

Murder in the Consulate: The Grammar of Transitivity in the Headlines of News Reports about Jamal Khashoggi

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ABSTRACT

The present study explicates the nature of the lexicogrammatical choices made in journalistic discourse about the death of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The case is internationally represented in the mostly circulated newspapers. The online versions of the four newspapers *Arab News* (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), *Hürreyat Daily News* (Turkey), *New York Times* (United States of America) and *Tehran Times* (Iran) are selected for the study. Proceeding within the framework of the transitivity system, the paper intends to expound how the four newspapers express the stances and viewpoints about the case. The analysis positions the newspapers writing technique within an ideological bifurcation of the legitimized US and the delegitimized THEM. The use of the transitivity system as an approach for analysis of the headlines unveils how journalists' attitudes steer readers toward the opinions preferred by the national policies of their countries.

INTRODUCTION

Ideologies shape and are shaped by the linguistic aspects of their discourse. News reports are instances of discourse where information is expressed and ideologies are reflected. Functional linguistics is a semiotic theory needed when analyzing textual contexts, social practices, and cultural knowledge to provide coherent interpretation of any piece of language. Producers and consumers of any discourse need to have knowledge of these three metafunctions in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intentions of that discourse.

Jamal Khashoggi: A Brief Biography

For a better understanding of the discourse on Khashoggi murder, it is crucial to provide a brief biography about Jamal Khashoggi and his identity. The Saudi citizen Jamal Khashoggi worked as a journalist in a number of renowned Saudi newspapers holding several positions. His fame is derived after leaving Saudi Arabia in 2017 residing in the United States. As a *Washington Post* Columnist, Khashoggi

was known for criticizing the policies of the Saudi Kingdom under the reign of the Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman (MBS) and King Salman bin Abdul Aziz. Getting to finalize his divorce paper in the Saudi Consulate on October 2, 2018, Khashoggi 'did not get out', as claimed by his Turkish fiancée who was waiting for him outside the consulate in Turkey.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Headlines: Form and Function

The essence of headlines is rooted in their linguistic formulation. Achieving their intents, headlines have to balance their short-sized form with their information-rich contents. According to Dor (2003), "headlines are designed to optimize the relevance of their stories for their readers" (p. 696). Ifantidou (2009) pinpointed the importance of creativity which helps in getting the reader attracted to the news article.

In terms of objectivity and bias, newspapers are intended to offer their readership a faculty of events delivered independently, neutrally and comprehensively. Deviation from such frame leads to unprofessionalism and lack of political

independence (Conboy, 2007). Headlines are regarded as an abridged and accurate form of a text (Ungerer, 2000) that performs a number of functions, such as initiating, sustaining, and shaping discourse for a large number of readers (Reah, 2002; Taiwo, 2007).

The fact that newspapers might be dealing with the same issues does not imply that the linguistic repertoire should be the same. Ideologies, stances and point of view are reflected through discrete linguistic selections. Newspapers seek to craft sensational stories in their headlines to attract interest in their news (Cain-Arzu, 2016). Headlines are the most important elements in news reports. People tend to skim words, phrases and topics headlines before deciding to scan the news reports (Imono et al., 2015; Kuiken et al., 2017). Headlines can be holistically read all through the paper or its electronic form. Thus, the headline has to attract the readers' attention and should, above all, make the reader eager to get to the contents inside.

Functional Grammar and the System of Transitivity

Functional Grammar is an approach proposed to enable individuals to understand texts and discourse within the frame of their communicative functions (Halliday, 1994). Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is so-called as it enables individuals to choose from the available choices to produce linguistic utterances and texts. Halliday and Hasan (1989) define 'language function' as a synonym of 'language use'. For Halliday and Hasan (1989), "function will be interpreted not just as the use of language but as a fundamental property of language itself, something that is basic to the evolution of the semantic system" (p.17). Halliday proposes a 'Transitivity System' that involves processes types, participants, and circumstances (Halliday, 1994).

Halliday (1994) states that "[t]he transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types" (p.106). He asserts that the processes of external world (material process), and inner experience, the process of consciousness (mental processes) are differently utilized. There are also process types of classifying and identifying (relational processes) and humane behavioral processes in addition to the category of verbal and existential processes.

Thus, the importance of this study lies in its analysis of the headlines of the news reports and the recontextualization of their elements such as activities, participants, places, time and other contextual references (Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 2008). Focusing on headlines, the current paper is, hopefully, intended to reaffirm the ideological implications through the analysis of the linguistic choices and the ideological positions of the selected newspapers through their contents.

METHODOLOGY

This study is capitalized on the headlines of 198 new reports (one-month period) from the English-language newspapers of the *Arab News*(AN), *Hürriyet Daily News* (HDN), *New York Times* (NYT), and *Tehran Times* (TT). The newspapers of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the United States and Iran are exclusively designated as per the intensification of the

political and economic mutual intervention among these countries. The four countries are politically labeled as sharing notoriously antagonistic struggling relations reflected through the ideological voice borne and presented in their official media forms.

In addition to their circulation rate, the news reports of the four newspapers were especially chosen because they embody different ideological beliefs. During this period, domestic political stances of the newspapers were obviously mimicking the voice and mirroring the international viewpoints of the four countries. Table 1 shows the article portions in the newspapers which, in turn, reflect the self-involvement of the national politics in Khashoggi case:

The analyzed news reports are posted on the official website of the four newspapers from the 2nd of October, 2018 till the 2nd of November, 2018. The online version of the newspaper is chosen for the easiness of retrieval and, most importantly, for the expansion of its readership as more newspapers are consumed in electronic form rather than paper form (Kuiken et al., 2017).

The period covers a month after the disappearance of the Saudi Journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the Saudi Consulate. The articles are gathered by using search words 'Khashoggi/Khashoggi/Jamal', 'Saudi', 'Journalist', 'kingdom'. The texts are then downloaded and fed into *UAMCorpusTool*. The software is useful in segmenting and annotating the elements of the transitivity system in a System Network as seen in Figure 1.

Generated statistical records of the required queries are presented after rendering the grammatical features using *UAMCorpusTool* (version 03). Tables and figures illustrating examples and frequency of transitivity features are methods of result representations. Figure 2 shows the dynamic movement of the discursive analysis taking place in this study.

