

## Ideational Meta-Functional Analysis of Letters to the Editor of *The Times*

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** Letters to the editor are linguistic texts in which the letter writer expresses a specific type of discourse related to a previously addressed issue, requiring clear interpretation by both the editor and the third-party reader. The study aims to investigate the discourse function of verb nominalizations used in letters to the editor throughout the research.

**Methods:** The study sheds light on the function of transitivity and its variants in the act of communication. To convey the communicative value of transitivity utilised in letters to the editor, which represent a kind of written discourse, of *The Times*, the study adopts Halliday and Matthiessen's model (2014) to present a statistic of transitivity processes which reflect the ideational meta-function.

**Results:** The study presents variant percentages of transitivity processes utilized which reveal the communicative value of transitivity in the selected letters-to-the-editor. Material process occurs with 35% which is the highest percentage while other processes; relational, mental, behavioral, verbal and existential with 25%, 19%, 14%, 3% and 1% respectively.

**Conclusions:** The discourse functions of transitivity processes realised in the selected samples of letters to the editor are variant, depending on the ideological significance, social power and text type.

**Keywords:** Analysis, letters to the editor, meta-function, transitivity, the times.

### تحليل وظيفي فكري لرسائل إلى المحرر في صحيفة التايمز

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#### ملخص

الأهداف: إن الرسائل إلى المحرر نصوص لغوية يعبر فيها كاتب الرسالة عن نوع معين من الخطاب المتعلق بقضية جرى تناولها سابقاً وتحتاج إلى تفسير واضح من قبل المحرر والقارئ الثالث أيضاً. وتهدف الدراسة إلى التحقق من الوظيفة الخطابية لمتعدية الفعل المستخدمة في رسائل إلى المحرر مدار البحث.

المنهجية: جرى تسليط الضوء على وظيفة متعدية الفعل ومتغيراتها في تحقيق التواصل ونقل القيمة التواصلية المستخدمة في الرسائل إلى المحرر، التي تمثل نوعاً للخطاب المكتوب، في مجلة التايمز. تبنت الدراسة النحو الوظيفي النظامي لهالدي وماتسن (2014) لتقديم إحصائية بأنواع متعدية الفعل المستخدمة في الرسائل المختارة والتي بدورها تعكس الوظيفة الفكرية.

النتائج: تقدم الدراسة نسباً متغيرة من أنواع متعدية الفعل المستخدمة والتي تكشف القيمة التواصلية لمتعدية الفعل في الرسائل إلى المحرر المختارة. حقق النوع المادي 35% وتعد أعلى نسبة استخدام بينما تدرجت بقية الأنواع الارتباطي، العقلي، السلوكي، اللفظي والوجودي بنسب 28%، 19%، 14%، 3% و 1% على التوالي.

الخلاصة: تتنوع وظائف الخطاب لمتعدية الفعل المستخدمة في العينات المختارة من الرسائل إلى المحرر اعتماداً على الأهمية الأيديولوجية والقوة الاجتماعية ونوع النص.

الكلمات الدالة: التحليل، رسائل إلى المحرر، الوظيفة الفكرية، متعدية الفعل، التايمز.



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## 1. Introduction

Letters to the editor, as a genre, is a powerful section of newspaper discourse since it aims to include readers in the act of communication. It represents a linguistic case in which the letter writer expresses a specific type of mode that needs to be well interpreted by readers since each clause in the letter illustrates a specific type of proposition or mood. It is primary argumentative, i.e. it is designed to make readers convinced to accept a particular viewpoint and to provoke them into an immediate or future course of action. This situation is closely linked with ideational meta-function which is represented by transitivity.

