Journal of Human and Social Sciences (JHSS) • Vol 9, Issue 8 (2025) • P: 88 - 72
https://journals.ajsrp.com/index.php/jhss
ISSN: 2522-3380 (Online) • ISSN: 2522-3380 (Print)

An Exploration of Morpho-Syntactic Elements of Block Language in Journalistic Discourse

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Received: 03/07/2025
Revised: 12/07/2025
Accepted: 31/07/2025
Published: 30/08/2025

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Citation: Yaseen, O. H. (2025). An Exploration of Morpho-Syntactic Elements of Block Language in Journalistic Discourse. *Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences, 9*(8), 72 – 88. https://doi.org/10.26389/AJSRP.Q050725

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Abstract: The present study aims at investigating the morphological and syntactic features that constitute the "block language" in journalistic discourse through the comparison of Arabic and English texts. The research used a hybrid approach, qualitative-quantitative. The data collection consisted of 100 documents: 50 Arabic articles taken from Al-Quds Al-Arabi and 50 English articles taken from The Guardian.

The results indicate that nominal structures are dominant, accounting for 88% in Arabic texts and 82% in English texts. The grammatical ellipsis is 76% in Arabic writings and 70% in English writings. Arabic composition uses the passive voice 58% of the time while English composition uses it 72% of the time. "Research has shown that Arabic writings tend to have more ellipsis and syntactic compression, while the passive voice is more common in English. Block language is shown to be more than a mere stylistic preference: it is a functional tactic of conciseness, an illusion of impartiality, an articulation of ideological stances and an occasional obscuring of agent and accountability.

The research suggests further study of the ideological characteristics of block language in different media formats, emphasising the necessity to include the study of morphological and syntactic features in the study of journalism and translation programs, thus enhancing critical consciousness and analytical reading skills of media texts.

Keywords: Block Language, Journalistic Discourse, Functional Grammar, Media Linguistic Interaction

استكشاف العناصر الصرفية والنحوية للغة المغلقة في الخطاب الصحفي

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المستخلص: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى ايجاد العناصر الصرفية والنحوية التي تُميّز ما يُعرف بـ"اللغة المغلقة" في الخطاب الصحفي من خلال تحليل مقارنة للنصوص العربية والإنجليزية. واعتمدت هذه الدراسة منهجية نوعية وكمية، شملت 100 نصاً صحفياً (50 نصًا عربيًا من صحيفة القدس، و50 نصًا إنجليزيًا من صحيفة الغارديان).

وأظهرت النتائج أن التراكيب الاسمية هي الأكثر شيوعًا، حيث شكلت 88% في النصوص العربية و82% في النصوص الإنجليزية. يليها الحذف النحوي بنسبة 76% في النصوص العربية و70% في النصوص الإنجليزية. وتم أستخدم المبني للمجهول بنسبة 58% في النصوص العربية و72% في النصوص الإنجليزية. كما أظهرت الدراسة أن النصوص العربية تميل إلى استخدام الحذف والاختصار النحوي بشكل أكبر، ومن ناحية أخرى شكل المبني للمجهول النسبة الأكبر في اللغة الإنجليزية. وقد تبين أن اللغة المغلقة ليست مجرد خيار أسلوبي، بل هي استراتيجية وظيفية تُستخدم لتحقيق الإيجاز وإظهار الحياد الظاهر وصياغة المواقف الأيديولوجية، وأحيانًا إخفاء الفاعل أو اخلاء المسؤولية.

وتوصي الدراسة بمواصلة البحث في الأبعاد الأيديولوجية للغة المغلقة عبر مختلف أنواع الإعلام الاخرى وضرورة دمج تحليل الظواهر الصرفية والنحوية في مناهج الصحافة والترجمة. وهذا ما سوف يساهم في تنمية الوعي النقدي ومهارات القراءة التحليلية للنصوص الإعلامية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لغة الكتلة، الخطاب الصحفي، القواعد الوظيفية، التفاعل اللغوي الإعلامي.

1- Introduction

Journalistic discourse is a new species of linguistic communication characterised by the brevity of information, use of condensed linguistic structures and use of certain rhetorical and grammatical means to attract the audience and deliver information with maximum efficiency. One of the linguistic phenomena that characterises this discourse is the so-called " block language ". This is a pattern characterised by short or fragmented sentences, or grammatically deficient structures that have a specific communicative purpose in a journalistic context (Giomi, R., 2023).

The analysis of morpho-syntactic features of this type of language is of special importance for understanding the way in which the language of journalistic discourse changes the rules of the standard language to meet the requirements of brevity, involvement and rapid comprehension. As Halliday (1985) points out, language is not merely a device for expressing thought, but is itself conditioned by the social situation, and therefore a corresponding language is formed for each mode of discourse.

Accordingly, this research seeks to explore the morphological and syntactic phenomena of fragmented language within journalistic discourse, focusing on patterns of ellipsis, the use of the passive voice, nominal construction, and reduced constructions. It also aims to understand how journalism reshapes the grammatical system of language to serve its communicative goals, based on the analysis of real-life samples of articles and headlines in contemporary print media Zappavigna, M., 2023).

Recent research shows that analysing this type of language not only sheds light on the mechanisms of journalistic writing, but also contributes to the development of applied linguistics, language teaching, and mass communication studies (Biber et al., 1999). Hence, the importance of this research stems from its exploration of the intersection between linguistic structure and media context, raising important questions about the flexibility of grammar in contemporary discursive practices(Crystal and Davy, 1969)

This study stems from an academic desire to understand the morphological and syntactic foundations that constitute what is known in contemporary linguistic studies as "fragmented language" in journalistic discourse, particularly in headlines and introductions characterised by abbreviation and condensation. The research aims to analyse the linguistic forms adopted by this language in terms of morphological structure (such as the omission of articles or the use of abbreviated forms of words) and syntactic structure (such as the deliberate omission of essential grammatical elements such as the verb or the grammatical conjunction) (Bednarik, M. 2023)..

The aim of the research is to study the communicative roles these structures play, and the ways in which disjointed language communicates messages effectively, even when it does not follow conventional grammatical rules. It involves the study of linguistic phenomena such as grammatical ellipsis, heavy nominal constructions, the absence of pronouns and concise explanatory systems.

