

## Representational and Interactional Meanings of UNHCR Reports on Displaced Iraqis

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### Abstract

The use of appropriate and accurate language is of utmost importance when describing people on the move and their dilemma, particularly refugees and displaced persons who have unique legal protection. So, there are a lot of scholars who have investigated the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) reports, but no one has examined representational and interactional meanings of UNHCR reports. Accordingly, this research aims to explore the role of UNHCR reports in enhancing the value of the humanitarian, which is attributed to the uniqueness of its use of language. The current study investigates the manner in which the textual content interacts with the images that are associated with the category of the UNHCR reports. Four reports are analysed with regard to their representational, interactional structures of photos and transitivity analysis of texts. The present study adapts Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) and Transitivity System proposed by Halliday (2004). It is found that the participant roles of Actors and Goals of both photos and texts are more frequent than the other roles of participants. These roles are connected with the most dominant processes, the transactional action process of images and the material process of texts.

**Keywords:** displaced Iraqis, multimodality, transitivity analysis, UNHCR reports, and visual grammar.

## 1. Introduction

In contemporary society, the media play a crucial role in shaping political attitudes towards displacement and migration, influencing how these issues are perceived and discussed.

Despite extensive research on United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports, there is a significant gap in examining the representational and interactional meanings within these documents. This study aims to fill this gap by conducting a multimodal discourse and transitivity analysis of UNHCR reports focusing on the challenges faced by displaced Iraqis. The objectives include assessing the effectiveness and persuasiveness of these reports, as well as exploring the relationship between text and images and their impact on the audience. To achieve these aims, the research will establish a theoretical framework based on transitivity analysis and multimodal discourse analysis (MDA), using both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study will be relevant to scholars of multimodal analysis and political communication, and will provide valuable insights for media professionals and educators, particularly those involved in teaching English as a foreign language. By exploring these complex dynamics, the research aims to improve understanding of how media representation shapes humanitarian discourse and public perception.

As posited by Marken (cited in Salih, 2019, p. 14), social media provides individuals with the ability to seek and obtain valuable information by enabling them to disseminate details and participate in meaningful activities like "exchanging opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives" (2007, p. 10). The reports of UNHCR play a significant role in communication and depict the situations and challenges faced by displaced persons and refugees in a particular way to make the content apparently perceived by the readers. One of the worst crises of internal displacement has been witnessed in Iraq. As a result, over 6 million people have been displaced, particularly during the years 2014 to 2017 (Reid, 2019).

This study examines UNHCR reports on internal displaced individuals in Iraq. These reports are taken from UNHCR official website. The UNHCR website is ([www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)). The insights derived from Transitivity System and MDA refer to expansions of Systemic Functional Linguistic theory to other modes. MDA creates a systematic method of investigating the media texts as well as different semiotic modes such as photographs, images or diagrams. Within mainstream media, the photographs convey more information in comparison with the texts (Çoşkun, 2015). The analysis applied in this paper is qualitative as it is based on the analytic framework; and quantitative as it depends on the average of frequencies of variables. The initial stage of the present study attempts to characterize the grammar of verbal and visual communications by examining the constituents of the structure offered. Secondly, it attempts to analyze the UNHCR reports according to four points of evaluation:

- 1) How does the written text interact with the photos?
- 2) Does the text add to the photo (illustrate, explicate) or is it running simply in parallel to it?
- 3) What types of relations are proposed between the interactive participants (viewers) and represented elements?
- 4) How may these types of relations be identified with the objectives of the genre of UNHCR reports'?

In this context, these evaluations above are based on what Halliday (1978) proposed that all approaches of semiotics, comprising visible designs, consist of three metafunctions (Ly & Jung, 2015). The initial two questions investigate the ideational

function of photos and texts and the third one shows how the interpersonal function reveals the types of relationship suggested to be found between the interactive participant (the viewer) and represented participant. The final point describes the contribution of these two functions to the communicative effect and purpose of the images. This paper may be of value to those who are associated with political affairs especially editing news and analyzing discourses and also to those who are preoccupied with media outlets.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Multimodality**

In the field of linguistics, the term "multimodal" signifies the acknowledgment that meaning is not solely conveyed through linguistic means, but also through the integration of diverse semiotic modes, encompassing visual and gestural elements. Multimodality is concerned with investigations into the properties of language and image that construe the spectacle of suffering on screen (Chouliaraki, 2006).

The fields of multimodality and critical discourse analysis (CDA) have been combined to form a new discipline, known as multimodal discourse analysis (MDA). This integration was first proposed in the book, "The Grammar of Visual Design" (1996, 2006), Kress and van Leeuwen examine the ways in which texts, photographs, images, and other semiotic modes work together to convey a range of meanings. They posit that the principles of linguistic analysis, as espoused by Halliday in his systemic functional linguistics (SFL), which serve as the foundation for CDA, can also be applied to visual communication. Consequently, MDA examines two interconnected pathways: the potential for meaning creation and the interaction among diverse semiotic resources. (Machin & Mayr, 2012; Çoşkun, 2015).

