach to analyze clauses functions in the reports understudy.

1.7 Limits of the Study

The study focuses on investigative journalistic reports because these texts provide rich data for analyzing the ideational function in Halliday's SFG, focusing on how language represents complex actions, events, and relationships. Other types, like news or opinion pieces, often lack the depth of process and participant interaction necessary for a detailed ideational analysis, making them less suitable for this study.

The data are taken from NIRIJ in specific because such type of discourse has not been approached syntactically in contrast with other types of discourse which have been comprehensively approached. Another reason is the unique structure of the text which relies on data, documents, and interviews to reveal new information or truths.

1.8 The Model

The study adopts Halliday's (1985) SFG[1] which provides a framework for analyzing the structure and function of language at the clause level. There are three metafunctions for the analysis: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The focus in the current study is the ideational one which consists of three components of analysis: processes, participants, and circumstances. The process component, also called "transitivity system", includes six types of processes: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential. Each type of those processes requires specific type of participants (i.e. actor, goal, sensor, phenomenon, sayer, receiver, etc.) and the element circumstances is used to provide additional details about the process, such as time, place, manner, cause, or accompaniment. Circumstances function to give context to the process, enriching the meaning by specifying conditions under which the action or state occurs. Consider the following figure:

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[1] Systemic: means we have a set of choices
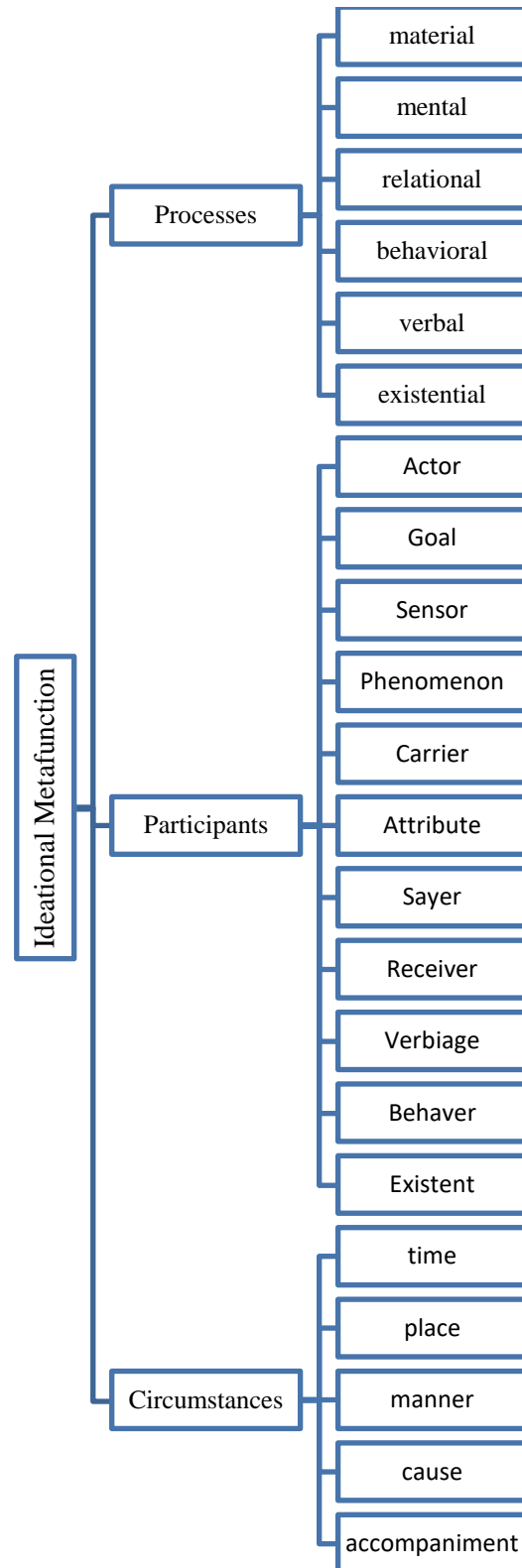   Functional: means that the clause has certain language function: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

Figure (1): Halliday's SFG: The Ideational Metafunction

1.9 Significance of the Study

This study helps linguistic students develop their analytical skills, apply Halliday's framework of transitivity to other texts, and explore the interconnection between linguistics and journalism. It provides other researchers with the references needed in this field. Also, it deepens readers' understanding of the way in which language shapes narratives and reflects social and cultural contexts in journalistic discourses.

2. Investigative Journalistic Discourse

Investigative journalism is a crucial tool in democratic societies, aiming to uncover hidden truths and hold power structures accountable. Its effectiveness is influenced by linguistic, stylistic, and discourse techniques, which shape the narrative and ensure clear communication of complex information. Journalists use precise language, active voice, technical jargon, and narrative structures to engage readers and present factual information. Techniques like framing, intertextuality, and critical discourse analysis are essential for shaping public perception. The "Investigative Journalism Manual" provides guidance on incorporating direct and indirect speech, incorporating speech into investigative reports, and analyzing language to uncover underlying power dynamics and ideologies (Farkas, 2023: 1 – 4; Dayaji, 2016: 23 - 26).