It also seeks to extend the theoretical discussion on the relationship between linguistic structure and social context, referring to functional grammar theories such as Halliday's 'systematic functional grammar' and Biber et al.'s (1999) model for discriminating between written and spoken language. The objective of this work is to understand the adaptation of the language system to the requirements of media speech and to develop a holistic view of the language of journalism as a communication system with its own rules in a dynamically developing situation aimed at the recipient.

2- Literature Review

The field of journalistic discourse is a fertile ground for linguistic analysis due to its distinctive stylistic and structural features. One of such features is the use of block language. It emphasises conciseness and compression to achieve the maximum effect with the minimum number of words. This phenomenon has been investigated by many studies from different perspectives; however, the majority of the work has been carried out on the English language, with very limited work on the Arabic language or in a comparative perspective of both languages.

Wu (2023) recently investigated stylistic variation in digital texts and the importance of functional analysis for understanding how language operates in media discourse. “Modern media is often using short forms of language that go beyond traditional grammar rules in an effort to deliver the information effectively and engage the audience,” he said. Ding et al. (2023) investigated the relationship between linguistic economy in media discourse and societal polarisation. They found that extreme brevity and omission of detail may lead to different interpretations of events, further polarising public opinion (Banks, 2024).

These studies are useful; however, most of them have dealt with English discourse or linguistic phenomena in the digital context without examining the morphological and syntactic features of block language in Arabic journalistic texts or conducting a detailed

comparative study between the two languages. Moreover, these studies have not deeply explored the direct relationship between these linguistic phenomena and the ideological dimension in the construction of journalistic discourse (Amari and Hamlawi, 2025).

The research gap lies in the lack of a comparative analytical study that investigates the distinctive morphological and syntactic features of block language in both Arabic and English and relates these features to the communicative and ideological functions of journalistic texts, especially in headlines and introductions, which are among the most densely populated textual domains with block language.

The originality of this study lies in the fact that it is the first, to the researcher's knowledge, to integrate morphological and syntactic analysis of block language in Arabic and English journalistic texts, using a dual analytical model that combines the methodology of systematic functional grammar and structural content analysis. This model allows for a deeper understanding of the relationship between linguistic structure and the ideological function of journalistic discourse and contributes to enriching applied studies in the field of media linguistics, in addition to providing a practical tool that benefits researchers, translators, and professionals in the field of media (Ashraf, 2025).

Block Language

Fragmented language, also known in some modern linguistics as block language, is a prominent stylistic linguistic phenomenon in media discourse, particularly in newspaper headlines, news introductions, and subheadings. It refers to the use of concise linguistic structures that do not necessarily meet the rules of a complete sentence according to the traditional grammatical system but perform a complete communicative function within their context. This style is widely used in the media due to its brevity, density, and rapid transmission of meaning, which aligns with the practical requirements of print and visual journalism.

The term segmented language as a functional linguistic phenomenon was presented in the 1960's with the development of stylistic studies and discourse analysis . David Crystal and Derek Davy noted that newspaper headlines could not always be interpreted through the conventional grammatical structure of the sentence . In their 1969 book Investigating English Style they said that:

"Newspaper headlines often constitute a unique grammatical system, departing from the usual rules of grammar to achieve a special communicative purpose"

According to Bell (1991), what drives journalists to use this abbreviated structure is their need for time and space compression, along with the need to quickly capture the reader's attention, especially in an era where media platforms have multiplied and competition for audience attention has become more intense.

Recent studies claim that fragmented language is a functional linguistic phenomenon that has adapted morphological and syntactic rules to meet the demands of modern media, such as condensed meaning, attention-grabbing and speed of reception. As researchers have explained, this language is based on the use of nominal structures, omission of redundant grammatical elements, and dependence on context to understand the complete meaning (Al-Jarf, 2021).

There are a number of salient features of segmented language such as:

- Ellipsis: such as the omission of a verb or conjunction, as in "Protests are on the rise" instead of "Protests are now escalating."
- Nominal sequences: such as "Emergency session in Parliament," where the sentence is composed of only nouns.
- Reliance on nominal verbs or passive structures: as in "Shooting in the West Bank," without specifying the subject.

These characteristics demonstrate that segmented language does not violate linguistic rules so much as reuses them to suit the media context. This is consistent with the theory of functional grammar, which asserts that linguistic structure is shaped by the social purpose of discourse (Halliday, 1985).

This phenomenon has been recently studied as a rhetorical and discursive device. It has been explained that fragmented language is used to create rhythm and to increase the psychological impact of information especially in the case of breaking or controversial news (Montgomery, 2007) . Scholars argue that this language has an ideological function, as the linguistic simplification can be used to rearrange the information or to highlight some elements, thus allowing the "steering of public sentiment through frames" and not only the explicit meaning (Van Dijk, 1988).

The syntactic and morphological structure of journalistic discourse

Journalistic discourse, especially headlines and news leads, is a rich source for linguistic research. It uses block language to a great extent, defined by simplified morphological and syntactic structures. This language is different from standard grammatical systems as it has certain grammatical features designed to increase brevity, clarity and charm.

1. **Ellipsis**

Newspaper headlines often use grammatical ellipsis to be concise by leaving out verbs or conjunctions, but still mean what they mean. For example, in the title "Emergency Meeting in Parliament", the verb "held" or "is held" is missing and it is understood from the context that the meeting took place or will take place. (Al-Jarf, 2021).

2. **Nominal Sequences**

Journals make extensive use of nominal constructions. Sentences consist only of nouns and do not contain verbs. The text sounds formal and simple. For example, the noun phrase "Global price increases" means an increase in prices worldwide. (Biber et al., 1999).

3. **Using Passive Voice**

In journalism, the passive voice is used to hide the identity of the offender, especially when the offender is unknown or thought to be unimportant, or to avoid blaming a particular individual. For instance, "Shooting in the West Bank" is listed without clarification as to who the shooter was (Van Dijk, 1988).

