

A Functional Text Analysis of News Stories: Hard News and Soft News

by Mitsuo Shindo

This paper analyses and compares two different kinds of news stories using the resources of systemic functional grammar. Both texts are from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, one of the most popular newspapers in Australia. One of the texts is titled 'Acquitted: man who shot Japanese student', which is about a trial in the United States against a man who, near Halloween time in 1994 shot and killed a Japanese student after mistaking him for an attacker. This news had a considerable emotional impact on the two nations and gave us all a chance to think about possessing a gun in self-defence. It portrays a dark image and makes us somehow feel a sense of insecurity. The other news item is titled 'Rabbits top the national hit list', about the control of rabbits in Australia, where farmers consider them noxious pests. Rabbits may look cute, but to the farmer they are no more than vermin. Compared to the atmosphere of the former article, this second text is not so pessimistic and the issue does not compel immediate action. What are the distinguishing features of these news reports, and how are they organised to convey information effectively? To answer these questions, we will analyse these two types of news stories, namely hard news and soft news, by looking at the similarities and differences between them in Field, Tenor, Mode and Genre.

1 Introduction

We read for action and interaction, for information and for entertainment (Halliday, 1988: 40). Needless to say, newspapers are read primarily for information. But their contents appear in various forms, such as news stories, editorials, readers' columns, weather forecasts, advertisements and TV program reviews. The social purposes of these formats are of course different, and their text styles also vary according to social function. Even in news stories, we can observe various kinds of texts in terms of contents and style. They are roughly classified into two categories, 'hard' news and 'soft' news. Thomson (2000: 3) mentions that the social purpose of the 'hard' news story is to chronicle an event and indicate its social relevance, while that of the 'soft' news story is to exemplify social values. She also indicates that the hard news story has higher newsworthiness and more intensity and urgency than the soft news story (*ibid*: 4f). This paper analyses and compares those two kinds of texts using the model of systemic functional grammar as a tool. The following two news reports are chosen for this study from the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Text 1

Acquitted: man who shot Japanese student

BATON ROUGE, Louisiana, Monday: A jury yesterday acquitted a man who fatally shot a Japanese exchange student who knocked on his door looking for a Halloween party.

The manslaughter trial of Rodney Peairs, 31, for the shooting of Yoshi Hattori, 16, had drawn widespread interest in Japan, where guns are rare and most shootings are gang-related.

The defence lawyer, Mr Lewis Unglesby, said in closing arguments yesterday that the way the student had been acting made it reasonable for Peairs to think his life was in danger.

The District Attorney, Mr Doug Moreau, said he recognised that Peairs wished the shooting never happened, "but that's not the point of what we're doing here. Because Yoshi doesn't get to do it again --- that's the tragedy."

The events of October 17 were hardly disputed during three days of evidence. Jury deliberations lasted just over three hours.

Yoshi, of Nagoya, and his American host were invited to a party but got lost and went to Peairs's door because the address was similar and the house was decorated for Halloween which was two weeks away.

They rang the front bell twice but Mrs Bonnie Peairs answered the garage door. Yoshi came around from the front, quickly, and frightened her. She slammed the door and yelled for her husband to get his gun.

Peairs came to the door with his .44 Magnum revolver. When he saw the youth, Peairs yelled "Freeze!" --- may be also "Stop!" --- but Yoshi kept coming. Yoshi was not wearing his contact lenses and, with his limited English, might have misunderstood "freeze" as "please."

When Yoshi was one to two metres away, Peairs fired, hitting him in the chest. Yoshi was wearing a ruffled shirt and white tuxedo, like John Travolta in the film *Saturday Night Fever*.

The defence said it was reasonable for Peairs to think he was in danger. Yoshi was running at the door, according to Peairs's testimony, waving something above his head, which turned out to be a camera.

(340 words/ 25/May/1995)

Text 2

Rabbits top the national hit list

By CRAIG SKEHAN

Despite having been poisoned, shot, trapped, gassed and infected with viruses, rabbits continue to be Australia's most damaging animal pest and a new report has called for nationally integrated approach to their control.

The report, *Managing Vertebrate Pests* --- Rabbits, looks at past follies such as the release into the wild of cats to reduce rabbit numbers, and new options such as spreading Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD).

Researchers from the CSIRO and the Bureau of Resource Sciences encountered widely differing views on rabbits as they went about compiling their 283 - page report.

"Various segments of the community see rabbits as appealing characters from cartoons and literature, a commercial resource, a subsistence food source, an animal welfare concern or a major pest," the report states.

The success of myxomatosis in the 1950s caused unrealistic expectations in relation to agents of biological control. The result was that many land managers were still not putting enough effort into conventional rabbit management.

"The challenge will be to use conventional control techniques to take

maximum advantage of lowered rabbit densities following biological control," the scientists found.

There were complicating factors in relation to impacts on native wildlife.

For example, when rabbit numbers are feately reduced, foxes and cats could turn to wildlife as an alternative prey, requiring fox and cat control in tandem with rabbit reduction.

Rabbits arrived with the First Fleet in 1788 and colonised Australia at a rate believed to be the fastest for a mammal anywhere in the world. The Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Collins, when releasing the report yesterday, noted that female rabbits could breed as young as three months and mate within hours of giving birth.

While wild rabbit densities as high as 200 per hectare have been recorded, densities as low as one per hectare could prevent the regeneration of some native vegetation.

"They have even been spotted five metres up trees," Senator Collins said. "This all adds up to one inescapable conclusion---rabbits are Australia's worst agricultural and environmental pest."

The minister said field research on Rabbit Calicivirus Disease recently began on Wardang Island, off the south Australian coast.

As RCD was still at a trial stage, it was too early to recommend introduction to mainland Australia, he said.

The Australian Conservation Foundation welcomed the report yesterday and said rabbit control in sensitive environments should be accorded a high priority.

The National Farmers' Federation called on farmers to apply rabbit control guidelines detailed in the report.

(418 words/ 10/March/1995)

2 Genre

News stories act to inform us of recent events or current issues in society and help us mold our opinions. Text 1, 'Acquitted: man who shot Japanese student', deals with a specific tragic incident in the United States, the consequences of which were watched carefully in the weeks and months following. It can be said that the article has succeeded in conveying to readers the urgency and seriousness of the incident. The article has a headline using impressive-sounding words

in order to draw the attention of readers, followed by a lead which digests the whole story. Two facial portraits, one of Yoshi Hattori and the other of Rodney Peairs, the man who killed him, appear over the caption: 'Yoshi Hattori ... wrong address and limited English' and 'Rodney Peairs ... wished the shooting never happened' respectively. From the above evidence, this news story can be subsumed under the general category of hard news even though it does not deal with the incident itself. Text 2, 'Rabbits top the national hit list', deals with more general environmental issues in Australia and discusses effective measures to be taken. Accompanying the article is one illustration portraying a rabbit sitting quietly and making a long face against a background of the island continent of Australia. Although this piece deals with a socially destabilising event that has a negative impact on society to some extent, it is not so dynamic and there is not much urgency in the rabbit problem compared to the news story in Text 1. In that sense this news story can be seen as different from the first one and considered more akin to soft news.

2.1 Clause Complexes

The breakdown of the two texts into clause complexes helps clarify the structure of each and the flow of information from each. Halliday (1995: 215ff.) interprets the relations between clauses in terms of 'type of interdependency' and 'logico-semantic relation'. He argues that all clause complexes are interpreted as hypotaxis or parataxis (or a combination of the two) from the viewpoint of interdependency, and as expansion or projection from a logico-semantic point of view. The main points of his idea and their suggested notation are summarised as follows.

[Types of interdependency]

	<primary clause>		<secondary clause>	
(1) parataxis	1	(initiating)	2	(continuing)
(2) hypotaxis	α	(dominant)	β	(dependent)

[Logico - semantic relation]

- (1) Expansion: the secondary clause expands the primary clause by;
- (a) elaborating = ('equals') e.g. 'i.e.'
- (b) extending + ('is added to') e.g. 'and, or'
- (c) enhancing \times ('is multiplied by') e.g. 'so, yet, then'
- (2) Projection: the secondary clause is projected through the primary clause, which instates it as;
- (a) a locution " (double quotes) e.g. 'says'
- (b) an idea ' (single quotes) e.g. 'thinks'
- (Halliday, 1995:219f)

The clause complex analyses are as follows.