3. What is SFG?

SFL is a language approach developed by M.A.K. Halliday and his followers in the 1960s, focusing on understanding language within its social context. It contrasts with traditional grammar, which is seen as a set of rigid rules, and views grammar as a resource for making meaning (Sadighi and Bavali, 2008: 14 - 15). SFL argues that language is a system for making meaning, and grammar plays a crucial role in shaping that meaning. SFL takes a systemic perspective, focusing on the overall system of grammar and how different grammatical choices contribute to meaning-making. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of grammatical choices and focuses on the clause as the main unit of analysis, rather than the sentence. SFG is an effective approach built on the notion that language is a human communication system. Halliday (1987) suggests three distinct kinds of meanings: interpersonal, textual, and ideational functions, which contribute to how meaning is constructed within a clause. These functions allow a single clause to carry multiple layers of meaning, providing a rich framework for understanding how language operates as a tool for social interaction, communication, and representation. By considering language as a dynamic tool for meaning-making, SFL presents a flexible and powerful alternative to traditional grammatical models. By focusing on the clause as the main unit of analysis, SFL provides a comprehensive framework for understanding language's role in communication, social interaction, and representation (Basit et al., 2024: 486).

4.   Ideational Metafunction

The "ideational function" is meant to "convey new information, to communicate a content that is unknown to the hearer". Halliday (1970, 2004) points out through this function the speaker or writer expresses (via the lexico-grammatical choices) his experience of the phenomena of the real world

Matthiessen et al (1997:100) write that the ideational metafunction has two modes "experiential", meaning in the clause; and "logical", meaning between the clauses that go into a clause complex. Eggins (2004) writes that experiential meaning is expressed through the system of transitivity or the process type; once the process is chosen, certain participant associated roles and configuration will be implicated. The attention, in the current study, will be on the experiential mode because it displays the process of the outer and inner experience of the speaker, that is, the processes of the external world and the set of processes of consciousness, namely reactions, cognitions, and percepts (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 170). Accordingly, experience will take the form of two facets:

a.   "Transience: The experience of unfolding through time. It is constructed by verbal group serving as the process".

b. "Permanence: The experience of lasting through time. It is constructed by nominal group serving as participants".

The meaningful grammatical unit in the transitivity system is the clause, which expresses what is happening, what is being done, what is felt and what the state is and so on. Halliday (1994: 106) maintains that, through this function, language enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of what goes on around and inside them. This experiential meaning is realized in the system of transitivity. Matthiessen et al (1997:18) write that transitivity offers a network of inter-related options for representing different types of experience – our experience of the material world, of the world of our inner consciousness, of the world of symbolization, and so on. Transitivity is a semantic notion, and the transitivity system refers to a system for describing the whole clause (Halliday, 1994). However, this term must not be confused with the traditional "transitivity". The term "Transitivity" in SFG is accounted for at clause rank. Meanwhile, in traditional grammar, it is taken as a feature of the verb, i.e. at the verbal group rank. Transitivity system in SFG contains three components:

4.   Processes : realized by verbal complexes (groups)

5.   Participants: realized by (nominal groups)

6.   Circumstances: realized by (Adverbial groups/ Prepositional phrases)

They	played	tennis	at the beach

Participant	process	participant	Circumstance

Early morning	the boy	heard	a faint sound	from out in the bay
Circumstance *Adverbial group*	*participant*	*process*	*participant*	*Circumstance* *Prepositional Phrase*

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 175) declare that circumstantial elements are almost always optional augmentations of the clause rather than obligatory components. In contrast, participants are **inherent** in the process (i.e. There must be at least one participants).

According to Fairclough (1992: 179 and 2003: 141-12), transitivity system comprises six processes which "differ in their naming, meaning, participants and in the types of circumstances associated with them". These processes are *"material, mental, relational, verbal, behavioural* and *existential"*.

1.   Material Processes (Processes of doing and happening)

They refer to the processes in which something is "done/happened". They may or may not affect other participants. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 180 - 195):

Processes of doing are called "Transitive"   (e.g. The police arrested the man).)

Processes of happening are called "Intransitive". (e.g. The baby cried

Participants: Actor, Goal, Beneficiary

Mary	*eats*	*lunch*	*with her mother.*
Actor	*Process(material)*	*Goal*	*Circumstance*

Yesterday,	*Mary*	*gave*	*her sister*	*a note book.*
Circumstances	*Actor*	*Process(material)*	*Beneficiary*	*Goal*

Both Transitive and intransitive can be either creative or transformative.

Halliday & Matthiessen (2004: 187 - 189) present a list of verbs on each type:

Type: creative		intransitive	transitive
general		*appear, emerge, occur, take place, happen*	
		develop, form, grow, produce	
specific			*create, make, prepare*
			assemble, build, construct, compose, design, draft, draw, forge, paint, sketch, write, bake, brew, cook, knit, sew, weave, dig, drill, found, establish, open, set up

Type: transformative		intransitive	transitive
elaborating	state	*burn, singe, boil, fry, bake, dissolve, cool, freeze, warm, heat, melt, liquefy, pulverize, vaporize, harden, soften*	
	make-up	*blow up, break, burst, chip, collapse, crack, crash, explode, shatter, tear, mend, heal*	
		erupt	*crush, demolish, destroy, damage, mash, smash, squash, wreck*
		chop, cut, mow, prune, slice, trim	
			axe, hack, harpoon, knife, pierce, prick, spear, skewer, stab, sting
	surface	*polish, rub, dust, scratch, wipe*	
			brush, lick, rake, scrape, shave, sweep
	size	*compress, decompress, enlarge, extend, expand, grow, stretch, reduce, shrink, shrivel*	
	shape	*form, shaped, arch, bend, coil, contort, curl, uncurl, curve, deform, distort, fashion, flatten, fold, unfold, stretch, squash, twist*	
	age	*age, ripen, mature, modernize*	
	amount	*increase, reduce, strengthen, weaken*	
	colour	*colour, blacken, whiten, darken, brighten, fade, solarize*	
		blush, redden, yellow, pale	

Examples:

	Creative	Transformative
Transitive	They built a house. She cooked meat.	The sun melted the icicles. The boy brushed his teeth.