Figure 2 elucidates how grammatical structures are interwoven in framing the whole case. Khashoggi issue is internationally propagated to achieve economic and political goals. The thematic contents of the texts are contextualized to show how opposing power axis interacts, each of which is seeking to establish a set of overtly ideological constructs. Cultural contexts represented in economic control, citizenship and mediated conspiracies are some of the ideological

Table 1. Portion of articles in the corpus

<i>AN</i>	<i>HDN</i>	<i>NT</i>	<i>TT</i>
52	51	51	44

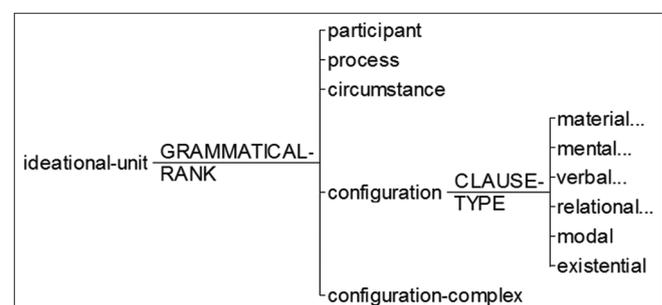


Figure 1. System network used in UAM Corpus Tool Software

constructs sought to be disseminated through the texts. The analysis of the current corpus expounds a set of dichotomies: self and other, evil and good, and/or supremacy and inferiority.

ANALYSIS

The different transitivity patterns help in revealing how the newspapers differ in their editorial styles, hence enabling us to pay attention to how the contextual elements are defined, and foregrounded. The following table clarifies the distribution of process types in the news reports.

It can be seen that material processes occupy the highest proportion. Actions, murder activities and happenings are stated. Commentaries and point of views are represented through the use of the verbal processes which come second in rank after material process. The least used process type is the relational processes which are direct judgmental verbs.

According to SFG, the transitivity system depicts the world view. The table above shows how the difference in the process patterns mirrors the newspapers style in depicting events and participants involved in the case. Amidst fast-paced events of Khashoggi's murder, each newspaper represents the events from its own perspective and point of view reflecting its own ideological background. Countries view the events involving themselves as active participants some way or another.

Table 2 shows how the use of the material processes is prevalent in the headlines of *TNY*, *HDN* and *TT*. In the Saudi *AN*, the material processes are less active. It is only the Saudi newspaper that opts for other process types other than the material processes. As the material processes reflect an action-related events performed by the participant, the Saudi newspaper did not rely much on the actions performed by the actor on a given goal. Such obvious difference pinpoints the ideological difference of the Saudi stance concerning the issue of the murdered Saudi citizen.

The Saudi newspaper opts for the use of verbal process more frequently. Similarly, the American newspaper relies more on verbal commentaries and declarations. The *AN*, according to the statistics tends to orient its context to the 'saying' rather than the 'doing'. As an international observer,

the American newspaper intends to express its involvement in the running events by utilizing both the verbal and the material processes. The analysis of the difference strategic choice process types reflects the stance adopted by each country through the discourse of its newspapers.

The study of the current discourse is based on viewing the texts as a murder topic-related discourse. The analyzed articles are thematically and ideologically loaded, and the role of language is to prove the validity of such ideological and thematic structures. Utilizing the approach of Functional Grammar (1994) and van Dijk's ideology square (2006), the following analysis seeks to highlight how the four newspapers adopt the approach of 'Self-legitimization' and 'Other-delegitimization'.

The death of Khashoggi brings about a complex network of topics related to economic power, international conflicts, substantiated threats from and against Arab countries. The analysis decomposes the selected one-month data into common diverged themes based on the cited participants in the headlines (See Table 2). The difference between the newspapers' stances may be qualitatively revealed by explicating how participants are represented and constructed with the process types.

The previous table distributes the themes according to the participants being represented in the headlines. The analysis of the corpus shows that news reports tend to distribute participants into five main categories:

1. Media Participant: Media, fake news, journalists, news reports (source of information to the public)
2. International community participants: Countries (allies, watchers, observers and supporters)
3. Arab Countries: Egypt, Palestine, Gulf states (Supporters), Qatar (Detractors)
4. Saudi Participants: Saudi officials, kingdom, Saudi ministers, investigators, Saudi delegates (observers)
5. Khashoggi-related: Case, disappearance, death, missing (issues and topics)
6. Country (self-engagement): Turkey, Iran, US, Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Stance (Arab News - Saudi Affairs Page)

Seeking to get out of the political dilemma, the Saudi *AN* adopts a completely different discursive practice that depicts the surroundings from the viewpoint of an 'accused'. Table 4 illustrates the dispersion of processes types and the participants in *AN*. The transitivity pattern of the *AN* shows how

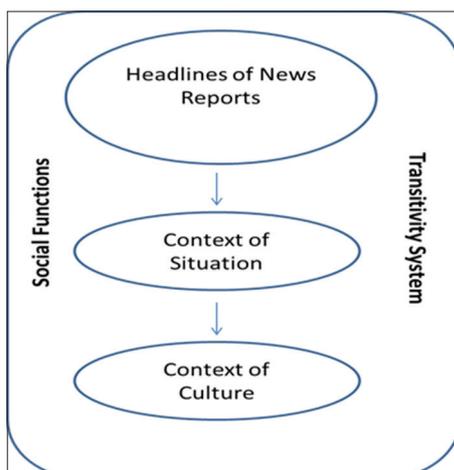


Figure 2. Dynamic movement of the current analysis

Table 2. Distribution of process types in the headlines

Process type	TNY	HDN	TT	AN
Material Process	57.26%	52.63%	54.66%	28.57%
Verbal Process	33.58%	23.68%	9.79%	38.78%
Mental Process	8.99%	21.05%	10.76%	22.45%
Relational Process	0.17%	2.64%	19.91%	8.16%
Existential Process	0.00%	0.00%	4.88%	2.04%

the newspaper does not have a defined evaluative strategy to a certain participant. The statistics show the overwhelming intention to present their headlines differently. Saudi participants are discretely distanced from the events using their voices only (verbal processes) rather than the physical actions or event transformations. The percentage of the verbal participant (Saudi) assimilates the participant of the international community who are watchers and observers over the case. Ranked the top two participants (Saudi and international community) both are presented as commentators rather than dominant key players. The transitivity pattern does not even coincide with the patterns utilized in the other three newspapers.