Text 1: Acquitted: man who shot Japanese student)

1		BATON ROUGE, Louisiana, Monday:	8e	+2	and the house was decorated for Halloween
2		A jury yesterday acquitted a man [[who fatally shot a Japanese exchange student [[who knocked on his door looking for a Halloween party]]]].			[[which was two weeks away.]]
3a	α	The manslaughter trial of Rodney Peairs, 31, for the shooting of Yoshi Hattori, 16, had drawn widespread interest in Japan,	9a	1	They rang the front bell twice
3b	β 1	where guns are rare	9b	+2	but Mrs Bonnie Peairs answered the garage door.
3c	+2	and most shootings are gang-related.	10a	1	Yoshi came around from front, quickly,
4a	α	The defence lawyer, Mr Leis Unglesby, said in closing arguments yesterday	10b	+2	and frightened her.
4b	" β	that the way [[the student had been acting]] made it reasonable for Peairs to think his life was in danger.	11a	1	She slammed the door
5a	α	The District Attorney, Mr Doug Moreau, said	11b	+2	and yelled [[for her husband to get his gun.]]
5b	" β 1 α	he recognised	12		Peairs came to the door with his .44 Magnum revolver.
5c	' β	that Peairs wished	13a	' β	When he saw the youth,
5d	' γ	the shooting never happened,	13b	α 1 1	Peairs yelled
5e	+2 α	"but that's not the point of [[what we're doing here.]]	13c	"2 1	"Freeze!"
5f	\times β	Because Yoshi doesn't get to do it again ---	13d	+2 ---	--- may be also "Stop!" ---
5g	"3	that's the tragedy."	13e	+2	but Yoshi kept coming.
6		The events of October 17 were hardly disputed during three days of evidence.	14a	1	Yoshi was not wearing his contact lenses
7		Jury deliberations lasted just over three hours.	14b	+2	and, with his limited English, might have misunderstood "freeze" as "please."
8a	1	Yoshi, of Nagoya, and his American host were invited to a party	15a	' β	When Yoshi was one to two metres away,
8b	+2	but got lost	15b	α	Peairs fired,
8c	+3 α	and went to Peairs's door	15c	' γ	hitting him in the chest.
8d	' β 1	because the address was similar	16		Yoshi was wearing a ruffled shirt and white tuxedo, like John Travolta in the film <i>Saturday Night Fever</i> .
			17a	α	The defence said
			17b	' β	it was reasonable [[for Peairs to think he was in danger.]]
			18a	α	Yoshi was running at the door, according to Peairs's testimony,
			18b	+ β α	waving something above his head,
			18c	' β	which turned out to be a camera.

Text 2: Rabbits top the national hit list

1a	β	Despite having been poisoned, shot, trapped, gassed and infected with viruses,	9c	+β	requiring fox and cat control in tandem with rabbit reduction.
1b	α 1	rabbits continue to be Australia's most damaging animal pest	10a	1	Rabbits arrived with the First Fleet in 1788
1c	+2	and a new report has called for nationally integrated approach to their control.	10b	+2	and colonised Australia at a rate [[believed to be the fastest for a mammal anywhere in the world]].
2		The report, <i>Managing Vertebrate Pests -- Rabbits</i> , looks at past follies such as the release into the wild of cats to reduce rabbit numbers, and new options [[such as spreading Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD)]].	11a	α	The Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Collins, <<when releasing the report yesterday,>> noted that female rabbits could breed as young as three months
3a	α	Researchers from the CSIRO and the Bureau of Resource Sciences encountered widely differing views on rabbits	11b	"β 1	and mate within hours of giving birth.
3b	β	as they went about compiling their 283-page report.	11c	+2	While wild rabbit densities as high as 200 per hectare have been recorded,
4a	"1	"Various segments of the community see rabbits as appealing characters from cartoons and literature, a commercial resource, a subsistence food source, an animal welfare concern or a major pest,"	12a	+β	densities as low as one per hectare could prevent the regeneration of some native vegetation.
4b	2	the report states.	12b	α	"They have even been spotted five metres up trees,"
5		The success of myxomatosis in the 1950s caused unrealistic expectations in relation to agents of biological control.	13a	"1	Senator Collins said.
6		The result was that many land managers were still not putting enough effort into conventional rabbit management.	14a	1	"This all adds up to one inescapable conclusion -- rabbits are Australia's worst agricultural and environmental pest."
7a	'1 α	"The challenge will be [[to use conventional control techniques]]	14b	"2	The minister said
7b	β	to take maximum advantage of lowered rabbit densities following biological control,"	15a	α	field research on Rabbit Calicivirus Disease recently began on Wardang Island, off the south Australian coast.
7c	2	the scientists found.	15b	"β	As RCD was still at a trial stage,
8		There were complicating factors in relation to impacts on native wildlife.	16a	"1 β	it was too early [[to recommend introduction to mainland Australia]],
9a	β	For example, when rabbit numbers are greatly reduced,	16b	α	he said.
9b	α α	foxes and cats could turn to wildlife as an alternative prey,	16c	2	The Australian Conservation Foundation welcomed the report yesterday
			17a	1	and said
			17b	+2 α	rabbit control in sensitive environments should be accorded a high priority.
			17c	"β	The National Farmers' Federation called on farmers
			18a	α	to apply rabbit control guidelines detailed in the report.
			18b	β	

Table 1 and Figure 1 summarise the various types of clause complexes for the texts under study. In Text 1 we can see one minor clause, 'BATON ROUGE, Louisiana, Monday', which helps readers set up their perspective before they read the whole text. This function can be said to be one of the characteristics of hard news; indeed, journalists use these datelines for almost all hard news stories that are not locally written. Simplexes in Text 1 play a more important role than those in Text 2. Both texts use almost the same proportion of parataxis; however, most of the parataxis in Text 1 are made up of extensions, whereas half of the parataxis in Text 2 consist of quotations. This is because Text 1 needs to use many extensions to show the sequence of events (see clauses 9, 10, 11, 14), which makes us feel a greater sense of urgency about what happened. On the other hand, the parataxis in Text 2 are

used to show the contents of new findings by using quotations (4, 13) so that the readers can understand exactly who said as well as what the researcher found. Hypotaxis are often used in Text 2 when the writer explains the biological features of rabbits (9, 12) or when some explanations are offered by using reporting (15). In summing up, Text 1 uses simpler clauses, while text 2 relies more on hypotaxis and combinations (parataxis and hypotaxis) to elaborate theoretical facts.

	Text 1 (gun)		Text 2 (rabbit)	
Minor clause	6	6%	0	0%
Simplex	5	28%	4	22%
Parataxis	4	22%	4	22%
Hypotaxis	4	22%	5	28%
Combination (para.+ hypo.)	1	6%	5	28%
Combination (extended para. and hypo)	3	17%	0	0%
total	18	100%	18	100%

Table 1 Summary of clause complexes in Text 1 & 2

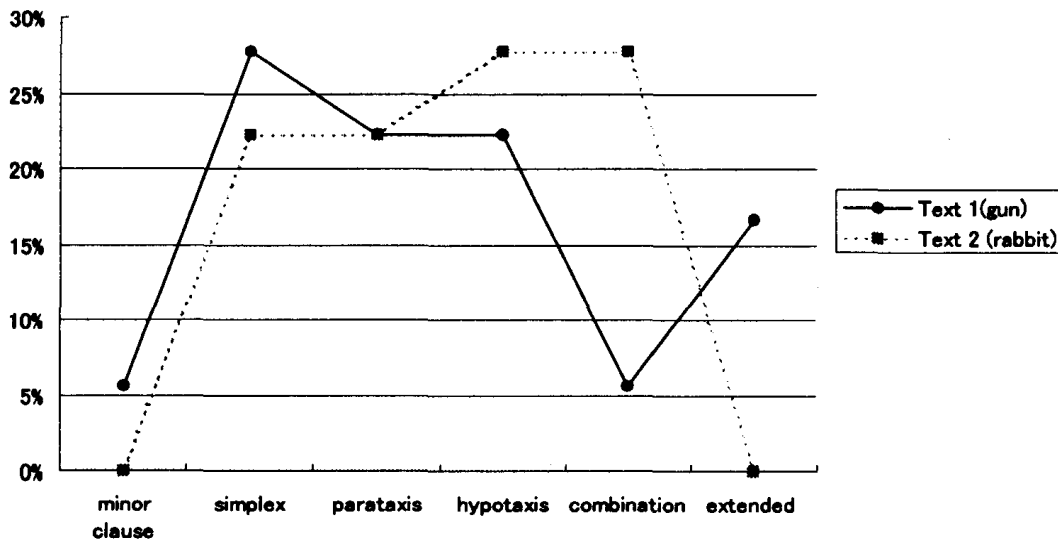


Figure 1 Comparison of clause complexes in Text 1 & 2

2.2 Stage

The stages of these news stories, realised through the organisation of the message at the clause level, are shown in Tables 2 and 3. Text 1 can

be divided into four stages. It deals with a trial for a tragic incident and takes a retrospective glance at the related events at the same time. Following a striking head, 'Acquitted: man who shot Japanese student', comes the lead statement, which summarises the whole story. Readers can understand the key points of the news just by reading it, and if they are already familiar with the incident, they can ignore the rest of the story. The headline and lead combine to function as the nucleus of the whole structure (Thomson, 2000). In the second stage, more details about the trial are reported in order to explain the decision of 'not guilty' in this case. The third stage recounts the incident around the axes of space and time in order to refresh our memory as to the tragedy. It may seem that stage 4 is just describing the exchanges of testimony during the trial, but it actually functions as a covert explanation of the verdict.

