

The construction of ‘truth’: A matter for the state or a story from the street? A functional grammar analysis of two different newspaper articles reporting on the murder of British soldier Drummer Lee Rigby by Islamic extremists.

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Apply the principles of systemic linguistic analysis explored in the course to a comparison of the style and communicative functionality of two short texts or text extracts of your own choice. (Texts typically shouldn't be longer than 500 words). The texts should have a similar subject matter, be drawn from a similar institutional or discourse domain (science, economics, health care provision, tourism, politics, the arts etc) or have some other obvious point of similarity. They need, however, to differ significantly in some aspect of their style, structure, approach, tone.

You should indicate how the texts are similar and how they are different in terms of their general stylistic properties and their communicative functionality. Your claims should be backed up by means of an analysis of the types of lexical and grammatical features explored in the course. That is to say, you should consider whether the texts are similar or different in terms of the types of either textual, interpersonal or experiential (ideational) meanings explored in the materials.

You will need to supply copies of the two texts (photocopies of the original or transcripts). Please ensure that you supply complete details as to the origin of the text (author, date, publication, section / page numbers, etc.).

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1. Introduction

Systemic Functional Grammar takes a meaning-based approach to language, where “grammar is viewed as a resource for creating meaning” (Lock 1996: xi), as opposed to the form-based approach favoured by Noam Chomsky in his ‘Transformational-Generative’ system, where grammar is viewed as a set of rules to be learnt and adhered to. The development of a fixed and definitive set of abstract rules from which grammatically correct sentences may be formed is a product of the kind of explicit description of language which is considered by Chomsky to be central to the understanding of the structure of language itself. The meaning-based approach of Systemic functional linguistics, on the other hand, chooses to place the emphasis less on the structure of language per se and more on the interrelationship between the language, the language user and the context in which that language is used. As Thompson puts it:

‘For language users, meaning is the central fact about language, and meaning emerges from a seamless union of wording and context. Functional grammar attempts to face that uncomfortable fact head-on and to establish a unified model of language that in principle allows the links to be made within the same description.’ (Thompson, 2004: 249)

The functional approach sees the lexico-grammatical choices made by a language user as central to the production of meaning in a text. These lexico-grammatical choices are inextricably linked to the context in which they are made. Thus, it follows that “any naturally occurring stretch of language should...come trailing clouds of context with it.” (Thompson, 2004: 10) Hence, using the systemic functional framework to analyze the lexico-grammatical choices present in two different texts should reveal something about the context each text is trying to create. To that end, an experiential analysis will be conducted, in this essay, on two different newspaper articles that report on the same event, contrasting and comparing the lexico-grammatical choices made in each article in order to infer what kind of context is being created by each paper.

2. The Experiential Analysis

The experiential (Ideational) level of analysis that will be undertaken in this essay is just one out of a possible three levels of systemic functional analysis, with the other two levels being interpersonal and textual. These three levels of analysis are designed to reflect the three principle functions that language fulfills: “a function for organizing, understanding and expressing our perceptions of the world and of our own consciousness (ideational); a function for creating interpersonal relationships (interpersonal); and a function for organizing information (textual).” (Eggins 1994, 2004; cited in Rodriguez, 2007: 53)

All clauses analyzed at the experiential (ideational) level of analysis consist of three categories: Processes, Participants and Circumstances. Further categorization exists by way of the division of the Processes, which are as follows: Material Processes (concerned with changes in the material world), Mental Processes (concerned with changes and workings in the world of the mind), Verbal Processes (concerned with communication), Relational Processes (concerned with being and having), Existential Processes (concerned with expressing simply the existence of an entity) and Behavioural Processes (concerning the mid way point between material and mental Processes). Each Process consists of different labels for the Participants that occur alongside it, with the labels realized by the function of the Participant in each type of Process clause. In this essay, the following three Process types will be analyzed: Material, Verbal and Relational (Attributive).

This essay will aim to show the way that “the media...construct and order the way reality is presented” by way of a transitivity analysis involving the three Process types of Material, Verbal and Relational (Attributive) that were mentioned above. (Chen 2007: 27)

3. The Texts

On the afternoon of May 22nd 2013 Drummer Lee Rigby, a British soldier, was attacked and killed by two British men of Nigerian descent who had been raised Christian but had converted to Islam. The attack was considered to be an Islamic Terrorist attack by both the British media and Her Majesty's Government in spite of the fact that no direct link between the attackers and al-Qaida had been proven. One of the attackers had a history of involvement in radical Islamic activities and had been questioned by MI5 on numerous occasions prior to the attack.

The two newspaper articles that are used in this essay report on this attack. One article is taken from the British tabloid newspaper "The Sun" whilst the other is taken from the British broadsheet newspaper "The Guardian." These two papers operate under different ideologies, have different agendas and differ markedly in terms of their register and style. The Guardian is traditionally associated with 'objective' reporting. The Sun is traditionally associated with 'sensationalism.'

4. Material Processes

The analysis of material processes undertaken in this essay will focus on two of the main components of material processes – Actors and Goals - contrasting and comparing the lexicogrammatical choices made by each article in relation to these two components.