The countries self-engagement is the third participant in terms of frequency in the AN. The average annexation of the Saudi Arabia is limited to the processes of saying, judgment and evaluation. This is more relevant to the Saudi media that report conflicting news about the case and its uncertain scenarios.

Saudi participants: we are good, they are evil

As the story begins on the 2nd of October, 2018, the Saudi stance appears divergent seeking to depict an image of the victimized self and the demonized other. The news reports of the AN are found to follow the national stance of the Saudi Arabia. Saudi participants are highlighted as the mostly frequent participants in the head lines (See table 3). The reference to the Saudi participants is intended to be less dynamic, i.e. an observer and a discernment commentator rather than a doer. Chronologically, we can spot the Saudi denial to the accusations of being involved in killing the Saudi journalist

Table 3. Participant-based themes of the headlines

	<i>HDN</i>	<i>TT</i>	<i>NYT</i>	<i>AN</i>
International Community	19.44%	34.15%	33.33%	26.67%
Khashoggi'-related	16.67%	31.71%	25.00%	6.67%
Saudi Participants	27.78%	21.95%	13.89%	37.78%
Country (Self-engagement/reference)	33.33%	9.76%	22.22%	13.33%
Arab Countries (Supporters)	0%	0%	2.78%	8.89%
Media Participants	0%	2.44%	2.78%	6.67%
Others	2.78%	0%	0%	0%

Jamal Khashoggi. The following headlines label the Saudi participants as either royal descendants or officials. From the first day till the announcement of the death of Khashoggi in the 19th of October, the news reports in the AN highlights all participants as seeking self-substantiation either by filling the role of sayers (45%) whose only voices are observed as seen in examples (1-5), actors (20%) whose actions merely target accusations as in example (6), or sensors (20%) as in examples (7-8) where perceptual observation of the Turkish attitudes and interventions are anticipated.

1. Prince Turki Al-Faisal denounces demonization of Saudi Arabia
2. Saudi Consulate in Istanbul says looking into journalist's disappearance.
3. Turkish authorities can search consulate for missing journalist, Saudi crown prince says.
4. Missing writer Jamal Khashoggi 'is not here' Saudi envoy in Istanbul says.
5. Saudi official dismisses Turkish claims Jamal Khashoggi was killed in Istanbul consulate.
6. Saudi interior minister slams 'false accusations' on Khashoggi's disappearance.
7. King Salman thanks Erdogan for welcoming the proposal to form a joint team in the Khashoggi case.
8. Cabinet welcomes joint Saudi-Turkish Khashoggi probe.

After the announcement of the death of Khashoggi on the 20th of Oct, it was expected that the editorial linguistic repertoire would change, but this did not happen. The Saudi newspaper has not changed its initial stance in legitimizing its self. Example (9) shows how Saudi officials are actors seeking to reveal the truth. On the same day accusations are made about 'people acting beyond their authority' and intervening in the Saudi affairs are accused by the newspaper as taking a part in killing Khashoggi (Example 10).

9. Saudi official provides further, new details on Khashoggi case.
10. People acting beyond their authority' responsible for Khashoggi's death, says Saudi FM .
11. Saudi leadership condoles with Khashoggi's family and relatives.
12. Saudi foreign minister pledges 'comprehensive investigation' of Khashoggi killing.

Table 4. Distribution of process types and participants (AN)

Freq. ▼	Participant role/ Process type	Material	Mental	Verbal	Relational	Existential
#1	Saudi Participants	20.00%	20.00%	45.00%	10.00%	5.00%
#2	International Community	35.71%	14.29%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
#3	Country Self-Engagement	16.67%	16.67%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
#4	Arab Countries	0.00%	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
#5	Media	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
#6	Khashoggi-Related	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	0.00%

13. FII delegates pay tribute to Khashoggi, say ‘terrible act not part of our DNA’.
14. King Salman holds telephone calls with Germany’s Merkel, Russia’s Putin.
15. There will be justice for Khashoggi, says Saudi crown prince.
16. Saudi public prosecutor: Information obtained from Turkey shows that Khashoggi’s murder was premeditated.
17. Saudi Red Sea Project ‘to have 40-50 hotels’.
18. Crown prince begins reform of Saudi intelligence services.
19. Saudi FM meets with Bahrain’s crown prince to discuss regional developments.

Mental and sentimental feelings are used in the mental processes pledge and condole to express the Saudi refusal to this criminal act (Examples 11-12). The Saudi repudiation of being politically involved in this crime is also clear in example (12) in the verbiage stated by the Saudi officials.

Examples (13-16) highlight Saudi participants as ‘sayers’ seeking to enunciate measures taken to reveal the truth. Interestingly, examples (17-19) show how the Saudi participants deviate from the main topic of Khashoggi death to local and international investment developments and economic reforms. Such divergence is intended to gesticulate with political and economic power and that the capabilities of the Saudi government to recapitulate the events using its grand projects (Example 17). The headlines also insinuate additional capabilities of the Saudi reign to gather the Arab countries through ‘regional developments’. Such waving strategies may raise the interest of the international community of the benefits they would gain if they support the Saudi stance.

The international community says a lot

The death of Khashoggi and the involvement of Saudi Arabia in his murder have received most of the global attention. This is represented in the *AN* tendencies to portray the international community as vital participants in the course of events. World countries are mainly labeled as sayers and minimally referred to as actors and sensors in the headlines of *AN*.

20. Britain, France and Germany encourage Saudi-Turkish efforts in Khashoggi case.
21. CIA Director briefs US President Trump on Khashoggi’s case.
22. Rogue killers’ may be behind Khashoggi disappearance, Trump says.
23. US’ Mnuchin says talk about sanctions premature, will visit Riyadh to meet with counterpart.
24. US praises Saudi decision on slain writer’s son.
25. Saudi Arabia’s US ambassador condemns ‘malicious leaks and grim rumors’ surrounding Khashoggi disappearance.
26. Erdogan: KSA took ‘important step’ in revealing killing, but more answers needed.
27. Turkish authorities can search consulate for missing journalist, Saudi crown prince says.