Letters to the editor reflects a standpoint of the writer, one of readers, who is supposed to be “older, better educated, wealthier and more politically conservative than other readers” who do not care of writing in letters to the editor (Grey and Brown cited in Richardson 2007:152). To achieve the persuasion of the readers and to get their attention accordingly, the writer's viewpoint is expressed carefully and refers to a specific representation of an event in terms of transitivity. Transitivity is related to ideational meta-function which reflects the contextual value of field which is the activity in regard to which language is functioning in context of situation (Graber, 2001:75). Transitivity has different choices and each choice is utilised in a different degree from others. The transitivity action process is different from relational process according to a social or ideological significance between them. The variable choices in transitivity that reflect ideational meta-function would create a problem that would face the reader in getting full interpretation of the suggested proposition or implication in the letters to the editor.

The current study aims at identifying the transitivity processes in selected letters to the editor of *The Times* edited on June-December 2022 and analysing these processes to show the representation which reflects clearly the ideational meta-function. To achieve this qualitative study and according to the workable concepts in systemic functional grammar (henceforth SFG), Halliday and Matthiessen's model (2014) has been chosen to examine the functions and discoursal values of transitivity occurred in letters to the editor.

The study comes up with some conclusions that show the ideational meta-function of transitivity system utilised in the selected letters to the editor. The transitivity processes in the selected samples of letters to the editor are variants, depending on the ideological significance, social power and text type.

## 2. The Meta-Functional Perspective

The term meta-function is suggested instead of ‘function’ to indicate the meaning of ‘functionality of language’ as an intrinsic and integral component in the theory rather than the confined meaning of ‘function’ which is traditionally means the way we use the language or the purpose of using it (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014: 31). The functional approach of SFG analyzes the functions of the language to make meaning in context of situation. In terms of discourse analysis, this approach is grounded on a social semiotic which is well defined in the works of Halliday by which his emphasis centered on the functionality of language and how people use language to accomplish things (Nguyen, 2012:85). The conceptual framework of this theory is built on functional aspect rather than the formal one (Halliday, 1994:39). In SFG, system is related to the meaning by which it has diversity of options which enable them to generate linguistic utterances (Coffin, 1997:196). Halliday and Matthiessen (2014:33) state that functionality is essential to language. The theory is used in a much wider sense, particularly to describe the whole system of the clause, instead of describing the verb only with its object. However, it concerns with the traditional emphasis on the verbal group, since it is the main issue of the type of process that determines labelling the participants. For example, the ‘doer’ of a material process like ‘kicking’ has a different naming from the ‘doer’ of a mental process like ‘wishing’ (Thompson, 2014: 94). Bloor and Bloor (1995:4) state that people use language as an expression of meaning whether it occurs in spoken discourse or written text. Halliday considers the text as a chunk of language produced for communicative purposes between people in real circumstances. Utterances and texts are generated by speakers of the language to convey their intended meanings by the ‘generalized meta-functions which connect the language to the external world in which people have social roles (Haratyan, 2011:260). Halliday states that there are three meta-functions of language which are as follow:

## 2.1 Ideational Meta-Function

## 2.2 Interpersonal Meta-Function

## 2.3 Textual Meta-Function

Meta-functions are the main components of the semantic system; ideational, interpersonal, and textual, are reflected in the language use (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 29–31). Moreover, all clauses include meta-functional meanings. Coffin (1997:230) states that the main principal of meta-function is rooted in the theory of ‘context of situation’ and ‘context of culture’ by Mailnowski (1923-1935) which then was developed by Firth. The context involve three variables are made to analyze the text which are: ‘Field’ of activity referring to the ideational function, ‘Tenor’ of the social relationships of people and the ‘mode’ that is used to compose the information in the message.

### 3. Ideational Meta-Function and Transitivity System

Halliday’s development of Functional grammar of modern English is one of major contribution to linguistic analysis. He shows how simultaneous elements of meaning (ideational, interpersonal, and textual) are represented in clause structure (Alaei and Ahangari, 2016:205). The ideational study reflects the grammatical resources which are provided to construe meanings of the world at the level of the clause to give rise to possible representations of reality” (Bloor and Bloor, 2014:151). Also, Eggins (2004:204) states that the ideational elements of meaning involve two components: the first one is experiential meaning that is represented within the clause. The second one is the logical meaning which lies between clauses within complex ones. Representational meaning is expressed by the transitivity system and that is about Halliday’s “clause as representation”.