	Actor – process – Goal	*Actor – process - Goal*
Intransitive	The icicles formed. The tree grew.	The icicles melted. The water boiled.
	Actor – process	*Actor – process*

As for the contrast between operative and receptive, it is a contrast in voice (active and passive respectively). It exists with transitive verbs only.

They built a house. (operative)

A house was built by them. (receptive)

There are a number of participant roles that may be involved in the process of a material clause:

Actor -- the one performing the action

Goal -- that which is affected by the action

Scope -- that which remains unaffected by the action

Attribute -- a quality ascribed or attributed to an entity

Client -- for whom/which the action occurs

Recipient -- the receiver of goods or services

scope[2] (range)	entity	They crossed **the street**.	entity – which construes "an entity which exists independently of the process but which indicates the domain over which the process takes place" (H & M, p.192). This gives us, for example, *play the piano*, where the grammar construes our experience that the piano exists as an entity.
	process	They played **football**.	process – which is "another name for the process" (H & M, p.193), for example, *sing a song, play tennis*. This also results in common delexical phrases, such as *have a bath* or *make a mistake*. One important reason why the grammar uses these as opposed to a process is that the use of a noun allows greater modification – *have a nice long hot bath* or *play five good games of tennis* – which would not be possible with a verb.
Recipient (receiver)		She gave *her mother* a gift. /She gave a gift *to her mother*.	
Client (Beneficiary)		She bought *her mother* a gift. /She bought a gift *for her mother*.	
attribute	resultative	He painted the wall *white*. He came back *rich*.	
	depictive	They left the meeting *happy*.	

However, because the material process involves dynamic verbs, the progressive is permitted -- "Alvin <u>was playing</u> ping pong yesterday". This is a useful test to tell apart a material process from another that is inherently stative.. Also, it should be noticed that *Goal* is that which is affected by something being done to it (that is, it either changes its position or its status). If it remains unaffected (or unimpacted), it is not Goal, but Scope. Another useful point to note is that whereas Recipient takes the preposition "to", Client takes "for".

2. Mental Processes (Processes of Sensing)

They express such mental phenomena as "perception" (see, hear, look), "reaction" (*like, please*) and "cognition" (*know, believe, convince*). A mental process involves two participants, Sensor and Phenomenon.

Participants: *Senser, Phenomenon*

Processes:

a. Process of Perception (see, hear, smell, taste, touch)

Ali	*saw*	*the movie*
Senser	*Process (mental)*	*phenomenon*

b. Process of Cognition (know, understand, believe, think)

Nada	*knew*	*the fact that he apologized.*
The kid	*thought*	*The moon was a ball.*
Senser	*process(mental)*	*phenomenon*

c. Process of Affection (like, fear)

She	*liked*	*her job.*
He	*likes*	*swimming early in the morning.*
Senser	*process(mental)*	*phenomenon*

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 210) present two types of the verbs that signify mental process: "***like-type***" and "***please-type***".

In the (Like – type), the (senser) precedes the (phenomenon).

I	*like*	*this book*
Senser	*Process(mental)*	*phenomenon*

In the (Please – type), the (phenomenon) precedes the (senser)

This book	*interests* (delights, amuses, entertains)	*me.*
phenomenon	*process(mental)*	*Senser*

	``like´´ type	``please´´ type
Perceptive	perceive, sense; see, notice, hear, feel, taste, etc.	(assail)
Cognitive	believe, expect, know, think, forget, dream, imagine, etc.	surprise, strike, occur to, convince; remind, escape; puzzle, intrigue
Desiderative	desire, decide, want, wish, agree, resolve, etc.	(tempt)
Emotive	like, adore, regret, enjoy, etc.	

3. Relational Processes (Processes of being & becoming)

They refer to setting up a relation between two separate entities. They express the notion of being something or somewhere. Halliday and Matthiessen (ibid: 215) propose that there are three kinds of relation "***Intensive, Possessive, Circumstantial***", each of these kinds is subdivided into "*Identifying*" and "*Attributive*".

Intensive Relational Process

In this relation, we have something "which is called identified" has an identity assigned to "which is called the identifier". In other words, one entity is being used to identify another.

a. **Intensive Identifying Process**:

Bob	is	the lawyer.
Identified	intensive	identifier

John	is	my friend.
identified	intensive	identifier

b. **Intensive Attributive Process**:

Mary	is	beautiful
carrier	process	attribute

Nada	is	a good nurse.
carrier	process	attribute

The points below can demonstrate the difference between "intensive identifying process" and "intensive attributive process":

- Identifying mode is reversible. (Participants: Identifier/Identified)
    "Sarah is the leader. ←→The leader is Sarah"
  Meanwhile, "Attribute mode" is irreversible. (Participants: Carrier/Attribute)
"Sarah is wise" ⟶*Wise is Sarah.
- Only "attributive" type can be realized by an adjective.
- In "identifying process", the nominal groups used are definite. But, they are indefinite in the attributive ones.

Possessive Relational Process
This process can be divided into two categories: possessive identifying processes and possessive attribute processes.

a. **Possessive Identifying processes**
Processes express possession through a relationship between the identified and the identifier, using either participant or process features.
i. *Possession as participant*:
The identified here signifies the thing possessed; the identifier signifies the property of the possessor.

