

Interpersonal Meaning in Media texts Written by Native & Non-native Writers of English

Looloo Mohammed Alraimi

English Department, Faculty of Languages, Sudan University of Science and
Technology, Sudan

English Department, Faculty of Languages, Najran University, KSA

E-mail: looloo922@hotmail.com

Abdalla Yassin Abdalla

English Department, Faculty of Languages, Sudan University of Science and Technology,
Sudan

E-mail: yassinabdalla362@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study presents an exploration of how interpersonal meaning is created and recognized in media texts written by native and non-native writers of English. The objectives of this study are: to compare and describe the types of interpersonal meaning, and the various structures and speech functions realized in media texts from native and non-native online newspapers that reveal the authors' intention to influence the readers. Eight articles from Washington Post (WP) & Arab News (AN) online newspapers were collected for the analysis. The texts' clauses were identified and analyzed for mood and modality based on Halliday's framework of Systemic Functional Grammar. The analysis reveals that the most dominant mood type is declarative, and modality of medium value pervades all the texts with higher frequency in WP newspaper which makes the authors appear to be more personal and certain about their claims than the AN authors. Yet, declarative moods have varying structures and varying degrees of 'functions'. The conclusion shows that this variation in the clause structures and functions is done with the authors' intention to get the readers persuaded.

Keywords: Function, Interpersonal meaning, Media Texts, Modality, Mood

1. Introduction

According to David Crystal (1987, quoted in Sandar Moe, 2014, p.82):

Newspaper reporting style is different from other styles of language as there are some fundamental constraints of using language which are the pressures of time and space. Information has to be compressed into a limited space, usually in columns. Interest has to be focused, captured, and maintained through the use of large type, dramatic headlines, short paragraphs, and succinct sentences. In various ways, the occurrence of photographs, the decency of the information reported and the need to maintain human interest will influence the choice of vocabulary and grammar.

Accordingly, this paper attempts to study how newspaper writers make choices to maintain the readers involvement and establish interpersonal relationship with them from the perspective of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG).

In fact, newspaper articles are written to inform and get people persuaded about particular point of views. Articles are pervaded by some features that may influence the readers and get them convinced about the subject matter. These features are innate in the grammatical choices used by the writers. Therein lies the significance to carry out a comparative analysis of the texts produced by native and non-native writers of English to get an intended audience persuaded, from a grammatical perspective. Such analysis may enable language teachers/learners realize how meanings are created/expressed and look at the forms of grammar "as means to an end, rather than as an end in themselves" (Halliday, 1985, xiv).

The researcher will perform a Lexico-grammatical analysis of eight articles from Washington Post & Arab News online newspapers with the main aim of comparing and identifying how interpersonal relationships are created between the writers and the readers.

The following section discusses the theoretical framework concerning Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar. Then the aims of the study are presented in focus in section 3. Sections 4 & 5 are concerned with data description and analysis. The conclusion is given in section 6.

2. Theoretical Framework

Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) constitutes the theoretical framework for the current study. SFG considers grammar in terms of usage and the creation of meaning. It takes the resource perspective rather than the rule perspective; and it is designed to display the overall system of grammar rather than only fragment (Halliday & Mathiessen 2004).

Halliday & Hassan (1985, p. 4), describe SFG view of language as "attempt to relate Language primarily to a particular aspect of human experience, namely, that of social structure". This, in fact, implies that language use is viewed as a system of choices made among other options within the context.

The context of situation is thus arranged in categories. They are Field, Tenor and Mode. Halliday's ideas of metafunctions; the ideational, interpersonal and textual are corresponding to them respectively. According him, each of these metafunctions is related to grammatical

systems. Experiential Metafunction considers grammar of a clause as representation and it is realized by the systems of transitivity, whereas Interpersonal Metafunction reflects grammar of a clause as exchange and it is recognized by the systems of mood and modality. Textual Metafunction looks at the grammar of clause as message and it is realized by the systems of Theme and Rheme. He further clarifies that Interpersonal metafunction analysis considers sentence as a piece of interaction between the speaker and listener (Halliday & Hassan, 1985).