The MDA approach draws upon the theoretical framework of systemic functional linguistics to elucidate the manner in which various semiotic modes collaborate with textual elements to convey implicit or indirect meanings. This approach is underpinned by the utilisation of SFL theory as a guiding principle for the analysis of multimodal texts. In particular, it is informed by the framework proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen, which emphasises the importance of identifying the metafunctions outlined by Halliday at the outset of the analysis in order to establish the underlying communication system (Ledin & Machin, 2018). In their 2006 study, Kress and van Leeuwen posit that all images achieve Halliday's metafunctions through the adherence to three distinct patterns.

- 1.** Interaction patterns (corresponding to the 'interpersonal' metafunction) delineate the resources employed to construct relationships among the viewer, the creator of visual texts, and the subjects depicted within the texts.
- 2.** Representation patterns (corresponding to the 'ideational' metafunction) highlight the visual elements (individuals, locations, and objects depicted in the image) as well as the portrayal of interactions and conceptual relationships among them.
- 3.** Composition patterns (corresponding to the 'textual' metafunction) show how the patterns of representation and interaction are integrated into a unified and meaningful whole. The composition patterns (which align with the 'textual' metafunction) demonstrate how these patterns of representation and interaction are brought together in a unified and coherent manner.

The works of Michael O'Toole (1994, 2010) and Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (1996, 2006) have been considered as foundational in multimodal studies throughout the 1980s and 1990s. These contributions primarily draw upon Michael Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics. Halliday's emphasis on both text

and context is evident in these seminal works (Halliday, 1978). Similarly, Kress and van Leeuwen employ a contextual method that places emphasis on the role of ideology in visual design. This approach involves analysing key concepts in visual design through the lens of textual analysis. In contrast, O'Toole (2010) employs a grammatical approach, analysing specific 'texts' such as sculptures, paintings and architectural designs to develop theoretical frameworks for broader application (O'Halloran, 2011).

### **2.1.1 Representation**

In accordance with the tenets set forth by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the act of representation entails the formation of a visual "syntax" by means of linking the depicted participants (which may include, but are not limited to, people, figures, or objects) within an image.

Visual representations can be structured either as narratives or concepts. Narrative structures illustrate unfolding actions, events, processes of change, or transient spatial arrangements, whereas conceptual structures present participants in terms of their generalized and stable essence, relating them to class, structure, or meaning (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006, p. 79).

The representation of narrative is conveyed through the use of "action verbs," which are visually represented by elements formally defined as vectors. In the context of visual representation, a vector can be defined as a diagonal line created by the use of arrows, tools, bodies, or limbs that serve to connect participants and indicate the progression of actions or events. The individual who instigates the action is referred to as the 'Actor', while the individual towards whom the vector is directed is designated as the 'Goal'. In reactional processes, the participants represented are identified by the direction of the glance of one participant, labelled the 'Reacter,' which follows a vector to the receiving participant or process, termed the 'Phenomenon'. Each process comprises both transactional and non-transactional sub-processes.

Participants are categorised in a conceptual representation based on their classification according to a given set of criteria, whether that be based on the structure of the representation itself, the meaning conveyed, or the class to which they belong. This type of representation is concerned with the visual conveyance of a concept or idea. The concept is illustrated through the use of 'tree structures', which demonstrate the various types of relations, and comprises three sub-processes: analytical, symbolic, and classificational (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

### **2.1.2 Interaction**

The utilisation of visual communication resources serves to facilitate and perpetuate the interaction between the creator and the audience of a visual. In accordance with the theory proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the process of interpreting or viewing a visual entails the participation of two distinct types of individuals: those who are represented and those who are interactive. The represented participants are those depicted in the visual, such as people, objects, and places. In contrast, the interactive participants are those engaging with the visual medium, including the viewer and the photographer. The interaction category is subdivided into three subcategories: contact (relating to the act of image-making), attitude (encompassing the subjective or objective nature of the image), and social distance (referring to the framing size and the degree of intimacy conveyed) (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

## **2.2 Transitivity system**

It has been provided (Halliday, 1994, p. 107) that "*transitivity translates the world of experience into a manageable set of process types.*". Halliday mentions that there are two processes derived from the outer experience and from the inner experience. The

outer experience relates to the actions and events or things that happen or people who make them happen, whereas the inner experience is a type of replay of the outer by reacting to it to embody the world of consciousness (Halliday 2004:170). Thus, the outer experience is the process of the external world and the inner experience is the process of consciousness.

Transitivity system is clearly concerned with the transmission of the view of world by maintaining the way in which meanings are realized in the clause. It demonstrates how speakers encode their mental representation and depiction of reality in language and how they interpret their experiences of the world around them (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 170-171). There are six type processes of the transitivity system that are realized by verbs. These processes are material, verbal, mental, relational, existential and behavioural that expressing doing or happening, saying, seeing or feeling or thinking, having, being and behaving, respectively (Marbum, 2016, p. 7).

### 2.3 Theoretical Framework

Generally, the field of discourse analysis investigates the ways in which language is employed in communication. The principal objective of discourse analysis is to demonstrate the cultural values that are deeply intertwined with language and communication (Almuslehi, 2024). In this vein, the approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) builds upon this foundation by analysing language use while also examining the ways in which social inequality, power and ideology are embedded within discourse (van Dijk, 1993; Fairclough, 1995).