28. Iran’s gains in the Khashoggi crisis.
29. Russia fund boss sees no drop in foreign investment to Saudi Arabia.

Apart from Turkey, *AN* depicts world countries as mere observers. Given the political and economic deference of the Saudi Arabia, it is inevitable that the western countries would depict their role and involvement discretely. The headlines of the news reports of the *AN* tend to reflect both the international and national interests of each country. It can be seen that western countries point of view is gathered in one headline (Example 20). These countries are seen to ‘encourage’ Saudi Arabia and Turkey in ‘their efforts’. The American role is depicted as a dynamic player which reflects the American interest in appearing as leading the course of events, thus, maximizing later benefits from the Saudi part. American participants play the role of sayers (Examples 21-23), sensors (Examples 24-25). The newspaper starkly depicts the Iranian stance as having ‘gains’ and that the Russian support is emphasized through pro-economic support through the phenomenon of the mental process in ‘see no drop in foreign investment to Saudi Arabia’. The transitivity pattern in the newspaper headlines seeks to highlight who supports and who opposes the Saudi reign.

Saudi Arabian self-engagement

The *AN* portrays the political sphere in Saudi Arabia and how it legitimizes its practices in terms of positive self-representations. One of the main and dominant macro-legitimatory process type is the mental actions of ‘denying’ false accusations, and appreciations of the supporting OTHER as seen in examples (30) and (31), respectively.

30. Saudi Arabia denies ‘baseless’ reports of Turkish ambassador’s expulsion.
31. Saudi Arabia extends appreciation to US administration for not jumping to conclusions in journalist investigation.

Arab countries are our allies

The same strategy of highlighting the countries that support the Saudi stance can be seen in examples (32-35). The *AN* seeks to acknowledge the Arab countries’ inherent support, hence, proclaiming power and Arab defiant identity. Superiority here is triggered from the construction of the powerful ‘US’ versus the world that is portrayed as the ‘OTHER’. This is contextualized in the participants represented in ‘Arab Allies and Middle East Organizations’ and the accompaniment prepositional phrase ‘with Saudi Arabia’ (Example 32).

32. Arab allies and Middle East organizations voice support, solidarity with Saudi Arabia.
33. UAE mogul Khalaf Al-Habtoor calls for a boycott of US firms, execs. who pulled out of Saudi investment summit.
34. Muslim countries reject political blackmail campaigns against Saudi Arabia.

35. Arab and Muslim nations, organizations commend Saudi Arabia's decrees on Khashoggi case.

In example (33), the verbiage ‘boycott of US firms’ depicts the prowess of the Arab coalition to wave economic threats to ‘THEM’ who dare take unplanned actions towards the kingdom. Examples (34) and (35) draw the Islamic and the Arab identities through the utilization of the mental processes ‘reject’ and ‘commend’ where the Saudi Arabia is the target and the phenomenon highlighted. These two examples explicitly construct the conceptualization of the Muslim US and the non-Muslim THEY raising the predominant ideological outlook that may be recalled whenever the confrontation between Islamic and non-Islamic countries come into being; that helps in strengthening the Saudi stance against the west creating a unity against bullying evil superpower.

Media: The hidden demon

The least referred to participant is ‘media’ which, according to the newspaper, played a role in killing Khashoggi (Example 36). Media is a global player that is politically utilized as a means of world power a cultural defamation (Example 37). As such, the AN stipulates that media coverage is utilized as an indirect means of distorting the Saudi self-image and to overarching Anti-Saudi public opinion.

36. The media has already killed Khashoggi.
 37. Culture of defamation means media is misused all over the world.

The above classification of participants will be described in the three other newspapers accordingly to review how there referential strategies reflect the editorial, hence national, motivation towards the Khashoggi case.

Turkish Stance (Hürriyat Daily News - Turkey Page)

The distribution of processes and participants in the Turkish newspaper headlines has its own linguistic style. The following table indicates that HDN intends to involve both the Turkish and the Saudi role in the case. Involvement is represented on the presidential or the official levels from the both sides.

Material processes again are ranked highly as the direct involvement is depicted dynamically to reveal the truth as will be seen in the detailed analysis of the participants. The role of the international community, according to the Turkish

newspaper is delimited to the senses and feelings and minor knowledge and speculations about what actually happened. Again Khashoggi’s name is mentioned in related issues which control the course of events in terms of the material processes.

Self-engagement: Turkey is here

Despite the moderate self-engagement strategies adopted by the other four newspapers (See Table 3), the Turkish newspaper is seen to have the highest quantity of headlines which reflect Turkey’s interest and involvement in Khashoggi’s case. The newspaper favors highlighting physical actions associated by Turkey. Revealing the ideology of supremacy, HDN seeks to show how Turkish officials are taking part in revealing justice, especially when the accused is the Saudi Arabian adversary whose relations with Turkey witness political unrests.

38. Turkey’s Erdogan speaks with Khashoggi’s family, sends condolences.
39. Erdoğan says top Saudi officials ordered Khashoggi hit
40. Turkey vows to reveal ‘naked truth’ over Khashoggi death.
41. Turkish officials inspect sewage network around Saudi Arabia consulate.
42. Turkish police raid villa in western Turkey as part of Khashoggi probe.
43. Turkish police probe Saudi consul’s fireplace amid search for Khashoggi’s body.
44. Turkish police find clothes in suitcases locked in abandoned Saudi consular car.
45. Turkish police investigating water sample from Saudi consulate well.

Examples (38-45) illustrate how the case occupies great importance on both the presidential level (as seen in examples 38-39) and the official level (Examples 40-45). The role of the president is framed within verbal practices such as ‘speak’, ‘says’ and ‘vow’ (Examples 38-40) while the role of the officials is to provide actions of happening and transformative events utilizing the following material processes: ‘inspect’, ‘raid’, ‘probe’, ‘find’ and ‘investigate’, in examples (41-45), respectively. The extensive reference to the Turkish officials as actors suggests the newspaper perception of the Turkish role as more relevant to their actions rather than their voices. According to HDN, the presidential role is to instruct and edict officials whose actions, in turn, are highlighted.