Bankole & Ayoola, (2014, p. 140) refer that "the mood structure indicates how clause is structured to realize the speech functions of offer, command, statement and question in interaction from the Lexico-grammatical structure of a clause; a statement is realized by declarative mood, question is realized by interrogative mood and command is realized by imperative mood"

"Modality refers to the degree of certainty and truth of statements about the world. Modality consists of modulation realized by modal verb operators such as may, will and must and modulation realized by the mood adjuncts. It is the general term for all signs of speakers' opinion" (Butt, et al, 1995, quoted in Bankole & Ayoola, 2014, p. 140). The interpersonal metafunction is a resource for enacting social roles and relationships between speaker/writer and listener/reader (Matthiessen 1995, p.17).

Modality has three values, namely high, median and low (Xi Wang, 2014, p. 257). (see Table 1 for specification).

Table 1. Modality values

Modality	Value	Examples
Modal Verbs	High	must, ought to, mustn't, oughtn't to, can't, couldn't.
	Median	will, would, should, shall, won't, wouldn't, shouldn't.
	Low	can, may, could, might.
Mood Adjuncts	High	Certain, certainly. Surely, indeed, always, continuously, never.
	Median	Probable, probably, often, usually, frequently, repeatedly.
	Low	Possible, possibly, hardly, occasionally, sometime.

3. Aims of the Study

Mainly, the study aims to examine and compare how interpersonal relationship is created by native and non-native writers of media texts from two online newspapers; and how the readers are involved through the system of mood and modality within the framework of Systematic Functional Grammar.

4. Description of Data

The corpus for analysis in this study consists of eight online articles; four from Washington Post newspaper and the other four articles are from Arab News newspaper. The choice of the newspapers is motivated by the fact that they are both considered as prominent newspapers with an extensive influence and a vast readership. The preference of online editions of the concerned newspapers is due to availability and accessibility. Selection of sample articles is

based on two criteria: authenticity and topic similarity to maintain consistent scale for comparison. Publication date is not taken as a criterion since articles of similar topics are not necessarily be written in same period.

The text of each article is divided into clauses for Lexico-grammatical analysis. Each clause is analyzed for mood and modality. Their frequencies and percentages are measured and presented in the form of statistical tables. (For space restriction, the full lexico-grammatical analysis of the texts are not presented here but the result of the analysis is given. For full texts of the data, the articles' links are provided in the appendices). Then, a comparison between the articles from the Washington Post (WP) and Arab News (AN) newspapers is made.

5. Data Analysis & Results

Tables 2 & 3 below give the result of the mood analysis showing the percentage of each mood choice to the total number of clauses in each article.

5.1 Mood Analysis

Table 2. Mood frequency in WP articles

Article NO.	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.	%
Declarative	48	100%	35	100 %	44	100%	77	100%
Interrogative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imperative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total mood frequency	48		35		44		77	

Table 3. Mood frequency in AN articles

Article NO.	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.	%
Declarative	56	100%	62	98.41%	16	100%	37	100%
Interrogative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Imperative	0	0	1	1.58%	0	0	0	0
Total mood frequency	56		63		16		37	

Tables 2 & 3 show that the WP and AN authors depend mostly on the choice of declarative mood to maintain interpersonal relationship with the readers; avoiding the interrogative and imperative moods. It is only for article 2 in AN there exists a choice of imperative mood at a low rate which constitutes 1.58% to total clauses of 63.

The dominance of declarative mood indicates that the writers' primary concern in the articles is not to question or demand but to offer the readers some information convincing them to get persuaded.