Although Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) originated in the early 1990s, its contemporary focus is closely associated with the field of critical linguistics, which emerged in the 1970s. CDA is considered as a branch of critical linguistics that examines how discourse events relate to sociopolitical and cultural influences (Ali & Yaseen, 2023). As outlined by Van Dijk (2001), CDA entails the examination of written and spoken texts within social and political contexts, with a view to identifying how they perpetuate, enact, and challenge issues of social power abuse, inequality, and dominance. Therefore, critical discourse analysts take an outright position to understand, reveal and eventually resist social inequality.

It has been noted that CDA is “*fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language*” (Wodak, 2001, p. 2). In a broad sense, Wodak and Meyer (2009) point out that CDA emancipates human beings from all kinds of domination through self-reflection by creating and conveying critical knowledge. Thus, the main function of CDA is addressing social problems. It is interested in the implications for relationships of social and political domination, and hence how the interests of certain groups are actually served or even overlooked through text (Castello, 2013). Fairclough (2012) defines CDA as “*a branch of critical social analysis*” (p. 13). In this direction, CDA contributes to explain how discourse is linked to other elements of social life (i.e., how discourse constructs in power relations, ideologies, institutions, etc.). He considers CDA as ‘dialectical reasoning’ that integrates of *critique* of discourse and *explanation* of how discourse constructs in present social reality as a foundation for *action* to change reality.

The transitivity system has proven to be an invaluable tool for conducting Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This analytical approach, which is rooted in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), allows for the examination of texts in order to uncover the underlying ideologies that they convey. In Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), grammar serves as a mechanism for the construction and conveyance of

meanings through language. The utilisation of linguistic elements gives rise to a multitude of interpretations (Isti'anah, 2014).

The present research integrates principles from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as outlined by Halliday (1994), and incorporates elements from Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006). This approach primarily emphasises representational and interactional structures, while also employing the transitivity system based on Halliday's framework (2004).

While the primary focus of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has traditionally been on the analysis of linguistic structures, scholars have recently proposed a visual turn, integrating visual images into broader multimodal concepts of discourse (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). This shift towards semiotics within CDA can be attributed to the influence of Halliday's theory, which argues that language is only one semiotic resource among many forms of representation, both linguistic and non-linguistic. For example, while newspapers can convey ideological and political perspectives through vocabulary and grammatical structures, visual elements such as photographs and images can also convey ideological meanings effectively.

Consequently, the application of linguistic approaches from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) shows how visuals, alongside language, contribute to the creation of implicit or indirect meanings in texts (Mayr, 2012). Thus, the study conducted by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) facilitates the study of both lexical and grammatical structures alongside visual features.

### **3. Methods**

This research employs a comprehensive methodological framework that combines a range of analytical models. A principal element is Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA), as drawn up by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), which examines how the meaning conveyed through a multiplicity of modes of communication, including text and image. Furthermore, the study incorporates transitivity analysis, which is rooted in Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics. This analysis focuses on the ways in which actions, processes, and participants are represented in language, with the aim of investigating how meaning is structured within discourse. The combination of these approaches offers comprehensive tools for analysing the interaction between different semiotic resources and their functional roles in communication.

#### **3.1 Data Description**

##### **3.1.1 Iraq's Crisis of Displacement**

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are individuals forced to abandon their homes due to armed conflicts or human rights abuses, yet who continue to reside within the geographical boundaries of their country, as recognized by the international community (Cohen, 2004).

The conflict in Iraq has resulted in the displacement of millions of individuals. This has occurred as a consequence of clashes between the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and other associated forces, as well as the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS). The spread of ISIS into many northern and central provinces has been a significant phenomenon over recent years (UNHCR, 2016). The majority of displaced Iraqis continue to face significant challenges in maintaining their security. The displaced Iraqis lack awareness of their future living arrangements and the possibility of returning to their homes (Ferris, 2008). In the context of this crisis, numerous humanitarian organisations, including the UNCHR, have initiated a series of extensive media advocacy campaigns with the objective of persuading other countries to provide greater assistance (Berry et al., 2016).

In conclusion, the displacement crisis in Iraq serves to illustrate the pressing necessity for global collaboration in order to address the humanitarian consequences of conflicts and displacement. The conflict in Iraq has resulted in the forcible displacement of millions of individuals within the country. This has been caused by clashes involving the Iraqi Security Forces, associated factions, and ISIS, which has exacerbated instability and suffering (Cohen, 2004; UNHCR, 2016).

### 3.1.2 UNHCR

The UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (2007) asserts that the United Nations has empowered the UNHCR to oversee and coordinate global efforts aimed at safeguarding and ensuring the well-being of refugees, as well as resolving refugee-related issues. The UNHCR is widely regarded as one of the most prominent humanitarian organisations globally (UNHCR, 2016).

The media plays a pivotal role in disseminating information about the challenges faced by refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), as evidenced in the UNHCR resettlement handbook (2011). The UNHCR reports illuminate the harsh realities of daily life for displaced individuals, with photographs serving as a powerful means of conveying their stories. Furthermore, the UNHCR and other human rights organisations have documented instances of ISIS involvement in crimes against humanity, including, but not limited to, killings, kidnappings, torture, forced religious conversions, and various forms of violence (UNHCR, 2016).

Ultimately, the nature of political discourse differs from that of other forms of discourse, such as medical, legal, or educational discourse. Unlike these other forms of discourse, political discourse includes a range of participants beyond just politicians, involving various other groups of people (Janam, 2019). The significance of UNHCR reports lies in the way these reports are presented to shape humanitarian responses and address the displacement crisis.

