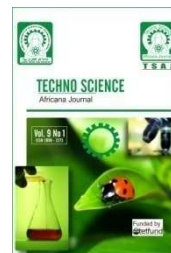




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TRANSITIVITY PATTERN IN NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE CHOICE OF PROCESS TYPES IN THE *DAILY TRUST* AND *THE GUARDIAN*

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ABSTRACT

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This study was conducted to find out the process types that predominantly appear in Nigerian newspaper headlines of political news reports in the *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers, with a view to making a comparative study of the choices of linguistic elements (functional) and their roles, in order to examine the level of their conformity to the system of transitivity. The main objectives of the study were to find out whether the use of process types and other functional linguistic features and their roles conform to the system of transitivity in the two popular Nigerian newspapers: *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* by using the Systemic Functional Linguistic Approach. The population of the study was made up of all plain headlines. Stratified sampling technique was used in the selection of samples for the study. Documentary analysis was the instrument for the collection of the data from the samples of the study. The selected samples were analysed using simple percentage. The analytical framework adopted was transitivity system of grammatical analysis. Findings of the study exhibited the use of material and verbal processes as the predominant process types, while relational and mental processes were used at different proportions in the selected samples of both papers studied. The study also shows the absence of behavioural processes and existential processes in both papers. The study established the conformity of plain newspaper headlines to the system of transitivity through their choices of process types and other functional linguistic features and their roles in those plain headlines which contain those four process types.

INTRODUCTION

This study intends to explore the use of process types in Nigerian newspaper headlines. It is aimed at making a comparative study of the choice of process types in the two popular Nigerian newspapers: *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* by applying systemic functional linguistic approach (SFL). This approach regards language as constituting social semiotic or “meaning potentials” that have

evolved to enable human beings to exchange three fundamental types of meaning: the ideational meaning, which involves the identification and description of people, things and events; the interpersonal meaning, which involves the expression of social roles and attitudes, and the textual meaning, which involves the coordination of texts both internally and with respect to their contexts.

The study therefore, focuses on the ideational meanings realised in the lexicogrammatical stratum via the system of TRANSITIVITY.

Transitivity is a fundamental semantic concept in SFL which is a powerful tool for the analysis of representation in texts. It is a linguistic approach that focuses on construing the world of real life events and actions that exist in clauses/discourses through the ways those process types are chosen to express certain experiences. It also focuses on the ideational metafunction of language, which is a fundamental property of language to enable human beings to build a mental picture of reality. The approach is in contrast with other formal linguistic approaches such as Chomsky's generative grammar, which according to Fowler (1991:5) is not interested in the role of language in real use. Rather, it is concerned with the study of how meanings are constructed through the choice of various linguistic system, such as lexical items, grammatical resources, polarity and so on. According to the SFL approach, language is a social activity which always takes place in a context. Therefore, it is developed on how the language is used and how meanings are constructed (Bloor and Bloor, 2004).

The main insight that the notion of transitivity offers is that every text could have been produced differently and these different versions would have represented alternative points of view. A very important concern in analysing transitivity in newspaper headlines is that it helps to investigate the kinds of processes appear and the participants involved in the headlines, because the language in the headlines of newspapers is specially composed to shape readers' attitudes and perspectives towards a particular group of people referred to or constructed by the newspapers and also to determine their level of conformity to the grammatical system (transitivity). Therefore, investigating the language of headlines can reveal the identities of the participants involved in the news and the ideologies of the news practitioners (Van Dijk, 1983; 1988; 1997 and 2001).

Newspaper Headlines

Newspaper headlines are often the first things that everyone notices in a newspaper. They often guide the readers in deciding whether to continue on reading the whole news report or to skip on to another one. Headlines should be sentences (Mardh, 1980:12), and so they should have regular sentence structures containing subjects and verbs, with the exception that headlines normally do not contain certain grammatical features, because of the limited space provided for each headline and the problem of fitting the best words. Consequently, the rule of a sentence may be broken in such a way that a headline can be rather difficult to understand. Sometimes this may happen deliberately to make the headlines somehow special with the aim to attract the readers' attention to the news reports or even to buy the newspaper. This study was motivated by this trend that is the choices of language and how these choices can be explored as tools of grammatical analysis in newspaper headlines. The use of language in news media generally, such as news reports, editorials and so forth has been the focus of many studies, the influential of which are those conducted by Van Dijk (1983;1988), Bell (1991;1998), Olowe (1993), Ledema *et al.* (1994), Taiwo (2004; 2007), White (1997) and Kamilu (2004). The researches shed light on the news as discourse, giving insights into the language of the news as well as generic structures of news reports. Ledema *et al.* (1994) and White (1997) offered a model of the architecture of news reports and investigated the language of the news from the interpersonal meaning, and outlined a framework for identifying different styles of journalism in English language journalistic writing as well as the relationship between language, power and ideology. Their findings believed that any piece of language use is ideologically motivated; especially the language of media and that language is a means for social construction (Crystal, 1987; Fairclough, 1989; Fowler, 1991; and Van Dijk, 1997).