Text 2 can be divided into six stages. Text 2 has no lead statement, but rather an orientation stage, which sets a background for the events following. Unlike the case with Text 1, readers cannot grasp the main idea after reading the head and the first clause complex. As a result, readers are intrigued and therefore want to read the rest of the news. In the second stage, the new report, 'Managing Vertebrate Pests - - - Rabbits', is introduced, and the third stage explains some past failures in controlling rabbits and environmental protection laws followed by the need for new measures. In the fourth stage, an attempt is made to deepen readers' appreciation of farmer's problem with rabbits in Australia, by explaining how serious the damage caused by rabbits is. Stage 5 explains RCD in detail, and the last stage presents the attitudes of the Australian Conservation Foundation and the National Farmers' Federation toward rabbit control, and indicates covertly what the public (Australian farmers) should do.

STAGE	FUNCTION	CLAUSE COMPLEX
1	Reporting the result of the trial	1 2
2	Reporting details during the trial	3 4 5 6 7
3	Recounting the incident in the past	8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
4	Reporting details during the trial and explaining the judgement	17 18

Table 2: Staging of Text 1 (Gun)

STAGE	FUNCTION	CLAUSE COMPLEX
1	Orientation to a social problem caused by rabbits in Australia	1
2	Introducing a new research	2 3 4
3	Explaining approaches in the past and future	5 6 7 8 9
4	Explaining the history and biological features of rabbits	10 11 12 13 14
5	Explaining RCD	15 16
6	Commenting on effective countermeasures	17 18

Table 3: Staging of Text 2 (Rabbit)

3 Field

Field is described by Halliday & Hasan (1985:13) as “what is happening, the nature of the social action that is taking place, what it is that the participants are engaged in, in which the language figures as an essential component”. Here, we investigate field at the clause level by performing a transitivity analysis and at the text level by analysing reference and lexical strings.

3.1 Reference

Reference, or participant identification, is the system by which we can retrieve the meaning, the identity of a particular thing or class of things that is being referred to in a text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Reference

is subdivided into several phora: homophora, endophora, exophora. Homophora is used when relevant information can be assumed because of shared knowledge among interlocutors deriving from their membership in some definable community (Martin: 1992: 122). Reference to the co-text is referred to as endophora, and reference to the non-verbal context as exophora. Note that Halliday & Hasan (1974:71ff) treat homophoric reference as a type of exophora. Endophoric reference correlates closely with cohesion of text and is subdivided into anaphora and esphora, and cataphora. These distinctions are summarised by Martin in Figure 2.

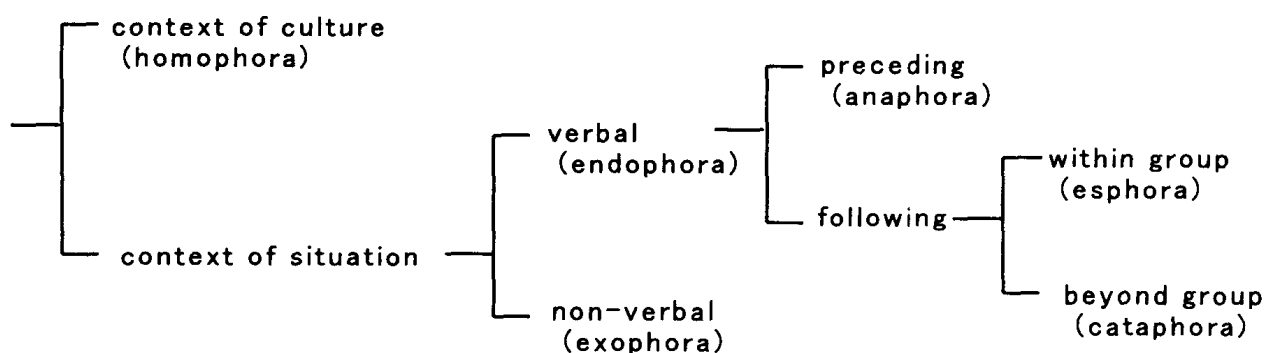


Figure 2 Types of phora (Martin, 1992: 124)

Reference chains of the two texts are presented in Figures 3 and 4. Indirect reference, which helps us recover an implied identity, is called bridging and is marked by 'BR'. Also, relevance phoricity is marked with 'RL'. The two participants in possessive nominal groups are aligned with their respective chains with a dotted line. Note that these analyses of reference structures consist only of phoric items and the non-phoric items they presume. Non-phoric items that are not presumed are not included, since they do not enter into semantic dependencies related to participant identification.

As we can see from the reference analysis of Text 1, the text is built around three major reference chains: Peairs, door and Yoshi. In this

text, two major participants are introduced non - phorically: *a man* and *a Japanese exchange student*. From 8a to 15c, the recounting of the incident, the story develops around the behaviour of Peairs and that of Yoshi. Their referential chains are well developed and long, heightening the drama of what was happening at the scene of the tragic affair. Between the chains of Peairs and Yoshi, the door plays an important role for the sake of contrast. Its reference chain is also strong enough for readers to monitor the positions of the two players. Peairs (defendant), Yoshi (victim) and door are presumed 16, 17 and 8 times, respectively.

The reference cohesion in Text 2 is not so strong compared to Text 1. Text 2 develops by putting the items 'a new report', 'rabbits' and 'researchers' in its centre; however, their reference chains are to some extent sporadic; 'a new report' is presumed 8 times, 'rabbits' 5 times, and 'researchers' 7 times. Although this story is about rabbits, its reference chain is weak. This is because 'rabbits' is not a phoric nominal group, but a generic participant here. They do not depend on their context in the way specific groups do (Martin, 1992). Their contour as an entity is ambiguous compared to, for example, 'John's rabbits'.

It should be noted that in Text 2 we can see many homophorics such as *the CSIRO, the Bureau of Resource Sciences, the Minister for Primary Industries, the south Australian coast, the Australian Conservation Foundation and the National Farmers' Federation*. This is probably because the reporter tries to collect as many opinions as possible from a wide range of standpoints, to write the text more objectively.