5.1.1 Declarative Mood

The declarative mood choice helped to achieve the purpose of the texts, i.e., to convince and persuade. However, the texts are structured in a way that the clauses with declarative mood

are given varying structures and varying degrees of speech functions which all hang together to achieve persuasive texts. The following structures and features are the most observed ones that are used in WP & AN articles to set up interpersonal relations between the authors and their audience through the declarative mood. Some features are present in one newspaper but absent in the second, and other features are expressed differently in the two newspapers. Also, there are common features between the two newspapers. All these are taken into consideration while doing the analysis.

To perform the analysis task, first some pieces from the newspapers articles are presented listing them with alphabetical numbers. Then, interpretations are followed highlighting the major features with special attention to how interaction occurs and how the readers are involved.

5.1.1.1 Emphasis

- a. "The rate of unemployment published by CDSI is calculated by applying a **STRICT DEFINITION**. It takes into account only those unemployed women who have been seriously searching for work during the month preceding the survey. It thus does not include in the rate those women who are not looking for work for whatever reason, such as full-time housewives or retirees. Nor **do** CDSI unemployment figures for women include those who are not searching for employment because they are too discouraged, have lost hope that they would find suitable employment, or do not have the means to **“seriously”** or properly search for employment". See [AN article 2]

Emphasis is found in AN article 2. The writer makes an accentuation in 'STRICT DEFINITION'. It is capitalized for the sake of stressing meaning. In the same example the verb 'do' and the word "seriously" within inverted commas create other forms of emphasis. The writer wants the readers to pay the emphasized words more attention because they sum up his argument. He intends stimulating them to grasp his message more effectively.

Since there is a distance between the writer and the readers, the emphasis device seems to reduce the distance between them in which it makes the written language appear closer to the spoken mode as in face to face communication.

5.1.1.2 Contraction

- a. "**What's** more, the bailout also sets aside \$46 billion for programs". See [WP article 1].
- b. "**He's** had an impact on so many people's lives [...] It **wasn't** like Nick [...] I **can't** tell you [...] **it's** going to have. **It's** one of [...] you **don't** even...". See [WP article 4].

WP articles are characterized by extensive use of the contracted forms throughout the texts; whereas there is none in the AN texts. The use of contracted forms in reporting news produces the informal style in the texts. Therein exists a process of interaction. The choice of informal style is motivated by the target audience. WP audience is expected to be Americans who are familiar with informal expressions since English is their native language and it is

their daily life practice; while this is not the case of AN audience who learnt English through formal education and lacks practice in daily life. So, the audience is needed to be addressed formally, the same way they learned English.

5.1.1.3 Initial Adverbial Modifying a Clause

- a. "**Remarkably**, however, despite lavish government expenditure, the economy did not heat up[...] **Obviously**, if the two trends continue in future years, we can expect to see a budget deficit before too long". See [AN article 1]

'Initial adverbial modifying a clause' is a characteristic exclusive to AN author of article 1. It does not occur in the other articles or the WP ones.

Adverbials such as 'remarkably, obviously' initiating a clause bring up the image of 'acceptability' to readers and give them the feeling that what will be read next is significant. With the support of such adverbials in declarative clauses, the writer expresses his viewpoints intending to influence the readers accepting them. Additionally, with the use of the first person plural pronoun 'we' there is a strong indication of involving the readers.

5.1.1.4 Obligation/Advice/Condemnation Expressions

- a. "they **are required** to recoup the costs of the financial bailout from the financial industry". See [WP article 1]
- b. "investments and opportunities **need to** go beyond the "physical" infrastructure projects". See [WP article 2]
- c. "The event, organized by the Library of Congress, has become **a must-go-to** event in Washington". See [WP article 3]
- d. "Those sources **have to** be developed further to guard against future deficits". See [AN article 1]
- e. "Slow implementation has been the bane of many ordinary Saudis who want to see ambitious development programs and projects actually completed in their regions of the continent-like country". See [AN article 1]

Despite that the declarative mood pervaded the WP & AN articles carrying the informative function, there exist some expressions carrying the function of an imperative mood offering advice, or demanding obligation. The expressions '*are required, have to, need to and a must-go-to*' in the examples above signal the obligation and advice meaning to the readers.

