

# Linguistic Features of Legal Discourse: Genre Analysis of Police Reports<sup>560</sup>

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## Abstract

This genre analysis aimed to investigate the different linguistic features, cohesive devices, linguistic moves as well as narrative structures found in legal discourse specifically, police reports. The gathered linguistic corpora from the selected police stations in Davao del Norte were analyzed, categorized and interpreted through the lens of Finnegan's language structure and use, Halliday and Hasan's Text's Connected Theory, Labov and Walezky's Narrative Theory and Riberio's moves of police reports. Results showed that the linguistic features found in police reports are technical jargon, archaic expression, doublet, compounding, formality, derivational morpheme, and sentence complexity. The identified syntactic features are passives, prepositional phrases, unique determiners, parallel structure, participle, and relative clauses. Using the Text Connected Theory, the identified cohesive devices are reference, conjunctive elements, substitution, and lexical cohesion. Two types of reference are also identified such as cataphoric and esphoric reference. Conjunctive elements are also categorized into four namely, additive, temporal, adversative, and causal conjunctive. The lexical cohesion found are reiteration and collocation. As to linguistic moves, four linguistic moves were present in writing police reports such as move 1) Identifying and situating the agency, the Police Report (PR) and its circumstances; move 2) classifying the fact and its circumstances; move 3) narrating (reporting) the facts; and move 4) identifying the personnel responsible of the report. Narratives are also framed according to Labov and Walezky's Narrative Theory consisting of six elements such as abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Exploring the genre of police reports equips officers in understanding the specific conventions that facilitate law enforcement documentation. Genre analysis essentially helps police officers in identifying and navigating these requirements, ensuring that the produced reports from their stations are not only informative but also meet the necessary legal requirements. The meticulous process of creating narratives is not merely a bureaucratic duty, but rather a critical aspect of ensuring and maintaining accountability, integrity and public trust of the criminal justice system.

*Keywords: linguistic features, legal discourse, genre analysis, police reports*

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## 1. Introduction

The complex and multidimensional relationship between language and law influences many facets of the legal system, including the creation, interpretation, and application of legal texts (Maley, 2019). These crucial roles that language plays in legal discourse and interpretation have been highlighted by Johnson and Smith (2019) who examined language's function in legal interpretation and emphasized how it affects the way judges make decisions. Nguyen and Brown (2022) similarly investigated the power dynamics in legal discourse, demonstrating how language is used as a tool of control and persuasion in courtroom interactions.

Language serves as the primary medium through which legal norms, rights, obligations, and procedures are communicated, negotiated, and enforced within a legal framework (Patel and Jones 2021). Moreover, the language used in legal discourse is not only a tool for conveying meaning but also a mechanism for constructing legal realities, shaping legal identities, and mediating social relations within the legal community and broader society (Rodriguez and Garcia, 2024).

Police report as a genre represents a crucial intersection between language and law which offers insights how linguistic choices within these legal documents shape legal proceedings and perceptions of criminal events. With their descriptions of incidents, investigations, and arrests, police reports form the groundwork of the criminal justice system (Smith, 2019). Understanding the nuances of language used in these reports is essential for legal practitioners, linguists, and law enforcement officials alike. Harris and Smith (2021) emphasized the importance of analyzing linguistic patterns and communicative strategies in police reports to uncover underlying biases, power dynamics, and discursive practices that may impact the administration of justice.

A well-written, accurate, and comprehensive report is essential as it is considered the bedrock of the judicial system. If these reports are erroneous, confusing, and deceitful, there could be damaging repercussions for the police officer responsible for the report (Redwine 2023). Berg et al. (2004) considered that a comprehensive written incident report summarizes the officer's actions and observations chronologically and gives a detailed account of the crime scene, witnesses' testimony, and the evidence's descriptions.

Since legal discourse requires a specific type of register that is far different from the general language, police reports should be written following the standards of professional and technical writing (Pujante, 2021). Wallace and Roberson (2009) argued that accuracy, completeness, and impartiality should be the principles of a police officer when writing reports. Police report as a register of language necessitates different linguistic features for contextually defined varieties of language (Cetkovic 2017). As it aims for a specific audience and specific purpose, police officers should possess language competence that covers mastery of the technicalities or the grammar of the English language, word choice, and logical organization (Wallace and Roberson, 2009). Reynolds (2017) claims police reports should be accurate, brief, complete, objective, sequenced, and detailed. Similarly, Morley (2014) describes effective police report writing as precise, unbiased, comprehensive, brief, and straightforward.

In the Philippine context, Pujante (2021) claimed that one of the most important and yet often ignored jobs of police officers is documentation and reporting. Cetkovic (2013) argued that police agencies in Britain have a longstanding practice to use excessively formal language distinguished by its verbosity, complicated structures of sentences and overuse of passive voice. She claimed that the official police reports are characterized by long and unwieldy sentences which are not only grammatically inappropriate but also hard to comprehend. Moreover, in United States, police report writing has historically suffered from a lack of training and oversight (Carr et. Al, 1980 and Gregory et.al, 2011).

Despite their importance, there remains a significant gap in our understanding of the genre characteristics and linguistic features of police reports. While prior research has delved into genre analysis across various textual contexts, such as academic writing or professional communication, there is a dearth of comprehensive examinations specifically focused on police reports. This gap poses a considerable challenge to fully understand and grasp the features, structure, cohesiveness, and moves inherent in police reports.