Secondly ranked in participant frequency is the reference to the Saudi involvement in the case. HDN refers to the Saudi role with a percentage more than 27%. As seen in Table (2)

Distribution of process types and participants (HDN)

Freq.	Participant role/Process type	Material	Mental	Verbal	Relational
#1	Self-Engagement	53.85%	15.38%	30.77%	0.00%
#2	Saudi Participant	50.00%	10.00%	30.00%	10.00%
#3	International Community	37.50%	50.00%	12.50%	0.00%
#4	Khashoggi-Related	66.67%	16.67%	16.67%	0.00%

material processes in the Turkish newspaper reaches 52.63% while the verbal processes reaches 23.68%. The analysis, however, shows that the newspaper opts for associating the Saudi participants with verbal processes more frequently than the material processes. The following headlines exemplify the verbal processes used by the participants.

46. Crown Prince Mohammad says Khashoggi killing will not 'drive a wedge' between Saudi Arabia, Turkey.
47. Saudis vow 'complete' probe of Khashoggi murder: Mattis
48. Saudi officials refuse to allow Turkish police to search water well in consulate amid Khashoggi probe.
49. Saudi hitmen were 'cheerful, drinking alcohol' after Khashoggi killing: Turkish driver.
50. Saudi prosecutor leaves Turkey without answering key questions on Khashoggi.
51. Saudi prince said Khashoggi was dangerous Islamist: Reports.

'Saudi Crown Prince', 'Saudis' and 'Saudi official' are associated with the verbal processes 'says', 'vow' and 'refuse' in examples (46-51), respectively to reflect the Saudi attitudes in the eyes of the Turkish newspaper. The attitude of the newspaper is also clear in example (49) where the 'Saudi hitmen' are attributed with joyful and cheerful state of mind. The state is stressed by the circumstantial adjunct 'after Khashoggi killing' despite distancing itself by quoting these attribute by a 'Turkish driver'. Examples (49-51) reveal how the Turkish newspaper highlights the Saudi tendency to cover and justify the killing of Khashoggi. In example (50), the main participant who is concerned with revealing the truth is the Saudi prosecutor (Actor) who is the one who 'leaves' without fulfilling the mission he is sent for. The state of this participant is described in the circumstance 'without answering key questions of Khashoggi'. The headline implies accusing the Saudi official of hiding the truth that the Turkish officials seek to reveal.

The same implication can be inferred in the headline in example (51) where the Turkish newspaper highlights the participant 'Saudi Prince' as the sayer of the verbiage 'Khashoggi was a dangerous Islamist'. By ascribing the attribute of being 'a dangerous Islamist' to Khashoggi (carrier), the Turkish newspaper indirectly draws the Saudi justification of the murder using Saudi reported speech as a proof of such acclaim.

Global views and the biased countries

With a percentage 9.44%, *HDN* highlights the role of the international community as observers of the case. The Turkish newspaper highly evaluates the American partaking throughout the headlines either by reference to the American president as in examples (52-53) or American intelligence executives (examples 54-59) all of whom are animate participants.

52. Trump unsatisfied with Saudi response to journalist death, backs arms deal.
53. Trump doesn't feel 'betrayed' by Saudi Arabia over Khashoggi killing
54. CIA director hears Khashoggi murder tape: Report.

55. CIA chief visits Turkey as officials seek to clarify Saudi prince's role in Khashoggi death.
56. CIA chief briefs Trump on Khashoggi probe after Turkey trip.
57. France vows 'punitive measures' if Riyadh role in Khashoggi murder 'proven'.
58. UK intelligence knew Saudi plot to kill Khashoggi.
59. Netanyahu condemns Khashoggi murder but backs stability in Saudi.

As seen in the previous examples, *HDN* foregrounds the dynamic role of the American part. The newspaper seeks to imply the interests and benefits that America pursues from the case. Such representations converse the passive reference to other countries which are referred to merely diplomatically by the country name as inactive participants. In examples (57-58) 'France' and 'UK' are represented in the headlines as third party in connection to the case. There are inactive 'sensors' with no action. In example (59), the proper noun of the Israeli Prime Minister is dynamically mentioned as both a sayer and actor, simultaneously, to highlight his direct intervention in the events. Given the presupposed antipathy between Israel and Arab countries, such explicit involvement could intend to imply provoking attitudes to Saudi part who is involved in the killing process.

Khashoggi-related attributes

In the headlines of *HDN*, a mixture between verbal and material process are seen when tackling Khashoggi-related attributes as a thematic participant in the headlines. In examples (60-62), 'Khashoggi's' body and 'Khashoggi's fiancé' are two goals highlighted by passivization to emphasize their position as first and second party participants respectively. The active construction of the sayer 'Khashoggi's Turkish fiancé' in example (63) is significant especially when the addressee is the American president 'Trump'. This addressee-oriented example implies that Trump is an active party in the events especially within the context mentioned in the circumstance (of purpose) 'to help reveal truth'.

60. Khashoggi's body parts found at Saudi consul's residence in Istanbul: Report.
61. Khashoggi's body destroyed in acid by Saudis.
62. Khashoggi's fiancée given police protection in Turkey.
63. Khashoggi's Turkish fiancée asks Trump to help reveal 'truth'.
64. Khashoggi-style killing must 'never happen again': Saudi FM.
65. Khashoggi murderers left Turkey over Saudi King's phone call: Opposition party leader.

In examples (64-65), we can notice the impersonalization of the case. Such utilization of the possessive style in 'Khashoggi-style killing' and 'Khashoggi murderers' are represented as actors pointing the fingers to the complete responsibility of the Saudi regime. The headlines emphasize the context in which the actions happen. That is, in example (64), the adverb 'again' presupposes that it did happen in the first place, and in example

(65) ‘over Saudi King’s phone’ which implies direct connections of the Saudi King with the murderers.

Despite the variant degree of engagement of both Turkey and Saudi Arabia, there are significant differences in the linguistic and strategic formulation of the headlines of *HDN* and *AN* as seen in Table (3) and as seen in the analysis of the *AN* headlines.