Ideational meta-function is the source of interpreting our outer and inner world of experience, and it enables human beings to express patterns of experiences. In order to achieve this goal, the unit of the language which is the clause plays an important role in representing the reality consists of processes. Linguists and scholars utilise these processes to model experience. Human experience clearly made up of ‘flow of events or ‘goings-on’ which is chunked into what is described by Halliday ‘quanta of change’ and by the grammar of the clause each one of ‘quantum of change’ is represented as a ‘figure’. “A figure of happening, doing, sensing, saying, being or having”. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004:170). All these meta-functions are accomplished by the grammatical system and that is called “Transitivity”. However, the grammatical system which is used to accomplish meanings in a text is transitivity system. Transitivity system is reflective of experiential facet of meaning (or in another word ideational meaning) (Wulandari, 2016:3). Bumela (2012:111) states that “meanings are basically grammaticalized” and all choices of grammar are meaningful, and their goal is to serve specific discourse. People construe the complex world depending on this system which aids to deal with our experiences and categorize them into a set of process types. The clause conveys the semantic processes involving three components:

1. Process is precisely the part of the clause which is realized by the verb phrase.
2. Participants are often an animate (human) involved in the process realized by NP. Hence, not all of participants are animates, in sentences like ‘something stop the car’ here both of ‘car’ and ‘something’ are inanimate participants (Bloor& Bloor, 2004:109)
3. Circumstances are not directly related with the process, realized by adverb and preposition phrases.

### 4. Letters to the Editor

Letters to the editor create a dialogue between editor and readers and sometimes among readers themselves and stimulating readers to write about variety of public and private issues that concern them all (Shevelow,1989:41). Richardson (2007:150) states that letters to the editor is primarily argumentative and their significance is in (re)shaping public opinion but they are not representative of public opinion.

Wahl-Jorgensen (2002:73) suggests four criteria used by editors to select or reject readers’ letters to be published. The first is the rule of relevance which prefers topics that have a legitimate place in the public debate. The second is the rule of entertainment. Notions of what is entertaining differ according to taste. All newspapers try to “turn on readers by offering

more sparkly, entertaining op-ed pages and letters sections” (ibid.:74). This is the case when letters argue about disempowered, discriminated or otherwise harassed issues of the public. The rule of brevity, which is the third, prefers the succinct and punchy letters not lengthy deliberation. This means that discussion tends to fall within the bounds of “thinkable thought” (Richardson, 2007:153). Finally, the rule of authority which is displayed in two ways: as textual competence and as personal character. It is not enough for the letter writer to have something to say but the on-odds letter writer knows how to say it. Also what gives authority to letters is their writers even though personal authority alters between newspapers (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2002:77).

Accordingly, Richardson (2007:151) summarizes the main characteristics of letters to the editor:

1. Letters to the editor is written by readers using their ideas, observations, and arguments.
2. It is usually written in response to previous articles in that newspaper therefore it also says something about the news values of the newspapers.
3. The editorial staff select and print letters, the way in which an indication of news values is given. This leads to show how the newspaper wants to represent the opinions of their readers.
4. Like all editorial content, letters to the editor is edited in accordance with the newspaper’s style guide to provide an insight into the interpersonal function of newspaper discourse.
5. Letters to the editor is often placed alongside letters that offer different standpoints, in ways that sometimes reveal the editorial line of the newspaper.

Al-Mahdawi and Hummadi (2009:19) states that letters to the editor represent a set of opinions expressing the voice of the newspaper.

To sum up, letters to the editor gives an ideational representation of thought/action, in terms of transitivity system about or towards the previous discussed proposition. Transitivity system is well dealt with in Halliday and Matthiessen’s model (2014) which would be a workable model for this system.

## 5. Methodology

This qualitative study reveals the ideational meta-function reflected in the use of variant transitivity processes depending on social relations and ideological significance. Each process reflects the communicative value of persuasion in letters to the editor. Ten samples of letters to the editor of *The Times* in the period from June-December 2022 are selected for the sake of analysis adopting Halliday and Matthiessen’s model (2014) of analysis as being the most comprehensive model in this area.