Recent studies have highlighted the need for a more nuanced understanding of police report genres (Smith, 2019; Jones et al., 2020; Brown, 2021). However, these studies have primarily focused on specific aspects of police reports, such as narrative structures or lexical choices, rather than providing a holistic genre analysis. Consequently, there remains a pressing need for research that systematically examines the genre conventions, linguistic features, and move patterns embedded within police reports.

To address this gap, the current research aims to conduct a comprehensive genre analysis of police reports, shedding light on their unique characteristics within the realm of law enforcement discourse. By employing a genre analysis, this study sought to uncover the underlying features that distinguish police reports from other genres. Through this investigation, valuable insights can be provided that can inform both theoretical understanding and practical applications in law enforcement contexts.

The current research is gleaned from the perspective of Finegan's language structure and use. Finegan (2014) argued that words have meaningful parts and principles that govern their composition and function in sentences. Finegan (2014) further emphasized that morphology shows three ways words can be interpreted. First, people can create new words from existing words and different parts of words. Second, people can borrow words from other languages. Finally, people can create new words just by using their creative minds. Finegan's view is used because this study concerns linguistic features, specifically on police reports.

This study can also be seen in Swales's genre and move analysis (1990) and Labov and Waletzky (1997). Genre is an institutionalized communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purposes identified and commonly understood by professional or academic community members where it is used as a regular form of communication. It is also a form of written discourse with criteria such as events and purposes, forms and contents' restrictions, and relevance to the community utilizing the discourse. Fairclough (14) and Sorouri et al. (2022) exemplify genre as using language in a socially ratified way with the aim of a specific type of social goal.

Bhatia (1993) defined it based on the communication or rhetorical purposes of the texts used by discourse community members in a definite context. Swales (1990) also claims that genre is a set of communicative events wherein users share communicative goals that consider style, structure, and content. Genre analysis explores the structure of the text by analyzing rhetorical construction that differentiates one text from another type of text. Further, it intends to recognize the orders of moves, genre strategies, and the linguistic features of the genre that make it unique and different from other genres.

Move analysis is then used to delve deeper into the genre (Cotos, 2017). This analysis focuses on meaning and ideas in analyzing the discourse structure of texts from a genre (Swales 1993). Move is a functional unit in a text that serves some recognizable functions. It frequently identifies textual regularities in particular writing genres (Ding, 2007). Swales described the move as a semantic unit based on the function it offers on the totality of the article. As this study will describe the different steps or moves of writing police narratives, move analysis is paramount for comprehensive scrutiny of the linguistic corpora.

Further, this study utilized Halliday's and Hasan's (2004) text connectedness to determine the structure of police narratives, which makes it a different genre or text. They claimed that the essential criteria for making a text are reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. This theory is used since these criteria are linguistic tools to make a text a text. Moreover, coherence and logical organization are essential for meaningful written discourse. In this study, cohesion and coherence of police narratives were examined to describe the structure of police narratives and the linguistic features that aid in making the narrative clear, precise, and accurate.

This genre analysis is essential in exploring the linguistic features of legal discourse, specifically the police report, as these are specific types of genres that follow unique writing rules and conventions. As used in this study, linguistic features substantiate various scholars' definitions, including vocabulary, content, and rhetorical organization (Brown 2021; Brown et al., 2005; and Iwashita et al., 2008).

As defined by Brown (2021), legal discourse signifies a strong interplay between law and language, linking together law as like language and law as itself language. In this study, this legal discourse pertains to the discourse used in the actual police report produced from the different police stations within Davao del Norte, Philippines. Genre analysis, as defined by Bhatia (1993), aims to recognize the orders of moves, strategies employed, and the linguistic features of the genre that make it unique and different from another genre. This explored the moves of police reports and how moves are cohesively and coherently connected to create a meaningful text or police report. Moreover, this study also explored the different linguistic features used by police officers to describe the crime or incident that occurred. As operationally used, a police report is a written document prepared after a crime or accident is reported to law enforcement which typically identifies the victim of a crime, witnesses who might have the first information needed for the investigation of the matter, the classification of the offense, and other pertinent data.

While many studies explore the gaps and problems present in police reports (Pujante, 2021; Redwine, 2023; Cetkovic, 2017; Wallace and Roberson 2009; Carr et. Al, 1980 and Gregory et.al, 2011), few researches (Sumaljab, 2018) only explore the moves as to how police reports are crafted and the linguistic features that constitute the police report. As police reports are considered crucial aids for investigation and legal proceedings, it is a must to study this unexplored genre as it deals with specific language uniquely designed to achieve specific purposes within the discourse community. This should also be scrutinized as public documents to identify the different lexical categories and linguistic features encompassing the comprehensive police report.

### **1.1 Research Questions**

This genre analysis aims to identify the different linguistic features used in different types of police reports. This includes lexical features, syntactic features, and cohesive devices found in the linguistic corpora (Finegan 34-50). Further, this analysis would use Swales (1-10) and Labov and Waletzky (36) in exploring the moves of the police report. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What linguistic features are found in police reports?
2. How do police officers frame their narratives?