The extensive literature on the news reports in English language journalism has offered well developed accounts of how they are organized textually, their stylistic properties, how they operate interpersonally and their potential for ideological effects. Most of the researches conducted on newspaper reports have focused on the structure, stylistic properties and the rhetorical and ideological potential of news reporting. However, there has been very little work on transitivity system analysis, especially the study of the use (choice) of process types in newspaper reports and editorials, especially in their headlines as a means of expressing the ideational meaning, which is a key area in any discourse and critical discourse analysis. This study therefore, intends to make a comparative analysis of the choice of language (process types) in newspaper headlines and how this can be explored as a theoretical tool in the analysis of ideational meaning in the two selected Nigerian newspapers (i.e. *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian*).

News headlines sometimes do not give the true picture of the news contents. Unfortunately, it is these headlines that some buyers of the newspapers read and ignore the whole news articles; in which case the readers are likely to be misled and disappointed. Headlines can be misleading, inaccurate, or ambiguous. At times, ambiguity is created intentionally to mislead readers (Brône and Coulson, 2010 as cited in White, 2011; MacRitchie & Seedat, 2008). Therefore, Identifying linguistic cues that impose diluted views and truths become more important as readers face an onslaught of headlines. This research proposes to analyse the language of newspaper headlines from the ideational metafunctional perspective, with a view to making a comparative study of the choices of process types in the newspaper headlines of the *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers based on Halliday (1985; 1994 & 2004) as tools for realising the ideational meaning. The aim of this study is to make a comparative study of the ideational meaning (transitivity) in newspaper headlines from the systemic functional linguistic perspective, with a view

to establishing the conformity of newspaper headlines to the system of transitivity. The choices made of process types are reflected in the structure of the text. So, the basic principle of transitivity can be expressed by a question: who or what does what to whom or what?

The Language and Classification of Headlines

The aim of this presentation is to make a comparative analysis of the choice of process types in the headlines of political news reports presented on the pages of two Nigerian newspapers (*Daily Trust* and *The Guardian*). Therefore, an explication of the notion of headline is needed. Reah (2002) defines headline as a unique type of text that are placed above the news story and operates within a range of restrictions that limits the freedom of the writer (Reah, 2002:13). Generally, a headline tells the whole story of the news and is placed above the news story in bigger font size. Moreover, headlines serve three important functions: First, they provide summary of the main news. Second, they distract people's attention by various font sizes and vocabulary use. Third, they often provides an initial indicator of the content and style of the news values of the newspaper that is the way newspaper appeals to its audience by expressing the identity of those involved in the news, as well as the ideologies of the news practitioners (Conboy, 2007:26). The language of headlines reveals the social, cultural and national issues that are circulating in a society at any given time and reach an audience considerably wider than the news story. This is because it is more carefully chosen to evoke some emotions in the readers. Newspaper editors deliberately select eye-catching expressions (Taiwo, 2007: 5). Taiwo asserts that headlines are strategically used by the editors, who choose emotive vocabulary, rhetorical and graphological devices to make an impact on the readership. Newspaper headlines are a rich source of information about the field of cultural reference and they can be sometimes difficult to understand especially when the reader cannot recognise the field, allusions, issues and cultural references to decode the content.