The car	is	John's.
Identified		Identifier
token		value

ii.   *Possession as process*:

Possession, here, is encoded as process. In the example below, it is realized by the verb (own) :

John	*owns*	*the car.*
Identified		Identifier
token		value

According to Muir (1972: 110) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 231), if the verb must be in the active voice to render the same meaning, the order is Token - Value. If the verb must be in the passive voice to render the same meaning, the order is Value – Token.

In other words, if the surface structure of the clause is operative (= active), the grammatical subject is "Token". If the surface structure of the clause is receptive (= passive), the grammatical subject is "Value".

e.g. (*Jack token owns the car value*), (*The car value is owned by Jack token*).

b. Possessive Attribute Processes

The relationship here is the ownership relationship, where the carrier possesses an attribute, which can be viewed as an attribute or a process (Halliday, 1994: 132 – 133)

i.   Possession as attribute

The verb (to be) is used to express possession/ownership, with the attribute realized by a genitive pronoun or ('s) genitive, with the carrier being the possessed and the attribute being the possessor.

e.g.   The house (carrier) is (Process /intensive verb) theirs (attribute).

ii.   Possession as process:

The possession relationship is encoded using verbs (have, own, possess), with the carrier being the possessor and the attribute being the possessed.

e.g. Sam (carrier) owns (Process/ possession verb) a big house (attribute).

Circumstantial Relational Process

The processes here have a relationship of time, place, etc.

a. *Circumstantial Identifying Process*:

Here, we deal with circumstance either as "participant" or as "process".

i.   *Circumstance as participant*:

Yesterday (Identified/ token) *is* (intensive*) the 6th* (Identifier/ value)*.*

The 6th (Identified/ value) is Yesterday (Identifier/ token).

ii.   *Circumstance as process*:
e.g.
The gathering (Identifier/ token) takes up the whole day (Identified/ value).
The whole day (Identified/ value) is taken up by the gathering (Identifier/ value)

b. *Circumstantial Attribute Process*:
We deal with the circumstance either as attribute or as process.
i.   *Circumstance as attribute*:
e.g. The seminar (carrier) was (intensive) about origins of language (attribute).

ii.   *Circumstance as process*:
e.g. the seminar (carrier) concerns origins of language (attribute).

4.   Verbal Processes (processes of saying)

They denote exchanging information verbally. Normally the verbs used are *say, tell, talk, praise, boast, describe,* etc. In these processes, the main participants are: "sayer, receiver, verbiage , target" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 255).
-    *Sayer*: The participant accounted for the verbal process, might not necessarily be a conscious participant - although it mostly is, but anything capable of putting out a signal.
-    *Reciever* (the one to whom the verbal process is directed: the Beneficiary of a verbal message, occurring with or without a preposition depending on position in the clause)
-    *Verbiage* (it corresponds to what is said, representing it as a class of thing rather than as a report or quote, i.e. it is a nominalized statement of the verbal process: a noun expressing some kind of verbal behavior).
-    *Target:* occurs only in a sub-type of verbal clause, this function constructs the entity that is targeted by the process of saying. (e.g. They accused *an old colleague* of conspiring against them).
Halliday and Matthiessen (ibid: 253) mention that the clause, here, might be quoted or reported.   Examples:

Jack	*said*	*"I am hungry".*
sayer	process	
Quoting		Quoted

Jack	*said*	*he was hungry.*
sayer	process	
Reporting		Reported

Jack	told (said to)	his mother	that he is leaving
sayer	process	target	verbiage

5.   Behavioral Processes (Processes of behaving)

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 248) define behavioral processes as physiological and psychological activities like breathing, coughing, and more. These processes typically involve only one participant (Behaver), often a human, and can be easily distinguished from material processes if the activity is physiological or psychological. When a behavioral process has two participants, it can be considered a material process, for example, *A man beats the boy*.

Examples:

Physiological behavior process: She (behaver) is sleeping (process).

Psychological behavior process: She (behaver) is laughing (process).

6. Existential Processes (Processes of Existence)

In this type, the process points out that something exists or happens. Hence, there is an Existent as participant. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 175) remark that such types of process are considered "unique" because the "Subject" is not a participant but rather the item "there" which represents only "existence", not the participant that exists, this participants comes after the "process". Consider:

There is a black car (existent) in the street.

As for the third component of transitivity system, i.e. circumstances, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 260) assert that circumstantial elements are present in all processes and hold the same significance regardless of their location. There are a number of types of circumstantial elements. They are shown in the figure below:
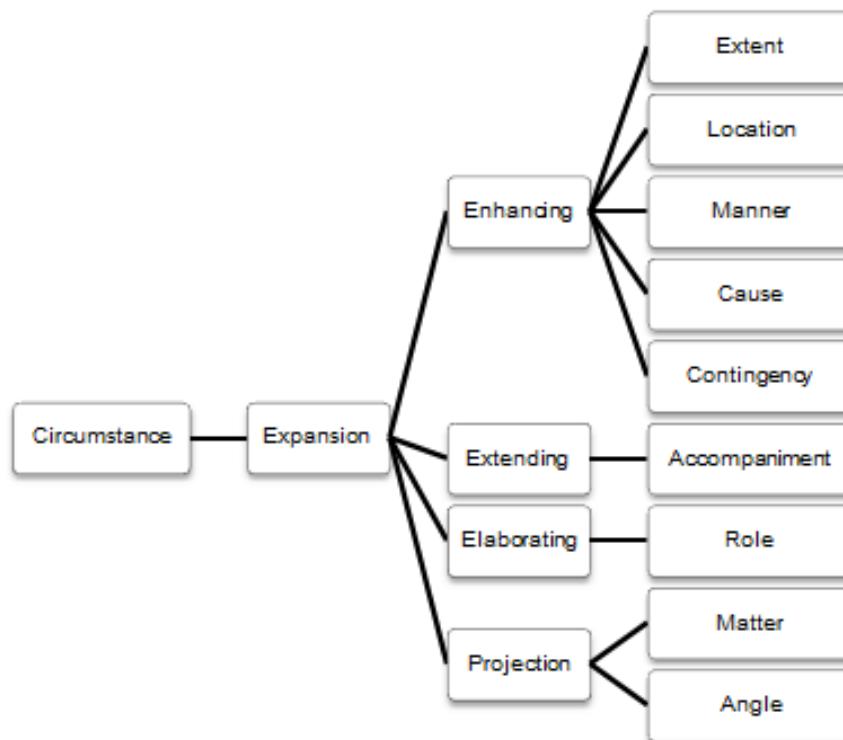
Figure (2): Types of circumstantial elements