### 5.1 Analysis of Selected Letters to the Editor

#### Analysis of Letter (1)

##### Question of leadership within the Tory party

Sir, I read with interest your leading article about the British government’s lack of philosophical purpose and sense of public duty (“Gesture Politics”, May 31. These complaints are similar to the ones heard here in Australia, where two weeks ago an arrogant conservative government sleepwalked its way to election ignominy.

Yes, there is a difference in style between Scott Morrison, the former Australian prime minister, and Boris Johnson. But there is also a troubling similarity between their governments — tired conservative parties that trashed conventions to hold on to power at any cost. Policy concerns in the two countries bear a striking similarity: the cost of living, affordable housing and government accountability.

**(Friday June 03 2022, 12.01am, The Times)**

The writer of Letter (1) tries to make lots of comparisons between the policies and the philosophy of the two different countries with showing mostly material aspect of both positive and negative sides like “conservative parties that **trashed** conventions to **hold** on to power”. Some comparisons are introduced by relational processes like “These complaints are similar to the ones...”. Existential processes identified the existence of some similarities and differences between two events,

like “there is a difference in style between...” and “These complaints are similar...”. The writer showed his awareness of serious of the situation by mental processes like “I read with interest”, and “Policy concerns in the two countries”.

#### **Analysis of Letter (2)**

##### **Impact of biggest rail strikes in a generate**

Sir, Rail union members are concerned about “unfair” pay. Have they considered the unfairness of the Tube and rail strikes on students? Their action means that pupils across the country, already nervous about the first public exams any of them have faced after two years of the pandemic, have the added anxiety of missing the exam. Exam boards allow some flexibility to start a candidate up to 30 minutes late but that flexibility is limited to protect the exam’s integrity. On June 21, students in London face the double whammy of a Tube and rail strike. Could thought at least be given to separating the strikes so that students have more travel options that day? Pupils will be left with the unenviable choice of embarking.

**(Saturday June 11 2022, 12.01am, The Times)**

The writer of Letter (2) uses different types of transitivity processes. Basically, relational processes are used to draw important relations to express the anxiety of rail member union towards the little payment for employees and worrying from their strikes on students, like “Rail union members are concerned about...”, and “students have more travel options”. Material processes are used to show some difficulties that students may face during the exams and presenting some solution to solve the problem they encounter. Besides using some behavioral processes to show his outer manifestations toward the case like “Exam boards **allow** some flexibility to start...to **protect** the exam’s...”, the writer also used mental processes to express feelings of the members of the rail union, employees, and students.

#### **Analysis of Letter (3)**

##### **Blueprint for a 21<sup>st</sup>-century school system**

Sir, I gave evidence to the Times Education Commission and agree with most of its conclusions (reports, Jun 15). To adapt to our changing world, young people need an education that allows them to study a broader-ranging curriculum rather than specialize in three core academic subjects at 16. This would allow them to continue with key subjects that they otherwise would have given up at 16, such as a second language or maths. They also need an education that recognizes the importance of critical thinking, community service and philosophy, much like the programmes of the International Baccalaureate (IB). That said, the commission’s suggestion of one overarching qualification, a British baccalaureate giving equal value to vocational and academic routes represents a challenge to me.

**(Thursday June 16 2022, 12.00am BST, The Times)**

Halliday and Matthiessen states that mental process expresses the inner experience. The writer aims to express his agreement about the conclusions of education commission through mental processes. Besides, other processes such as material processes are used in L (3) to urge the educational system to put into consideration to expand the curriculum for students for more benefit, for example “I **gave** evidence”. Verbal process takes place in this letter to identify the conclusions of the commission “That said, the commission’s suggestion”.