4. **Condensed Structures**

Condensed structures are used in newspaper headlines to convey information in a concise form which makes it easier for readers to understand quickly. Violent Confrontations...Injuries and Arrests is a brief way of stating incidents that led to injuries and arrests without using full sentences (Montgomery, 2007).

Systematic Functional Grammar

Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is one of the most influential theories in the area of discourse analysis. Michael Halliday made it a theoretical framework which bridges linguistic structure and social context. The hypothesis states that language is not a collection of strict rules but a fluid system which is used to achieve communicative purposes in different social contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

An example of these roles is journalistic communication. Headlines such as "Violent Clashes in the West Bank" are ideologically important in that they portray a real event, while the textual function is important to convey the message in a coherent way without having to use complete sentences and thus fits the characteristics of "fragmented language" discussed earlier (Jiang, 2021).

The choice of words and positions in particular in political or economic coverage additionally emphasises the interactive function of journalism, where language is employed not only to convey the news but also to shape opinion or establish an implicit position (Wang, 2023).

Linguistic economy in journalism

The principle of economy of language is of importance in the analysis of journalistic discourse. That is, the tendency in language to express the most meaning with the fewest words, but still be clear and precise. This idea is included in the so-called 'law of minimum effort.; (Zipf, 1949).

1. **Aspects of linguistic economy in journalistic discourse**

In the journalistic context, linguistic economy manifests itself in several ways, including:

- **Ellipsis**: Grammatical elements, such as verbs or conjunctions, are dropped without changing the meaning.
- **Nominal sequence**: It is widely used in journalistic communication where sentences are made without verbs, only using nouns. It gives formality and directness to writing.
- **Using the passive voice**: It is used in news reporting to avoid naming the perpetrator, especially when the perpetrator is unknown or unimportant or to avoid assigning responsibility to a particular organization.
- **Condensed Structures**: These are used in the titles of newspapers in an effort to convey information in the most brief manner – allowing the reader to get the gist of the story quickly.

The characteristics suggest that segmented language does not violate linguistic rules, but rather reorganises them according to the media context, in line with the functional grammar theory, according to which the social goals of the discourse affect the linguistic structure (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

2. Linguistic Economy as a Communication Strategy

Linguistic efficiency in journalism is a communicative approach to brevity, clarity and appeal. Researchers say that condensed structures, hierarchical nouns and grammatical ellipsis help to distribute information and capture the reader's attention, especially at the time of the development of media platforms and the growing competition for the audience's attention (Samboruk & Golubykh, 2020).

Linguistic economy demonstrates the importance of linguistic economy in achieving the communicative goals of journalism by presenting information effectively and influentially (Ding, X., Horning, M., and Rho, E. H. 2023).

3- Methodology

This research relies on the descriptive-analytical approach, which is used in linguistic studies to analyse texts and interpret linguistic phenomena within their social and cultural contexts. This approach focuses on describing linguistic phenomena as they are, without modifying or changing them, while analyzing them to understand their functions and the reasons for their use Ashraf, Z. (2025).

In addition, the research is based on the theory of Systemic Functional Grammar developed by Michael Halliday, which is a theoretical framework through which language can be analysed as a functional system used to achieve specific communicative purposes in specific social contexts (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

The Sample

The research community consists of written journalistic discourse in Arabic and English newspapers, with a focus on headlines and news headlines that display extensive use of fragmented language.

Sample selection criteria:

- Newspapers with wide circulation and significant public influence.
- Texts containing headlines and news headlines that display the use of fragmented language.
- A variety of topics, including politics, economics, and culture.

The sample size was determined based on the study's objectives and the nature of the analytical approach used. Fifty headlines and news introductions were selected from each of two well-known newspapers, one in Arabic and one in English, for a total of 100 journalistic texts. The focus was on headlines and introductions because they represent areas of heavy use of what is known as "block language," which is the primary focus of this research.

This number complies with the recommendations of analytical linguistics research using qualitative discourse analysis, where sample size is described as "flexible" and related to analytical depth rather than statistical representation (Silverman, 2013). Not the statistical generalisation is the aim, but a faithful qualitative description and analysis of morphological and syntactic patterns in journalistic discourse; for this reason, the sample selected is sufficient to achieve results suitable for analysis and interpretation.

The Model

This research is the basis for using a bifurcated model of disjointed language in journalistic communication. It combines the theoretical framework of systematic functional grammar, developed by Michael Halliday (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014), with a structural content analysis approach to identify and analyse linguistic structures according to their grammatical structure and communicative context. The reason for choosing this model is that it has the capacity to analyse journalistic discourse with the help of several integrated linguistic dimensions such as morphological, syntactic and functional.

This analytical model operates on three main axes. First, the morphological level, where the structure of words used in headlines and introductions is analysed, focusing on phenomena such as the omission of conjunctions or the prevalence of nominal derivatives as substitutes for verb phrases. Second, the syntactic level, which analyses the structure of journalistic sentences, particularly in cases of grammatical omission or the extensive use of nominal and passive structures, which are recurring linguistic phenomena in what is known as block language (Al-Jarf, 2021). Finally, the functional level is used to analyse the purpose of these structures in the media context, either as informative (ideological function), interactive (directing an opinion or creating a position) or organisational (coordinating the discourse and linking it to the overall context) and the principles of systematic functional grammar are used in this analysis (Wang, 2023).