This study aims to add valuable information to the existing literature that explores genre analysis, and police report as linguistic corpora. As few studies have explored the genre of police reports, this study can be of great use in applied linguistics and legal discourse, and it would also introduce future researchers to various linguistic features and moves in

writing police reports. As it is considered a significant aid in legal proceedings and as a public document, this study would introduce various professionals, not only those in the legal profession but also those who are in the academe, to the different types of police reports and the rules and conventions of various types of police reports.

The findings of this study would also help people in the legal department scrutinize police narratives. Further, this would introduce them to the lexical categories in legal discourse and develop their writing competence in making detailed, accurate, and concise police reports. Curriculum makers and language teachers shall also be equipped to identify, write, and contextualize teaching and learning materials for Criminal Justice Education students. This ensures that future law enforcers will use authentic texts for technical writing courses. In a global perspective, the study addressed the two Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations for 2030 namely 1) ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG 4-Quality Education) and 2) promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all level (SDG 16-Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

Considering the objectives of this genre analysis, certain delimitations and limitations are identified to set the scope of the study. This only focused on 30 linguistic corpora from two (2) police stations of Davao del Norte, Philippines, such as Tagum City Police Station and New Corella Police Station. These 30 linguistic corpora were analyzed according to linguistic, lexical, and syntactic features. These are also categorized according to their types. Further, moves were explored to distinguish how coherence is achieved in writing police reports. Though this study explores legal discourse, this is only delimited to police reports and does not investigate the entirety of legal language, as police reports are just part of the broad and complex nature of legal language. Because of the limited language corpora, results may not generalize the soundness of conclusions.

## **2. Method**

This section contains the method used in this study. Data sources, materials, instruments, design, and procedures are also presented.

### **2.1 Data sources**

This genre analysis makes use of secondary data, such as police reports. Martins et al. (2018) claimed that any material obtained by others from any community domain is categorized as secondary data. These are usually free and inexpensive to access and can provide a strong foundation for any research once value and usefulness are adequately assessed. It refers to a data set not directly gathered by the author (Boslaugh 2007). It pertains to information gathered by others that can be used for new methods of inquiry and for which it was not primarily and initially intended (Vartanian 2010).

In this study, these are written narratives produced by police officers or law enforcers intended to record the crime committed or incident that happened as a reference for criminal investigation and legal proceedings. These linguistic corpora were used as data sources to scrutinize the different linguistic features, such as lexical categories, syntactic features, and cohesive devices in the reports. No participant was involved. Instead, this used authentic texts that actual practitioners of the discourse produce as data sources. Morrow (1997) describes authentic materials as a stretch of natural language produced by real users or writers designed to convey a specific purpose. Further, Gilmore (2007) claims that authentic texts, produced in the natural communication process, reflect the situation, the participants, social and cultural communication, and the purposes of the communicative act.

Different types of police reports, such as spot reports, special reports, progress reports, investigation reports, beat inspection reports, after-patrol reports, and situation reports, which were written from 2019 onwards, were subjected to deeper scrutiny and analysis in order to identify various lexical, syntactic and cohesive devices that make up the whole police report. Thereby providing comprehensive information on the linguistic features and moves.

These police reports were taken from Tagum City Police Station and New Corella Police Station from January 2024 to February 2024. These reports include different cases such as robbery, theft, arson, burglary, online fraud, murder, frustrated homicide, adultery, drug-related cases, and others. These data sources are considered secondary data since police reports are considered public documents.

## 2.3 Materials and Instrument

This qualitative-genre analysis utilized 30 police reports as linguistic corpora obtained from two police stations in Davao del Norte. These 30 linguistic corpora sufficed this analysis as Clarke and Braun (2013) suggested that 10-100 materials are needed for data saturation when using secondary sources in qualitative research (Fugard and Potts 2015).

From these gathered documents, I focused my analysis on the linguistic features through the lens of Finegan's language structure, Halliday and Hassan (2014) cohesive devices, and established the moves of police reports using Swales (1990) and Labov and Waletzky (1997) genre and move analysis and Riberio's six (6) moves of police report (2014).

## 2.4 Design and Procedures

This genre analysis employed a qualitative research design. Creswell (2000) defines qualitative research as a method of inquiry that aims to create a comprehensive, primarily narrative account to aid the researcher in understanding a social or cultural phenomenon. When conducting qualitative research, participants observe, participate in interviews, and analyze documents in their natural settings. Additionally, qualitative research is a scientific study that entails an investigation that looks for solutions to a query. This research is centered on examining and analyzing language and how it is used in a specific genre, and framing is established to create a meaningful whole or text.

Specifically, this study employed genre analysis as it explored the nature of linguistic conventions and how they operate in police reports as a type of text. This further explored the structure and communicative goal of police reports as a genre and how these texts function to law enforcers or police officers as part of the discourse community. Genre, as defined by Swales (1993), is an approach to text analysis that focuses on structure and rhetorical organization and differentiates one type of text from another. Swales further elaborated that genre constitutes the class of communicative events in which community members share some purposes recognized by the practitioners, thereby shaping the schematic structure of the discourse that determines the constraints of choice relevant to content and styles.

Referring to what Swales stipulated, Bhatia (1993) stated that genre often follows a high structure and conventions with constraints on the intent, form, positioning, and functional value. Expert community members achieve these intentions within socially recognized communicative purposes. Fang (2012) viewed that through genre analysis, the psychological process of constructing the text is emphasized. This offers a more profound and thorough explanation of form and function relations through analysis of the rhetorical organization and other linguistic features of a text as a genre. Anchored from this perspective, in this study, I identified the different rhetorical moves and strategies employed from the gathered linguistic corpora as genre analysis investigates social and linguistic conventions.