### 3.2 Data Collection

The data collection for this study includes four UNHCR reports from the organization's official website, focusing on the critical period from 2014 to 2017 in Iraq. Each report features text and photographs that highlight various UNHCR spokespeople, offering insights into the challenges faced by displaced populations. This combination of language and imagery enhances understanding of the urgent humanitarian needs and the UNHCR's efforts to address them.

### 3.3 The Model of Analysis

In their 2006 study, Kress and van Leeuwen differentiate between two primary visual categories, which are employed to examine the data at hand. The first of these is representation, which pertains to the manner in which visual elements portray and symbolise participants, actions, and concepts. The second is interaction, which focuses on the ways in which these visual elements engage with viewers or other elements within the visual composition. These categories provide a framework for understanding the processes through which visual communication operates to convey meaning, emphasising both the static representation of visual elements and their dynamic relationships and engagements within the visual context.

The second part of the eclectic model employed is transitivity system, adopting Halliday's (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistics. In this system, there are six processes: material, verbal, mental, relational, existential and behavioral. To characterize each process, a verb is the tool to determine the type of each process.

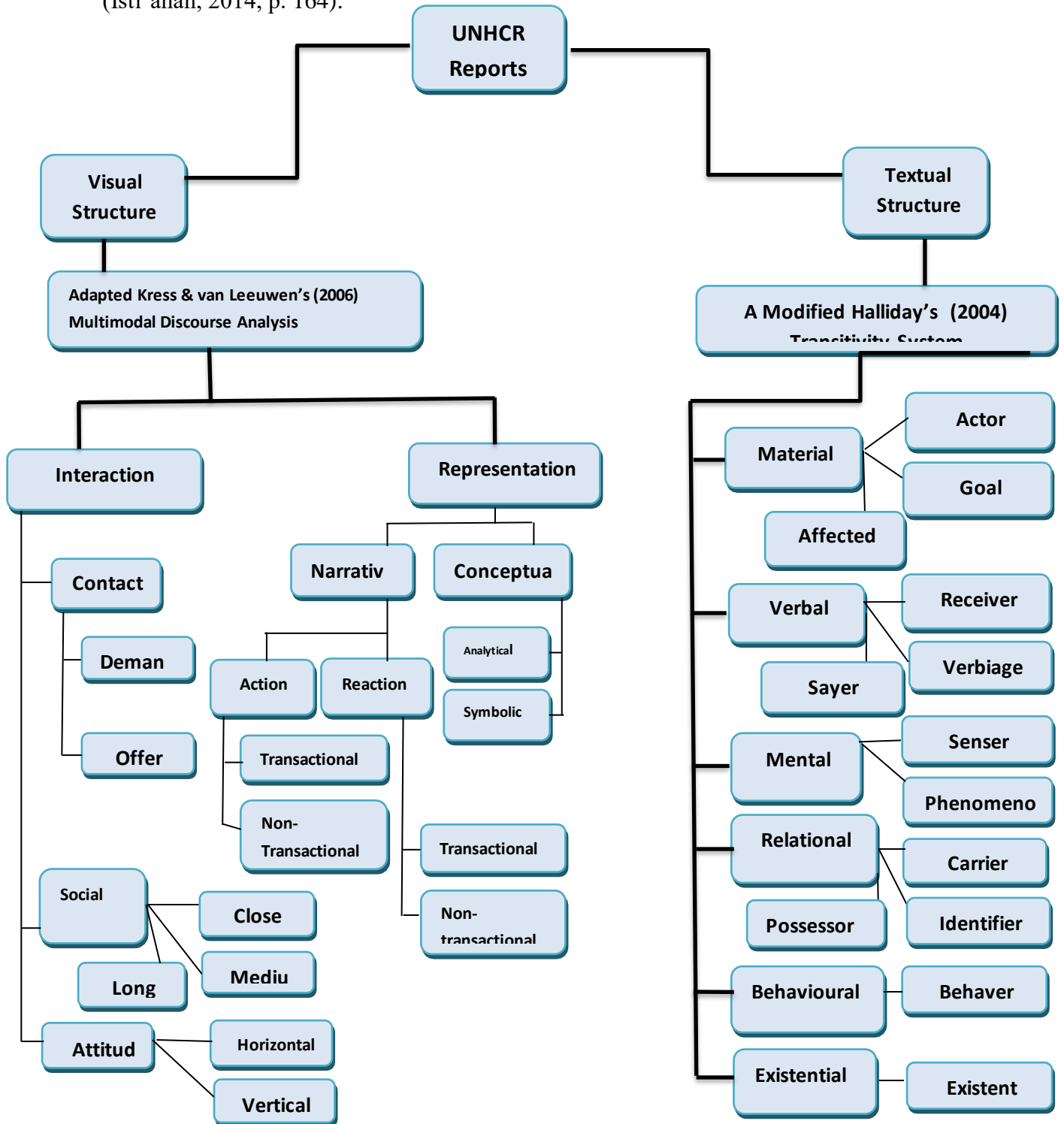
The participant in the material process is labeled as *Actor*, *Goal* or *Affected*. The verbal processes have *Receiver*, *Sayer*, and *Verbiage participants*. Concerning the

mental process, the participant is named *Senser* or *Phenomenon*. However, the relational process comprises *Carrier-Attribute*, *Possessor-Possessed*, and *Identifier-*

**Figure 1**

*The Eclectic Model of Analysis*

*Identified* participants. In regard to the behavioural process, it has one participant called *Behaver*. Finally, the existential process only has one participant named *Existent* (Isti'anah, 2014, p. 164).