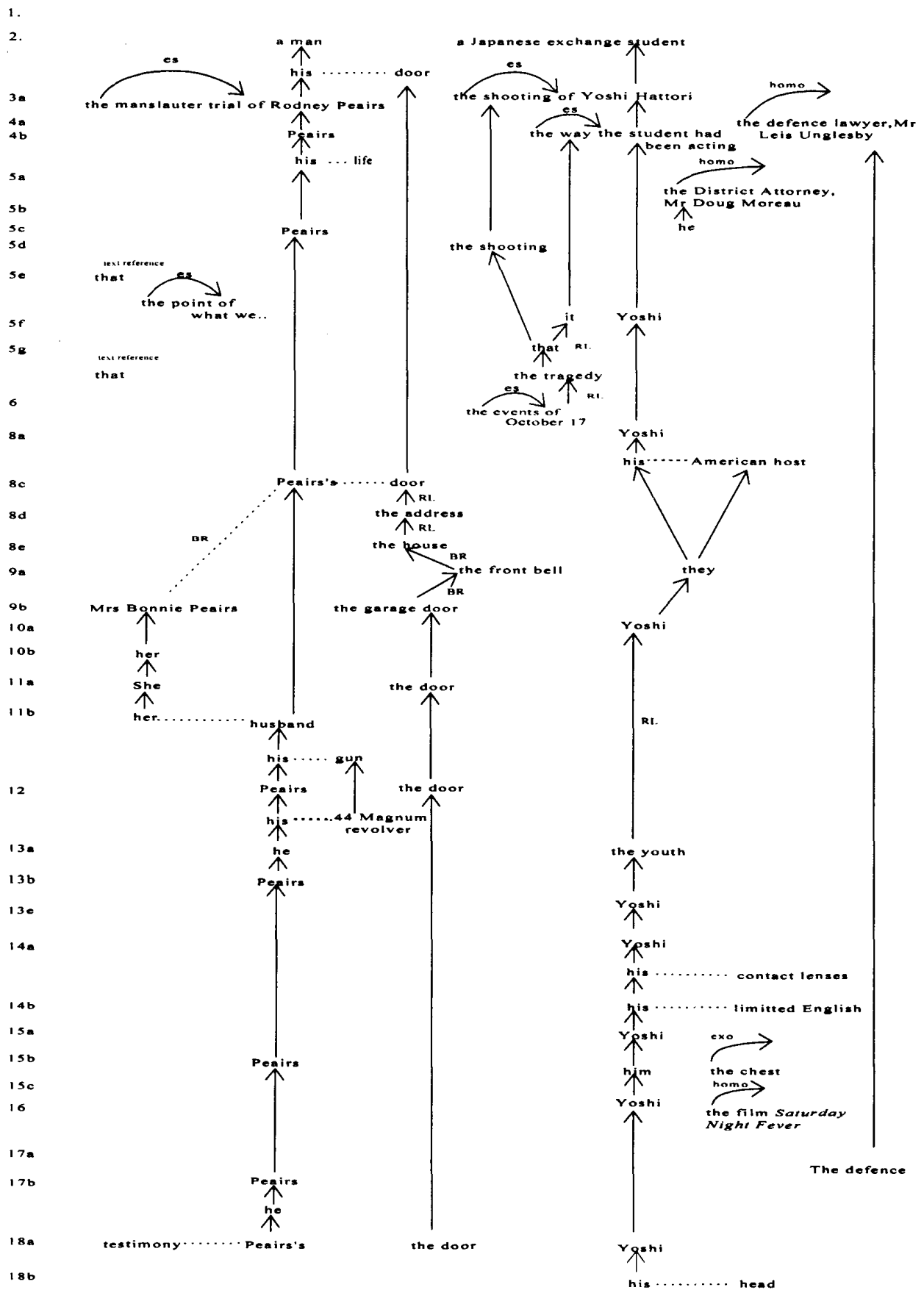


Figure 3 Reference chain of Text 1 (Gun)

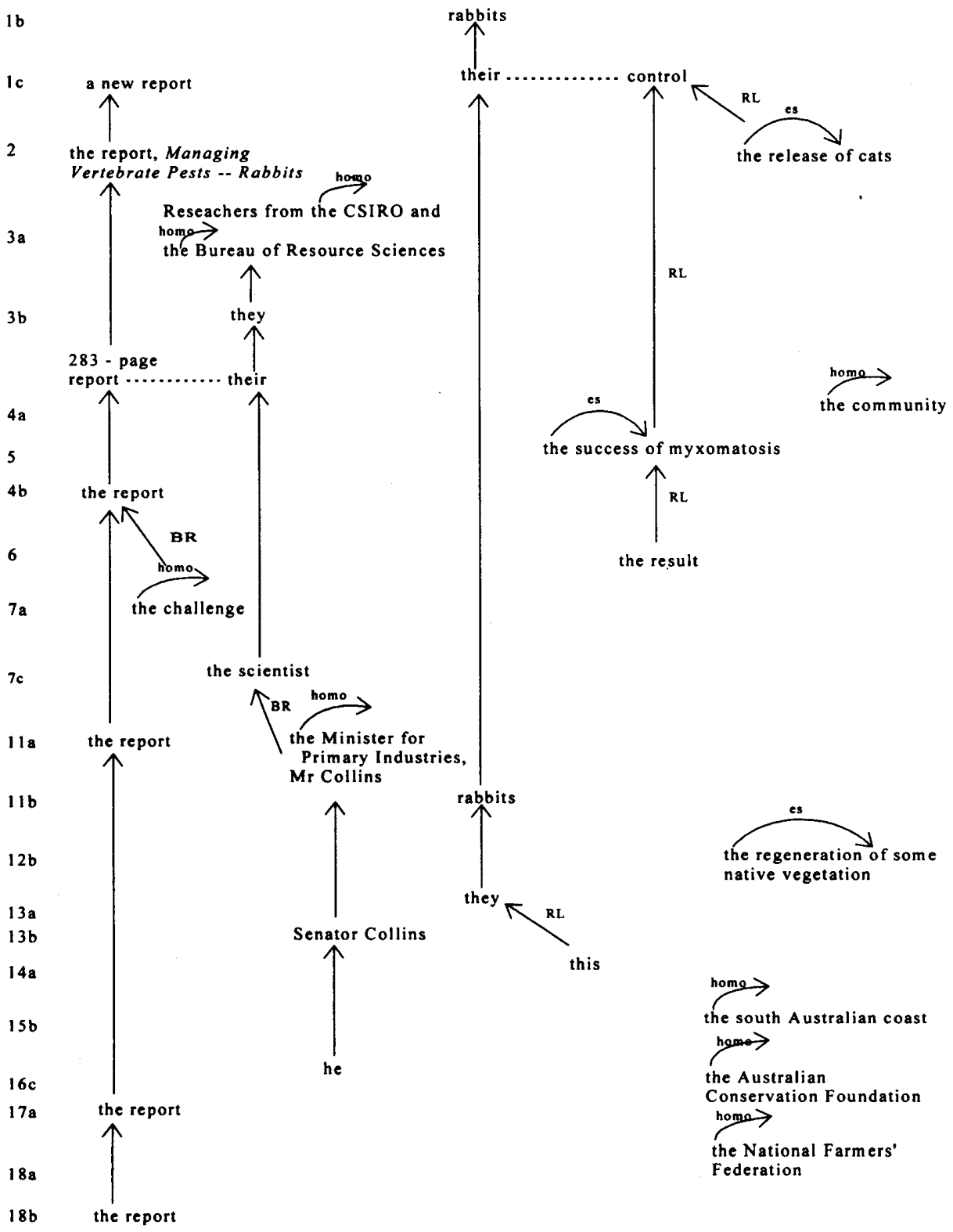


Figure 4 Reference chain of Text 2 (Rabbit)

3.2 Lexical Strings

The analysis of lexical relations will show some of the ways in which characterisation of the differences between message parts and lexical items needs to be extended in order to present a full account of experiential cohesion in text (Martin, 1992). The texts considered are analysed for lexical relations according to such categories as hyponymy, cohyponymy, contrast, synonymy, repetition, meronymy and comeronymy. As can be seen from the analysis of lexical relations in Figures 5, 6 and 7, Text 1 consists of seven main lexical strings. Of the seven, the defendant and victim are constructed out of repetition and synonym. It is important to note that one of the reasons for the high lexical density in both strings is precisely to make clear which participants are being referred to, so that readers can easily identify the progress of the incident. Proper names rather than pronominal references are often used in order to avoid confusion about the players in the events. From 12 to 18 in Text 1, there are some crucial lexical strings that caused the tragedy. They are about a misunderstanding over the meaning of an English word, the items Yoshi was carrying and his fancy outfit, and Peairs's gun. The tragic situation takes place in a confrontation between Peairs and Yoshi at the door of Peairs's house, as illustrated in Figure 8.