1. Enhancing:

a)   **Extent Circumstances**: They express semantic concepts as distance (how far), duration (for how long) and frequency (how often). The typical structure is a" nominal group". Consider the following:

-    *They drove (for) nine miles/(a long way).*   (distance)
-    *His friend waited (for) three hours/ (a long time).*   (duration)
-    *They called her five times.*   (frequency)

b)   **Location Circumstances:** They denote place (where) and time (when). Events happen in time and space. The items "spatial" and "temporal" are used for these two sub-types. The usual structure is an adverbial group or prepositional phrase. For example:

-    *Mary lives in Italy.*   (Spatial)
-    *The boy wakes up at 8 o'clock.*   (Temporal)
-    *My friends travelled last week.*   (Temporal)

c)   **Manner Circumstances:** They are of four sub-types:

i. Means (*how: e.g. "with what tools? what methods?" e.g. "with a key, by magic, electronically*") e.g. *They unlocked the gate with a special key*.

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ii. Quality (*how: "in what manner or style", e.g. silently, quickly, with some reluctance*) e.g. *She ate slowly.*

iii. Comparison (*how:" like what?" e.g. "similarly, in a different way, like an angel"*) e.g. *Her mother cooked the meal in a different way.*

iv. Degree (*how much: e.g. "greatly, considerably, a little, a bit, very much"*)
Laila admires her sister very much.

The typical structure is an "adverbial group" or "prepositional phrase".

d) Cause Circumstances: They are of three sub-types

- *Reason (why: e.g. "because of, thanks to, owing to")*
His manager died of heart failure.

- *Purpose (why, what for: e.g. "for, for the purpose of, with the aim of")*
The employees worked hard for the purpose of promotion.

- *Behalf (who for: e.g. for, on behalf of, against)*
She did a lot for her sake.

The typical structure is an adverbial group or prepositional phrase

e) Contingency Circumstances: They specify an element on which the actualization of the process depends. They are of three sub-types:

- Condition (under what conditions – in case of, in the event of)
"In case of fire, proceed calmly down the stairs".

- Default (in default of, in the absence of, failing)
"In the absence of reform, progress will be slow".

- Concession (in spite of, despite, regardless of)
"In spite of the sunny weather, they didn't go to the beach".

2. Extending Circumstances

Accompaniment: It is a self-explanatory term, but there are two sub-types:

a. Comitative "who with, what with: with/without".
Jack came with Martin.
Mary set out with her umbrella.
She came without her key.

b. Additive (as well as, instead of, besides)
Jack came as well as Martin.
Mary came instead of her daughter.

3. Elaborating Circumstances

Role: It can be either Guise or product**.**

a. Guise: "as what, for what: e.g. by way of, in the form of"
She came here as a team leader.
They left the room untidy by way of protest.

b. Product: (into what)
"She will grow into a big girl". "Material process + Role"

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"He will turn into a real terror". "Relational process + Attribute".

4. Projection Circumstances

a) **Matter:** as in 'subject matter' "about what?), this usually occurs in verbal process and is difficult to separate from Verbiage". "Matter" is expressed by prepositions such as ***"about, concening, with reference to,*** and sometimes simply ***of".***

e.g. "She *told me about her plans".*

b) **Angle:** It is concerned with point of view and relates to (i) Sayer or (ii) Senser. There are two sub-types:

i. Source "attribution: according to X, in the words of Y"

e.g. *"According to the great detective, the time was 4.16 pm."*

ii. Viewpoint "in my opinion, for me"

e.g. *"For me the important thing is the colou"r.*

5. Previous Studies

Investigative journalism, a genre focusing on in-depth research and exposing hidden truths, has not been thoroughly studied using the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) lens. Existing research mainly focuses on print media and general journalistic forms, but has not addressed the unique discourse of investigative journalism.. The lack of focused SFG studies on investigative journalism leaves a significant gap in understanding how linguistic choices operate uniquely within this genre. Future research should address the specialized discourse of investigative journalism within the SFG framework, providing practical insights into how investigative journalists use language strategically to fulfill their role as watchdogs of society and supporting its core objectives of scrutiny, accountability, and social justice.

Ansary and Babaii's (2005) paper explores the application of the Systemic Functional theory of language to genre analysis, focusing on English newspaper editorials as a public "Cinderella" genre. It proposes a generic prototypical text development pattern, known as the Generic Structure Potential (GSP), for editorials. The results will benefit genre theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics, benefiting applied linguists, education, journalism, and media professionals.