Taiwo (2007) classifies Nigerian newspapers headlines according to their thematic preoccupations and also their surface structures. Their themes may vary from one another like religious crises, on different issues, on politics, on education and on labour matters. He also classifies headlines according to their surface structures as plain headlines, speech as headlines, headlines with pointer and question as headlines. However, he contended that those on politics and plains take the lion's share. Mardh (1980) offers an exhaustive study of the characteristic features of the headlines of English newspapers. He realises that there are omissions of articles, verbs, and auxiliaries, use of nominalizations, use of adverbial headlines, usage of short words, and use of alliteration are certain features pointed out by him. Olowe (1993) in his PhD thesis identifies various linguistic features used by the editors to form ideologies in a hidden way. These devices are thematisation, passivization, presupposition and nominalization. In Presupposition, Huckin (1997) contends that certain ideas are taken for granted in such a way that there was no alternative. Topicalization according to McGregor (2003) is the framing of a sentence. It presents the slant or perspective a writer wants to present in order to influence the reader's perception by putting something on topic position. Headlines can also convey information about power relations, but sometimes agency is being deleted in order to avoid the responsibility of saying something. Convoy (2007:26) maintains that the most outstanding feature of the language of headline is the vocabulary. Different scholars have studied some linguistic devices that are used for effectively creating headlines. For example: Richardson (2007) proposes an analysis of lexical choice in examining newspapers, while convoy (2007) proposes an analysis of metaphor as a means of understanding the language of headlines. In addition, van leeuwen (2013) suggests an analysis of the way of representing actors (reference). However, this study analyses transitivity as a means of explaining the participants, the processes, which represent events or happening and circumstances

constructed by the news headlines and how the choices of the processes (process types) can reveal the identity of those participants involved or referred to by the headlines.

In news discourse, the information that exhibits headline presence is what news agencies regard as significant. News stories derive significance according to their impact (the scale and effect of the event, e.g. number of deaths), prominence (involvement of significant people and places), proximity (the closer the target reading audience is to the event, the greater is the news value), relevance (direct or indirect effect on readers), and human interest values (attention and curiosity) (Morrison, 2006 as cited in MacRitchie and Seedat, 2008).

The way Taiwo (2007) classifies the Nigerian Newspapers headlines is presented below, because it is the basis of the data selection in this presentation.

METHODOLOGY

The data of this research were plain headlines regarding news about politics, which were collected from the two national Nigerian newspapers: *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian*. The headlines used in this study were those on the pages dedicated to politics. In the *Daily Trust* the section contains pages entitled 'INSIDE POLITICS', while in *The Guardian*, they were named 'POLITICS' or 'POLITICS, GOVERNANCE & DEVELOPMENT'. The total number of the headlines that constituted the population of this study is 224, and the sample size is 166. 92 were selected from *Daily Trust*, while 74 were selected from *The Guardian*. Therefore, the total number of headlines used in this study is 166 headlines. These samples were collected from January, 1st through April, 2015. The two newspapers were selected as representation of the southern and northern parts of the country (Nigeria). Furthermore, each of the two selected newspapers reserves a section for political news reports. Plain headlines that contain processes (verbs) as classified by Taiwo (2007) form the data of this study. The study applies transitivity system of systemic functional linguistics proposed by Halliday (1985; 1994), Halliday and Mathiessen (2002 and 20014), Eggins (2004) and Bloor and Bloor (2004 and 2013) as its analytical framework.

Data Analysis and Discussions

The methods used for the analysis of the data are transitivity system and described based on

descriptive analysis of simple percentage. The presentation is made in tabular form as follows:

Table 1: Process Types Usages in the headlines of *The Guardian*

S/N	Process type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total	%
1	Material	14	08	08	07	37	50.0
2	Verbal	7	05	03	08	23	31.0
3	Mental	00	01	02	02	05	6.8
4	Relational	00	03	03	02	08	10.8
5	Behavioural	00	00	00	00	00	0.0
6	Existential	00	00	01	00	01	1.4
	Total	21	17	17	19	74	100

N=74

The analysis in table 1 shows that 50% of the processes used in the selected samples were material processes, followed by verbal processes, with 31%, then relational processes,

with 10.8%, followed by mental processes with 6.8%, and finally existential processes with 1.4%. Behavioural processes did not appear in the entire selected samples, representing 0%.