4.1 Actors

White (2000: 145) argues that in any analysis of participant roles it is important to group participants into “socially/culturally/politically significant sets”. With this in mind, a number of Participant sets were established. The following 3 sets will be analyzed in this section: The killers, the bystanders and the police.

4.1.1 The Killers

The Participant set most frequently realizing Actor position in the Sun is represented by the killers, who feature as Actor in 17 clauses. In the Guardian, the killers feature as Actor in just 9 clauses and are not the most frequently occurring Participant set in Actor position.

The major difference associated with the presentation of the killers in each paper doesn't just concern the frequency with which the killers realize Actor position, it also concerns the lexical choices that have been made in presenting the killers as Actor in each paper.

Table 4.1 illustrates the lexical choices underpinning the re-presentation of the killers in both papers (excluding pronouns):

Table 4.1

The Guardian (Killers as Actor)	Cl. N°	The Sun (Killers as Actor)	Cl. N°
(by) two assailants	9	the pair	6
one of the suspects	21	The beasts [[who struck yards from a primary school,]]	9
the man	24	the butchers	20
one of the assailants	32	the ranting pair, [[who paused to film themselves as they hacked at their victim,]]	23
the tall black bloke	39	one of the terrorists – [[both thought to be al-Qaeda “lone wolves”]] -	32
		his pal	33
		both the fanatics	35
		one of the black men	57

The lexical choices made by the Guardian concerning the killers as Actor, represent an intention, on their part, to define the killers in terms of the act that they have committed (“assailants” – Cl. 9, 32) and their status as a result of that act (“Suspects” – Cl. 21). These carefully chosen noun-heads show a more descriptive use of language, veering away from value judgements as much as possible.

By contrast, the analysis concerning the choice of noun-heads used to represent the killers in Actor position in the Sun shows that there is a greater level of value judgements directed at the killers. These value judgements exist in the semantics of the noun head that has been chosen in each case. Referring to the killers early on in the article as “The beasts” (Cl. 9) precludes judgement of the killers on the basis of their actions alone. The semantic association with animals that the term ‘beasts’ entails also presents them as de-humanized, irrespective of the subsequent actions that are presented.

The Sun's characterization of the killers by way of the term "The butchers" (Cl. 20), contains certain value judgements on the attack itself, likening it to the act of killing animals for a *purpose* and in doing so drawing a parallel between the sacrifice of animals in exchange for capital, and the sacrifice of a British soldier in exchange for a Muslim, as part of a war against the West. The semantic potentialities of this particular noun-head, then, are contextualized by the Sun and used to characterize the killers prior to the subsequent description of their actions.

In terms of the modification of the noun heads realizing the killers in Actor position in each of the articles, the Guardian makes use of numeratives to differentiate the actions of one killer from another (Cl. 9, 21, 32) and the Sun, likewise, does the same. (Cl. 32, 33, 35, 37) However, Cl. 39 in the Guardian is the only clause to feature an epithet, defining one of the killers in terms of his height, before going on to use a classifier to indicate his race.

In the Sun there is one example of an epithet being used to modify the noun head realizing the killers as Actor. (Cl. 23) The use of the epithet "ranting" in Cl. 23 implies, semantically, a sense of wildness or even madness, bringing the mental state of the killers into question. The classifier "black", used in Cl. 57, is exactly the same as the example used in Cl. 39 in the Guardian, defining the killer in terms of his race.

The Sun's choice to focus more on the killers is exemplified through both the frequency with which they realize Actor position in material clauses (17 clauses) compared to the Guardian (9 clauses), as well as through the characterization of the killers that is constructed out of the specific lexical choices made by the Sun at the level of nominal group. Conversely, through the Guardian's decision to give less responsibility to the killers for the actions that unfold, and through its decision to include less modification of the noun heads realizing the killers, our focus on events is far less circumscribed by a particular representation of them, than it is in the Sun.

4.1.2 The Bystanders

In the Guardian there are just three instances of bystanders occupying the Actor position as shown in table 4.2:

Table 4.2

The Guardian	Cl. N°
I (Julia Wilders)	38
I (Julia Wilders)	43
^HE (David Dixon, Headteacher)	68

In the Sun, however, there are 9 instances of bystanders occupying the Actor position as shown in table 4.3:

Table 4.3

The Sun	Cl. N°
A heroine	1
One brave woman	19
witnesses	25
unsuspecting pedestrians [[- including women carrying shopping-]]	27
he	46
they	54
we	56
He	61
^HE	62

The higher number of bystanders in Actor position in the Sun shows us that they are more frequently presented as people who were actively involved in the unfolding of the event, rather than just being people reporting what happened. Additionally, in the case of C.1 in the Sun, the choice of a noun head that elevates the status of one female bystander to that of a ‘heroine’ reflects an *assessment* of the bystander’s character made by the Sun in relation to her role in events. In the Guardian, no such *assessment* through the choice of noun head occurs, with the bystanders in Actor position being realized by pronouns that denote only their gender.