#### 4. Data Analysis

These reports provide a detailed examination of several Iraqi cities, notably Mosul, Ramadi and Fallujah, each of which has been deeply affected by the conflict and the resulting humanitarian crises. In order to analyse the content of these reports, we adopt a dual approach that incorporates both photographic and textual analysis. The photographic analysis uses representational and interactional modes to decode the visual narratives presented.

##### **Report (1): “UNHCR distributes aid to thousands of Iraqis fleeing attacks in Ninewa” published on 05 August 2014**

The ongoing conflict in Iraq has resulted in the forced displacement of thousands of individuals from their homes. Many have fled from areas controlled by ISIS, while others have been displaced within Iraq’s Kurdistan region because of clashes between Kurdish forces and opposing militant groups. Ensuring the safety and protection of all displaced individuals is of the highest priority.

##### **Photo 1**



In terms of a representational visual approach, the primary participants depicted are a woman, three men, and various objects such as mattresses, blankets, boxes, and tarpaulins. They are positioned standing and engaging visually with each other, their interactions defined largely by the positioning of their arms and the direction of their eye contact. Photo 1 employs both transactional action and reactional processes: the woman is depicted as a Major Actor, her arm creating a visual vector to a box, portraying it as the Goal in a transactional action process. The two men in vests are observed looking towards the woman, indicating them as Reactors in a transactional reactional process, with the woman as a Phenomenon. Additionally, an analytical representation approach is utilized, where the two men on the right are portrayed as Carriers, their vests and logos (Possessive Attributes) symbolizing affiliation with the UNHCR staff.

Regarding interactive interpretation, Photo 1 is categorized as an 'invitation' because none of the participants directly engage with the viewer. Instead, they are presented for observation as informational elements or objects for contemplation. The composition features a long shot where the participants are shown in full, occupying approximately half of the frame height. This setup establishes a formal and distant relationship between the viewer and those depicted. Horizontally, the participants are photographed from an angled perspective, fostering a sense of detachment. This positioning keeps the

viewer separate from the depicted individuals and their environment. Vertically, the participants are viewed from above, symbolically positioning the viewer in a role of authority over them.

On a textual level, concerning transitivity, the writer uses the material process that indicated by the verbs *distributes, staying, moved, fled, started, captured, trying, built, plans, sent, allocated, monitoring, displaced, given* and *deserves*. As illustrated in these quotations “UNHCR (Actor) **distributes** (Material Process) *aid* (Goal) *to thousands of Iraqis* (Recipient) *fleeing attacks in Ninewa* (Circumstance of location: place).”, “A *further 2,000 family tents and 6,000 emergency kits* (Goal) *will be sent* (Material Process) *this week* (Circumstance of extent: duration).”.

The writer also employs the verbal process. The verbal processes are expressed by the verbs *says, report, provided, told, said* and *stressed*. For example, “*The Iraqi government* (Sayer) **says** (Verbal Process) *up to 200,000* (Actor) *may have fled* (Material Process) *from Sinjar and some sought shelter in a mountainous region* (Circumstance of location: place). *UNHCR staff* (Sayer) **also report** (Verbal Process) *that some 3,000 Iraqis ...*”.

The mental processes are also realized by using the verbs *noticed, heard, seen* and *needs*. “*Staff from the refugee agency* (Senser) **have also noticed** (Mental Process) *a large number of people* (Phenomenon) *from ethnic minority groups among the latest exodus ...*”. The relational processes are indicated by employing the verbs *have* and *had*, as in “*He* (Possessor) **used to have** (Relational Process) *a good business* (Possessed) *selling fruit and vegetables...*”. The existential process is also utilized in “*A group of 400 Iraqi Turkmen* (Existent) **were** (Existential Process) *on Monday* (Circumstance of location: time) *midway between the militant-held northern city of Mosul and Erbil* (Circumstance of location: place).”.

### **Report (2): “UNHCR concerned about the challenges facing thousands of Iraqis fleeing Ramadi” published on 22 April 2015**

The displaced Iraqis need more aid in Ramadi city, the largest city in Anbar province. They flee Ramadi city due to the violent conflict between insurgents and the Iraqi army. In Photo 2, several people are crossing the bridge. The different kinds of a natural landscape seem to be divided into three parts, the river–palms–and sky.

**Photo 2**



For the representational structure, this image has both the narrative and conceptual processes. As to the narrative process, transactional action and transactional reaction processes are employed. In this photograph, the two men take on pivotal roles as Major Actors, indicated by their actions where their arms extend and connect with a buggy, thereby designating the wagon as the intended Goal. Consequently, this image can be interpreted as depicting them pushing the buggy forward. A transactional reaction process is also utilized since the two men (who pushing the buggy) are Reactors whose eye-lines create vectors connecting them with a man in the foreground, making him a Phenomenon. Concerning the conceptual aspect, an analytical method is utilized. Within this framework, the man prominently featured in the foreground serves as a Carrier, identifiable through his Possessive Attributes such as military attire and a firearm. These visual cues effectively communicate his affiliation with the military, clearly indicating his role as a soldier.