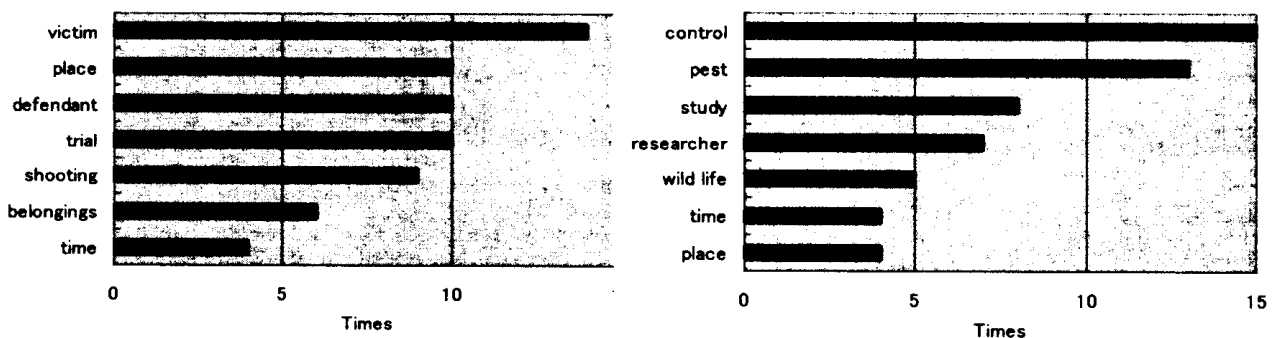


Figure 5 Length of lexical strings of Text 1 (left) and Text 2 (right)

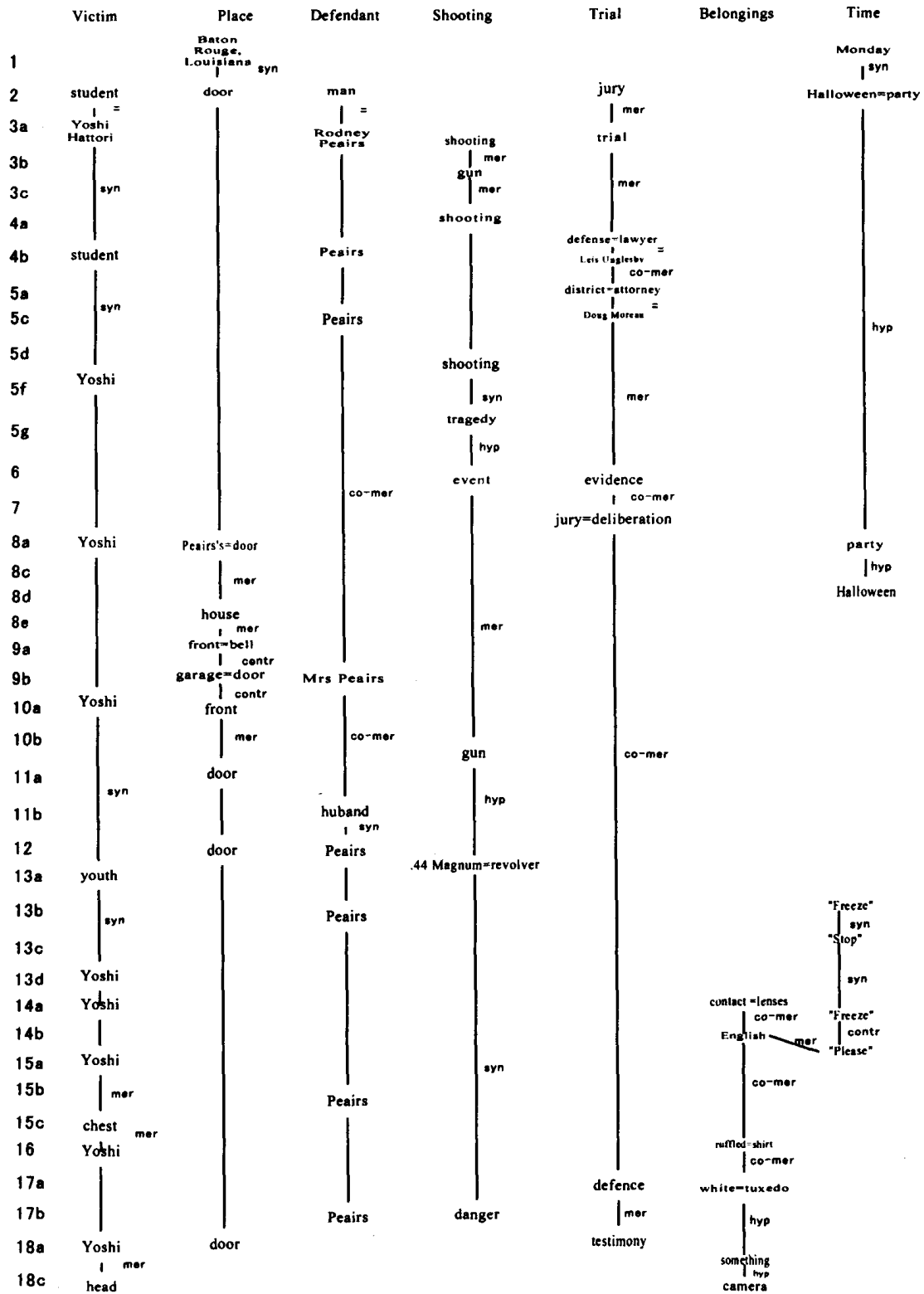


Figure 6 Lexical strings of Text 1 (Gun)

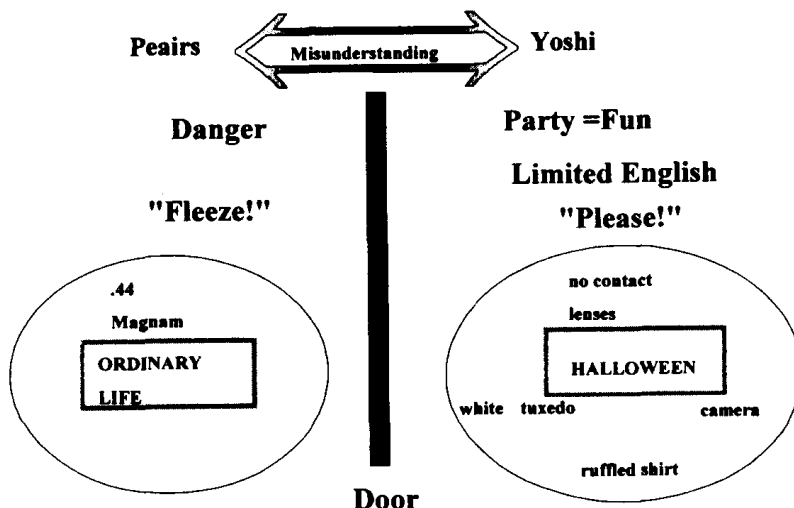


Figure 8 Semantic disposition of lexical items in Text 1

In contrast to Text 1, in which five lexical items (trial, defendant, victim, place and happening), equally show a strong cohesiveness throughout the text, the lexical items in Text 2 are stratified according to their frequency, with *control* at its head. The hyponymy and hyperonymy of 'rabbit control' can be illustrated in Figure 9. The lexical string about *control* is constructed by hyponymy, hyperonymy and co-hyponym as shown. The lexical items include some technical terms such as *Rabbit Calicivirus Disease* and *myxomatosis*, which are used several times through the text and sometimes in the abbreviation (*RCD*). Through this line, we can get to know about several options to regain control over the rabbits.

Furthermore, in the first paragraph of Text 2, rabbits are introduced as *Australia's most damaging animal pest*. In clause 1b and in the latter part of the article (14b), this phrase is paraphrased as *Australia's worst agricultural and environmental pest*, which results in making the whole text more cohesive and gives readers a good orientation and summary of the text. As this text is constructed using a lot of locutions by quoting and reporting, the researcher's string is relatively condensed.