Yi's (2014) study analyzes CCTV's News Probe, focusing on media neutralism in China's investigative TV reporting. Using Fairclough and Van Dijk's CDA frameworks, it reveals that the show uses balanced language and rhetorical strategies to maintain neutrality, despite ideological biases. The analysis highlights media's role in shaping public opinion and navigating governmental expectations.

Dayaji's (2016) study investigates BBC World's online coverage of the 2014 Israel-Palestine conflict, revealing potential bias. Through content analysis and critical discourse analysis, the study found that the BBC often portrayed the Israeli narrative as more significant than the Palestinian perspective, raising concerns about its impartiality.

Spiers (2019), in his thesis, examines media discourse following the 2016 Brexit referendum by analyzing four articles by The Guardian and the Daily Mail. It uses Systemic Functional Grammar to analyze the ideological differences in language used to discuss the issue. The transitivity analysis of the articles is used to analyze discourse, which is based on Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework. The study finds that both newspapers actively presented opposing views of Brexit, with The Guardian opposing leaving and the Daily Mail supporting leaving the EU. The study concludes that societal discourse is complex and sometimes contradictory.

Salman (2021), in her research, examines investigative investigations on ISIS published on the NIRIJ network from 11/12/2014 to 28/11/2020. The study focuses on social issues such as terrorism, crime, and social phycological problems in Iraqi regions occupied by ISIS. The research surveyed 23 investigations, revealing that minorities like Christians, Yazidis, Turkmen, and shabak are affected by ISIS. The most significant massacres were spiker and badush prison. The research also revealed the negative impact of ISIS on children, with many recruited and left unnamed. The extremist ideology instilled in these children required intensive rehabilitation efforts.

Hence, since the current study uses SFG to analyze investigative journalism, addressing a gap in the field unlike previous studies that applied SFG to general journalistic discourse, it focuses on the distinctive linguistic and functional features of investigative reporting. It offers a deeper understanding of how language constructs meaning, authority, and objectivity in uncovering hidden truths. This perspective also highlights the genre's role in fostering accountability and social awareness, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of journalistic discourse.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The following chart illustrates the percentages of each process type across the data analysis. This chart provides an overall view of how often each process type is used:
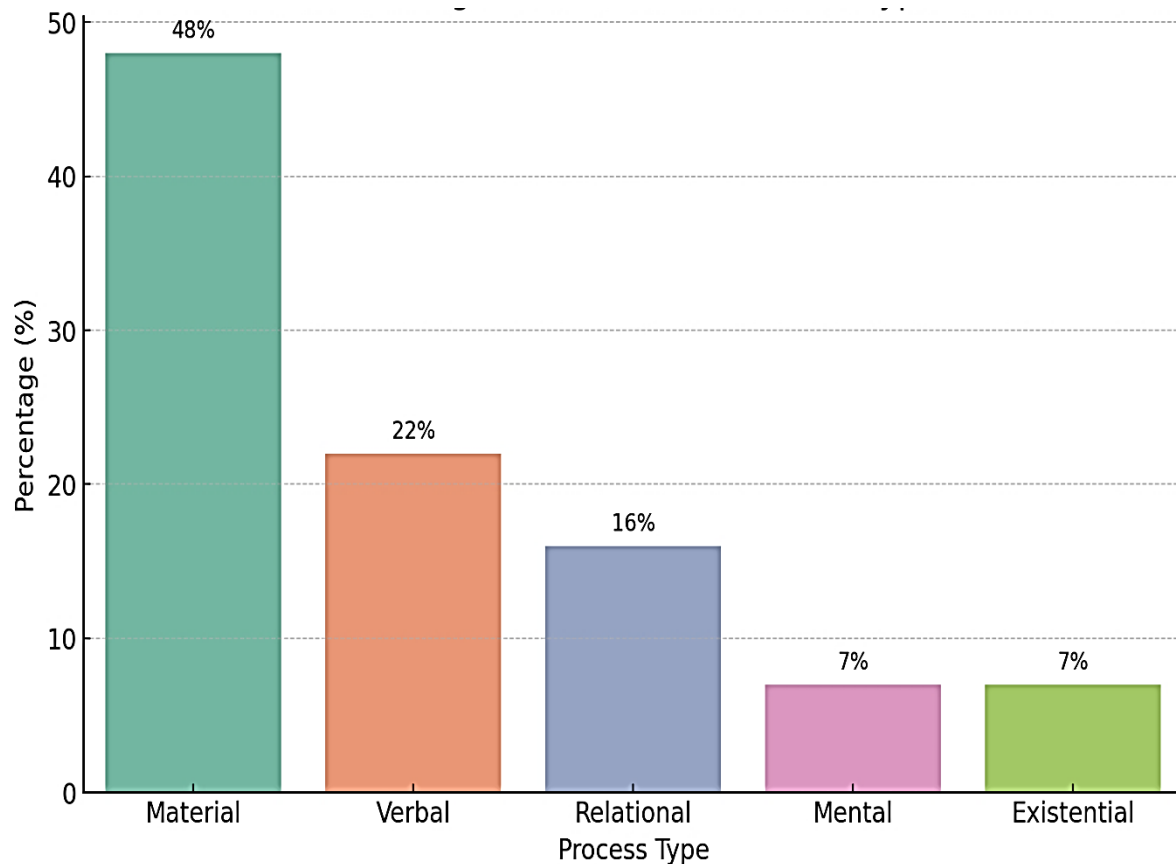
Fig. (3): Percentage Distribution of Process Types

The Process Chart displays different types of processes, such as Material, Verbal, Relational, Mental, and Existential, used to convey actions or states. Each process type has a specific percentage that shows how frequently it appears relative to the others. Material processes are the most common, representing physical actions or changes. Verbal processes involve communication, while Relational processes describe relationships or attributes. Mental processes express thoughts or feelings, and Existential processes indicate the presence of something. This chart helps to understand the emphasis on different kinds of processes in communication or analysis.