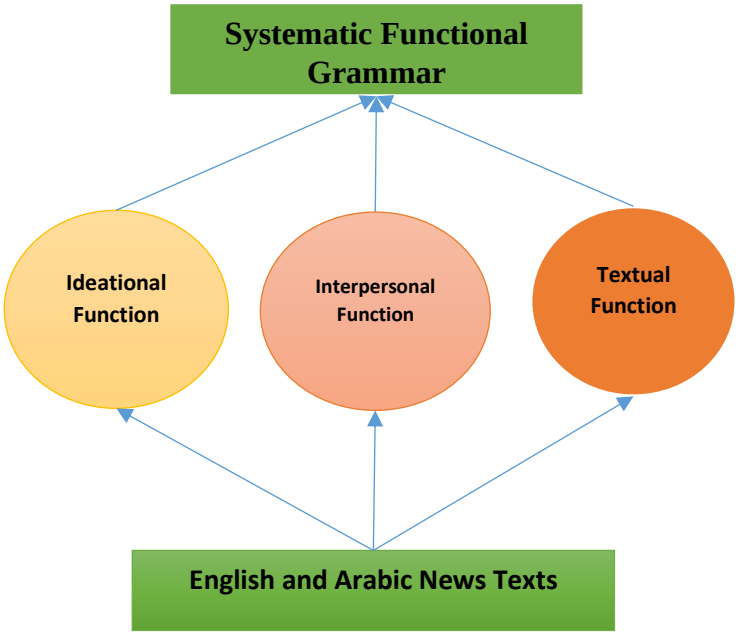

Figure (1): The analytical model of the study considering systematic functional grammar (SFG)

Data Collection and Description

The data collection process in this research is based on a textual discourse analysis strategy, employing the Directed Content Analysis tool, based on the framework of systematic functional grammar. The collection process was carefully designed to provide a representative sample of journalistic texts characterised by the extensive use of fragmented language, particularly in headlines and news introductions, where the need for brevity and linguistic suggestiveness is higher than in other sections of a journalistic article (Breeze, 2019).

The sample texts chosen are taken from two leading newspapers, Al-Quds Al-Arabi as an Arabic journalistic discourse and The Guardian as an English language discourse. The data were obtained from the electronic editions of these newspapers through keywords search of political and economic events of a pre-determined period of time to ensure balance in the events covered. The texts were gathered from the period from January to March 2024, which made it possible to study linguistic phenomena in current and interactive contexts.

The total number of texts was 100 (50 Arabic, 50 English). The text types were headlines and news introductions (lead + headline). The study covered the following subject areas: politics, economics, and international events. It also targeted linguistic features such as grammatical deletion, nominal constructions, the passive voice, and sentence compression.

Each text was classified according to the composition of its syntax, the features of segmented linguistic elements and the way in which it presented information (Saldaña, 2021).

Specific procedures were followed during the coding phase to ensure transparency and objectivity, according to the following steps:

1. **Coding Scheme Preparation:**

Five major linguistic themes were initially assembled: grammatical ellipsis, nominal constructions, passive voice, nominalisation and syntactic reduction.

2. **Coder Training:**

Before the coding, the researcher and one independent research assistant were trained on the code list using a pretest sample of 10 texts (5 texts in Arabic and 5 texts in English).

3. **Coding Process:**

All documents were systematically organised according to pre-established data collection templates with categories for the type of linguistic event, its position within the text, and its communicative purpose.

4. **Reliability Check:**

An independent research assistant checked for internal consistency by recording a random sample of 20% of the total sample. The agreement between the researcher and the assistant was evaluated using Cohen's Kappa (score 0.91), indicating a very high level of reliability.

5. **Data Analysis Steps:**

A detailed statistical analysis was performed to determine the frequency and percentage of each linguistic occurrence in the Arabic and English texts. A pragmatic-semantic analysis was carried out for each linguistic instance. The present study is based on the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, correlating the findings with the ideological and communicative aspects of journalistic texts.

Ensuring Validity and Reliability

To protect the analysis from inaccuracies, the peer debriefing method was used. 20% of the texts were independently re-coded by a research assistant. The concordance rate between the two evaluations was calculated at 91% and therefore shows the high reliability of the coding methods.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study used in-depth qualitative approach. In analysing data, this study used Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) as the main analytical framework, and analysed data at morphological, syntactic and functional levels. The analysis was carried out in systematic steps, in an attempt to reveal the reduced linguistic structure, or what is called "segmented language", in journalistic discourse. Coding and analysis tools were used, based on both linguistic content and pragmatic context (Amari, F. Z., & Hamlawi, N., 2025).

1. **Initial Coding**

First, all journalistic texts were subjected to a close reading process to identify linguistic units relevant to the research topic, such as:

- Ellipsis
- Nominal Structures
- Passive Voice
- Nominalization

Initial coding models were developed specifically for this research, based on Halliday's (2014) classifications, and reviewed by an independent linguist to verify their linguistic and contextual validity.

2. **Functional Categorization**

After the coding process, each linguistic example was classified into one or more of the language functions identified by Halliday in his theory:

- Ideological function: to represent reality or an event.
- Interpersonal function: to build relationships and direct attitudes.
- Textual function: to organize the text and connect its components.

This classification is important in understanding how reduced structures are used to achieve informational, political, or emancipatory goals in media discourse (Eggins, 2004).

3. **Comparative Analysis**

A comparative analysis was conducted on Arabic and English texts to explore similarities and differences in the use of fragmented language. The prevalence and functional diversity of fragmented structures were analysed in both languages, showing significant linguistic and cultural differences in the styles of journalistic expression in the Arabic and Anglo-Saxon contexts (Bhatia, 2017).

4. **Pragmatic Interpretation**

In this phase the results of the disjointed language use were examined in relation to the political and social contexts in which the texts were produced (van Dijk, 2008).

The analytical framework developed was bifurcated, incorporating the functional grammar methodologies and structural content analysis techniques to observe the morphological and syntactic occurrences (e.g. structural omission, nominal phrases, passive construction, etc.). For each linguistic phenomenon, a table with its definition, linguistic markers, and examples from the research sample was provided. The functional analysis allowed identifying the role of each phenomenon in the journalistic discourse (ideological, interactive or textual).

Table (1): Classification of linguistic phenomena and their functions in block language in journalistic discourse

linguistic phenomenon	Definition	Linguistic indicators	Arabic Example	English Example	Function in journalistic discourse
grammatical elision	Deleting a grammatical element such as a verb or conjunction without changing the meaning	absence of action or connection	التصعيد السياسي وما يقابله من ترقب الدولي	Political escalation... international anticipation	Brevity, suspense, directing attention to the event, not the actor
Nominal structures	Structures consisting of consecutive nouns without verbs	Accumulation of names in context	عشرات الضحايا في تفجير!	Bombing. Dozens of victims.	Summarize the event in a brief piece of information, giving it the quality of established facts
passive voice	Hide the subject and focus on the event	Using Passive Voice	التحقيقات المستمرة حول تفجير مرفأ بيروت	Beirut Port Explosion... Investigations Continue	Apparent neutrality, concealing the perpetrator for political or ideological reasons

4- Findings

The aim of this section is to present and discuss the results obtained from applying the proposed analytical framework to a selected sample of Arabic and English journalistic texts. The present study applies qualitative and quantitative methods, and linguistic occurrences are not simply recorded for their numerical prevalence, but their functional implications within the discursive framework enhance understanding.