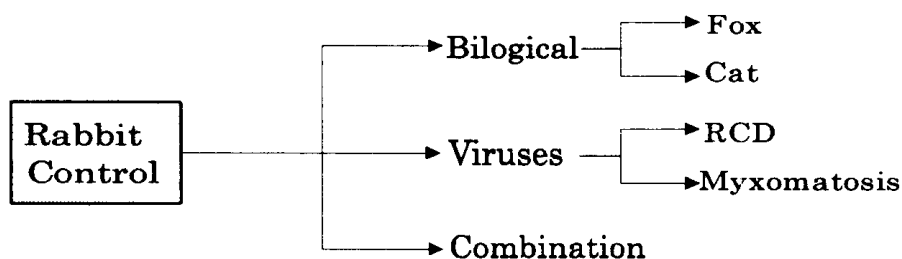


Figure 9 Illustrative superordination taxonomy for 'Rabbit control'

3.3 Transitivity

Transitivity is part of the ideational metafunction, which is concerned with 'ideation', i.e., with interpretation and representation of our experience of the phenomena in the world around us and the world of our consciousness. Martin et al. (1997: 100) notes that transitivity is represented as a configuration of a process, participants involved in it and attendant circumstances. On the basis of Halliday's (1994) theory, Matthiessen (1995: 150ff) classified process types into four categories: material, mental, verbal and relational. Material processes express the notion that some entity 'does' something -- which may be 'done to' some other entity. Mental processes are processes of feeling, thinking and seeing. Verbal clauses not only represent processes of 'saying' or 'asking' but also semiotic processes like 'indicating'. Relational clauses are close to the traditional notion of 'copula' construction. Halliday's behavioural and existential process categories are included in the material and relational process types, respectively. If it is true, as Halliday (1994: 109) mentions, that the concepts of process, participant and circumstance are semantic categories that explain in the most general way how phenomena of the real world are represented as linguistic structures, we may be able to find some differences in transitivity between the two texts. Transitivity analyses of Text 1 and Text 2 are shown in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Process types				Participants			clause
material	mental	verbal	relational	Agent	Medium	Range	
dispositive <i>acquitted</i>				Actor <i>a jury</i>	Goal <i>a man</i>		2.
dispositive <i>drawn</i>				Actor <i>trial</i>	Goal <i>interest</i>		3a
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>guns</i>	Attribute <i>rare</i>	3b
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>shootings</i>	Attribute <i>gang related</i>	3c
		verbalization locution reporting			Sayer <i>lawyer</i>		4a
			ascriptive intensive	Attributor <i>way</i>	Carrier <i>it (to think-)</i>	Attribute <i>reasonable</i>	4b
		verbalization locution reporting			Sayer <i>attorney</i>		5a
	cognitive <i>recognized</i>				Senser <i>he</i>		5b
					Senser <i>Peairs</i>		5c
eventive non-rang					Actor <i>shooting</i>		5d
			identifying intensive		Token <i>that</i>	Value <i>point</i>	5e
dispositive				Actor <i>Yoshi</i>	Goal <i>it</i>		5f
			identifying intensive		Token <i>that</i>	Value <i>tragedy</i>	5g
		no receiver verbalization as name				Verbiage <i>events</i>	6
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>deliberations</i>		7
dispositive				<Actor>	Goal <i>Yoshi and his host</i>		8a
effective non-ranged					<Actor> <i>they</i>		8b
eventive non-ranged					<Actor> <i>they</i>		8c
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>address</i>	Attribute <i>similar</i>	8d
dispositive				<Actor>	Goal <i>house</i>		8e
dispositive				Actor <i>they</i>	Goal <i>bell</i>		9a
eventive ranged					Actor <i>Bonnie</i>	Range <i>door</i>	9b
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>Yoshi</i>		10a
	emotive phenomenal			Phenomenon <i>Yoshi</i>	Senser <i>her</i>		10b
dispositive				Actor <i>she</i>	Goal <i>door</i>		11a
		locution reporting imperating			<Sayer> <i>she</i>		11b
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>Peairs</i>		12
	perceptive phenomenal				Senser <i>he</i>	Phenomenon <i>youth</i>	13a
		locution quoting imperating			Sayer <i>Peairs</i>		13b
eventive non-range					<Actore> <i>you</i>		13c
eventive non-ranged					<Actor> <i>Yoshi</i>		13d
			ascriptive intensive		<Carrier> <i>it</i>	Attributive <i>"Stop"</i>	13e
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>Yoshi</i>		13e

eventive ranged					Actor <i>Yoshi</i>	Range <i>lenses</i>	14a
	cognitive phenomenal				<Senser> <i>Yoshi</i>	Phenomenon <i>freeze</i>	14b
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>Yoshi</i>	Attribute <i>one to two meters away</i>	15a
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>Peairs</i>		15b
eventive ranged				<Actor> <i>the bullet</i>	Goal <i>him</i>		15c
eventive ranged					Actor <i>Yoshi</i>	Range <i>shirt & tuxedo</i>	16
		locution reporting			Sayer <i>defense</i>		17a
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>it</i>	Attribute <i>reasonable</i>	17b
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>Yoshi</i>		18a
dispositive				<Actor> <i>Yoshi</i>	Goal <i>something</i>		18b
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>which</i>	Attribute <i>a camera</i>	18c

Table 4: Transitivity analysis of Text 1 (Gun)

Process types				Participants			clause
material	mental	verbal	relational	Agent	Medium	Range	
dispositive				<Actor>	<Goal> <i>rabbis</i>		1a
			identifying intensive		TK <i>rabbis</i>	VL <i>pest</i>	1b
		verbalization as name			Sayer <i>report</i>	Verbiage <i>approach</i>	1c
behavioral					Actor <i>report</i>		2
	perceptive phenomenal				Senser <i>researchers</i>	Phenomenon <i>views</i>	3a
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>they</i>		3b
	perceptive phenomenal				Senser <i>segments</i>	Phenomenon <i>rabbis</i>	4a
		verbalization locution quoting			Sayer <i>report</i>		4b
creative				Actor <i>success</i>	Goal <i>expectations</i>		5
			identifying intensive		Token <i>result</i>	Value <i>that ~</i>	6
			identifying intensive		Token <i>challenge</i>	Value <i>to use</i>	7a
dispositive				<Actor>	Goal <i>advantage</i>		7b
	perceptive metaphenomenal				Senser <i>scientists</i>		7c
			existence		Existent <i>factors</i>		8
dispositive				<Actor>	Goal <i>rabbit numbers</i>		9a
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>faxes and cats</i>	Attribute <i>wildlife</i>	9b
		verbalization as name			<Sayer>	Verbiage <i>control</i>	9c
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>rabbis</i>		10a
eventive ranged					<Actor> <i>rabbis</i>	Range <i>Australia</i>	10b
		verbalization metaphenomenal			Sayer <i>Collins</i>		11a
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>rabbis</i>		11b
eventive non-ranged					<Actor> <i>rabbit</i>		11c

dispositive				<Actor>	Goal <i>densines</i>		12a
dispositive				Actor <i>densities</i>	Goal <i>regeneration</i>		12b
	perceptive phenomenal				<Senser>	Phenomenon <i>they</i>	13a
		verbalization locution quoting			Sayer <i>Collins</i>		13b
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>this</i>	Attribute <i>conclusion</i>	14a
			identifying intensive		Token <i>rabbits</i>	Value <i>pest</i>	14b
		verbalization locution quoting			Sayer <i>minister</i>		15a
eventive non-ranged					Actor <i>research</i>		15b
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>RCD</i>	Attribute <i>at a trial stage</i>	16a
			ascriptive intensive		Carrier <i>it (to ~)</i>	Attribute <i>early</i>	16b
		verbalization locution reporting			Sayer <i>he</i>		16c
	emotive phenomenal				Senser <i>Foundation</i>	Phenomenon <i>report</i>	17a
		verbalization locution reporting			<Sayer> <i>Foundation</i>		17b
dispositive reciprocity				<Actor>	Goal <i>priority</i>	[Beneficiary] Recipient, <i>control</i>	17c
		verbalization locution reporting imperating			Sayer <i>Federation</i>	[Beneficiary] Receiver, <i>farmers</i>	18a
dispositive				<Actor>	Goal <i>guideline</i>		18b

Table 5: Transitivity analysis of Text 2 (Rabbits)

In Text 1, material processes are dominant in clauses 8 - 12 and 13d - 16. This is because those clauses are mainly the description of the incident. That is to say, materials are used as a favourite means of expression for giving an animated description of the participants of the incident. On the other hand, in Text 2, although material processes are used from clauses 10 to 12 to describe the history of rabbits in Australia and their behavioural habits, their overall role in the whole text is relatively weak. Table 6 shows that Text 1 is more dominated by material processes than is Text 2. On the other hand, verbal processes play an important role in Text 2, where the history of rabbit reduction programmes or some biological features of rabbits are projected by quoting and reporting, such as *the report states* (4b) and *Collins said* (13b), which function not only to clarify the origin of the information

but also to make the news story more objective.