As for participants type, the following chart illustrates the percentages of each participant type across the data analysis. This chart provides an overall view of how often each participant type is used:
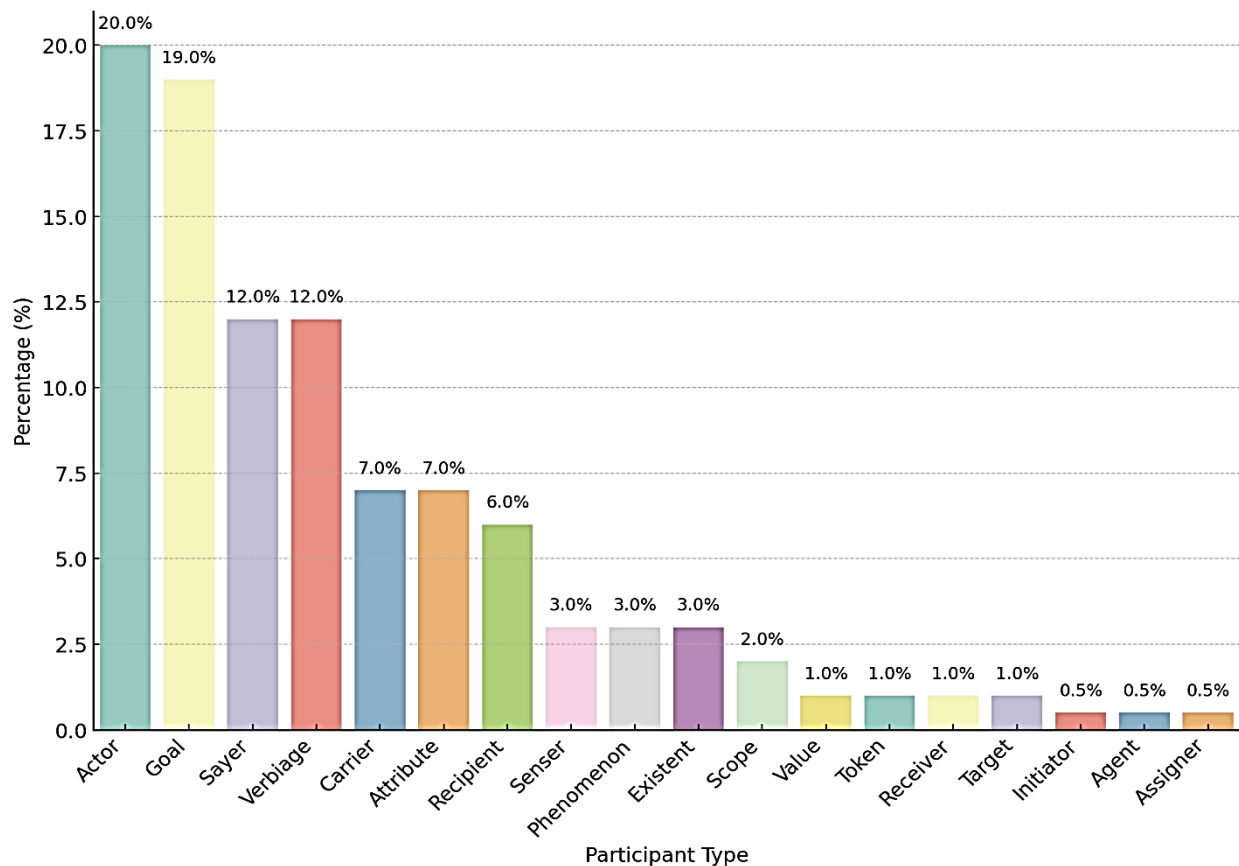
Fig. (4): Percentage Distribution of Participants Type

The Participant Chart categorizes various participant roles within statements or narratives, each shown with its frequency and percentage. Major participant roles like "Actor," "Goal," "Sayer," and "Verbiage" appear more frequently, indicating their importance in describing who is involved in actions or statements. Other roles, like "Carrier," "Attribute," and "Recipient," add additional context, while roles like "Agent," "Initiator," and "Assigner" are much less common. This chart helps to identify which types of participants are most significant in the context being analyzed, providing insight into the roles people or things play in described actions.