## 3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the result of the analysis of the corpora gathered, which are the Police reports on file from three different police stations in Davao del Norte, Philippines.

These linguistic corpora were analyzed, focusing on the linguistic features through the lens of Finegan's language structure and text cohesive devices using Halliday and Hasan's Text Connectedness Theory. Linguistic moves of police reports were also explored using Swales (1990) and Labov and Waletzky (1997) genre and move analysis using Riberio's six moves of police report (2010).

To fully understand the nature of legal discourse, communicative purpose and ways of constructing the legal text should be perceived (Berūkštienė (2016). Legal texts, as elaborated, can be regarded as special texts with specific purposes belonging to legal discourse. These texts are different from any other texts because of their texts-internal and text-external features, which could be manifested through their functions, structure, and even the language used. Legal texts are drafted with a specialized language.

Lehrberger (1986) elaborated that legal texts only explore limited subject matter focusing on law, observed lexical, semantic, and syntactic restrictions evident in the use of terminologies, and the high frequency of specific constructions such as formalized sentence patterns and structure. Šarčević also added that legal texts are formulated in a unique language



subject to special syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic rules. Along a similar notion, Cao (2007) argued that legal language covers all communications in a legal setting. Legal language is considered a complex form of discourse that could be difficult to understand and inexplicable for laypeople.

Danet (1985) stated that the distinct characteristics of legal texts and documents can be identified through the linguistic aspects of having a formal vocabulary and possessing the highest degree standards that comply with the norms of style. She also pointed out lexical features of legal texts with uncommon meanings. Presented in Table 1.1 are the Linguistic Features found in Police Reports.

The table shows a comprehensive overview of both lexical and syntactic features found within the analyzed corpora. In terms of lexical features, technical jargon emerges as the most prevalent, constituting 27.7% of the total occurrences. This prevalence suggests a specialized vocabulary inherent to the discourse domain being examined, possibly reflecting the professional or technical nature of the texts. Additionally, the presence of archaic expressions at 18.08% indicates a historical or formal linguistic register within the corpus. The occurrence of compounding and derivational morphemes (7.45% and 26.06%, respectively) further underscores the complexity and depth of word formation processes utilized in the text.

Turning to syntactic features, prepositional phrases emerge as the most frequent, accounting for a significant portion (48.27%) of the total occurrences. This prevalence suggests a high level of specificity and detail in the descriptions provided within the corpus. The presence of passives (17.02%), pronominal adverbs (14.18%), and participles (6.38%) indicates a diverse range of grammatical structures employed within the text. Additionally, the occurrence of relative clauses and parallel structures (2.84% each) adds further complexity and variety to the syntactic composition of the corpus.

Overall, the data highlights the richness and intricacy of language use within the analyzed corpus, characterized by a combination of specialized terminology, formal expressions, and diverse syntactic structures. These findings offer valuable insights into the linguistic characteristics specific to the discourse domain under study and provide a foundation for deeper analysis and interpretation.

**Table 1.1 - Linguistic Features in Police Reports**

<b>Linguistic Features found in Police Reports</b> (Finegan's Language Structure and Use)		
<b>Lexical Features</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Technical Jargon	52	27.7%
Archaic Expression	34	18.08%
Doublet	5	2.66%
Compounding	14	7.45%
Formality	34	18.09%
Derivational Morpheme	49	26.06%
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	
<b>Syntactic Features</b>		
Passives	24	17.02%
Prepositional Phrases	68	48.27%
Pronominal Adverbs	20	14.18%
Unique Determiners	12	8.51%
Parallel Structure	4	2.84%
Participle	9	6.38%
Relative Clause	4	2.84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	

**Table 1.2-Cohesive Devices found in Police Report**

<b>Cohesive Devices found in Police Reports (Halliday and Hasan's Text Cohesiveness Theory)</b>			
<b>Cohesive Devices</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Reference</b>	▪Anaphoric Reference	78	27.96%
	▪Cataphoric Reference	26	9.32%
	▪Esphoric Reference	52	18.64%
	▪Personal ▪Demonstrative		
<b>Conjunctive Element</b>	▪Additive Conjunctive	32	11.47%
	▪Temporal Conjunctive	18	6.45%
	▪Adversative Conjunctive	16	5.73%
	▪Causal Conjunctive	12	4.30%
<b>Substitution</b>		25	8.96%
<b>Lexical Cohesion</b>	▪Reiteration	12	4.30%
	▪Collocation	8	2.87%
<b>Total</b>		<b>279</b>	

Table 1.2 outlines the usage of cohesive devices within police reports, based on Halliday and Hasan's Text Cohesiveness Theory. Cohesive devices play a crucial role in maintaining coherence and clarity within texts, thereby aiding in effective communication. For reference, anaphoric reference emerges as the most frequent cohesive device, constituting 27.96% of the total occurrences. Anaphoric references refer back to previously mentioned elements in the text, facilitating continuity and cohesion. Similarly, cataphoric references (9.32%) and personal/demonstrative references (18.64%) contribute to text cohesion by linking subsequent elements to previously introduced ones.