	Material	Mental	Verbal	Relational	Total
Text 1 (Gun)	23 52%	5 11%	6 14%	10 23%	44 100%
Text 2 (Rabbit)	14 38%	5 14%	9 24%	9 24%	37 100%

Table 6: Distribution of process types

4 Mode

Mode is defined by Martin (1992: 508) as the role language is playing in realising social action. It covers the channel of communication, the choice of theme and organisation of information at a clause level, the degree of abstraction and the system of tonicity in the text. From the viewpoint of mode, news stories might be defined as: non-aural ^ public ^ general ^ documentation ^ informing. As mentioned in the section on genre, these two news stories use graphics in order to give readers the physical description of the events. In particular, the pictures of the smiling Yoshi and of Peairs, his face grave, create a stark contrast in the news. On the other hand, the illustration of a rabbit with the Australian continent in the background gives us a kind of soft image and no sense of emergency.

4.1 Theme

Theme can be identified as that element which comes in the first position in the clause (Halliday, 1992: 38). The rest of the message of the clause is called rheme, and it is what is presented against the background of the local context. Themes are split into textual, interpersonal and topical themes. Textual themes always come before any other themes and include conjunctives, relatives and continuatives. Interpersonal themes are finites, interrogatives, vocatives and adjuncts (modal-

ities). Topical themes express some kind of representational meaning by using participants, circumstances and processes. The choice of theme for every clause will generally relate to the way information is being developed over the course of the entire text. The Given/New information structure and the Theme/Rheme structure, although closely related, are not the same. When we focus on thematic progression and the method of development, there are two types, pattern A and pattern B, as shown in Figure 10. Tables 7 and 8 show the theme analyses of Texts 1 and 2, respectively. Marked themes are shown in bold face, and elided items have been added in brackets. Empty brackets mean there is no topical theme.

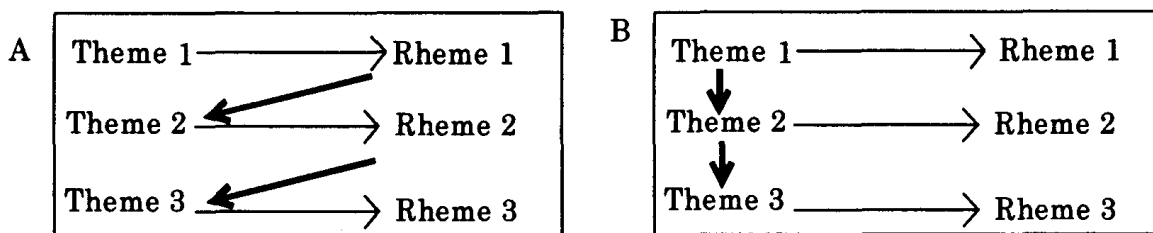


Figure 10 Basic thematic progression patterns

#	Theme			Rheme
	textual	interspersional	topical	
1				BATON ROUGE, Louisiana, Monday:
2			A jury	yesterday acquitted a man [[who fatally shot a Japanese exchange student[[who knocked on his door looking for a Halloween party]]]].
3a			The manslaughter trial of Rodney Peairs, 31, for the shooting of Yoshi Hattori, 16,	had drawn widespread interest in Japan,
3b	where		where	guns are rare
3c	and		most shootings	are gang-related
4a			The defence lawyer, Mr Leis Unglesby,	said in closing arguments yesterday
4b	that		the way [[the student had been acting]]	made it reasonable for Peairs to think his life was in danger.
5a			The District Attorney, Mr Doug Moreau,	said
5b			he	recognised
5c	that		Peairs	wished
5d			the shooting	never happened
5e	“but		that	’s not the point of [[what we’re doing here.]]
5f	Because		Yoshi	doesn’t get to do it again ---
5g			that	’s the tragedy.”
6			The events of October 17	were hardly disputed during three days of evidence.
7			Jury deliberations	lasted just over three hours
8a			Yoshi, of Nagoya, and his American host	were invited to a party
8b	but		[they]	got lost
8c	and		[they]	went to Peairs’s door
8d	because		the address	was similar
8e	and		the house	was decorated for Halloween [[which was two weeks away.]]
9a			They	rang the front bell twice
9b	but		Mrs Bonnie Peairs	answered the garage door.
10a			Yoshi	came around from front, quickly,
10b	and		[Yoshi]	frightened her.
11a			She	slammed the door
11b	and		[she]	yelled [[for her husband to get his gun.]]
12			Peairs	came to the door with his .44 Magnum revolver.
13a	When		he	saw the youth,
13b			Peairs	yelled
13c			“Freeze!”	
13d			[“freeze”]	---may be also “Stop”---
13e	but		Yoshi	kept coming.
14a			Yoshi	was not wearing his contact lenses
14b	and		with his limited English,	might have misunderstood “freeze” as “please.”
15a	When		Yoshi	was one to two metres away
15b			Peairs	fired,
15c			[]	hitting him in the chest.
16			Yoshi	was wearing a ruffled shirt and white tuxedo, like John Travolta in the film Saturday Night Fever.
17a			The defence	said
17b			it	was reasonable [[for Peairs to think he was in danger.]]
18a			Yoshi	was running at the door, according to Peairs’s testimony,
18b			[]	waving something above his head,
18c	which		which	turned out to be a camera.

Table 7 Theme analysis of Text 1 (Gun)

#	Theme			Rheme
	textual	interspersional	topical	
1a	Despite		[]	having been poisoned, shot, trapped, gassed and infected with viruses,
1b			rabbits	continue to be Australia's most damaging animal pest
1c	and		a new report	has called for nationally integrated approach to their control
2			The report, <i>Managing Vertebrate Pests -- Rabbits</i> ,	looks at past follies such as the release into the wild of cats to reduce rabbit numbers, and new options [[such as spreading Rabbit Calicivirus Disease (RCD)]].
3a			Researchers from the CSIRO and the Bureau of Resource Sciences	encountered widely differing views on rabbits
3b	as		they	went about compiling their 283-page report.
4a			"Various segments of the community	see rabbits as appealing characters from cartoons and literature, a commercial resource, a subsistence food source, an animal welfare concern or a major pest,"
4b			the report	states.
5			The success of myxomatosis in the 1950s	caused unrealistic expectations in relation to agents of biological control.
6			The result	was [[that many land managers were still not putting enough effort into conventional rabbit management]].
7a			"The challenge	will be [[to use conventional control techniques]]
7b			[]	to take maximum advantage of lowered rabbit densities following biological control,"
7c			the scientists	found.
8			There	were complicating factors in relation to impacts on native wildlife.
9a	For example, when		rabbit numbers	are greatly reduced,
9b			foxes and cats	could turn to wildlife as an alternative prey,
9c			[]	requiring fox and cat control in tandem with rabbit reduction
10a			Rabbits	arrived with the First Fleet in 1788
10b	and		[Rabbits]	colonised Australia at a rate [[believed to be the fastest for a mammal anywhere in the world]].
11a			The Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Collins	, <<when releasing the report yesterday,>> noted
11b	that		female rabbits	could breed as young as three months
11c	and		[female rabbits]	mate within hours of giving birth.
12a	While		wild rabbit densities as high as 200 per hectare	have been recorded,
12b			densities as low as one per hectare	could prevent the regeneration of some native vegetation.
13a			"They	have even been spotted five metres up trees,"
13b			Senator Collins	said.
14a			"This all	adds up to one inescapable conclusion --
14b			rabbits	are Australia's worst agricultural and environmental pest."
15a			The minister	said
15b			field research on RCD	recently began on Wardang Island, off the south Australian coast.
16a	As		RCD	was still at a trial stage,
16b			it	was too early [[to recommend introduction to mainland Australia]].
16c			he	said
17a			The Australian Conservation Foundation	welcomed the report yesterday
17b	and		[it]	said
17c			rabbit control in sensitive environments	should be accorded a high priority
18a			The National Farmers' Federation	called on farmers
18b			[]	to apply rabbit control guidelines detailed in the report

Table 8 Theme analysis of Text 2 (Rabbit)

Seeing that marked themes gain a greater textual prominence (Martin *et al.*, 1997: 24), the fact that marked topical themes occur rarely in both texts is one of the indications of journalists' tenet resulted from the thought that newspapers need to avoid exaggeration as much as possible. Often the theme development reveals the organisation of context. Figure 11 represents the Theme/Rheme structure of the two texts under study. First, in Text 1, Theme/Rheme development patterns are used twice as often as in Text 2; 19 and 9 times, respectively. Moreover, Text 1 employs both thematic development patterns (A) and (B), but Text 2 employs pattern (A) only.