In Cl. 19 in the Sun, the epithet ‘brave’ is used to pre-modify the noun-head of a bystander in positive admirable terms. This constitutes an *interpretation* of the bystander’s role in the event as construed through the lexico-grammatical choice made. To be sure, the Sun has *decided* that the bystander is brave. This is a subjective assessment. In the Guardian, such subjective assessment, involving the use of epithets to modify noun heads realizing bystanders in the Actor position, does not occur.

In neither of the above cases (Cl. 1, 19) were the lexico-grammatical choices made for the purpose of *identifying* bystanders. Rather, the choices were made in each case, by the Sun, for the purposes of *describing* and indeed *re-presenting* the bystanders, embellishing them with positive qualities that serve to emphasize the role they played in the community’s reaction to the events.

Through an Actor analysis of these participant sets we have so far been able to see who, in each article, has been made responsible for the unfolding of events. Bestowing this responsibility on the Killers and the Bystanders, as the Sun chooses to do, has the effect of localizing the story.

By contrast, the Guardian, through choosing to underrepresent the bystanders and the killers as being the ones who are responsible for the action that takes place, enables the focus to be shifted elsewhere. In the following section (4.1.3), as we shall see, this focus is directed towards the institutions of the state, endowing their actions with a significance and importance that is directly related to national interests and security.

4.1.3 The Police

The most frequently occurring Actor set in the Guardian is the police. There are a total of 12 clauses featuring the police as Actor in the Guardian compared to just 4 clauses in the Sun. The lexical choices made by each paper to represent the police in Actor position is shown in table 4.4: (excluding pronouns)

Table 4.4

The Guardian (Police as Actor)	Cl. N°	The Sun (Police as Actor)	Cl. N°
armed police	14	armed cops	31
(by) armed officers	15	Two cops [one a policewoman]	34
the counter terrorism command	28	police	101
British officials	30		
the response police	41		
officers [[including local Greenwich officers]]	96		
firearms officers	97		
(by) police	99		
The Independent Police Complaints Commission	102		

In the Guardian a variety of noun-heads (police, officers, counter terrorism command, officials) and classifiers (armed, response, firearms) are used to describe the particular type of police unit that was involved on the day. The frequent use of classifiers and the absence of any epithets used to describe the police, points to objective reporting of their role. In two out of the three material process clauses in the Sun where the police are positioned as Actors, the more informal noun-head ‘cops’ is

chosen. (Cl. 31 and 34) Notwithstanding, in the Sun, the classifier ‘armed’ is also used to describe the police and the use of epithets to describe the police is likewise avoided.

Through choosing to modify 7 of the noun heads realizing the police as Actor, we are able to see that, in the Guardian, a greater focus has been placed on the *way* the police are represented as Actors. The specific use of classifiers to modify those 7 noun-heads shows that the representation of the police in the Guardian article is informed by a need for clarity and accuracy concerning the type of police unit responsible for action. In the Sun, the three clauses featuring the police as Actor and the one classifier that is used do not provide enough evidence to determine the way the police are represented in that article.

Presenting the police as Actors in a total of 12 clauses, as opposed to only three in the Sun, supports the view that in the Guardian the focus is on the institutions of the state and their role in the events. The Sun’s choice to underrepresent police action in favour of an increased focus on the killers and bystanders as Actors, meanwhile, lends support to the view that they are constructing a more personalized perspective, whereby *characterization* of the killers and the bystanders is achieved through the specific noun heads chosen to signify them and the use of epithets and embedded clauses chosen to modify those noun heads.

4.2 Goals

In this section we will focus exclusively on the representation of the killers in Goal position in both articles.

4.2.1 The Killers

The killers feature as goal in 7 clauses in the Guardian (Cl. 1, 15, 16, 44, 46, 99, 100) as opposed to just 1 in the Sun (Cl. 38). 6 of those 7 clauses in the Guardian involve the police as Actor/Agent. (Cl. 15, 16, 44, 46, 99, 100) The focus in the Guardian is on what the police did to the killers. This

takes the form of two main roles: shooting the killers and taking them away. In the Guardian, all of the clauses that include the police shooting (Cl. 15, 44, 46, 99) feature the police as either Actor or Agent. The following two examples, taken from the Guardian, show the police as Actor and the police as Agent:

C.44 (Ind.) - so they shot him.

so	they	shot	him.
	Actor	Process: Material	Goal

C.15 (Ind.) - They were shot and apprehended by armed officers

They	were shot and apprehended	by armed officers
Goal	Process: Material (Passive)	Actor (Agent)

The two clauses in the Guardian that feature the killers being taken away (Cl. 16, 100), imply the police's role through using Agentless passive structures. Here is one example:

C.100 (Ind.) - "They were taken to separate London hospitals,

They	were taken	to separate London hospitals,
Goal	Process: Material (Passive)	Circumstance: Location (Place)

The placement of the Police in Actor position in 6 out of the 7 clauses where the killers are the Goal shows that, in the Guardian, the action taken against the killers is principally carried out by the police. Also, through exclusively using the police as Actor/Agent in clauses that involve the police shooting, the Guardian is able to draw attention to this particular aspect of police action, emphasizing the active role the police play in maintaining national security.