American Stance (The New York Times - Middle East Page)

Table (6) shows the distribution of processes and participants in the headlines of the American newspaper. The newspaper’s most important participant is the international community which is mainly depicted as the sayer and commentator over the events. *NYT* spots its light on the worlds’ opinion and commentaries. The news reports are seen to foreground the actions and the words of happening performed by the international community with a percentage reaching 33.33%. The newspaper is interested in the quoted opinion of the international community where beliefs and cognitions are covered by the mental verbs (16%). The worlds opinions and the global reaction is mostly covered to show the importance of the case and to state how huge it is.

Second in frequency is the participant type associated with Khashoggi’s case which is the agent controlling the events all through the headlines of the *NYT*. The variant distribution of the process types reflects how the newspaper is depicting the American role as dynamic commentator and active transformer of the current events. The American newspaper shows the American involvement in the current events. The newspaper does not pay attention to the Saudi participant voice. The Saudi participants are portrayed as active actors and opinions are given towards them with a percentage not exceeding 20%.

Global interference is a must

As seen in Table (3) and Table (6) above, *NYT* extensively relies on depicting the role of the international community as the key player in the course of events. With a percentage reaching more than 33%, some world countries are claimed to have a vital involvement. Turkey occupies the most frequent referred to country. Being the country in which the killing happened, Turkey is depicted as performing actions of ‘happening’ as in examples (66-67), ‘saying’ (68-71) and ‘believing’ as in example (71). Turkey is portrayed as a country of actions whose role is to high light the case and

preventing it from diminishing while pointing fingers to Saudi involvement in the murder. This can be seen in the circumstantials complementing the proposition in the clauses, e.g. ‘over disappearance of journalist’, ‘in the consulate case’, and ‘where Saudi journalist vanished’.

66. Turkey Summoned Saudi Envoy Over Disappearance of Journalist.
67. Naming Names, Turks Turn Up Heat on Saudis in Consulate Case.
68. Turkey Says Will Search Consulate Where Saudi Journalist Vanished.
69. Turkey Says Saudi Arabia Must Cooperate on Khashoggi, Allow Access to Consulate.
70. Turkey Says Joint ‘Inspection’ Planned at Saudi Consulate.
71. Turkey Believes Prominent Saudi Critic Was Killed in Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.
72. The Latest: Spain Joins Global Calls for Probe on Khashoggi.
73. Iran Says It Won’t Comment Yet on Missing Journalist Khashoggi Case.
74. Pakistan Hopes for Resolution in Khashoggi Case.
75. EU Expects Investigation of Khashoggi Disappearance, Mogherini Says.

Examples (72-75), however, refer minimally to the input of other countries as seen in the thematic openings of the headlines. The use of the mental processes accompanying the other countries (sensors) such as ‘Iran’ and ‘Pakistan’ shows how passiveness of such countries is construed towards the actions represented in the phenomena i.e. ‘Khashoggi Case’. Thus, it can be noticed that the newspaper adopts reversing attitudes when portraying the immersion of the countries in the case. The analysis of participant roles in *NYT* headlines reflects the economic interest in the outcome of the case from the Saudi Arabic. Turkey and Iran are seeking to be involved politically so as to achieve the utmost political goals.

Khashoggi is dead but is still there

With a frequency reaching 25%, Khashoggi-related referentials are second in terms of importance from the American newspaper perspective. Example (76) tells the state of Khashoggi. ‘Jamal Khashoggi’ is mentioned as a goal whose actor is elided. The involvement of the Saudi role is not enunciated and the expressed location is ‘in Istanbul’ the circumstance of location where Khashoggi disappeared. Examples

Table 6. Distribution of process types and participants (New York Time)

Freq.	Participant role/Process type	Material	Mental	Verbal	Relational	Existential
#1	International Community	33.33%	16.67%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
#2	Khashoggi-Related	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
#3	Self-Engagement	37.50%	12.50%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
#4	Saudi Participant	60.00%	0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	20.00%
#5	Arab Countries	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
#6	Media	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%

(81-82) elucidate how the case is referred to, i.e. either as ‘case’ or ‘disappearance’.

Interestingly the analysis shows that all the headlines whose participant is Khashoggi-related are represented as ‘actors’ of processes of actions. Looking chronologically a week after Khashoggi’s disappearance, the case is portrayed as having physical material action on its goal. The material processes ‘shows’, ‘shakes’, ‘strains’, ‘divides’ and ‘raises’ explicate the negative effect on the goal which is mainly the Saudi participant.

76. Jamal Khashoggi, Saudi Journalist , Detained in Consulate in Istanbul.
77. Missing Writer Shows Saudi Arabia’s Dark Side.
78. ‘Our Hands Can Reach You’: Khashoggi Case Shakes Saudi Dissidents Abroad.
79. Saudi Writer’s Disappearance Strains Turkey-Saudi Ties.
80. Fake News or Chilling Message? Journalist’s Disappearance Divides Saudis.
81. Khashoggi Case Raises Tensions Between Saudi Prince and Turkish President.
82. Journalist’s Disappearance Hardens U.S. Congress Stance on Saudi Arms Deals.

Freedom of journalists and themes related to this issue are indirectly constructed by drawing the role of the actors, i.e. ‘Saudi Journalist’ (Example 76), ‘missing writer’ (Example 77), ‘Saudi Writer’ (Example 79) and ‘Journalist’ (Example 80). His identity as a Saudi and his profession as a journalist contribute in constructing the out-group and other identity through the assumption of the oppression of thought and opinion.

The discourse of the newspaper is positioned within a network of direct involvement of the Saudi Arabia which is portrayed as deeply involved in Khashoggi murder. The discourse of the headlines presents the interconnection between America and Saudi Arabia, and this is clear in the American self-engagement in investigating the case of the Saudi journalist. Examples (83-84) show that American officials along with the American president are ‘sayers’ to the receiver ‘Saudi leadership’ with a verbiage promoting investigations about the case. The relations are expressed as deep in terms of the mental process ‘concerned’ whose ‘senser’ is the American president.