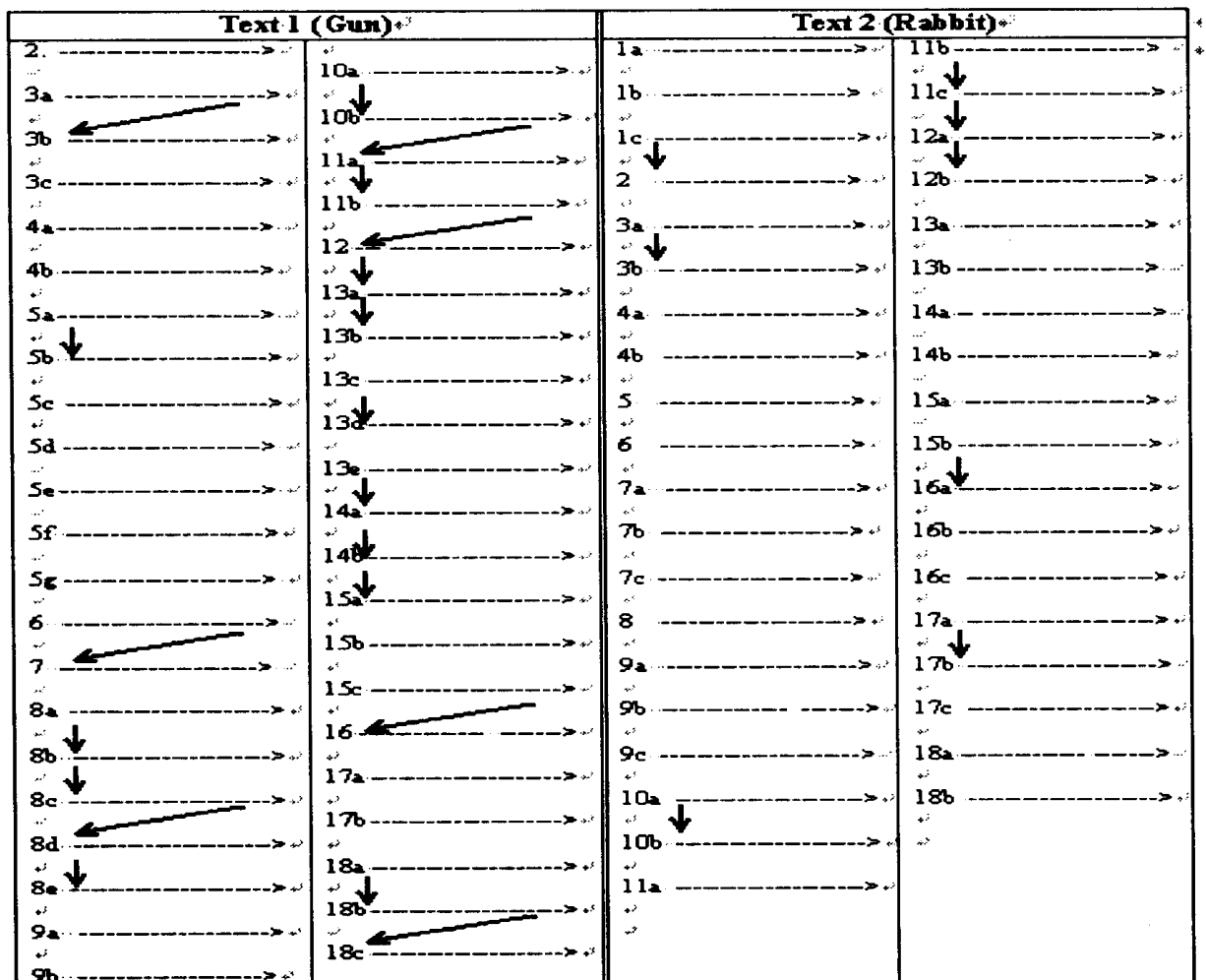


Figure 11 Thematic Progression

5 Tenor

Tenor refers to the type of role interaction, the set of relevant social relations among the participants involved (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 22). More specifically, tenor puts major emphasis on phonological and lexico-grammatical systems such as Tone, Mood, Polarity, Modalisation, Modulation, Comment, Tagging, Vocation and Person (Martin, 1992: 523).

In the case of written news reports, tenor reflects the relationship between the writer and the reader. It is interesting that Text 1 is written by the Associated Press, while the author of Text 2 is named after the head. From this it can be said that, although both texts are still formal, Text 2 forms a stronger connection between the writer and the reader than does Text 1. Most of the clauses of both texts are declarative and no interrogative is found. There is one imperative, *freeze!* in Text 1, but it is used in a quotation. As regards mood person, non-interactant--the third person of traditional grammar--is used. We can consider the fact that only non-interactant is adapted in news stories as an indication of the common belief that newspapers must be unbiased.

Modalisation is the expression of the speaker's attitude toward what he or she is saying. In other words, it is the way the speaker or writer gets into the text, expressing a judgement on the certainty, probability or frequency of an event. In Text 1, one modalisation is used in (14b), *and with his limited English, might have misunderstood "freeze" as "please"*, where the writer expresses the probability of the fact using the modal *might* together with a marked topical theme *with his limited English*. In Text 2, there are three low modalisations, namely *could* in (9b), (11b) and (12a), and one modulation, *should* in (17c). Note that in (11a) and (17c) the modalisations are used as a quoted idea.

6 Conclusion

In general, Text 1 (Gun) succeeds in conveying information clearly and succinctly by using many simplexes and parataxis along with elaborating conjunctions. The main point is indicated in the head and lead at the beginning of the text. On the other hand, Text 2 (Rabbit) uses many hypotaxis and combinations of hypotaxis and parataxis at the clause complex level. Many of these consist of quoting or reporting using verbal processes in the transitivity network where the writer can introduce a variety of the ideas of different people in various fields in order to create a theoretical context, which is often used in scientific articles or academic papers. Unlike the case in Text 1, the main idea in Text 2 is presented at the end of the text.

In lexical string analysis, we have observed that the action and location of the leading participants are depicted clearly in Text 1 around lexical strings in time and place, showing strong cohesion. In particular, the Yoshi and Peairs reference chains are well developed and long, especially in the latter part of the story. Many new lexical items are introduced in Text 2, but they developed around only the central lexical line 'control'. The reference chain of Text 1 is also stronger than that of Text 2. These facts suggest that Text 1--the hard news--tends to have stronger cohesion than Text 2--the soft news--in terms of the lexical structure and reference function.

Considered from the transitivity viewpoint, Text 1 favours the material process to convey the development of an event with precision, while Text 2 employs each process type more evenly. We should point out that Text 2 uses verbal processes at the rate of 24 percent, which is higher than Text 1. This may have been caused by the writer's intention to use lots of quotations or reporting leads to create a thoroughly objective account. Using this kind of strategy, journalists may be expressing

their own opinions covertly while overtly seeming unbiased. This strategy is found in Text 1 too. Clauses (17a) and (17b), *The defence said it was reasonable for Peairs to think he was in danger*, is not the journalist's opinion, but by putting this quotation at the end of the article, he impresses implicitly upon readers' consciousness the sense that this tragedy was just an inevitable accident.

Textual themes are frequently used in Text 1, mainly in the form of the conjunction *and*, which is the most common conjunction relating activities in an activity sequence (Martin, 1992). Concerning the Theme/Rheme construction, Text 1 takes both a zigzag pattern, where the rheme becomes the theme in the following clause, and the monotonous theme pattern, while Text 2 takes only monotonous theme construction, in which the story revolves around one particular theme. Marked themes are rarely used in both texts, to keep the texts free from possible exaggerated expressions or the writer's personal opinions. As a common feature, there are no interpersonal themes throughout the texts. This is a matter of course if we consider the fact that interpersonal theme includes adjuncts of comment, attitude and modality such as *unfortunately*, *surprisingly*, *frankly*, *perhaps* and *certainly*, which are considered to be used often in formats such as columns or editorials, in which journalists are allowed to express their opinions without hesitation.

Regarding Tenor, there is no great difference between Text 1 and Text 2. Both texts mainly use declaratives and non-interactant as Mood type. However, we have observed that Text 2 has a slight tendency to establish an interpersonal relationship with readers in terms of modalisation and anonymity.

Lastly, we have observed some different and common features between Text 1 and Text 2 as an example of hard news and soft news, which

gives us some textual tendencies between the two types of news stories. However, it is of course too hasty to interpret these findings as the general features of hard news and soft news. To deduce more general and global features in the text construction of news stories, there is a need for further investigations into wide-ranging texts in future.

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