In the Sun article, there is just one clause (Cl. 38) that features the killers as Goal. In this clause the Participant implied as being responsible for the Process acting upon the killers is again the police. In this sense, through representation or otherwise implication, both papers hold the police responsible for the Processes acting upon the killers. However, this clause in the Sun (Cl. 38) is an Agentless passive construction. Hence, the police responsibility is only *implied*, with the police being necessarily ellipted. It can be seen below:

C.38 (Ind.) - The other was taken to a separate London hospital by road.

The other	was taken	to a separate London hospital	by road.
Goal	Process: Material (Passive)	Circumstance: Location (Place)	Circumstance: Manner

In the event of two armed men attacking an unarmed man in a public place, the only likely action to be taken against the armed men constitutes a response from the police. The analysis has so far shown that this is indeed the case. 6 out of the 7 clauses featuring the killers as Goal in the Guardian involved the police as Actor whilst the one clause to feature the killers as Goal in the Sun implied the police through using an Agentless passive. That the police action against the killers is much less represented in the Sun than in the Guardian, coupled with the fact that the killers were the most frequently occurring Participant in Actor position in the Sun (See Section 4.1.1), is revealing of an underlying motivation. This is exemplified through the lexico-grammatical choices made by the Sun, to focus more on the killers as the *doers* of heinous crimes, rather than as the *products* of a successful capture operation by the state, as has been shown in the Guardian.

We will now turn our attention to Verbal Processes and the way in which each paper's construal of events is realized through this particular aspect of the lexico-grammar.

5. Verbal Processes

This section will be divided into an analysis of two Participant sets realizing Sayer position: The bystanders and the authorities (as represented by the police and the Government).

5.1 The Bystanders

In the Sun, the bystanders are the Participant set who feature most frequently as Sayer. Out of a total of 26 verbal process clauses in the Sun, 11 feature a bystander as a Sayer. Through apportioning such a high number of the verbal process clauses to the bystanders, allowing them to offer their views of events, the argument that the Sun's focus is on presenting the human side of the story is reinforced.

In the Guardian, only 5 verbal process clauses out of a total of 27 feature a bystander in Sayer position. The Guardian devotes much less space to hearing what the bystanders have to say, instead choosing, as we shall see in Section 5.2, to apportion the majority of its verbal process clauses to the authorities. When the Guardian does allow the bystanders to have a voice, they are explicitly referred to as "witnesses", with the only accompanying details in these instances being their location and name. (Cl. 8, 31, 37, 47) In the Sun, the term "witnesses" is rarely used. (Cl. 12, 84) Instead, greater detail is given about the bystanders, such as their age (Cl. 14, 40) and their job or position in the community (Cl. 14, 40, 80) The following two examples, the first taken from the Guardian and the second taken from the Sun, demonstrate the difference in the way the bystanders are presented in Sayer position in each article:

C.31 (Ind.) - Witnesses at the scene spoke of attempts made by some passersby to stop the attackers.

Witnesses at the scene	spoke	of attempts <<made by some passersby>> to stop the attackers.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Circumstance: Matter

C.40 (Ind.) (Verbal Process Clause Projecting) - Local resident Graham Wilders, 50 - whose nine-year-old son Steven is a pupil at the school - told

Local resident Graham Wilders, 50 – [[whose nine-year-old son Steven is a pupil at the school -]]	told
Sayer	Process: Verbal

The Sun, through pre-modifying and post-modifying the bystanders in Sayer position with details concerning their name, their age, their job, their position in the community and their relevance to the story, is humanizing the bystanders and indeed contextualizing them within its own personalized perspective of events. This not only makes what they go on to say seem more believable, it also makes them more believable as characters, allowing for both greater identification with them and the situation they find themselves in, as well as a greater overall perceived *relevance* for the article itself. As Langer states: “Not only are his biographical details particular, they are also arbitrary – his age could be any age, his suburb could be any suburb, his job any job, his fate could be anyone’s fate, *in-the-normal-course-of-events*.” (Langer 1998: 82)

The full list of bystanders in Sayer position in both articles (excluding pronouns) can be seen in table 5.1:

Table 5.1

The Guardian	Clause N°	The Sun	Clause N°
Witnesses	8	One witness	12
Witnesses at the scene	31	Van loader Joe Tallant, 20	14
Julia Wilders, a witness	37	Local resident Graham Wilders, 50 – [[whose nine year old son Steven is a pupil at the school -]]	40
One witness [[identified as James Heneghan]]	47	Graham	53
David Dixon, headteacher of nearby Musgrave School	66	Head David Dixon, [[who saw the body in the road]]	80
		Another shaken witness	84

5.2 The Authorities

In the Guardian, more focus is placed on the authorities and their involvement in, and reaction to the events. 12 of the Sayers in the Guardian are represented by the authorities as opposed to just 6 Sayers in the Sun. Table 5.2 shows a breakdown of Sayers representing authority in each article:

Table 5.2

	Guardian	Sun
Government	10	2
Police	2	3
Army Authorities	0	1
Total	12	6

Out of the 10 Sayers representing the Government in the Guardian article, 9 of them are actually Members of Parliament (with the Prime Minister realizing 6 alone), and 1 is the Director General of MI5. By contrast, the Sun features only 2 Members of Parliament as Sayers; neither one of them is the Prime Minister.