For the conjunctive element, additive conjunctives are the most prevalent type, accounting for 11.47% of the total occurrences. These cohesive devices serve to connect clauses or sentences by indicating addition or accumulation of information. Temporal, adversative, and causal conjunctives (6.45%, 5.73%, and 4.30%, respectively) further enhance text cohesion by signaling temporal relationships, contrast, and cause-effect connections. Substitution occurs 8.96% of the time, allowing for the replacement of repeated elements with pronouns or other expressions, thereby avoiding redundancy and enhancing text flow. For the used lexical cohesion, reiteration (4.30%) and collocation (2.87%) contribute to lexical cohesion within the text. Reiteration involves the repetition of lexical items, while collocation refers to the co-occurrence of words or phrases in close proximity, both of which contribute to semantic coherence. The overall frequency and distribution of these cohesive devices underscore the importance of maintaining coherence and cohesion within police reports. Effective use of these devices facilitates understanding and interpretation, crucial for legal and investigative purposes.

### **Linguistic Moves of Police Reports**



Police reports, as a highly structured genre, follow a certain number of moves, evident in the gathered corpora. Police officers frame their narrative in identifiable and distinguishable moves that make their report comprehensive. From the gathered corpora, only four out of six significant moves in Police reporting writing identified by Riberio (2010) are observed since the participants involved in the report are all part of the narrative section. To elaborate on these moves, I presented part of the Police reports, accentuating each move as samples to discuss comprehensively. Separate samples of the police reports are also provided to identify all the moves and their corresponding steps to show how the overall structure of

a police report is created and produced. The four moves observed are the following:



- Move 1: Identifying and situating the agency, the Police Report (PR) and its circumstances.
- Move 2 - Classifying the fact and its circumstances;
- Move 3 - Narrating (reporting) the facts;
- Move 4- Identifying the personnel responsible for the report.

### Move 1: Identifying and situating the agency, the Police Report (PR), and its circumstances.

In this move, the police station which produced the police report is identified. This states the recipient, subject, and date of the Police reports. This aims to inform the circumstances of the time and place the report was produced. This move is realized by following two steps, namely step 1) identifying the institution and municipality, the city and the province reflecting the location of the station, and step 2) providing the recipient, sender, subject, and dates of print as shown in the corpora provided (Sumaljag, 2018)

	Republic of the Philippines NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE <b>NEW CORELLA POLICE STATION</b> New Corella, Davao del Norte	
<b>MEMORANDUM</b>		
<b>FOR</b>	: <b>Provincial Director</b> Davao Norte PPO Tagum City (Attn: DNIDMS)	
<b>FROM</b>	: <b>Acting Chief of Police</b>	
<b>SUBJECT</b>	: Investigation Report re Purok 6A, Poblacion, New Corella, Davao del Norte on January 8, 2023 at about 10:48 P.M	
<b>Date</b>	: January 18, 2023	

As depicted in the corpora, move 1 shows a formulaic move since it follows a structure and linguistic components pattern in all corpora analyzed. Step 1 is realized through noun groups referring to "New Corella Police Station" and "Tagum City Police Station" to identify the police station. The noun group "Tagum City" and New Corella" for determining the city and municipality.

	Republic of the Philippines NATIONAL POLICE COMMISSION PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE, POLICE REGIONAL OFFICE 11 <b>DAVAO NORTE POLICE PROVINCIAL OFFICE</b> <b>TAGUM CITY POLICE STATION</b> Tagum City, Davao del Norte	
<b>MEMORANDUM</b>		
FOR	: Provincial Director DNPPPO, Tagum City (Attn: PIDMB/POMU)	
FROM	: Acting Chief of Police	
SUBJECT	: Report on Fire Incident	
DATE	: July 9, 2022	

It is also observed in step 2 that the recipient, sender subject, and even the date of the police report are all reflected,



and this is evident in all the gathered corpora. In the samples provided, the recipient is the "Provincial Director" of the Davao del Norte Provincial Police Office, and the sender is the "Acting Chief of Police" of the police stations. The subject is in PR no. 5 is the investigation report regarding the shooting incident and fire incident for PR no. 8 with the corresponding dates when these police reports are produced. Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Sumalag (99) asserted that the purpose of this move is to inform the readers of the time and place of the incident.

## Move 2 - Classifying the fact and its circumstances.

In this move, the police officer, as the recipient of the reports, obtains all facts and circumstances from the complainant or the victim. After getting all the needed information, all facts were analyzed and compared with the human behavior classified as a crime as stipulated in the criminal code. The purpose of this move is to verify and ensure that the reported human behavior suits the behaviors established in the criminal code. Move 2 is realized through three steps: step 1) establishing the legal or technical classification by analyzing the reported fact; step 2) providing spatiotemporal circumstances of the reported fact; and step 3) providing information about where the incident happened and how the facts were received or gathered (area, instrument, behavior and means of access) and provided corpora show how police officers make this move.