Regarding its interactive implications, Photo 2 is categorized as an 'offer' because the individuals portrayed do not establish direct eye contact with the viewer. In this depiction, they are presented as subjects for observation—conveying information or prompting contemplation. The photograph utilizes both medium and very long shots. In the medium shot, the soldier is framed from the knees upwards, suggesting a close social distance between viewer and subject where interactions are characterized by impersonal engagement. The very long shot is created because the other represented participants are shown as strangers. From the horizontal perspective, the represented participants are shown from the frontal angle, indicating something the viewer is involved with. Vertically, the represented participants are photographed from a high angle that manifests the viewer has more symbolic power over the represented participants.

As for the textual part, the material processes are expressed by using the verbs *fled, remain, gone, trying, reached, seeking, find, stay, displaced, sharing, asked, marks, resulting, waiting, visited, face, walked, distributed, continue, liaising, advocating and join*. As in “*Some 114,000 Iraqis (Actor) have fled (Material Process) Ramadi (Circumstance of location: place) over the past two weeks (Circumstance of extent: duration).*”.

The verbal processes are also employed in this report. They are received by the verbs *reported, told, said and suggest*. For example, “*UNHCR spokesman Adrian Edwards (Sayer) told (Verbal Process) journalists (Receiver) in Geneva (Circumstance of location: place).*”. The mental processes are perceived by using the verbs *concerned and expects*, such as “*UNHCR (Senser) expects (Mental Process) to reach another 12,000 people (Phenomenon) with emergency relief kits in the coming days (Circumstance of extent: duration).*”.

The relational process is indicated by using *been* in “*While more people (Token) have been able (Relational Process) to move (Value) into Baghdad (Circumstance of location: place) in recent days (Circumstance of extent: duration)*”. The behavioural process is also used and showed by the verb *slowed*, as demonstrated in this quotation “*... and those observed (Behaver) crossing had slowed (Behavioural Process) to a trickle.*”.

### **Report (3): “States pledge US\$701 million to UNHCR for 2017 operations” published on 07 December 2016**

A total of \$701 million has been committed by states for the support of UNHCR operations in 2017. This considerable commitment serves to illustrate a collective

endeavour to guarantee essential humanitarian aid and protection for refugees and individuals displaced from their homes on a global scale.

Visually, in Photo 3's representational mode, there are three distinct groups of elements: individuals (comprising two women, two men, and seven children), objects (such as a baking sheet, bread dough, breads, and tents), and the natural surroundings (consisting of barren land and the sky).

**Photo 3**



The primary participants depicted include a young boy, two women, and three young girls. In terms of narrative elements, the two women are portrayed as central figures (Major Actors) whose actions are pivotal: their arms create visual connections with the bread dough (Goal), symbolizing their involvement in baking. This interpretation suggests that the photo can be understood as depicting 'these two women baking bread'. Additionally, the young boy is also portrayed as a Major Actor, with his arm connecting to a piece of bread (Goal), indicating his action of 'eating bread'. Thus, transactional action processes are evident in this photograph. In terms of conceptual elements, a symbolic approach is employed: the young boy, two women, and three girls are depicted as Carriers associated with Symbolic Attributes such as tents bearing the UNHCR logo and a baking sheet, symbolizing their status as displaced individuals.

Concerning the interaction conveyed in Photo 3, it is categorized as an 'offer' since none of the individuals depicted engage directly with the viewer. They are presented as subjects for observation and contemplation, inviting viewers to perceive them as informative elements or objects of reflection. The photograph utilizes a very long perspective to include more than four participants, suggesting a distant portrayal typically associated with strangers. Horizontally, the participants are captured at an angled view, observing them from a detached perspective. This positioning maintains a sense of separation between the viewer and the depicted individuals. Vertically, the participants are viewed from a slightly elevated angle, symbolically placing the viewer in a position of oversight or authority.

As far as the textual structure is concerned, the material processes are expressed by employing the verbs *help, provide, stands, cover, represents, access, saving, protecting, placing, shown* and *funded*. As illustrated in this quotation that is said by Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, “...all displaced people (Actor) can *access* (Material Process) *protection* (Goal) and *build* (Material Process) a *secure future* (Goal),”.



The verbal processes are perceived by using the verbs *pledge*, *promised*, *calling*, *added* and *said*. As demonstrated in the title “*States (Sayer) pledge (Verbal Process) US\$701 million (Verbiage) to UNHCR (Receiver) for 2017 (Circumstance of extent: duration) operations*”.

The mental process is realized using the verb *expects*, as in “*For 2016 (Circumstance of extent: duration), UNHCR (Sensor) expects (Mental Process) to receive the highest proportion (Phenomenon)...*”. The relational process is indicated by the verb *been* in “*Refugees’ needs (Token) have never been (Relational Process) greater (Value), (Verbiage) Grandi (Sayer) added (Verbal Process)*”.

**Report (4): “As Mosul displacement continues, UNHCR opens new camps, expands appeal” published on 17 March 2017**

As the displacement from Mosul persists, the UNHCR is responding by opening new camps and intensifying its appeal for support. This expansion of efforts aims to accommodate the increasing number of displaced individuals, providing them with essential shelter and services amid the ongoing crisis.