The full list of authority representatives in Sayer position (excluding pronouns) can be seen in table 5.3 below:

Table 5.3

The Guardian	Clause N°	The Sun	Clause N°
David Cameron [[who was in Paris and was due to return last night]]	7	Woolwich's MP Nick Raynsford	90
Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan Howe	27	Home Secretary Theresa May	99
Cameron, [in Paris [for talks with the French President, Francois Hollande,]]	52	(by) ^ARMY AUTHORITIES (Agentless Passive - Implied)	103
May*	60	Woolwich Police Commander	105
(by) the Director General of MI5, Andrew Parker	61		
The Woolwich and Greenwich MP, Nick Raynsford	76		
Commander Simon Letchford, [from Woolwich Police,]	92		

*(Theresa May, Home Secretary)

Here, the Guardian engages in more modification. They pre-modify the names of the Sayers with classifiers that detail their exact job position whilst using embedded clauses to post modify those clauses involving the Prime Minister, using them to give details as to his whereabouts. No post-modification of noun-heads realizing authority representatives in Sayer position are found in the Sun. In addition, the first verbal process clause to feature a representative of authority in Sayer position in the Guardian occurs early on in the article at clause 7, whereas in the Sun it does not occur until near the end of the article at clause 90. This reflects the prioritization of the authorities in verbal process clauses in the Guardian and likewise the disregard of them in the Sun.

The Sun, through devoting a higher number of verbal process clauses to the bystanders than to the authorities and through pre-modifying and post-modifying the noun heads realizing the Sayers in those clauses, is able to focus on the bystanders, using their reports to *enhance* its story of events. Meanwhile the Guardian, through featuring the authorities more frequently as Sayer and through the modification of the noun heads realizing those Sayers (especially those who are representatives of the Government), uses the words of the Police and Government officials to situate its story of events within a more political and international context.

6. Relational Attributive Processes

Halliday & Matthiesen state that relational attributive clauses are “a resource for characterizing entities serving as the Carrier” whilst also being “a central grammatical strategy for assessing by assigning an evaluative Attribute to the Carrier.” (2004: 219) Through carrying out an analysis into the representation of the attack in relational attributive processes, we should be able to develop a deeper understanding of how it is characterized in each article.

In both the Guardian and the Sun the most frequent entities to feature as Carrier in relational attributive clauses are either the attack itself or things closely associated with it. However, the difference occurs in the choice each paper makes concerning the evaluative Attribute that is

assigned to the Carrier. Table 6.1 lists two examples of relational attributive clauses featuring the attack as Carrier in the Guardian:

Table 6.1

Carrier	Attribute	Cl. N°
yesterday's incident	a new style of terrorist attack in Britain	64
^IT	reminiscent of a past and disrupted plot <<by violent jihadists [in Birmingham [in 2007]]>> to kidnap and behead a British Muslim soldier.	65

Here we can see two Attributes, both directly referring to terrorism, being assigned to Carriers in two different clauses. This is revealing of the Guardian's evaluative stance towards the attack, which assesses it in terms of terrorism. In Cl. 65 they use pre-modification and embedding to go one step further by explicitly connecting the attack to a previous one, again involving Jihadists.

In the following example (in Table 6.2) the Guardian again makes use of an attribute that refers to terrorism. This time, though, it is used to characterize the Killers' speech, which occurred shortly after the attack and is thus closely associated with it:

Table 6.2

Carrier	Attribute	Cl. N°
the rhetoric	reminiscent of that used in al-Qaida influenced propaganda, [in particular the reference to “our land” – [[phraseology used by violent jihadists [[to describe Muslim territory being despoiled by Western soldiers]]]]]	26

In this area of the lexico-grammar, it is the Guardian that makes use of a multitude of embedded clauses. Through using multiple embedded clauses to post-modify a noun-head realizing an Attribute, the Guardian is able to provide as much information and evidence in support of their assessment of the speech *in terms of terrorism* as possible, strengthening their evaluative position on the matter.

In the relational attributive process clauses in the Sun, we see evidence of a very different way of characterizing the attack, as the following two examples show:

C.63 (Ind.) - It was absolutely terrifying.

It	was	absolutely terrifying.
Carrier	Process: Relational Attributive	Attribute

C.78 (Ind.) - But it could've been so much worse.

But	it	could've been	so much worse.
	Carrier	Process: Relational Attributive	Attribute

The above two clauses are both projected from a verbal process clause and are each part of separate bystander accounts. In the Sun, the main function that relational attributive clauses which involve the attack as Carrier have, is to enhance each bystanders account of events through characterizing the attack in a certain way. Attributes serve the bystanders needs as a means for assessing the attack in relation to *their* story, which the Sun allows them to tell. Hence the *personal effect* of the attack on each bystander and their story can be construed through the Attributes that have been assigned to the Carrier, such as is the case in the two examples above.

Conversely, in the Guardian, relational attributive clauses help to characterize the attack in terms of terrorism, reflecting the Guardian's intention to widen the scope of its article to include the international implications of the attack.