#### **Analysis of Letter (4)**

##### **Tory party rules and choosing the next leader**

Sir, I am ashamed of my party and for my country. I joined the Conservative Party in 1956, fought my first constituency in 1964, and have been in parliament for 52 years. Never have I experienced such chaos as in the last two years. Quite rightly a charlatan was removed from the highest office, only to be replaced, because of our absurd system of electing a successor, by an incompetent ideologue. She has now recognized that her government has lost all credibility. It is the duty of Conservative MPs to see that she can recommend to the King a leader who can command broad support and who will, in turn, create a broadly based and credible administration

**(Friday October 21 2022, 12.00pm, The Times)**

Halliday states that transitivity system construes the world of experience into manageable set of process types. Different

types of processes are used in this letter and the previous ones each of which serve different functions. Mental processes are used to express the discontent of the member towards his party like “I am **ashamed**...” and “I **experienced**...”. Along with material processes which are dominant in Letter (4) which show honest side of the member towards his party and the country like “charlatan was **removed** from ... to be **replaced**”.

### Analysis of Letter (5)

#### Johnson’s possible return as prime minister

Sir, I am saddened and disturbed that the main reason Jacob Rees-Mogg and others are using to persuade MPs to vote for Boris Johnson is that he would, allegedly, be more successful at the next general election. How low is the Conservative Party in danger of falling that we are being asked to choose the next prime minister based on the party interest and not on the public interest?

Johnson’s government collapsed only weeks ago, because his own cabinet and ministers concluded that he was unfit to be prime minister. The public interest is to have a prime minister who understands economic policy and who, working with the chancellor, can help to restore the UK’s reputation for competence and economic stability. Johnson has never been.

(Saturday October 22 2022, 12.01am, The Times)

Important relations are made in Letter (5) to show the bad influence of choosing a prime minister without considering the will of people and other societal aspects like “... Boris Johnson **is** that he would, allegedly, **be** more successful”. Mental processes are presented to show the feelings towards the issue like “I am **saddened** and **disturbed**”. The writer uses the material processes to presents solution for the issue and some suggestions, also, some hints if the selection of the prime minister will be based not on the public interest like “Johnson’s government collapsed only weeks ago”. The behavior processes used to show the amount of pressure that the writer face to make a decision like “to **vote** for Boris Johnson” and how they might behave in case the best candidate is chosen like “...can **help** to restore...”.

### Analysis of Letter (6)

#### Who gets the pets? Divorce court gives final say ... to the dog

After 15 years of marriage an Argentinian couple were happy to go their separate ways, apart from one intractable problem: who would get to keep the dogs?

So, they went to court. In the process, they helped to establish a legal precedent that they were a “multispecies family”, with each human and canine member having their own rights.

(Friday November 04 2022, 4.35pm GMT, The Times)

The issues are conveyed in material way through the use of five material processes between two couples with emphasis on important issue for both of them which are the right of the canine, the writer used material processes in clauses like “who would **get** to **keep**...”. The writer uses some relations clearly aiming at sending a message through which “couples **were** happy” and “they **were** multispecies”. Relational processes are functioned in a good way, they describe the feelings related to some issues like divorce.

### Analysis of Letter (7)

#### Nurses’ strike and ‘unsafe’ levels of care

Sir, Your report “Nurses will walk out of cancer and A&E wards” (Dec 3), implying services will be left unsafe, overlooks that NHS services are already unsafe. Using Christmas Day service levels may not be a good benchmark as many Christmas Days are unsafe. In fact, staffing levels may even improve on strike days, when every stop will be pulled out.

This government has ignored long-term solutions to staffing for years, but the one quick action that would help the situation right now would be to give a substantial pay rise to experienced staff, crucial to the service, who are leaving in droves. Thus, if the only thing that brings this government to the negotiating table is the last resort of industrial

**(Monday December 05 2022, 12.01am, The Times)**

Many processes are used in this letter with prominence of relational processes to show important relations like “services **are** unsafe” and “services **will be** left”. Also, there are different solutions are presented by using material processes like “...to **give** a substantial pay rise...who are **leaving** ...” by which the writer illustrates the bad influence will be left when applying the service of “Christmas Days” for nurses. The mental processes are not used in this letter in order to show the importance the subject presented in the letter away of feelings.