Moreover, the declarative sentence in example (e) carries the function of condemnation. It motivates Saudi people to work hard and increase their efforts.

This, in fact, illustrates that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the lexico-grammar of a clause or the mood of a clause and its interpersonal meaning in context.

5.1.1.5 Participial clauses

- a. **"Looking at** GDP components, **we see** that oil GDP in fact declined in 2013 by nearly four percent [...] **Looking at** the trade side of things, **we also see** a drop in the overall value of exports to \$367 billion [...] **looking at** trade more closely, **we see** a more pronounced drop in the value of oil exports". See [AN article 1].

Participial clause structure is used by AN author in article 1. Such structure is not used by the other authors or by the WP writers.

Participial clauses often express condition. The subject in the participial clause is omitted, but we can realize that it is the same subject as in the second or main clause of the conditional sentence. The examples cited above show that the writer of AN article did not state his observation directly. Instead, he uses the participial clause three times in the article with the same wording choice. In doing this, he is trying to involve the readers to notice his observation and communicating with them intellectually. 'Looking at, we see ...' means 'if we look....., we see'. Here there is a pure inclusion of the readers with the use of the first person plural form "WE"; convincing them to get persuaded.

5.1.1.6 Simple/Complex Sentence Structure

- a. "Some advocates argue that to help more women get back into the workforce, investments and opportunities need to go beyond the “physical” infrastructure projects that have been at the heart of most Democratic recovery plans". See [WP article 2]
- b. "Thousands of book enthusiasts flocked to the Mall on Saturday to experience the small but exuberant world of literature, where they heard their favorite authors read from their most recent works and discuss a range of topics at the 13th annual National Book Festival". See [WP article 3]
- c. "Together with the 2014 budget, the government issued the most detailed statement to date about actual performance of both government finances and the economy as a whole during 2013". See [AN article 1]
- d. "The Riyadh International Book Fair 2014 was inaugurated by Culture and Information Minister Abdulaziz Khoja under the theme, “Books: An Arch-Bridge Connecting Civilizations,” at the Riyadh International Convention and Exhibition Center (RICEC) on Tuesday". See [AN article 3]

A sentence of simple type consists of an independent clause, so it is made up of a subject and a predicate. Whereas a complex sentence entails an independent clause and at least one or more dependent clauses (Zimboiant, 2013, p.81).

Complex sentence structure is highly used by WP authors, while simple sentences are the most frequent sentence type in AN articles. Such variation in the use of sentence type, may be interpreted in terms of 'nativity'. It is expected that WP authors are native speakers of English; therefore, their mastery of English is superior to that of AN writers who almost are all Saudis,

at least as far as the sample articles are concerned. In addition, WP is an American newspaper that targets a specific readership among native Americans; this readership consists mainly of individuals with a certain educational level and from the middle and high classes. However, AN targets mainly Saudis and expatriates living in the Gulf, who are from different nationalities and mostly from South East Asia and perhaps having modest mastery of the English language. So, it is evident that the AN authors used simple sentence structures and avoided complex ones for the sake of their audience; to make the message easily understandable.

5.1.1.7 Generalization

- a. **"it is notable** that due to the drop in oil revenue in 2013, there was only a modest growth in GDP". See [AN article 1]
- b. "Thousands of people enjoying books and literature and **everything** that goes along with that". See [WP article 3]

Both newspapers' authors used generalization. Generalization in the first extract comes from the use of an 'empty pronoun; *'it'* without referring to a specific subject. *'It is notable'* means everyone can note; the writer as well as the readers. Through the writer's inclusion with the readers, he expresses his internal belief with much certainty influencing the readers to accept his view. In the second extract, the word *'everything'* brings about the author's use of generalization. It opened a space for the readers to recall their knowledge and are expected to be able to generate more figures or extend a list of the object referred to by the author. This shows that the knowledge is shared between them collectively and known almost to all people. Here, the writers appear to be more certain by using generalization.

