

## Analyzing the written style of the criminal and legal lawsuits based on the Systematic Functional Grammar

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### Abstract

In legal contexts, lawsuits are considered important documents because they involve verdicts or the same decision of the judicial authority. All or some of the verdicts of the dispute are resolved. So, they are binding and decisive. By examining the texts, it was clearly seen that they are elliptic and ambiguous, including some verbs and nominal groups that according to equivalent-deletion rules are omitted. Moreover, these ambiguities and ellipsis arose over the coordination of one verb with another one by using *and* as relative clause in order to avoid repetition. The nominal groups as subjects which are omitted because of the topicalization to make a passive sentence, is another ambiguous factor. Therefore, the first question of this article is what each clause of the written lawsuits represents according to Halliday's transitivity model and the second question of the research seeks which processes, participants, and circumstances have the most frequency.

The above discussion leads to selecting and analyzing 48 criminal and legal lawsuits randomly from the 50s to the 90s by utilization of the transitivity model of Halliday's ideational metafunction as an efficient tool. First of all, the ellipsis elements are found in the text. Then, by the diagnosis of the sort of the processes in terms of semantics, the variety of the participants are identified.

Afterward, the sort of circumstances of each clause, which demonstrate the manner and reason of the occurrence of the process types are identified. All the elements of transitivity model are demonstrated in a table in the article. Further, descriptive statistics have been used to measure the frequency of data and some tables are drawn to show them. Finally, all the frequencies are compared and interpreted.

According to the first question of this research, the material process in legal discourse involves the performance of action. The same clauses, which in terms of discourse are related to such processes, show the verbal strength of the judge or

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prosecutor. Such clauses are more active and dynamic.

The participants which are more used in this process are goal and actor. Hence, the goal participant indicates that in this genre, the action is more important than the actor, for this reason the clauses are seen as topicalization with a passive structure. In some clauses, the relational process expresses and explains the situation and scene of crime. However, it describes the reason of the issued verdicts in another clauses. Therefore, the gender of its participants is identified, identifier, carrier, and attributing. The attributing participant is the participant with the highest frequency. Further, the description of the situation is more significant.

The clauses which are included in a speech by a person as a judicial representative that they announce the final verdict are verbal processes. In this type of process, participants are sayer, receiver, and target. The only participant which is more used in these texts is target because it is more important to know the results of the discussion and the decision.

Some clauses that are representing the desire and aspiration are mental processes with the participants of the sensor and phenomenon or stimulus. Such clauses, are uttered by the person as defendant or claimant, so they do not have verbal power in terms of discourse. The existence of evidence implies an existential process, and the only participant in this process is the existing element, so the first hypothesis is acceptable. The second question showed that the material process has the highest frequency. in this way the second hypothesis is rejected.

The conclusions demonstrated that the legal genre emphasizes the validity of the verdicts and the characteristics of each clause were included in order to take action and commutation, explain and comment the situation, express the facts and evidence in the crime scene, announce and request the verdicts. This was concluded because all process types are observed except for the behavioral processes. No such statement was found in such texts to indicate the external manifestations of the acts. The writing style of these texts shows, the documents and evidence are stated at first, then the verdict and judgment are written. Typically, the frequency of the material process demonstrated that the legal genre emphasizes the necessity of enforcing judgments and instructions rather than external behaviors. It also seems that there is a correlation between the type of processes and the circumstances' elements. Since the circumstances' elements which are more commutation and act, show the necessity of carrying out the sentences. In the legal genre of litigation, this circumstances' element emphasizes the enforceability of judgments.

**Key words:** Ideational Metafunction, Lawsuit, Legal Text, Transitivity Model