In regard to circumstances type, the following chart illustrates the percentages of each participant type across the data analysis. This chart provides an overall view of how often each participant type is used:
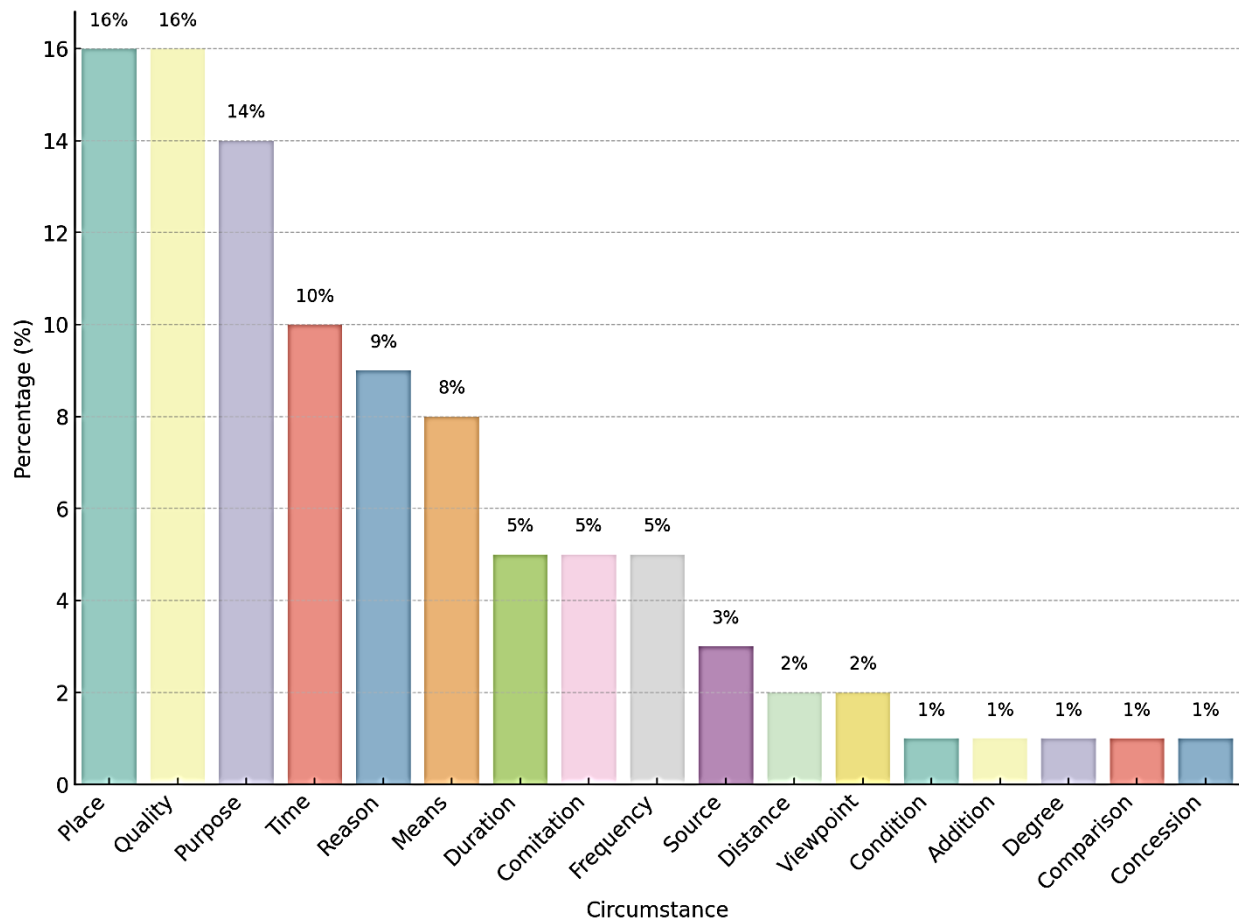
Fig. (5): Percentage Distribution of Circumstances Type

The Circumstances Chart shows various types of circumstances that add detail to statements, such as place, quality, purpose, time, and reason. Each type has a percentage indicating its relative importance or frequency. Common circumstances like "Place" and "Quality" describe where something happens or the nature of something, while others like "Purpose" and "Time" explain why or when. Less frequent circumstances, such as "Addition," "Condition," and "Concession," provide extra layers of detail. This chart highlights which contextual details are most often used to add clarity or depth to descriptions.

From the above findings, the analysis supports three hypotheses: material processes are prevalent in NIRIJ investigative reports, emphasizing concrete actions related to social and political issues. Participant roles like "Actor" and "Goal" are frequently used, representing individuals and groups involved in the issues being discussed. This diversity helps convey a multi-faceted view of social dynamics. Circumstantial details, particularly those related to "Place" and "Time," are commonly used to provide necessary context for readers. The analysis shows that NIRIJ investigative reports are structured to emphasize actions, diverse participant roles, and contextual details for comprehensive storytelling.

Therefore, the NIRIJ's investigative reports use a language style that emphasizes concrete actions, diverse participants, and contextual details to effectively communicate social and political issues. The reports use material processes to describe real-world occurrences, involving various participant roles to portray the multifaceted nature of social interactions and conflicts. Circumstantial details like time, place, and means provide context, enabling readers to understand the settings and motivations behind the events. This linguistic elements create an engaging and informative narrative, supporting the investigative goals of NIRIJ by providing a comprehensive view of the issues at hand.

7.　Conclusions

The study comes up with the following conclusions:

1. NIRIJ reports primarily use action-based language, emphasizing events and activities that bring attention to the social and political issues being investigated.

2. The reports frequently mention a variety of individuals and groups, offering multiple perspectives and showing the involvement of different people and entities in each issue.

3. Time, place, and manner are regularly included, providing essential background that helps readers understand the setting and relevance of the events discussed.

4. The consistent use of action-oriented language and contextual details makes complex issues more straightforward, ensuring that readers can easily follow the narrative.

5. By incorporating a range of participant roles and viewpoints, the reports present a balanced and multi-faceted view, fostering reader trust and credibility.

6. The roles of participants reveal the interactions between individuals and groups, adding depth to the reporting and giving readers a clearer picture of the social dynamics at play.

7. The inclusion of specific details, especially about timing and location, enhances the credibility of the reports, which is crucial in investigative journalism.

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