7. Conclusion

The experiential analysis undertaken on the article in the Guardian and the article in the Sun has enabled significant differences to be revealed concerning the way each paper reported the attack and murder of British soldier Drummer Lee Rigby on May 22nd 2013.

Comparing and contrasting the lexico-grammatical choices made in each article has exposed the way in which each paper's perspective of events has been constructed.

In the analysis of material processes it was shown that the Sun emphasized the role of the killers and the bystanders in the attack through choosing to place them in Actor position. The specific lexico-grammatical choices underpinning the presentation of the Actors in the Sun were also revealing of its intention to *characterize* the two Participant sets, constructing a more personalized account of the events that was predicated upon subjective assessment. (White 2000)

In the Guardian, the police were the most frequently occurring Participant set to feature as Actor, underlining the Guardian's emphasis on national security. (White 2000) An examination of the lexico-grammatical choices underpinning the presentation of the police in Actor position in the Guardian also demonstrated a need for clarity and accuracy, as evidenced by the use of classifiers to denote them.

The analysis of the killers in Goal position in both articles revealed a particular emphasis, in the Guardian, on police action towards the killers, presenting the killers as an object of successful state intervention. In the Sun the police were underrepresented, with the focus instead being placed on the action of the killers and the bystanders, hence supporting the view that the Sun presented a localized perspective of events.

Through its use of verbal processes, the Guardian opted to provide a greater opportunity for those participants representing the authorities to voice their concerns, supporting its view of the attack in

terms of its relevance to the nation state. The Sun, conversely, gave greater priority to the reports of bystanders, using their accounts to offer a more personalized report.

In relational attributive processes, both articles used evaluative attributes to describe the attack. In the Sun, the two examples of relational attributive processes that were provided occurred in bystander accounts. In both these examples the evaluative attributes were used to enhance the bystander accounts of the attack, allowing for the bystanders' personal interpretation of it. Relational attributive processes in the Guardian, however, were used for a very different purpose, enabling them to assess the attack as a terrorist act.

Through analyzing the lexico-grammatical choices made in each article, we have been able to reveal the way in which each paper has constructed its own perspective of events. We have shown how, in the Sun, that perspective is localized, offering a personalized account of events, whereas in the Guardian it is international, contextualizing the attack in terms of its relevance to the state. Neither one of these perspectives is necessarily closer to the 'truth'. Rather, they should be seen as constructs born of the lexico-grammatical choices made, choices that were guided by different agendas.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The Articles – The Guardian

Front: 'You people will never be safe': British soldier dead in suspected terror attack near London barracks: Knife attack 'an eye for an eye' says suspect in camera footage: Killing in street is 'absolutely sickening' says prime minister

Author: Dodd, Vikram; Malik, Shiv; Quinn, Ben

Publication info: The Guardian [London (UK)] 23 May 2013: 1.

[ProQuest document link](#)

Abstract (Abstract): "And the response police turned up and he's ran towards them with meat cleavers before I could even get out of the car so they shot him. And then the other one lifts the gun up and they shot him as well." One witness, identified as James Heneghan, said he and his partner saw two black men attack a young man aged around 20 in a Help for Heroes T-shirt with kitchen knives like he was "a piece of meat".

[David Cameron], in Paris for talks with the French president, Francois Hollande, described the killing as "truly shocking" and said he had asked the home secretary, Theresa May, to chair a meeting of Cobra, the government's emergency committee. He said Britain had faced terror attacks before and added: "We will never buckle in the face of it."

Muslim community leaders and law enforcement sources said they were alert to the danger of a violent backlash following the attack, a fear heightened by Woolwich's past history of racial tensions. The Woolwich and Greenwich MP, Nick Raynsford, said: "Obviously at a time when there are rumours circulating there must be cause for concern." Members of the extremist English Defence League clashed with police in the area late last night.

Links: [Check for availability](#)

Full text: A man suspected of staging a terrorist attack that left a British soldier dead near a military barracks in London, was caught on camera clutching a meat cleaver and knife in hands apparently covered in the blood of his victim, as he justified the violence as part of a jihadist-inspired fight against the west.

The incident happened in broad daylight, 400 metres from the perimeter of the Royal Artillery barracks, in Woolwich, south-east London, sparking a terrorist alert that saw the government crisis committee Cobra convene in emergency session. Hours later, David Cameron, who was in Paris and was due to return last night, described what had occurred as "an absolutely sickening attack".

Witnesses said a man was hacked at by two assailants with weapons including a machete, carrying strong echoes of attacks abroad, at about 2.20pm. It is understood that the victim was a soldier, although neither his identity nor profession was confirmed last night. It is believed the person died after suffering knife injuries, possibly around the head.

The two men remained on the scene, until armed police arrived up to 20 minutes later. They were shot and apprehended by armed officers and taken to two separate hospitals where they were being treated for their injuries under armed guard in the aftermath of the first al-Qaida inspired attack to claim a life on British soil since the 7 July bombings in London in 2005.

As counter-terrorism officials raced to work out if the incident was a random, macabre event or the start of a trend, astonishing footage emerged which explained why the government was so quick to treat it as a terrorist attack.