5.1.1.8 Symbolic Language

- a. "Folbre and other scholars argue that **"human infrastructure"** is equally important and can create jobs more effectively than building bridges or roads". See [WP article 2]
- b. "physical infrastructure projects often proved to be daunting logistical endeavors, some of which were not as **"shovel-ready"** as promised". See [WP article 2]
- c. "News of Lynch's death started a **chain of phone calls** yesterday morning among coaches around the state". See [WP article 4]
- d. "The book fair serves as a great **networking platform** for publishers, writers and scholars, as well as academic institutions". See [AN article 3]

The use of the expression "human infrastructure" is symbolic since infrastructure is concrete and cannot be attributed to human beings. However, the writer has used it to make a parallelism with 'physical infrastructure' mentioned earlier in the article. He intended to give the message 'as physical infrastructure received much care from the authorities, equally human being need to be paid much attention'.

The expression "shovel-ready" refers to something that is complete, and the use of this symbolism twice in the article may be clear to its intended audience, the Americans. But, the expression may also need some efforts to understand it; since it may not be clear enough to a part of the readership who are not used to such expression.

'Chain of phone calls' the word 'chain' symbolizes the idea of multiplicity and endless. Through this image of abundance phone calls, the author aimed to show how people struck about the sport man's death news.

The simile used in 'book fair serves as a great networking platform' represents the idea of connectedness; comparing the book fair as a platform.

This way, we realize that through the use of symbolic language, the authors intend to involve the reader to think of the meaning referred to and they need to go beyond the words used to understand their intentions.

5.1.1.9 Reported Speech

- a. "Dianne Whitaker, a librarian in Montgomery County, said she looks forward each year to meeting her favorite authors and listening to their stories". See [WP article 3]
- b. "The love of the kids and showing them direction and just being there for them, that is what motivates me," Nick Lynch told The Post in a 1999 profile. See [WP article 4]
- c. "The manager of the ambulance department at the hospital said that the final medical report would be released tomorrow". See [AN article 4]
- d. Saleh Al-Ghamdi, director of the Riyadh International Book Fair, said: "There is a special pavilion for Saudis.....". see [AN article 4]

Equally, authors of WP & AN newspapers used the direct and indirect styles of reporting others' speech to reinforce their standpoints affecting the readers accept their views.

Having quoted the speech of the dead sport man by the WP author, he intends not only to enable the readers read the speech, but also he wants them to hear the speech as it is actually spoken by the dead man. In this manner, the author strongly affects the readers having emotional impact on them and eliciting sorrowfulness.

5.1.1.10 Expressing Opinion with Assertion

- a. "The **event is even popular** with young readers. Tania Mendez-Lopez, 11, of the District said she enjoyed interacting with famous costumed characters such as PBS's WordGirl, "the girl who knows all the words in the dictionary." See [WP article 3]
- b. "Tania and her three younger siblings also listened to Nelson talk about his illustrated book [...],when King gave **his powerful speech**". See [WP article 3]
- c. "It is **wonderful** to see **wonderful** diversity. See [WP article 3]

- d. You can **never** replace Coach Lynch in any way". See [WP article 4]
- e. "He was **truly a leader** of Prince George's County coaches[...] It's **truly a loss** for everybody". See [WP article 4]
- f. "It is **especially surprising** that unemployment rates changed during 2012 in markedly different directions between the four groups". See [AN article 2]
- g. "The **only losers** among the four groups were Saudi women". See [AN article 2]
- h. "Book Fair is the **most prominent** book fair in the *Middle East*". See [AN article 3]

These examples show that WP & AN authors are highly affirmative. They expressed their opinions and beliefs with extreme confidence and assertion; in which they let the audience feels that they should not disagree or argue what they have read. Instead, they should accept the ideas as indubitable.