83. U.S. Officials Ask Saudi Crown Prince About Missing Journalist: White House.
84. Trump Says U.S. Working With Turkey, Saudis on Journalist Probe.
85. Pompeo Calls on Saudi Government to Investigate Khashoggi Disappearance.
86. Trump : Concerned About Reports of Saudi Journalist Missing in Turkey.
87. U.S. Ready to Assist on Missing Saudi Journalist Khashoggi: Pence.
88. U.S. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin Still Plans to Attend Upcoming Saudi Summit.
89. U.S. Says Khashoggi Remains Should Be Located, Returned to Family.
90. Senators Urge Trump to Suspend Nuclear Energy Talks With Saudi Arabia

Examples (87-90) show how the American side is seeking to strengthen and indirectly supporting the Saudi stance through the material processes ‘assist’ and the mental process ‘plan’. The headlines in the previous examples show the American involvement and willingness to pursue diplomacy and its readiness to cooperate and play a role in the resolution of the issue.

Saudi Arabia tries

The following examples show how *NYT* views the Saudi participants as dynamic actors seeking to reveal the truth. The material processes ‘manage’ (Example 91) and ‘opens up’ (Example 92) imply physical actions performed by the Saudi party.

91. Saudi Crown Prince’s Carefully Managed Rise Hides Dark Side.
92. Saudi Arabia Opens Up Consulate After Journalist Vanishes.

Media know all about it

NYT minimizes the role of media in the discourse of its headlines. The following instance shows that the role of media is restricted to delivering available facts about the case.

93. AP Explains: What’s Known About Saudi Writer’s Disappearance.
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The same insignificant partaking is ascribed to the Arab countries whose participation is limited to the rejection of the anti-Saudi attitude. The following example highlights the Kuwaiti standpoint in terms of representing Kuwait as the ‘sayer’ of the message clarified in the verbiage ‘Campaign against Saudi Arabia’.

94. Kuwait Says It Rejects ‘Campaign Against Saudi Arabia’.
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All of the above headlines in *NYT* are ideologically motivated and strongly influenced by the mutual interests between the two countries. The linguistic choices in the transitivity system of the newspapers contribute to the paper’s indirect promulgated pro-Saudi attitude. The ideological stance of the newspaper views Saudi Arabia as one of the strong allies in the Middle East. The newspaper indirectly seeks to construct the basis for legitimization of the Saudi stance as regards Khashoggi case.

Iranian Stance (Tehran Times – International Page)

The analysis of the Iranian newspaper shows how the priorities of the representation of the contexts construe the political stance and the position of the national policy towards Khashoggi murder. Through the distribution of the process types and the participants embedded in the headlines, we can notice that the percentage of the international community is topped as the highest frequency (33.33%). This editorial attitude resembles the American newspaper (See Table 3). Both newspapers review the world viewpoint regarding the course of events. Khashoggi-related issues is ranked second top then the rest of the participants arranged discerningly.

From Table (7), we can notice that the Iranian newspaper sees the international community as, by large, dynamically intervening in issue with material processes and judgmental through the use of relation processes and verbal processes.

Second top ranked participant is Khashoggi referential issues which are participants to material actions, mental processes, verbal, relational and existential. Khashoggi-related participants, according to the newspaper, are sustaining the readability and are ideologically motivated by the Iranian interest in expressing how critical the case is. In the light of that, we can say that *TT* foregrounds description of the Khashoggi-related case highlighting a qualitative substantial domination to the course of events.

Statistics related to the Country self-engagement (as seen in Table 7) is an indicator to keenness of the newspaper to show the neutral attitude towards the situation. Unlike the American linguistic and editorial repertoire, this transitivity representation may demonstrate the desire to maintain the Iranian ideology of non-interference. Supportively, the reference to the Saudi participants is limited to the minimum, which distance itself from the US vs. THEM discrimination.

The Iranian newspaper intends to distance itself from the killing of Khashoggi. Instead, *TT* seeks to describe the international political circles around the case. The first and foremost theme covered in the news is the description of the international community as observers and watchers of the case. The excessive reference of the American party is expressed in examples (58-62). The headlines reflect the Iranian newspaper attitude towards the relation between America and Saudi Arabia. Given the unfriendly relations between Iran and both America and Saudi Arabia, Iran portrays the American attitude as biased and not evenhanded.

The globe is a truth seeker and America hides it all

According to *TT*, America seeks to cover the murder of the Khashoggi as in example (95) where the USA is an actor to the metaphorical process 'buried' which imply covering and hiding the 'MBS disaster' under the auspices of Trump. In examples (96-97) *TT* expresses the end of MBS by the American supremacy. The schematization of 'Trump and the boy king' insinuates the end of the Saudi reign as in example (96) through the carrier/attribute relational process. Modalization in examples (97-99) reflects the decisive-looking yet meek-embedded attitude of the American and the western countries towards the murder. That is, according to *TT*, the world should consider severe measure more than 'might remove bin Salman from Crown Prince'. Again, in example

(98), the newspaper shows the transformation of the American attitude where the U.S. is the actor that will not put pressure on Riyadh. Passive involvement of the American attitude is also clear in example (99) as America will not voluntarily 'do something'. The material process 'force' has an actor which is 'Khashoggi case'.

95. U.S. has buried its moral compass in the Trump-Kushner-MBS disaster
96. Trump and the boy king: MBS's reign is over before it even began.
97. U.S. and other Western states might remove bin Salman from Crown Prince.
98. U.S. won't put game-changing pressure on Riyadh.
99. Khashoggi case will force Trump to do something: ex-senior CIA official.
100. Erdogan says 'savage' murder of Khashoggi was premeditated.
101. Recordings prove Jamal Khashoggi was killed, Turkish investigators claim.
102. UK preparing sanctions on Saudis over journalist disappearance.
103. Jamal Khashoggi : Labour attacks UK response as 'too little, too late'.
104. Global response to Khashoggi's murder 'late yet strong'.
105. G7 : Saudi explanation of Khashoggi's death leaves many questions unanswered.

According to *TT*, the Turkish role is not highlighted; the only two examples showing the Turkish involvement are examples (100-101). The Turkish role is restricted in the role of 'sayers' 'Erdogan' and 'Turkish investigators' to the verbal processes 'says' and 'claim', respectively. The newspaper, on the other hand, highlights the biased siding for the Saudi part. In examples (102-105), the agentive participants are passively depicted as third-party watchers. The Labour Party in UK is the actor of the material process whose goal is UK and the biased policies adopted by the UK politicians. In example (104), the anonymous 'Global response' is the carrier of the attribute 'late and strong' which supports the idea of passiveness of the international community and highlighting their intention not to lose relationship with Saudi party.