One hundred journalistic texts (50 in Arabic and 50 in English) were examined using precise coding tools based on morphological, syntactic, and functional classifications defined by a theoretical model based on the theory of systematic functional grammar. Linguistic patterns representing what is known as "block language" were extracted from these texts, including grammatical omissions, nominal constructions, linguistic abstraction, and other manifestations of syntactic stress.

These are not coincidental random phenomena, but a recurring structural component indicating an institutional approach to the construction of journalistic introductions and headlines. This is demonstrated by the study results. The data also showed differences between the Arabic and English texts in the frequency of some linguistic structures, indicating cultural and discursive differences in the presentation of journalistic information. This does not take away the underlying similarities in the mechanisms of brevity and abbreviation that are employed in both contexts.

This section is therefore subdivided in a detailed presentation of the tables that present the distribution of the linguistic categories under study, followed by a detailed description of each of the categories individually, with frequency analysis, percentages and illustrative examples that support the findings.

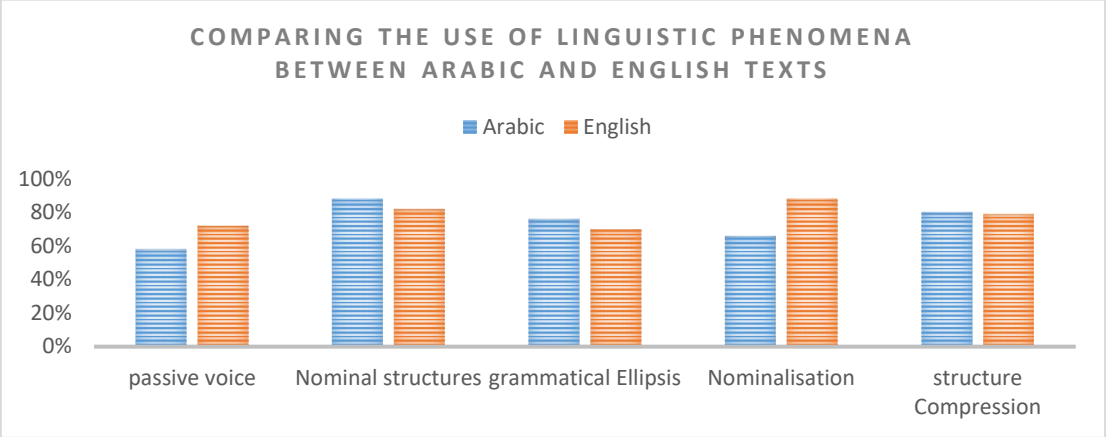

Figure 2: Comparison of the use of some linguistic phenomena between the Arabic and English texts in newspaper headlines.

Figure 2 illustrates that the analysis of linguistic phenomena in Arabic and English journalistic texts yielded a set of important findings that shed light on the expressive methods adopted by media discourse in both contexts. Through the study of five main linguistic phenomena nominal constructions, grammatical ellipsis, the passive voice, nominal derivation, and structural compression. It became clear that journalistic language generally tends toward condensation and abbreviation, serving its rapid and direct communicative nature.

Nominal constructions were the most frequent phenomena, accounting for 88% of the Arabic text and 82% of the English text. This indicates that journalistic style relies on freezing the verb and converting it to a noun to remove temporal references and condensed information. This approach enables journalists to present events as a final, abstract fact. While ellipsis was recorded in 76% of Arabic texts and 70% of English texts. This pattern is one of the most prominent characteristics of newspaper headlines, which strive for brevity and conciseness while maintaining semantic effectiveness. Ellipsis is not viewed as a mistake, but rather as a deliberate rhetorical choice that relies on the reader's awareness.

Furthermore, passive voice appeared more clearly in English texts, at 72%, compared to 58% in Arabic texts. This disparity is explained by the fact that English journalistic language employs the passive voice as a rhetorical device to conceal the perpetrator or avoid placing direct responsibility on a specific party, thus giving the news material a neutral character.

In addition, nominal derivation reached 66% in the Arabic text and 82% in the English text, indicating that both contexts use this phenomenon to formulate less emotional and more abstract declarative sentences. It is used to present an event without being linked to a verb or subject, increasing the text's susceptibility to repetition and reformulation.

Finally, the phenomenon of grammatical compression was found at 80% in the Arabic text and 79% in the English text, a nearly perfect match, confirming that reducing sentences to their basic elements is a common strategy in modern journalism. This is evident in the omission of conjunctions, the elimination of auxiliary verbs, or the use of essential vocabulary that conveys the message in the fewest possible words.

Based on the above, it can be said that the five phenomena studied do not reflect a linguistic defect or stylistic weakness, but rather a deliberate functional shift in the linguistic structure, reflecting the rapid and direct nature of contemporary journalistic discourse. The intersections and differences between Arabic and English in these phenomena also demonstrate the influence of culture and media context in guiding linguistic choices within texts.

Table (2): Arabic News Texts - Frequency and Percentage of Morpho-Syntactic Features

Responses to Morpho-Syntactic Features (Arabic)	Ellipsis		Nominal Structures		Passive Voice		Nominalization		Structure Compression		Total	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Frequently Used	38	*76*	44	*88*	29	*58*	33	*66*	40	*80*	184	*%73.6*
Occasionally Used	10	*20*	6	*12*	15	*30*	10	*20*	8	*16*	49	*%19.6*
Not Used	2	*4*	0	*0*	6	*12*	7	*14*	2	*4*	17	*%6.8*
Total	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	250	%100

Table (2) displays the quantitative distribution of five morphological-syntactic phenomena associated with what is known as "block language," based on the analysis of 100 journalistic texts, 50 of which were in Arabic and 50 in English.