**Analysis of Letter (8)**

**Government’s plan to rein in the judiciary**

Sir, The government’s plan to reverse unwelcome court judgments raises a number of questions (“PM plans to let ministers throw out legal rulings”, Dec 6). If parliament wishes to change the law in response to a particular case, it can do so. But the idea of an annual “Interpretation Bill” — apparently allowing for the wholesale reversal of judgments — looks like a threat to the courts that they will be routinely overruled if they find against the government. It would risk embedding a relationship of conflict between the judiciary and the executive. It is also unclear what role parliament would have in such a model.

**(Monday December 06 2022, 9.00pm GMT, The Times)**

Material processes are dominant in Letter (8). They are reflected on things the government aim to create and transfer some laws which appeal to the opposite direction “unwelcome judgments” like “The government’s plan to **reverse** unwelcome court judgments **raises** a number of questions”. According to Halliday ‘material process’ indicates the existing of the outer interaction with the inner ones. In this letter, material process is functioned to show the opposite direction to what is intended to be created by the government “if they **find** against the government”. On the other hand, mental processes are used by the writer to explain the desire of a third person that their needs will lead to subsequences which might be very bad. For example “If parliament **wishes** to change”.

**Analysis of Letter (9)**

**Nursing strike and threat of longer walkouts**

Sir, As a nurse with more than 40 years’ experience of working in the NHS I read with sadness the possibility of longer walkouts by nurses (news, Dec 15). The cost of living crisis is undoubtedly taking its toll on everyone’s finances, the health service is under extreme pressure and nurses are having to dig deeper to provide high-quality care. However, striking is only going to impact negatively on patients, creating longer waiting lists. Only if we work together can we find a way through. Strike action is not a solution, it is act of frustration and a distraction from getting us back on track. I am sad and disappointed in my profession.

**(Friday December 16 2022, 12.00am GMT, The Times)**

From the perspective of the writer, the finance difficulties effect the living of the nurses. Different processes like relational processes are used to link the strikes and their negative effects on patients like “The cost of living crisis **is** undoubtedly ...”. The writer functions the mental processes to reflect the feelings of the participants who are involved in this case, to gain their support to solve the issue. For example: “I **read** with sadness” mental processes used by the writer to express explicitly his feelings toward the case describing that the case is causing him sadness and frustration, like “I am sad and disappointed”.

**Analysis of Letter (10)**

**We’d be bonkers to encourage anonymous rants**

Last week the editors of The Times and Sunday Times explained in a message to readers why we’ve decided to remove the right to anonymity from those who post comments on our digital platforms. “The Times view is that you should know who you are speaking to, rather than debating with a pseudonym. We want to present an alternative to social media, where animosity is too often protected by anonymity.

Many readers have greeted the news with relief: “Congratulations,” Kevin Ryan wrote. “The quality of conversation can only go up. “Others said “High time” and “A sensible and long overdue decision, well done”

**(Friday December 16 2022, 9.00pm GMT, The Times)**

The writer of Letter (10) deals with “removing the right to anonymity” in a neutral way with showing the benefit of such a decision of The Times. Material processes are used to reflect the serious effect and intentions behind such a decision, like “to **remove** ... who **post** comments on ...”. Along with material processes, mental processes are presented by editors to justify their decision to the readers like “We **want** to present an alternative”. Also, the behavioral processes are used by the writer to shed the light at how the reader acted towards the new decision, like “readers have **greeted** the news with relief”

## 5.2 Findings and Discussion

The following table shows that (123) processes are spotted in selected letters to the editors. The majority of the process types is material process which occurred 43 times of the total of the letters. Material process is followed by (34) occurrences of relational processes. Mental processes occurred 23 times followed by the behavioral processes which appeared 17 times. However, table (1) shows that the least type of processes occurred in the selected letters of the editor are the verbal process (16) times and the existential process (9) respectively.