**Photo 4**



In consideration of the representational structure, the primary participants in Photo 4 are a girl and three boys. This photograph incorporates both narrative and conceptual elements. From a narrative perspective, the image illustrates transactional action processes. The girl and the three boys are the primary actors in this scene, with their outstretched arms forming vectors that link to the mattresses. This establishes the mattresses as the objects of their actions, or goals. This visual representation suggests that the two boys at the front are the agents of the action, pulling the mattresses, while the girl and the boy at the back are the recipients of the action, pushing them. From a conceptual standpoint, a symbolic process is employed. In this instance, the girl and three boys serve to represent displaced persons, a representation that is reinforced by a number of symbolic attributes. Such items as blankets bearing the UNHCR logo, jerrycans, mattresses, tents, and portable toilets serve to underscore the status of the individuals depicted as being affected by displacement. The combination of narrative and conceptual elements provides a multifaceted depiction of the participants' roles and circumstances within the photograph.

In the context of the interactional layer, the image in question, designated as 'Photo 4', is categorised as an 'offer' due to the absence of direct eye contact between the viewer and the individuals depicted. This depiction portrays the participants as entities to be

observed, akin to "pieces of information" or "subjects for reflection." The photograph utilises a long shot, encompassing the torsos of at least four individuals situated within the public domain of the UNHCR camp. From this distance, the participants are depicted in an impersonal manner, as if they were mere strangers. From a horizontal viewpoint, the participants are depicted at a slanted angle, thereby creating the impression of distance from both the individuals and their environment. From a vertical perspective, the participants are depicted from an elevated position, symbolically placing the viewer in a position of control or authority over them.

With regard to the written text, the dominant process is also the material type that showed by using the verbs *opens, expands, opening, displaced, crossed, continues, given, opened, increasing, finding, liaising, live, distributed and planned*. As illustrated in the title, "*As Mosul displacement continues* (Circumstance of cause), *UNHCR* (Actor) *opens* (Material Process) *new camps* (Goal), *expands* (Material Process) *appeal* (Goal)", "*Emergency relief items* (Goal) *have been distributed* (Material Process) *in various locations around Mosul* (Circumstance of location: place).".

The relational processes are expressed by employing the verbs *includes, have* and *has*. For example, "*UNHCR* (Possessor) *currently* (Circumstance of extent: duration) *has* (Relational Process) *10 camps* (Possessed) *operating...*". The mental processes are perceived by the verbs *needs* and *anticipate*, as in "*For 2017* (Circumstance of extent: duration), *UNHCR* (Sensor) *needs* (Mental Process) *USD 212 million* (Phenomenon), ...".

In this report, the verbal process is less used that received by utilizing the word *said*. "*This is a summary of what* (Verbiage) *was said* (Verbal Process) *by UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch* (Sayer)...". The existential process is indicated by the verb *is*, as in "...*where there is* (Existential Process) *capacity* (Existent)". The behavioural process is described by using the verb *slowed*, as in "...*arrivals* (Behaver) *have slowed* (Behavioural Process) *down in some of the camps* (Circumstance of location: place)...".

## 5. Results and Discussion

This study draws on the approaches of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) to Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) and Halliday (2004) to transitivity systems in order to conduct an analysis of both visual and textual structures. The tables presented illustrate the frequencies of visual categories depicted in the photographs, along with the distribution of textual processes employed across the selected reports.

Table 1. Representational Structures

Category	Representation					
Sub-category	Narrative				Conceptual	
Minor Sub-category	Action		Reactional		Analytical	Symbolic
	Transactional	Non-transactional	Transactional	Non-transactional		
Frequency	4	0	2	0	2	2
Percentage	40%	0%	20%	0%	20%	20%
	60%				40%	
Total	100%					

According to Table (1), narrative processes dominate with a frequency of 60%, surpassing conceptual processes which account for 40%. This indicates a clear emphasis on depicting unfolding actions or events rather than focusing on the symbolic representation of participants. Transactional action processes, constituting 40% of the total, are notably more prevalent than other types. This preference suggests that the image-maker prioritizes depicting the specific actions undertaken by the participants, highlighting their roles as actors within the visual narrative.

In Table (2), the analysis of participant roles indicates that the roles of 'Actor' and 'Goal' are each represented in 22% of the occurrences, suggesting that they are the most frequently depicted roles in the images from the selected reports. This observation leads the researcher to conclude that these roles align closely with the predominant process observed, namely the transactional action process. This finding suggests that photographers primarily focus on capturing the actions and behaviours of participants, rather than their possessions or symbolic representations, within the visual narratives.

Table 2. The role of the Participants

Participant Role	Frequency	Percentage
Actor	4	22%
Goal	4	22%
Reactor	2	11%
Phenomenon	2	11%
Carrier	2	11%
Possessive Attribute	2	11%
Symbolic Attribute	2	11%
Symbolic Suggestive	Zero	0%
Total	18	100%

Table 3. Dimensions of Interactional Mode

Dimension	Sub-Dimension		Frequency	Percentage
Gaze	Offer		4	22%
	Demand		Zero	0%
Social Distance	Close Shot		Zero	0%
	Medium Shot		1	5%
	Long Shot		4	22%
Attitude	Horizontal	Frontal	1	5%
		Oblique	4	22%
	Vertical	High	4	22%
		Low	Zero	0%
		Eye-level	Zero	0%
Total			18	100%