The categories analysed included: grammatical deletion, nominal constructions, passive voice, nominalisation, and syntactic reduction. The table shows the frequency and percentage of occurrences within each linguistic group for each category.

Ellipsis

This was the case in 76% of the texts that discussed the common use of grammatical ellipsis (38 cases) emphasising the effect of this technique in the growth of Arabic titles. 4% didn't use it and 20% used it sporadically. Ellipsis is considered one of the most important syntactic compression mechanisms Breeze (2019).

Nominal Structures

This was the most frequently used category with 88% of the texts using it predominantly (44 instances), 12% using it occasionally and 0% not using it at all. This result confirms that Arabic discourse favours nominalisation over verbalisation in reduction, because the representation of events as static facts relies heavily on abstract nouns, rather than their narration as temporal processes (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

Passive Voice

It appears in 58% of texts as a common usage, and is less frequent than in English. It was occasionally observed in 30% and absent in 12%. However, Arabic often replaces it with the bare noun or the complete omission of the subject.

Nominalization

This phenomenon was documented 66% of texts recorded a prevalent use of this pattern, while 20% used it occasionally, and 14% did not. This pattern reflects a linguistic style that moves away from direct kinetic expression and instead relies on conceptual abstraction.

Structural Compression

It achieved a high usage rate (80% common, 16% occasional), and was absent in only 4% of texts. This pattern is a fundamental feature of headline language, where sentences are reduced to the fewest possible words while preserving the central meaning, as in: "Bombing Gaza" instead of "The forces bombed targets in Gaza."

The data reveal that the Arab media relies primarily on the morphological and abbreviation features in the headlines and the introduction of the news, with a stylistic tendency for conciseness and non-bias. These high percentages demonstrate that these phenomena are not just auxiliary rhetorical devices, but rather represent acknowledged linguistic strategies consciously used within the framework of a formalised media discourse that responds to the demands of rapidity, attractiveness and impartiality.

Table (3): English News Texts - Frequency and Percentage of Morpho-Syntactic Features

Responses to Morpho-Syntactic Features (Arabic)	Ellipsis		Nominal Structures		Passive Voice		Nominalization		Structure Compression		Total	
	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P
Frequently Used	35	*70*	41	*82*	36	*72*	39	*78*	42	*84*	193	*%77.2*
Occasionally Used	12	*24*	9	*18*	10	*20*	9	*18*	6	*12*	46	*%18.4*
Not Used	3	*6*	0	*0*	4	*8*	2	*4*	2	*4*	11	*%4.4*
Total	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	50	*100%*	250	%100

Table (3) displays the results of analyzing 50 journalistic texts in English, based on classifying the responses into three categories: "Used Predominantly", "Used Occasionally", and "Not Used", across five main linguistic categories related to the fragmented structure of journalistic discourse.

Ellipsis

This phenomenon was recorded in 70% of texts as a common usage (35 instances), in 24% as an occasional use, and in only 6% of the sample it did not appear. Ellipsis techniques are used in English-language journalism, particularly in headlines, to conserve space without compromising the central meaning, such as: "Tensions escalate in Gaza" instead of a full sentence. This pattern indicates a stylistic tendency toward brevity and expressive economy (Bhatia, 2017).

Nominal Structures

This phenomenon accounted for 82% of common usage (41 instances), 18% of occasional usage, and no instances of non-use. This demonstrates the strong preference in English journalism for nominalization over dynamic expression, which contributes to presenting events as stable facts rather than ongoing processes, consistent with journalistic style in Anglo-Saxon environments (Eggins, 2004).

Passive Voice

Seventy-two per cent of texts recorded frequent use of the passive voice (36 instances), 20% used it occasionally, and only 8% did not. The use of the passive voice in English journalism is a strategic rhetorical device to avoid explicitly mentioning the perpetrator, especially in controversial or politically or morally charged topics, such as saying, "Protests were dispersed," instead of identifying the perpetrator.

Nominalization

This phenomenon appeared in 78% of texts as a common usage (39 instances), 18% as an occasional usage, and 4% as an absent usage. Nominalisation is used in English journalism to strip verbs and transform them into nouns that suggest neutrality or formality, such as "disruption," "withdrawal," and "negotiation." These findings point to a libertarian ideology based on reducing the moral clarity of an event.

Structural Compression

The most common use of this phenomenon was 84% (42 cases), compared to 12% occasional use and 4% non-use. This phenomenon appears in headlines where the focus is on keywords only, such as "UN meeting postponed," where every grammatical element that does not serve a central function in the meaning is omitted.

The table's results indicate that English in journalistic contexts relies heavily on morphological and syntactic reduction tools, driven by economic considerations in production and professional standards in editing. The slight differences in proportions between categories demonstrate a high degree of editorial awareness of the use of these structures, particularly in political and diplomatic news, where neutrality or strategic ambiguity are part of the rhetorical structure.

The results of this study revealed clear similarities and differences between Arabic and English in the use of block language in journalistic discourse. English texts showed a clearer tendency toward the passive voice (72%) compared to Arabic (58%), reflecting a trend in English journalism toward apparent neutrality or concealment of the subject for ideological or political reasons. In contrast, Arabic journalism demonstrated a greater reliance on syntactic deletion and linguistic abbreviation (76%), perhaps due to the nature of the Arabic language, which allows for more concise structures without compromising meaning, and also in response to the space and time constraints of digital publishing.

Another striking comparison is that nominal constructions appeared at similar rates in both languages (88% in Arabic and 82% in English), indicating a global trend toward reducing events to brief, newsworthy headlines, regardless of linguistic or cultural differences.

Practically, the results of this study offer several practical contributions, most notably:

- Helping Arabic and English journalists to understand the main language styles in headlines and news leads, which will help them to produce more accurate and more attractive content for the readers.
- The study describes the structural differences of the two languages, which enables the translators of journalistic translation to transfer the texts accurately, while keeping their communicative purpose and ideological impact.

- The education programs in journalism or translation could be enriched by adding specialised educational modules on block language, its morphological and syntactic features.
- Providing scholars with an analytical tool that they can employ in future research to examine media discourse and evaluate its ideological content.