**Table (1) Frequencies and Percentage of Transitivity Processes in the Selected Letters**

<b>Transitivity Processes</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Mental process</b>	<b>Relational process</b>	<b>Behavioral process</b>	<b>Verbal process</b>	<b>Existential process</b>
<b>Letter (1)</b>	3	2	1	1	-	2
<b>Letter (2)</b>	1	1	5	2	-	-
<b>Letter (3)</b>	3	4	1	4	1	-
<b>Letter (4)</b>	6	4	2	2	-	-
<b>Letter (5)</b>	4	5	6	3	1	-
<b>Letter (6)</b>	5	-	2	1	-	-
<b>Letter (7)</b>	4	-	6	2	-	-
<b>Letter (8)</b>	8	1	3	-	-	-
<b>Letter (9)</b>	4	3	7	1	-	-
<b>Letter (10)</b>	5	2	1	1	2	-
<b>Total Frequencies</b>	43	23	34	17	4	2
<b>Percentage</b>	35%	19%	28%	14%	3%	1%

Material process construes doing and happening. Also, it answers the question “what happened, and what did X do?” (Butt, 2000:28). In letters to the editor, there are 35% of material processes which are promoting actions that are intended by the (listeners) editors and other readers and (speakers) writers. These processes seem to convey more objectivity than the other ones and this observation. The written letters are doing or acting as leading element to direct the reader’s attention to specific case. Material processes give a clear picture of some actions and their subsequences. This gives a chance to bring in mind a scenario of future events, their negatives and positive.

Relational processes relate and characterize objects in the world. The process of being can describe the kind of relationship between two concepts or two things. Relational processes play a vital role in letters to the editor to represent important relations that needs to be solved and to take care of. Relational processes draw some unique relations in letters to the editor, and they are meant to be focused. On the other hands, they are used to show negative and positive aspects of some mentioned issues and trying by this process to make a balance drawing the attention to how to deal with these issues.



It was observed that Material and Relational processes are the most frequently expressed on letters to editors for taking accounts of reality and in turn deliver it to the readers.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) state that mental processes are concerned with feelings and sensing. The occurrences of mental processes are forming 19% of the letters to the editor. Mostly they express quantum of change in the flow of events and how they are reaching the consciousness of mind listener or speaker and how these events affect the inside world of him. Mental processes that are being used in letters to the editor used to express the feelings of the writer toward a specific case that is clearly closely to him, so that by mentioning some of these feeling hoping for a change for better situation. Also, it is used to give a picture of part of people side and how some events effect on them emotionally in try to interpret the type of action they are making. Demonstrations, and disappointing and depression the writer feels is caused by such heavy pressure affecting their life and their pattern of life.

Behavior processes construe physiological or psychological behavior like breathing, smiling ...etc. (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). In letters to the editor, behavioral processes occurred with 14% of the total which serve to depict the behavior of people. For example: “that flexibility is limited to protect the exam’s integrity”, the willing of behaving like protective for the integrity of exams and not to be affected by strikes which will definitely has negative influence on students who will be have late date for their exams.

Verbal and existential processes are the least processes were used in letters to editor, (3% and 1%) respectively. Most of the verbal processes used give the authority to the writer himself without and to show his real intention concerning the presented issues.

## **6. Conclusions**

The ideational function used by the writer is related to the statement of his/her real world and inner world experiences that include language acts and internal consciousness such as cognition, perception, and reaction. It is mostly realized through transitivity systems, which seek to identify the participants and circumstances involved with it.

Transitivity is an important part of the ideational meta-function in SFG. Transitivity system can realize the function because it interprets experience into a range of processes namely, Material process, Mental process, Relational process, Behavioral process, Verbal process, and Existential process. Thus, the specific variant of transitivity processes utilized by the writer in his/her letter to the editor is restricted by text type, ideological significance and social power. The communicative aspect is accomplished by using transitivity system since it creates a conversation between the reader and the editors. The reflected ideology was studied carefully by the editors who intended to present their agreement or disagreement on presented events or judgments. The discoursal function of transitivity of letters to the editor is successfully used since they reflected the main points that are aimed to be presented for both reader and writer.

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