In mobile phone video footage first broadcast by ITV News, one of the suspects was seen brandishing a cleaver and a knife. With the body of the victim lying yards away, the man said: "We swear by almighty Allah we will never stop fighting you. The only reason we have done this is because Muslims are dying every day. This British soldier is an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

Speaking in a British accent, the man said: "We must fight them. I apologise that women had to witness this today. But in our land, our women have to see the same. You people will never be safe. Remove your government, they don't care about you.

"You think David Cameron is going to get caught in the street when we start bussin' our guns? You think politicians are going to die? No it's going to be the average guy, like you, and your children. So get rid of them. Tell them to bring our troops back so you can all live in peace." In the footage, the man then walks away and talks to another suspected attacker, pictures of whom were also circulating.

The rhetoric was reminiscent of that used in al-Qaida-influenced propaganda, in particular the reference to "our land" - phraseology used by violent jihadists to describe Muslim territory being despoiled by western soldiers. In a statement, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe, said the counter terrorism command was leading the investigation after two men were arrested.

Reuters reported last night that British officials were investigating a possible Nigerian link in the attack.

Witnesses at the scene spoke of attempts made by some passersby to stop the attackers. One of the assailants reportedly danced near the body and then approached bus passengers, asking people to take his photograph.

There were unconfirmed reports that the attackers may have had a gun and raised it, possibly even fired it as armed police arrived. Julia Wilders, a witness, said: "I walked back up there and the tall black bloke had changed the gun to the other guy and he had two meat cleavers in his hand.

"And the response police turned up and he's ran towards them with meat cleavers before I could even get out of the car so they shot him. And then the other one lifts the gun up and they shot him as well." One witness, identified as James Heneghan, said he and his partner saw two black men attack a young man aged around 20 in a Help for Heroes T-shirt with kitchen knives like he was "a piece of meat".

The barracks near to where the attack happened is home to the Princess of Wales's regiment and the King's Troop, which is a ceremonial unit that relocated to Woolwich last year. One source suggested the victim had been returning to the barracks after attending an army recruitment event in central London.

Cameron, in Paris for talks with the French president, Francois Hollande, described the killing as "truly shocking" and said he had asked the home secretary, Theresa May, to chair a meeting of Cobra, the government's emergency committee. He said Britain had faced terror attacks before and added: "We will never buckle in the face of it."

The prime minister will chair another Cobra meeting this morning.

May said she had been briefed by the director general of MI5, Andrew Parker, on the "sickening and barbaric" incident. The terrorism threat level remains at substantial, meaning an attack is a strong possibility.

Yesterday's incident was a new style of terrorist attack in Britain, and reminiscent of a past and disrupted plot by violent jihadists in Birmingham in 2007 to kidnap and behead a British Muslim soldier.

David Dixon, headteacher of nearby Musgrave school, said he heard gunshots and locked the school down: "I saw the body lying in the road. We locked the gates, we locked everything down to make sure the children were safe inside . . . we kept them safe."

Muslim community leaders and law enforcement sources said they were alert to the danger of a violent backlash following the attack, a fear heightened by Woolwich's past history of racial tensions. The Woolwich and Greenwich MP, Nick Raynsford, said: "Obviously at a time when there are rumours circulating there must be cause for concern." Members of the extremist English Defence League clashed with police in the area late last night.

It was Raynsford who first said that a member of the armed forces was most likely to be the victim. He said: "We think a serving soldier was the victim. We don't know the circumstances surrounding the incident. We do know a number of weapons have been seized. They include a gun, various knives and a machete, apparently."

The Muslim Council of Britain said: "This is a truly barbaric act that has no basis in Islam and we condemn this unreservedly."

Commander Simon Letchford, from Woolwich police, said: "At approx 1420 we were called to reports of an assault in John Wilson Street, Woolwich where one man was being assaulted by two other men. A number of weapons were reportedly being used in the attack, and this included reports of a firearm.

"Officers, including local Greenwich officers, arrived at the scene and shortly after firearms officers arrived on the scene. On their arrival at the scene they found a man, who was later pronounced dead.

"Two men, who we believe from early reports to have been carrying weapons, were shot by police.

"They were taken to separate London hospitals, they are receiving treatment for their injuries."

The Independent Police Complaints Commission is investigating the shooting by police, which is standard in cases where officers open fire.

Credit: Vikram Dodd, Shiv Malik and Ben Quinn

Illustration

Caption: Captions: His hands bloodied and clutching a meat cleaver and knife, the suspected terrorist delivers his message of justification and threat to a passer-by's mobile phone camera Photograph: ITV News; Photographs

taken by passers-by: top, one of the suspects talking to witness Ingrid Loyau-Kennett; left, a second suspect with bloodied hands; right, witnesses gather round the victim Photographs: Pixel8000; ITV; Rex

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Appendix 2. The Articles – The Sun

1 of 1 DOCUMENT



The Sun (England)

May 23, 2013 Thursday
Edition 1;
National Edition

As woman strokes a **beheaded soldier**, his killer cries for jihad; **MACHETE MANIACS MURDER SQUADDIE**

BYLINE: MIKE SULLIVAN; JONATHAN REILLY; TOM WELLS; TOM MORGAN

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 2,3

LENGTH: 977 words

A HEROINE tends a young **soldier** dying in the road yesterday as a machetewielding jihadist who tried to behead him crows: "We swear by almighty Allah!" The appalling scene - as two maniacs plumbed depths of barbarity that chilled the nation - was captured at 2.20pm on a London street.