5- Discussion

The objective of this discourse is to clarify the findings of the theoretical framework applied, i.e. systematic functional grammar, and also to analyse them in the relevant media and cultural contexts of the texts. The present part of the study is of importance for the connection of quantitative and qualitative assessments, social and ideological implications embedded in the use of fragmented language in journalistic writings.

The data revealed that linguistic phenomena such as ellipsis, nominalisation, the passive voice, and syntactic reduction are widely used in both languages, demonstrating that fragmented language is not merely a stylistic choice, but rather a systematic rhetorical strategy consistent with the nature of journalistic texts, which strives for brevity, attractiveness, and apparent neutrality. Despite this overall similarity, there are subtle differences between Arabic and English, involving the way of each phenomenon was distribution pattern, and its communicative impact, which will be clarified in the following sections.

When examining the results from a Hallidayian perspective, we find that the linguistic phenomena analysed are directly related to the three functions of language:

- The ideological function: through abstraction and focusing on events rather than actors.
- The interactional function: through creating a neutral or evasive discourse that addresses a diverse audience.
- The textual function: through organising the title and introduction to present information in a minimal amount of space.

From here, the discussion will be divided into thematic units that address each linguistic phenomenon separately, in both the Arabic and English contexts, highlighting their rhetorical and ideological implications, before moving on to analysing the intersections and differences between the two discursive systems.

Ellipsis

It is one of the most prominent stylistic features in journalistic discourse, particularly in headlines and introductions, where it is used to condense information, achieve brevity, and attract the reader's attention. The sample results show that grammatical omission was present in 76% of Arabic texts and 70% of English texts, reflecting a common tendency to use this phenomenon to achieve specific editorial goals.

First: *Grammatical Ellipsis in Arabic Journalistic Texts*

In Arabic headlines, grammatical ellipsis is widely used, where verbs or grammatical conjunctions are omitted, leaving the reader to infer the omitted elements based on the context.

Headline:

: "Yes, our house is burning... but?" – "نعم بيتنا يحترق .... ولكن؟"

Source: Al-Quds Al-Arabi, December 20, 2019

Analysis: This headline features the omission of the verb or grammatical conjunction between "yes" and "our house is burning," lending the headline a dramatic character and motivating the reader to read on to understand the full context.

Second: Grammatical Ellipsis in English Newspaper Texts

In English headlines, grammatical ellipsis is used to achieve brevity and present information directly.

Headline:

"Modi's Unexpected Visit to Pakistan Will Make Little Difference."

Source: The Guardian, December 26, 2015

Analysis: This headline omits contextual details and simply mentions the main event, creating a straightforward tone and encouraging the reader to explore the details of the article.

The above examples highlight that grammatical ellipsis is used as an effective stylistic device in newspaper headlines to achieve brevity, attract the reader's attention, and present information directly and concisely. The results show that this phenomenon is widely used in both Arabic and English texts, with slight differences in style and grammatical structure.

Analysis of Nominal Structures in the Newspaper Sample

Nominal constructions are one of the most common linguistic forms in written journalistic discourse, especially in headlines and news openings. They are of practical value in that they distilll meaning. They remove the event from temporal and subjective contexts and present information in an impartial and abstract form.

The results of the sample showed that this phenomenon was the highest in comparison to the rest of the phenomena and its application was 88% in Arabic texts and 82% in English texts. This indicates a preference of the systemic approach to the nominal approach in journalistic reporting (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

First: *In Arabic newspaper headlines*

The Arabic sample used nominal structures extensively, with headlines predominantly constructed as abstract nominal sentences, which may consist of an infinitive and an omitted verb, or a subject and predicate without apparent verbs. An example of this is the headline in Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper:

Headline:

"Defending Indigenous Biodiversity Defenders" - "الدفاع عن المدافعين عن التنوع البيئي من السكان الأصليين"

(Al-Quds Al-Arabi, December 20, 2022)

In this headline, four overlapping nominal structures are used: "defence," "defenders," "biodiversity," and "indigenous people," all of which are used without any apparent verb. The overall structure presents the event as an abstract value, not linked to time or an agent, but rather to a condensed conceptual framework.

Second: *In English newspaper headlines*

In the English sample, the nominal constructions were used in almost the same way, with differences in grammatical structure due to the nature of the language. For this reason, The Guardian's headline read:

"Modi's unexpected visit to Pakistan will make little difference"

(The Guardian, December 26, 2015)

In this example, the nominal construction "unexpected visit" finally introduces the pre-arrival position, a linguistic technique favoured by English journalism for its ability to present a conceptual idea of the news without directly entering the scene.

The previous examples demonstrate that both Arabic and English use nominal structures in newspaper headlines to achieve brevity and condense information. However, the approaches differ between the two languages:

- Arabic tends to use nominal infinitives and derivatives to condense information.
- English relies on the omission of verbs and determiners, resulting in concise noun structures known as "noun pile-ups."

The Passive Voice in Newspaper Headlines

The use of the passive voice is a common linguistic device in journalism. It is used to present information in a way that focuses on the event or outcome, while minimising or concealing the actor. The sample results show that the passive voice was present in 58% of Arabic texts and 72% of English texts, reflecting a trend toward using this phenomenon to achieve specific editorial goals.

First: *The Passive Voice in Arabic Newspaper Headlines*

In Arabic headlines, the passive voice is used to present events in a way that focuses on the outcome or the victim, while minimising the focus on the perpetrator.

Headline:

"Journalist Shireen Abu Akleh martyred by Israeli occupation forces"

Source: Al Jazeera, May 11, 2022

The verb "martyred" is used in the passive voice, which focuses on the result (the journalist's martyrdom) without directly mentioning the agent, who is implicitly referred to as "the bullets of the occupation."

Second: *The Passive Voice in English Newspaper Headlines*

In English headlines, the passive voice is used similarly to present an event while minimising or obscuring the focus on the actor.

Headline:

"Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was shot and killed in the West Bank"

Source: NPR, May 11, 2022

The verbs "was shot" and "was killed" are used in the passive voice, which focuses on the event (shooting and killing) without mentioning the actor, giving the story a neutral tone.