### PR no. 4:

Reference: Spot report in memorandum form dated January 8, 2023

At about 10:51 PM of January 8, 2023, a concern citizen personally appeared to this station informing that a shooting incident has transpired at Purok 6A, Poblacion, New Corella, Davao del Norte

### PR no. 6

Reference: Spot Report on Arrest of Roselyn Manipes alias Rose ans Wellmer Morales alias Mario ( Drug Den Maintainers, et al for Violation of RA 9165

On November 25, 2023 at about 8:50 AM, personnel of Provincial Intelligence Unit (DNPIU) led by XXX under the supervision of PMAJ XXX-Chief PIU, personnel from Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit led by PEMS XXX under the supervision of PCAPT XXX, personnel of PDEA-XI Davao del Norte PO led by XXX and PNP personnel of Carmen MPS led PEMS XXX under the supervision of PMAJ XXX conducted joint buy-bust operation at Purok 4, Brgy. Taba, Carmen, Davao del Norte covered with PDEA pre-operation clearance number 30004-112023-0435

### PR no. 11

Reference:

- a. PNP Operational Procedure Series of 2013 and
- b. Information call from BISMUTH Base

At about 3:30 in the afternoon of August 26, 2019, information reached this office that a Fire incident transpired at Purok XXX, Brgy. Mankilam, Tagum City

In the corpora provided, PR no. 4 classifies the reported fact as a shooting incident as the first step of the second move. This move always starts with a reference to the identified and classified facts. From the reported information, the attending police officer obtained the spatiotemporal or the space and time of the incident, which transpired at about 10:51 PM of January 8, 2023, at XXX, signaling the second and the third steps of the second linguistic move. Moreover, the third move is also indicated by how the information is obtained, which in this report is through the personal appearance of the concerned citizen who reported the incident.

PR no. 6 realized the first step of the second move by stating the technical classification of the crime committed by

XXX and XXX, which is the violation of RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drug Act being the Drug den Maintainers concerning the criminal code. The second step of this linguistic move is observed by providing the space and time of the arrest of the identified suspects on November 25, 2023, at about 8:50 AM.

The final step of the second linguistic move is providing the information about where the incident happened, in this case, at XXX. Moreover, this arrest of the identified Drug den maintainers was realized through the joint buy-bust operation conducted by personnel of the Provincial Intelligence Unit (DNPIU), personnel from the Provincial Drug Enforcement Unit, personnel of PDEA-XI Davao del Norte and PNP personnel of Carmen Municipal Police Station. This information completes the final step, indicating how the facts were received or gathered.

PR no. 11 classified the information as a fire incident with reference to the PNP Operational Procedure Series of 2013 and an Information call from BISMUTH Base indicating the first step of the second move. To realize the second step of this move, the space and time are also noted as it reflects that the incident happened at about 3:30 in the afternoon of August 26, 2019. Further, the final step of this move is observed as it is reflected that the identified fire incident happened at Purok XXX, Mankilam Tagum City, with no specific means of how information reached the said police station, but by just writing that information only reached the said institution.

### **Move 3 - Narrating (reporting) the facts.**

The third linguistic move of police report writing is narrating or reporting the facts about the incident, which is also considered the main move of police report writing in the genre. In this move, detailed narration is done by the witness or the complainant to the attending police officer by giving all the essential information about the incident. After getting all the facts needed, a detailed summary of the transpired incident is then produced. Narratives of the behavior of all the participants, including the victim, witnesses, and suspects, are all taken into consideration, contributing to the comprehensive report of the criminal event, including the causes and consequences of the actions. The usual narration presents the victims' and sometimes the perpetrator's first version of facts; however, all these shall be considered in the whole procedure.

Narration of facts is realized through the three steps, namely, step 1) emphasizing the victim or complainant's attendance, step 2) restating the circumstances, and step 3) describing the perpetrator's behavior (criminal or non-criminal fact).

For a comprehensive discussion of this linguistic move, I also employed Labov & Waletzky's (27-37) Narrative Theory, which consists of six (6) components as Abstract, a summary or introduction that provides context for the narrative, Orientation, the background information that sets the scene and introduces the characters; Complication, the central conflict or problem that drives the narrative forward; Evaluation, the narrator's expression of personal feelings or thoughts about the events; Resolution, the outcome or solution to the complication; and Coda, a concluding statement that signals the end of the narrative.

#### **PR no. 4**

Team led by PLT XXX under the direct supervision of the undersigned Acting Chief of Police immediately proceeded to XXX to verify the veracity of the reported incident and to conduct investigation as well. Upon arrival at the stated place, a lifeless body was lying outside the door of their house at Purok XXX, Davao del Norte. Victim later identified as one XXX, 34 yrs. old, live-in, Banana Plantation employee and a resident of Purok XXX, New Corella, Davao del Norte. Victim sustained seven (7) gunshot wounds, two (2) on the latter's head, two (2) at his armpit, and three (3) on his body resulting to his instantaneous death.

Initial investigation conducted revealed that the victim together with his live-in partner XXX, 51 years old, arrived to their house at above mentioned place of incident, that two unidentified gunman was waiting for their arrival outside their residence. Upon their arrival, without any provocation shot the victim seven (7) times. After the incident the suspects who was wearing black long sleeves shirt immediately left the place on foot going towards Brgy XXX, New Corella, Davao del Norte direction. Motive of the killing is still to be determine as of this moment. Recovered from the crime scene were seven (7) pieces of empty shell of caliber.45 pistol and it was properly endorsed to PNP crime laboratory office at Tagum City for ballistic examination and cross matching as well.