The fanatics' victim - in a Help for Heroes top - was walking on a pavement when the pair screeched round the corner in a car and mowed him down.

Moments later - armed with a gun, knives and a cleaver - they clambered from the wreck of their blue Vauxhall Tigra, which had ploughed into a road sign. The beasts, who struck yards from a primary school, then launched into a frenzy of bloodlust as the **soldier** in his early 20s lay helpless - mercilessly stabbing and hacking at him. One witness said their victim was left practically "decapitated".

Van loader Joe Tallant, 20, said: "There were two black guys walking around his body, saying, 'This is what God would've wanted'."

Horrified passers-by saw them finally drag his body into the middle of the road in triumph.

One brave woman rushed to cradle the bloodied **soldier** as the butchers made no attempt to flee - instead proudly strutting around as they waited for gun cops. The ranting pair, who paused to film themselves as they hacked at their victim, used the 20 minutes it took for armed officers to arrive to demand witnesses also capture their savagery on mobile phones.

One of them - clad in black and his hands soaked in blood as he clutched a cleaver and a knife - boasted: "It is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth - by Allah, we swear by the almighty Allah."

In surreal mobile phone footage taken before anti-terror cops swooped, unsuspecting pedestrians - including women carrying shopping - pass the scene of horror, some oblivious to the slaughter outside Woolwich Barracks in South East London. Traffic there finally ground to halt, with buses and lorries pulling over, as armed cops finally reached the scene. One of the terrorists - both thought to be al-Qaeda "lone wolves" - rushed headlong towards a silver BMW armed response car as his pal raised his pistol.

Two cops - one a policewoman - immediately opened fire. Both the fanatics fell to the ground wounded - but survived.

An air ambulance landed in the playground of Mulgrave Primary School - where kids were feared to have witnessed the outrage - to rush the most badly wounded of the madmen for surgery.

The other was taken to a separate London hospital by road.

Last night both were in "serious condition". Local resident Graham Wilders, 50 - whose nine-year-old son Steven is a pupil at the school - told how children were leaving as the bloodbath unfolded. He rushed to warn them, yelling to teachers: "There's a gunman - get everybody inside." Minutes earlier he had been driving home with his wife Julia when they saw the **soldier's** body in the road.

Sickening Mum-of-four Julia, 51 said: "Two black guys looked like they were trying to resuscitate a white guy on the floor. Then I saw they were using cleavers to hack him up."

Graham told how they went to take another look after parking up at their house, He said: 7 When we walked back down to see what was happening, one of the black men pulled a handgun out from behind him. There was a lorry driver and it looked like he was waving it at the lorry driver. He got down out of his cab and legged it. It was absolutely terrifying.

My son goes to Mulgrave School which is right by where this was happening.

All I could think about was that it was home time and he would be walking down here soon. I saw a load of kids come out of school gates. I just yelled at them to get back.

The headmaster came out and they closed the school gates and kept everyone in. That was when I heard four shots. My wife saw it - she saw the police shoot the black guys.

I can't believe this has happened. But it could've been so much worse. Those kids were just feet from the men with the gun. 8 Head David Dixon, who saw the body in the road, said: "We needed to go into our emergency procedures to make sure that the children were as safe as possible." Another shaken witness said: "The blood was everywhere - trickling down the road." The **soldier** was a Fusilier and had previously been posted in Cyprus, sources said last night.

Woolwich's MP Nick Raynsford said after speaking to commanders at the famous Royal Artillery barracks: "It is my understanding this man was a serving **soldier** based at the barracks.

He had been on duty in central London and was making his way back to the barracks."

The **soldier** may have got off a train at Woolwich Arsenal station and was believed to have been walking the one mile from the town centre to the barracks. His killers were thought to be British citizens of West African descent. They were said to have yelled: "Allahu Akbar", meaning God is Great. Home Secretary Theresa May summoned an urgent meeting of the government's emergency committee COBRA. A cordon was set up 100 yards around where the murder happened as police erected a white tent in the road and bagged evidence.

Army cadets due to meet at the barracks today were told not to arrive in uniform. Woolwich police commander Simon Letchford said patrols would be beefed up - adding: "I am asking people to remain calm."

Help for Heroes branded the murder "sickening" - and said: "We are desperately saddened."

But firebrand Muslim preacher Anjem Choudary - an ex-pupil of Mulgrave Primary School - said: "This incident is indicative of how the foreign policies of David Cameron and his predecessors are failing."

LOAD-DATE: May 23, 2013

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

GRAPHIC: Terrifying ... shopper walks past unaware as heroine cradles dying **soldier** at feet of blood-spattered knifeman

Taking aim . . woman gun cop takes no chances with shot maniac

Treatment ... police medic tends to wounded killer on ground

Armed guard ... gun officer stands over as doc helps fanatic

Hero hoodie ... top like victim's

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Newspaper

JOURNAL-CODE: SUN

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