Khashoggi-related issues will never fade

The following examples illustrate the referential attitude adopted by the Iranian newspaper. In the first days of the case,

Table 7. Distribution of process types and participants (*Tehran Times*)

Freq.	Participant role/Process type	Material	Mental	Verbal	Relational	Existential
▼						
#1	International community	50.00%	0.00%	12.50%	18.75%	0.00%
#2	Khashoggi Related	61.54%	7.69%	7.69%	7.69%	15.38%
#3	Saudi Participant	46.15%	7.69%	7.69%	23.08%	0.00%
#4	Country Self-Engagement	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%	50.00%	0.00%
#5	Media	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Saudi Arabia intends to refer to Khashoggi as ‘a missing journalist’ killed by an anonymous criminal. Example (106) shows that the circumstantial ‘at the consulate’ and ‘in Turkey’ are intended to highlight the location of the murder, thus, indirectly referring to the suspected killers involved, that is Saudi and Turkey. Days on, the murder became ascertain and the proper name ‘Khashoggi’ became the goal. Highlighted, Khashoggi is the participant of the three material processes as seen in example (107). The case is also emphasized as a ‘scandal’. This scandal according to the Iranian newspaper is an actor in example (108) implying that the Saudi and U.S. cooperation will continue despite the brutality of the Saudi crime. The same participant is a carrier in example (109).

106. Missing Saudi journalist killed at consulate in Turkey.
107. Khashoggi was murdered, dismembered and taken out of Turkey: Askari.
108. Khashoggi scandal not to affect U.S.-Saudi cooperation against Iran: Mammadov.
109. Khashoggi scandal : Insult to wisdom of the entire world.
110. Khashoggi case won’t affect Saudi destructive regional policy.
111. Khashoggi case may awaken world to dangers of MBS.
112. Khashoggi’s ‘severed fingers taken to Saudi crown prince as macabre trophy’.

The Iranian stance is evidently accusing the Saudi regime seeking to prompt animosity mental state toward Saudi Arabia. In examples (110-111), the same intention is reinforced but with reference to the crime as ‘Khashoggi case’ (actor). The goal ‘Saudi destructive regional policy’ and the matter circumstantial ‘dangers of MBS’ in examples (110-111), respectively, mirror the Iranian stance toward the Saudi policies. Example (112) explicitly highlights the involvement of the Saudi Crown Prince through the utilization of the two beneficiary and role circumstantials ‘to Saudi crown prince’ and ‘as macabre trophy’.

Saudi Arabia did it

Thirdly ranked in terms of the frequency are the Saudi participants (21.95%) that are found playing four agentive roles (See Table 7). The Iranian stance in examples (113-115) is defiantly attacking the brutality and profligacy of the Saudi Prince Mohammad bin Salman. *TT* describes MBS as an immature ‘boy king’ (carrier) who ‘resembles’ (relational process) ‘Trump’ (attribute) and is described as the ‘next Saddam Hussein’ (attribute) in examples (115-117), respectively.

113. Trump and the boy king: MBS’s reign is over before it even began.
114. Mohammad bin Salman resembles Trump.
115. Mohammed bin Salman is the next Saddam Hussein.
116. Saudi Arabia likely murdered “Jamal Khashoggi”.
117. Saudi Arabia looking horrific given the Khashoggi affair.

TT also aims at describing the Saudi policies; in examples (116-117), respectively, *TT* is referring to Saudi Arabia

(Actor) as an active criminal and identifying it as country of horrific attributes.

Iran watches and will be a victim somehow

The Iranian editorial attitude of taking the role of a passive watcher is clear in the following headlines. We can see that the Iranian president is a sayer and the Iranian officials are following his lead in the verbalization of his voice or the mental representation of what they believe in (Example 118). The representation of their beliefs is manifested only through their voices. This can be seen in examples (121-123).

118. Khashoggi case a big test for self-proclaimed human rights defenders, Iranian president says. (Oct 24, 2018)
119. Driving Iranian oil export to zero in short term is not easy: Energy expert .
120. Saudis have been shielded from rights violations, breeding terror: Iranian diplomat .
121. Khashoggi murder proves Western human rights is a mirage: grand ayatollah.
122. Ex-envoy predicts U.S. will remove MBS.
123. Riyadh likely to double anti-Iran policies after Khashoggi death: Prof. Zonis.
124. Saudi spy met with Team Trump about taking down Iran.

In examples (123-124), *TT* views ‘Iran’ as a target for the world’s hostility. In example (123), Riyadh is the actor that motivates hatred in ‘anti-Iran policies’. According to Iran, this aims at distracting the world of the murder of Khashoggi. Similarly, according to *TT*, Iran will be the subject matter of the American Saudi evil plan ‘about taking down Iran’ (circumstance).

Saudi media holds the responsibility

The Saudi media is minimally discussed. Example (125) shows that the newspaper adopts the same unjustified attitude of Saudi Arabia mimicking the same national ideological beliefs of covering the crime of Khashoggi murder.

125. Saudi media tries to cover up circumstances of Khashoggi’s death.

This transitivity representation may demonstrate passive self-engagement and a desire to maintain its ideology of self-victimization and other demonization as well as adopting the policy of non-interference.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the headlines of the newspapers of Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran and the United States helps illuminating the linguistic style of the narration of the incidence from four different perspectives and angles. The results reconfirm the knowledge about how each country perceive itself and the other three countries. The findings also highlight the critical use of media forms in propagating national and domestic ideological stances. That is, the analysis positions the writing techniques of the headlines within an ideological divergence of the ‘US’ and ‘THEM’. The use of the transitivity

system as an approach for analyzing headlines unveils how journalists' attitudes steer readers toward the opinions preferred by the national policies of their countries. The foregrounding of specific contextual elements over others portrays the social actors as well as their actions in a manner that constructs the opinion of the public towards the case. The lexicogrammatical choices mirror the linguistic style employed to evaluate the story and emphasize how 'good' the 'self' is and how 'bad' the 'others' appear to be. The crucial impact of headlines of the news reports is laid on the skillful manipulation of their writers. In fact, the discourse of news reports solicits the factual information and the editorial tactics in evaluating the role of all the engaged parties through their linguistic repertoire.

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