The above bold word choices bring about the different ways used to express assertion e.g. using strong adjective and adverbs as modifiers as in examples b, e & f, through repetition as in c, high level of modality as in d, superlative comparison as in h, and placing modifying phrase initially as in example g. Regarding example g, it is possible to reverse the structure of the sentences and the meaning remains the same without a change as follows: *Saudi women were the only losers among the four groups*. But the writer has selected to place the modifying phrase initially intending to attract the audience's attention and get his message immediately. Besides, the word 'only' in the sentence imposes the author's opinion on the readers to accept the point without having the possibility for argument. In addition, providing a reported speech case as an evidence to a preceded opinion as in example a, confirms the write's certainty and does not allow the readers to disagree.

5.1.2 Imperative Mood

- a. "Let us look more closely at the unemployment rates for each of the four groups". See [AN article 2]

Notably, the imperative mood is not used by most of the authors in both newspapers the WP & AN. It is only once occurred in article 2 by AN author. This occurrence constitutes a very low rate; 1.58% to total clauses of 63. This, in fact, demonstrates that the writers aim to inform not to question or demand the readers.

Syntactically, the sentence used by the AN author carries the imperative mood, but semantically it does not give the order sense. The combination of the verb 'let' with the first person plural 'us' makes the imperative sentence far from being a command and denotes the meaning of a suggestion. The author attracts the audience's attention with a sudden call to join him and examine the validity of his claim by the use of 'Let us'.

Yet, in the imperative sentence, there is a clear evidence for the author's attempt to persuade the readers. In the expression (Let us) he opens up dialogue with the readers, inviting them to examine the validity of his idea. The writer intends to influence the audience through reasoning

without imposing his own thoughts or having an authority position. This has been proved to be an appropriate strategy for creating interpersonal relations with the readers.

5.2 Modality Analysis

Table 4. Modality frequency in WP articles

Modality	Article NO.	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
		Value	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.
Modal Verbs	High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Median	10	20.83	2	5.71	4	9.09	7	9.09
	Low	2	4.16	1	2.85	0	0	1	1.29
Mood Adjuncts	High	1	2.08	0	0	0	0	3	3.89
	Median	1	2.08	1	2.85	0	0	1	1.29
	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3.89
Total Frequency		14		4		4		15	

Table 5. Modality frequency in AN articles

Modality	Article NO.	(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)	
		Value	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.	%	Feq.
Modal Verbs	High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Median	4	7.14	1	1.58	1	6.25	2	5.40
	Low	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mood Adjuncts	High	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Median	0	0	2	3.17	0	0	0	0
	Low	1	1.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Frequency		5		3		1		2	

Tables 4 & 5 illuminate that the frequency of modality is low in all the texts. However, none of the WP or AN articles there exists modal auxiliaries of high value. The writers seem to have avoided the use of many modality operators so as not to be too subjective and authoritative but remain factual and forthright. For the same motive, they also have expressed median and low level of certainty and usuality. It is only for WP articles 1 & 4 there occurs the use of high value of mood adjuncts but still with low rate to the total number of clauses.

A correlation between WP & AN articles use of modality, it appears that WP articles constitute higher frequency among all the articles compared to AN ones. Below are some extracts presented from the articles along with interpretive analysis. They are arranged in accordance with the value degree.

5.2.1 High Modality Value

- a. "He took over a Suitland program in 1996 that had **never** made the playoffs and turned it into a state power, [...] He also **never** stopped doing the little things; [...]. He **always** said there is nothing promised. You can **never** replace Coach Lynch in

any way. **He's** a stand-up **guy** and a good person [...] He was unselfish with his time. If it needed to be done, **Nick** was the kind of **guy** who would do it. It's truly a loss for everybody ". See [WP article 4]

The WP author of article 4 expressed a high degree of modality (mood adjuncts) as shown in the examples above to increase the strength of his claims, and thus can indicate the higher degree of trustworthiness. Through the text form as well as the vocabulary choice, we can assume that the writer did not intend to have a power relationship with the readers; but rather an intimate one. Intimacy relationship is revealed through the informal style in which there are colloquial vocabulary (*guy*), use of more familiar terms, addressing with first name (*Nick*), and extensive use of reduced forms. The writer's main purpose is to evoke the sorrow feeling on the readers affecting their emotion about the dead sport man showing his noble deeds and how much he was a good man.