That on January 9, 2023 at 9:15 A.M., Investigator on case PCpl XXX and Intel Operatives conduct follow-up investigation under the supervision of the undersigned *Acting Chief of Police PMAJ* XXX conducted

follow up investigation re-shooting incident victimizing of XXX, 34 yrs. old, live-in, Banana Plantation employee at Comonsad Growers and a resident of PXXX, Poblacion, New Corella, Davao Del Norte in order to gain some potential information and to gather evidence as well that might help connect relative to the incident. The IOC interviewed the father of the victim XXX at this station and to the house of the victim, P-6A Poblacion, New Corella Davao del Norte. Mr. XXX revealed that the victim is close to him as his eldest son out of his eight siblings. That the victim Frankie Montado is a good man that focuses on his family. He added that he does not know about the other activities of the victim especially on his involvement in illegal activities if there's any.

That on January 10, 2023 at 11:00 A.M, Investigator on Case together with Intel operatives conducted follow up investigation re-shooting incident victimizing of XXX. The IOC interviewed Brgy Captain XXX of Brgy XXX, New Corella, Davao del Norte. According to him, the killing might have something with accusations involving thief/ransack incident in their Barangay and in neighboring barangay for that is the reason he heard scattering from the community, as the victim and his family members was a notable thief in their Barangay. He further revealed that in the year 2019, Sumifru Company summoned the victim together with his younger brother XXX of the lost equipment of the company. Barangay Captain Boctoto added that sometime in October year 2021, when he was in the compound of the victim, he saw equipment that was used in a Banana Plantation that filed outside their house covered with a tarpaulin outside their residence.

Recommend that in depth investigation to be conducted regarding to this incident and further gather of reliable information with the support of the family of the victim for the identification of suspect/s for possible filing of criminal case in court. Request ample time to conduct further investigation for possible identification of the suspect.

Suspects committed the crime of murder by treachery, taking advantage of a superior strength by using deadly weapon. The treacherous killing of the victim might have something to do with his involvement in criminal activities together with his cohorts. The IOC recommend that in depth investigation to be conducted regarding to this incident and further gather of reliable information with the support of the family and possible witness for the identification of suspect/s that might solve the case to the soonest possible time. The investigator on case will continue to conduct deeper investigation for possible identification of the suspects and motive of killing as well.

#### *Analysis of PR no. 4 using Labov and Walezky's Narrative Theory*

<b>Abstract</b>	The narrative begins with an abstract that summarizes the actions taken by the police team, focusing on verification and investigation of a reported incident involving a shooting.
<b>Orientation</b>	The report provides the orientation by introducing key details such as the location, the victim, and the circumstances of his death (gunshot wounds). Background information about the victim, including his employment and residence, is included.
<b>Complicating Action</b>	The complicating action unfolds in detailing the events leading to the discovery of the victim's body, the number and locations of gunshot wounds, and the initial investigation findings. It introduces the victim's live-in partner and describes the arrival of the victim and the subsequent shooting by two unidentified gunmen.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The report evaluates the incident by mentioning the lack of provocation before the victim was shot and the immediate departure of the suspects. The motive for the killing is stated to be undetermined at that moment. Questions are raised about the circumstances surrounding the incident.
<b>Resolution</b>	The resolution section outlines the actions taken by the police, including the recovery of seven empty shell casings, which were sent for ballistic examination. A follow-up investigation is conducted on January 9 and 10, involving interviews with the victim's father and the barangay captain. The narrative mentions potential motives, including accusations of theft and ransack incidents involving the victim.
<b>Coda</b>	The report concludes with recommendations for an in-depth investigation, gathering

reliable information, and seeking the support of the victim's family. The investigator recommends looking into criminal activities involving the victim and his cohorts, suggesting a motive for the treacherous killing.
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Overall, the police report adheres to Labov and Waletzky's Narrative Theory by presenting a structured sequence of events, providing background information, raising questions about the incident, and outlining the ongoing investigative process. The narrative leaves room for further investigation and suggests that the case is still under consideration.

PR no. 7 adheres to Labov and Waletzky's Narrative Theory by presenting a structured sequence of events, detailing the joint buy-bust operation, introducing the suspects, listing the seized items, and providing information about the legal actions to follow.

Labov and Walezky (27–37) define the narrative as one method of recapitulating experience using a verbal sequence of clauses that match actual events (Ibidem 12-13). Thus, Police report past experiences relating to criminal and non-criminal events with the aim of providing a report that has the same order as the original events based on the participants' involvement and actual circumstances. Understanding the narrative components identified by Labov and Waletzky can enhance the clarity, coherence, and effectiveness of police reports.

The Abstract of the narrative serves as the introduction, which provides a concise summary of the incident and offers essential details such as the type of incident, location, and parties involved. A well-crafted abstract helps readers quickly grasp the nature of the incident before delving into the detailed narrative.

The orientation section of the narrative is composed of a group of free clauses that precede the first narrative clause and aims to acquaint readers with the persons involved, the place where the incident occurred, as well as the time and behavioral situation (Ibidem 27). The orientation section sets the scene by providing background information about the individuals involved, the location, and the circumstances leading up to the incident (Helm and MacNeish 12-44). Establishing context is crucial for understanding the events and motivations surrounding the incident.

The complication is the central conflict or problem in the narrative. In a police report, this section details the core incident, including actions, reactions, and criminal activities. Clearly outlining the complication helps build a chronological and factual account of the events. Bastos (83) asserted that the complicating action of the narrative is the temporal sequence of clauses that refer to previous events and is typically composed of past verb tenses. Thus, it can be concluded that this is the narrative itself and is the only mandatory element of the narration.