The above examples highlight that the use of the passive voice is an effective stylistic device in newspaper headlines to achieve brevity, attract the reader's attention, and present information in a way that focuses on the event or outcome, while minimising or obscuring the subject. The results show that this phenomenon is widely used in both Arabic and English texts, with slight differences in style and grammatical structure.

Nominalisation in Newspaper Headlines

Nominalisation, or the conversion of verbs and adjectives into nouns, is a common linguistic phenomenon in journalistic discourse. It is used to condense information, achieve brevity, and present events abstractly and neutrally. The sample results show that nominalization was present in 78% of Arabic texts and 82% of English texts, reflecting a common trend toward using this phenomenon to achieve specific editorial goals.

First: *Nominalisation in Arabic newspaper headlines*

Arabic headlines frequently employ nominalisation, where verbs are transformed into infinitives or derived nouns, giving the headline a formal and abstract tone.

Headline:

"Destroying the Ocean to Save the Planet"

Source: The Arabic Pages, December 11, 2020

This headline is notable for the use of nominalism by converting the verb "destroy" to the infinitive "destroy" and the verb "save" to the infinitive "save", which gives the title a formal and abstract character, and focuses on the event rather than the subject.

Second: *Nominalisation in English newspaper headlines*

In English headlines, nominalisation is used similarly, transforming verbs into nouns using suffixes like "-tion" and "-ment," giving the headline a formal and abstract character.

Headline:

"The legalisation of cannabis sparks debate"

Source: The New York Times, June 15, 2021

This headline uses nominalisation, converting the verb "legalise" to the noun "legalisation." This gives the headline a formal and abstract character, focusing on the event rather than the subject.

The above examples show that nominalisation is a useful stylistic device in newspaper headlines, for making them concise, for presenting information in an abstract and neutral way, and for reducing the emphasis on the subject. What the findings indicate is that this phenomenon is commonly found in Arabic writings and English writings too with some slight variations in stylistic and grammatical construction.

Structural Compression in Newspaper Headlines

Structural compression is a major stylistic feature of journalistic texts. It is used to deliver information briefly, to achieve conciseness and to engage the attention of the audience. The findings show that 82% of the Arabic texts and 85% of the English texts used syntactic shorthand, showing a strong trend to use this phenomenon for some editorial goals.

First: *in Arabic newspaper headlines*

Structural compression in Arabic headlines, syntactic reduction is widely used, where certain grammatical elements, such as verbs or conjunctions, are omitted, leaving the reader to infer the omitted elements based on the context.

Headline:

"Urgent... The Security Council slaps a certain country." - "عاجل..مجلس الأمن يصفع دولة معينة"

Source: Al Jazeera Media Institute

This title demonstrates extensive use of Structural compression, omitting the full context of the event and using a powerful verb, "slap," to create drama and grab the reader's attention. This type of title emphasises suspense and excitement while minimising details, encouraging the reader to read on to understand the full context.

Second: Structural compression in English newspaper headlines

Structural compression in English headlines is used to achieve brevity and present information directly.

Headline:

"Lung cancer in women's mushrooms"

Source: Bucknell University

Analysis: This headline shows a heavy use of structural compression, omitting the full context of the event and using the verb "mushrooms" (to grow rapidly) to convey the idea of an increase in lung cancer cases among women. This type of headline emphasises suspense and excitement, while minimising details, which encourages the reader to read on to understand the full context.

The examples demonstrate that structural compression is an effective stylistic method in newspaper headlines for the purpose of brevity, attracting the reader's interest and providing information concisely. The findings reveal that this phenomenon is extensively applied in Arabic and English writings with slight differences in style and grammatical structure.

6- Conclusion

This study reached the following conclusions:

1. The studied journalistic texts intentionally and functionally relied on fragmented language strategies to achieve specific media objectives.
2. Arab and English-speaking journalists tend to use intensifying linguistic structures such as nominalisation and grammatical ellipsis to condense information.
3. Five morphosyntactic features predominated in the sample: grammatical ellipsis, nominal constructions, the passive voice, nominalisation, and syntactic reduction. Nominal constructions were the most frequently used in both languages.
4. Three main linguistic patterns are used for journalistic framing: presenting the event as an objective fact (using nominalisation), concealing the agent (using the passive voice), and intensifying the event (using ellipsis and reduction).
5. Ellipsis and reduction were employed more frequently in Arabic journalism than in English journalism, while the passive voice appeared more regularly in English texts.
6. These linguistic phenomena, despite their formal simplicity, reflect ideological discursive practices that aim to influence the reader's perception and reshape the sequence of events from the perspective of the media institution producing the text.

Limitation

The study was confined to a sample of journalistic writings. The sample was confined to only 100 texts distributed equally between Arabic and English. Although this aspect is considered appropriate for qualitative analysis, it may not be able to fully reflect the diverse stylistic and linguistic variations of journalistic discourse across various media organisations.

The study was also limited to two newspapers: The Guardian and Al-Quds Al-Arabi. This limitation may affect the generalisability of the results to other newspapers with different political or stylistic orientations. Furthermore, the investigation was based on the analysis of headlines and introductions and not on the exploration of the whole news texts or on the carrying out extensive investigations that could have uncovered more complex and diverse linguistic patterns.

The present study is pioneering in the exploration of new dimensions in the comparative linguistic analysis of journalistic discourse, and it is important that the following studies overcome these constraints and extend the field of research.

Recommendations:

This study recommends the following:

1. Including a larger number of newspapers and magazines in multiple languages. This will strengthen the results and make them more generalizable.
2. Comparison of block language in traditional and digital media (online journalism, social media platforms, etc.) to determine stylistic or functional differences.
3. Exploring the relationship between the use of block language and its psychological and social effect on the audience, especially in breaking or controversial news.
4. Exploring the ideological and rhetorical functions of journalistic discourse by integrating pragmatic analysis with morphological and syntactic analysis.
5. Development of training tools for media professionals and translators to use block language in writing or translation in an effort to preserve the meaning and significance of both languages.

The treatment of block language is not only a linguistic issue, but a starting point for understanding the deep relationship between language, media and ideology. This issue deserves further study in the future.

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