5.2.2 Median Modality Value

- a. "The Obama administration has **repeatedly** boasted how the historic rescue of Wall Street **will** cost taxpayers far less than originally expected". See [WP article 1]
- b. "such as the automakers, which **won't** have to pay the fee". See [WP article 1]
- c. "**As the stimulus revealed**, physical infrastructure projects **often proved** to be daunting logistical endeavors". See [WP article 2]
- d. "When she asked to list the five books she **would** bring with her if she were sent to a desolate island, Atwood asked why she **would** have to settle on only five when she **could** bring a Kindle". See [WP article 3]
- e. "he **usually** collected yard-markers and goal-post pads after home games". See [WP article 4]
- f. "since Saudi Arabia has accumulated a healthy public reserve fund of about \$700 billion, deficits **would not** represent a problem for a while". See [AN article 1]
- g. "When that happens, the private sector **would** be able to better cushion the impact of volatile oil prices". See [AN article 1]
- h. "as the economy grows, unemployment rates **usually** decline for all social groups". See [AN article 2]
- i. "because they are too discouraged, they have lost hope that they **would** find suitable employment". See [AN article 2]
- j. "The 11-day book fair **will** open its doors for visitors on March 5 and for students between March 9 and 13". See [AN article 3]

Modality used in the above examples in both newspapers represent moderate level of certainty. This certainty is recognized through various techniques: by providing evidence as in examples *e*, *h*, by means of condition cases as in *i*, *j*; via direct reported speech as in *f*, and through justifying response as in *k* instance.

'will' & 'will not' are also used as modal verbal operators which represent a medium scale of modal commitment; signaling a medium degree of certainty about the validity of a proposition. The use of 'will' in the data, as in *a*, *b*, *l*, is successful to show the writers' strong wish and determination and confirm that more actions will be definitely taken in the future.

This way, we realize that modality of medium value constitutes the greatest frequency among all articles of WP & AN. This proves that the authors' major motive was not to force higher degree of authoritativeness. But, rather, their concern was to establish moderate relationships with the audience convincing them enough to accept their standpoints.

5.2.3 Low Modality Value

- a. "Taxpayers **may** lose far more money in companies". See [WP article 1]
- b. "There **may** be more direct ways to create jobs by injecting money in health-care and education". See [WP article 2]
- c. "Folbre and other scholars argue that "human infrastructure" is equally important and **can** create jobs more effectively than building bridges or roads-- and **can** better address the gender disparity in employment". See [WP article 2]
- d. "and **occasionally** could be found making sure the bathrooms were clean". See [WP article 4]
- e. "He tried to give his players a family atmosphere that some of them **may** have lacked at home". See [WP article 4]
- f. "we **can expect** to see a budget deficit before too long". See [AN article 1]
- g. "As results, hundreds, **perhaps** thousands, of project are running behind schedule". See [AN article 1]
- h. "Police theorized the accident **could** have been caused by a pointed object that punctured the tire causing it to burst". See [AN article 4]

Modality expressed in these examples represents the lowest degree of certainty. Authors, of both newspapers WP & AN, used low modality operators to weaken the degree of their authoritativeness and to shorten the distance between them and the audience.

Semantically, 'can' means "has the ability to do something". Through the authors' choice of 'can' they opened the possibility for the readers to do the action but leaving the decision to them as shown in example *c*.

The modality operators used directly above convey the meaning that "something is possible, but not certain to happen" and display different language functions, for instance: making expectation as in examples *a*, *f*, offering suggestion as in *b*, denoting suspicion as in *h*, and expressing hesitation providing options for the readers to select or accept the most appropriate one as in example *g*.