The evaluation component allows officers to express their professional judgment or assessment of the situation. This may include observations, opinions, or statements about the severity of the incident (Helm and MacNeish 12-44). Evaluative language provides a nuanced perspective and can be critical in determining the appropriate legal and investigative actions. Labov and Walezky (30-31) asserted that evaluation is frequently located at the break between the complication and the resolution of these complications. Ibidem (30) also highlighted that evaluation signals where the complication has reached maximum and further defined it as a section of the narrative that reveals the speaker's attitude towards the narrative by emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units compared to other elements of the narration.

The resolution section outlines the actions taken by law enforcement to address the complication, including arrests, investigations, or interventions. This part is crucial for legal and administrative purposes, documenting the steps to resolve the incident. Bastos (83) claimed that this section is the finalization of the events sequence of the complication. The coda serves as a conclusion, summarizing the resolution and potentially offering insights or recommendations for further action (Helm and MacNeish 12-44). A well-crafted coda ensures the report concludes smoothly, leaving no ambiguity and signaling the end of the narrative. Labov and Walezky (35-36) asserted that the coda, as an additional element after the resolution section, functions as a device for returning the verbal perspective to the present situation.

Further, the coda signals the end of the narrative and is achieved through the use of many devices such as a) deixis (that, there, those, this, here, and these), 'that' refers to the referent rather than naming it explicitly; b) an incident which is no longer relevant to the sequence of the narrative that pursues one actor to the present situation and c) the narrative effect upon the narrator which is extended up to the present. However, it is essential to note that this suggested narrative structure varies according to its degree of complexity, structural elements, and functions (Riberio 22-23).

#### Move 4 - Identifying the personnel responsible for the report

This move presents the identification of the police officers on duty responsible for the report production. This move is realized through the following four steps: step 1) identifying the police officer who typed the PR and step 2) identifying the head of the police station on duty. Below are the samples of the corpora using the the linguistic move.

In the sample corpora, investigators on- the case and the Chief of Police are provided with the signal of the completed documents. Labov and Walezky (38-39) and Swales (1-10) asserted that the report's writer must be acknowledged for accountability.

##### PR no. 23

Prepared by:

Investigator on-case

Noted by:

**JEFFREY C LATAYADA**  
Police Lieutenant Colonel

##### PR no. 2

Investigator on case, PCpI William R Raboy-09338765412

**NDZ FAR A MANGKABONG**  
Police Major

##### PR no. 13

Traffic Officer on- case PPSg Randy O Libertino (09473195401)

**PLT FRANCISCO C CASLIB**  
Officer of the Day

##### PR no. 14

Investigators on-case- PSMS Joseph Pagaran (09453640856) PSSg Gil O Peralta Jr (09094288824)

**PLT ALEJANDRO L DIONALDO**  
Officer of the Day

In the sample corpora, investigators on- case and the chief of police are are provided giving the signal of the completed documents. Labov and Walezky (38-39) and Swales (1-10) asserted that the writer of the report must be acknowledged for accountability purposes.

#### Concluding Remarks

The conduct of this genre analysis helps me understand how crucial the roles of police investigators are in the realm of law enforcement and criminal justice. Police reports are critical documents for law enforcement officers when documenting incidents and conducting investigations. This study allows me to appreciate key concepts in police reporting, such as clarity and precision, objectivity, and neutrality, the importance of standardized format and its legal implications,



and communication and collaboration among law enforcement agencies and professionals.

In the gathered corpora, police reports emphasize clear and precise language using specific terms, factual details, and a very straightforward narrative style. These, I think, ensure that the information stipulated in the document is accurately conveyed and easily understood. Another characteristic of police reports evident in my gathered corpora is being objective and neutral regarding language use. As much as possible, facts presented should be free from personal biases that help in producing credible documents used in legal proceedings.

I also acknowledge that one essential characteristic of police reports is using a standardized format. I observe that police reports typically show crucial details such as the date, time, location, involved parties, statements of the witnesses, and the narration of the events, ensuring a systematic documentation approach. During the gathering of the corpora, I happened to ask one investigator regarding how crucial is the police report in court proceedings, and he responded that these documents are crucial evidence in court and, thus, they have to ensure that the presented evidence adheres to established protocols. I was also able to see the evidence, such as confiscated shabu and firearms, and even witnessed how police investigator documented the buy-bust operation conducted by their station. I waited a number of hours since he had to ensure that all the data, such as time, location, and even the complete details of the suspects, were accurate and free from errors. He has to print several times and verify the accuracy of all the essential information while securing the confiscated evidence. The investigator mentioned that he should be accurate since investigators will also appear on the witness stand for cross-examination. One simple mistake, such as time and date, may lead to further proceedings that may tarnish their integrity as law enforcers.

Indeed, genre analysis of legal discourse, specifically the genre of police reports, ostensibly sheds light on its multifaceted roles in law enforcement. Recognizing the standards and conventions of this genre helps police officers, legal professionals, and researchers alike. Creating narratives that uphold legal requirements is not merely a bureaucratic duty but rather a critical aspect of ensuring and maintaining accountability, integrity, and public trust in the criminal justice system.

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