Table 3 demonstrates that the 'offer' action is the most prevalent in photographs, occurring in 22% of cases, which is greater than the frequency of the 'demand' action. This indicates a preference for realism in these images, where there is a notable absence of direct eye contact between the interacting participants and those depicted in the scene, suggesting a lack of emphasis on their portrayal. With regard to the matter of social distance, the most common angle is that of a long shot, which occurs 22% of the time. This portrayal of an impersonal relationship between interactive and represented participants serves to emphasise their depiction as strangers. In terms of horizontal orientation, the oblique angle is the most prevalent at 22%, in comparison to the frontal angle, which accounts for only 5% of cases. This suggests a detached portrayal of the participants. In terms of vertical perspective, all photographs are taken from a high angle, representing 22% of cases. This suggests that the interactive participants are portrayed with symbolic authority over the represented participants.

Table 4. Types of Process

Processes	Frequency	Percentage
Material	62	63%
Verbal	16	16%
Mental	9	9%
Relational	7	7%
Behavioural	2	2%
Existential	2	2%
Total	98	100%

Table (4) clearly shows that the material process dominates the data that comprising the highest rate of frequency 63%. It is the process of doing or happening. Material clauses construe actions, activities, and events. The Actor mostly refers to UNHCR that shows what the UNHCR distributing, providing, starting, trying, planning, sending, liaising, visiting, hosting, saving, opening and expanding. Some material clauses don't have the Actor, as in "A further 2,000 family tents and 6,000 emergency kits (Goal) will be *sent* (Material Process)", "Emergency relief items (Goal) have been *distributed* (Material Process)". As such, there is a focus on what is provided for the displaced more than on who is. Thus, the findings, in the material processes, prove that writers convey their ideas in different styles of wordings.

The use of verbal processes with the rate (16%) is higher than the other processes that signifies that the writers focus on what the UNHCR or the Iraqi government utters. The frequency rate (9%) of the mental process is somewhat higher than the frequency rate (7%) of the relational process. This means the data analysis reveals what the UNHCR thinks. The relational processes are realized as identifying, and possessive processes more than as attributive. The small numbers of behavioural and existential



processes in the data signify that the writers do not focus on how the participants behaving or where existing.

## 6. Conclusion

In light of the previous results, applying Multimodal Discourse Analysis and the transitivity system reveals complementary structures of the photos and texts used in the UNHCR reports. All the process types of transitivity system are showed in these reports they are material, verbal, mental, relational, behavioural and existential process. The participant roles of actor and goal of both photos and texts are more frequent than the other roles of participants. These roles are connected with the most dominant processes, the transactional action process of photos and the material process of texts Thus, there is a great focus on unfolding actions or events more than on what the participants representing, thinking or possessing. So, the UNHCR reports concern with the question of what happened in the world. The analysis also demonstrates that the social relationships depicted between the represented participants and the interactive participants (viewers) serve to reinforce the identities being portrayed. Moreover, these relationships demonstrate how viewers, who typically reside in tranquil and secure settings, exert influence, in contrast to the represented participants, such as the displaced, who inhabit less secure circumstances. Finally, it is confirmed that the results support the theory of visual grammar and clearly draw attention to the value of photos as semiotic resources that integrated with textual elements to expand and convey multiple meanings.

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المعاني التمثيلية والتفاعلية في تقارير المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون

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## الملخص

من المهم استخدام لغة ملائمة ودقيقة عند وصف الأشخاص المتكلمين ومعضلاتهم، لا سيما اللاجئين والنازحين الذين يتمتعون بحماية قانونية فريدة من نوعها. على الرغم من أن العديد من الباحثين درسوا تقارير المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين، إلا أنه لم يتم أي باحث بدراسة المعنى التمثيلي والتفاعلي لتقارير المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين عن النازحين العراقيين. لذلك تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف دور تقارير المفوضية في تعزيز قيمة العمل الإنساني من حيث تفرد استخدام المفوضية للغة. وتبحث الدراسة في كيفية تفاعل الصور والمحتوى النصي فيما يتعلق بتقارير المفوضية:

حيث يتم تحليل أربعة تقارير فيما يتعلق بالبنية التمثيلية والتفاعلية للصور والنصوص. وتتخذ هذه الدراسة نموذج تحليل الخطاب متعدد الوسائط الذي طوره كريس وفان ليوين (2006) والنموذج الذي اقترحه هاليدي (2004). واستنادا إلى النتائج، توصلت الدراسة الحالية إلى أن تقارير المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين فعالة ولها تأثير إيجابي على القراء بنتائج مقنعة. وقد تبين أن أدوار الفاعل والهدف في كل من الصور والنصوص أكثر تواترا من أدوار المشاركين الآخرين. ترتبط هذه الأدوار بالعمليات الأكثر هيمنة، أي العمليات السلوكية التفاعلية للصورة والعمليات المادية للنصوص. وهذا يشير إلى أن التركيز ينصب على الكشف عن الأحداث والوقائع أكثر من التركيز على ما يمثله المشاركون أو يمتلكونه أو يفكرون فيه.

الكلمات الدالة: النازحين العراقيين ، تعدد الوسائط ، التحليل الانتقالي ، تقارير المفوضية السامية للأمم المتحدة لشؤون اللاجئين ، والقواعد المرئية