In this manner, we perceive that the choice of modality can convey various language functions to maintain interpersonal relationship between the writers and the audience.

6. Conclusion & Discussion

Based on the analysis of the interpersonal meaning in the Washington Post & Arab News newspapers articles, we observed that the declarative mood is dominated. The dominance of the declarative mood choice in the texts discloses the specific function that media texts can take. It is to inform the readers rather than to question or demand them. Yet, the declarative mood in the WP & AN articles assigns varying structures and varying degrees of speech functions. This variation in the structures and the speech functions of the clauses is due to the need to get the readers persuaded in accordance with what is more effective, appropriate or works well with them. For instance, the WP authors used contractions and complex sentence structures as this is common to the targeted audience who almost all are natives. However, this is not the case with the AN authors who addressed their audience formally and focused on simple sentence structure to make the message easily understandable.

While demanding obligation and offering advice are the functions of imperative mood, the same functions are also conveyed by the declarative mood. This demonstrates that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the lexico-grammar of a clause or the mood of a clause and its interpersonal meaning in context; just as some declarative clauses are not merely informative statements.

Concerning modality analysis, it shows that higher frequency of modality is employed by WP authors than the AN authors conveying different language functions. Modality employment is a sign that the writers are presenting personal views rather than objective facts, with which the degree of certainty about the validity of a claim is signaled. Thus the WP authors appear to be more personal and certain about their claims than the AN writers.

On the other hand, modality of medium value constitutes the greatest occurrence among all articles of WP & AN. This authorial choice of medium modality proves that their major motive is not to force higher degree of authoritativeness; but rather to establish moderate relationships with the audience convincing them enough to accept their standpoints.

As a final point, it is important to note that due to space restriction, a comprehensive analysis of the data was not included. Some of the declarative mood structures which may reveal the authorial intention of involving the readers have been observed but were not discussed such as: passive voice, redundancy, and abbreviations use. Another point, none of the sample articles contained instances for interrogative mood and there was only one example for the imperative mood. Further research would do well to examine a larger number of sample articles verifying the inclusion of the three mood types to show how the interpersonal meaning could be created through the choice of each mood type.

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Appendix (A)

Washington Post Articles

[WP article 1] "Price tag for Wall Street bailout goes up" by Jia Lynn Yang & Zachary A. Goldfarb, February 13, 2012.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/price-tag-for-wall-street-bailout-goes-up/2012/02/13/gIQAUdB3BR_story.html?utm_term=.fff9a0ffe25e

[WP article 2] "The recession's gender gap: from 'man-cession' to 'he-covery'", by Suzy Khimm, September 6, 2011.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/wonkblog/post/the-recessions-gender-gap-from-man-cession-to-he-covery/2011/09/06/gIQACdst6J_blog.html?utm_term=.141c24ca2b1f

[WP article 3] "National Book Festival draws thousands to National Mall", by Luz Lazo, September 21, 2013.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/national-book-festival-draws-thousands-to-national-mall/2013/09/21/cff8e904-222e-11e3-b73c-aab60bf735d0_story.html

[WP article 4] "Suitland High School Football Coach Nick Lynch Dies in Car Accident", by Josh Barr, January 1, 2009.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/12/31/AR2008123101058.html>

Appendix (B)**Arab News Articles**

[AN article 1] "Saudi budget 2014 and economic performance", by Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg., December 29, 2013. <http://www.arabnews.com/news/500101>

[AN article 2] "Unemployment and gender in Saudi Arabia", by Abdel Aziz Aluwaisheg, May 12, 2013 <http://www.arabnews.com/news/451262>

[AN article 3] "21 nations take part in Riyadh International Book Fair, by Ali Fayyaz, March 5, 2014 <http://www.arabnews.com/news/535041>

[AN article 4] "Saudi Soccer Star Al-Dossary Dies in Car Accident", by Mahmoud Ahmad, December 12, 2004

<http://www.arabnews.com/node/260319>

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