Table 2: Process Types Usages in the headlines of *The Daily Trust*

S/N	Process type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	Total	%
1	Material	16	11	09	09	45	48.9
2	Verbal	11	05	12	15	43	46.7
3	Mental	01	02	00	01	04	4.3
4	Relational	00	00	00	00	00	0.0
5	Behavioural	00	00	00	00	00	0.0
6	Existential	00	00	00	00	00	0.0
	Total	28	18	21	25	92	100

N=92

The analysis in table 2 shows that, 48.9% of the processes in the selected sample were material processes, followed by verbal processes with 46.7%, then mental processes with 4.3%. Behavioural, Relational and existential processes did not appear in the entire selected sample representing 0%.

proposed by Halliday (1985; 1994), Halliday and Mathiessen (2004 and 2014), Bloor and Bloor (2004 and 2013), Eggins (2004) and other proponents of systemic functional linguistics were distributed in the selected samples of the study in both papers from January to April, 2015.

The analysis in the tables 3 to 6 below, indicate the frequencies to which the six process types

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Process Types in January (*Daily Trust* and *The Guardian*)

S/N	Process Type	DT	No	%	GD	No	%
1	Material	16	28	57	14	21	67
2	Verbal	11	28	39	07	21	33
3	Mental	01	28	4.0	00	21	0.0
4	Relational	00	28	0.0	00	21	0.0
5	Behavioural	00	28	0.0	00	21	0.0
6	Existential	00	28	0.0	00	21	0.0

N=28

N=21

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Process Types in February (*Daily Trust and The Guardian*)

S/N	Process Type	DT	No	%	GD	No	%
1	Material	11	18	61	08	17	47
2	Verbal	05	18	28	05	17	29
3	Mental	02	18	11	01	17	6.0
4	Relational	00	18	0.0	03	17	18
5	Behavioural	00	18	0.0	00	17	0.0
6	Existential	00	18	0.0	00	17	0.0

N=18 N=17

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of Process Types in March (*Daily Trust and The Guardian*)

S/N	Process Type	DT	No	%	GD	No	%
1	Material	09	21	43	08	17	47
2	Verbal	12	21	57	03	17	18
3	Mental	00	21	0.0	02	17	12
4	Relational	00	21	0.0	03	17	18
5	Behavioural	00	21	0.0	00	17	0.0
6	Existential	00	21	0.0	01	17	6.0

N=21 N=17

Table 6: Frequency Distribution of Process Types in April (*Daily Trust and The Guardian*)

S/N	Process Type	DT	No	%	GD	No	%
1	Material	09	25	36	07	19	37
2	Verbal	15	25	60	08	19	42
3	Mental	01	25	4.0	02	19	11
4	Relational	00	25	0.0	02	19	11
5	Behavioural	00	25	0.0	00	19	0.0
6	Existential	00	25	0.0	00	19	0.0

N=25 N=19

The results of the analysis discovered that Material processes take a lion's share accounting for 57% and 67% in January, 61% and 47% in February, 43% and 47% in March, 36% and 37% in April. Verbal processes come a distant second with a total of 39% and 33% in January, 28% and 29% in February, 57% and 18% in March, 60% and 42% in April. The number of mental processes and relational processes is varied and inconsistent. For instance, mental processes have a representation of 4% and 0% in January. In February, mental processes have

11% and 6%, in March 0% and 12%, in April 4% and 11%.

Relational processes appear thus: February and March 0% and 18%, April 0% and 11%. Existential process exists only in March represents 0% and 6%. While behavioural processes have no representation in the entire samples with 0% and 0%.

The selected samples were analysed according to their respective functional linguistic features and were presented in the tables below:

Table 7: Headlines with Material Processes in *The Guardian* (January)

S/N	Headlines			
1	Our democracy ACTOR	must encourage Proc. MAT.	longevity of legislator’s tenure. GOAL	
2	Political parties ACTOR	don’t respect Proc. MAT.	their constitutions. GOAL	
3	New electoral law ACTOR	to check Proc. MAT.	military abuse of elections. GOAL	
4	Bloodshed, tears, sorrow ACTOR	went Proc. MAT.	with 2014. GOAL	
5	Reps ACTOR	in last minute CIRC.	move to bequeath Proc. MAT.	legacy. GOAL
6	UPP ACTOR	will give Proc. MAT.	Nigerians RECEIVER	revolutionary policies. GOAL
7	Controversy ACTOR	trails Proc. MAT.	Ondo PDP presidential campaign... GOAL	
8	Nkanu west ACTOR	softens Proc. MAT.	ground GOAL	for PDP governorship. CIRC.
9	Day SDP ACTOR	landed Proc. MAT.	in Jalingo. CIRC.	
10	Jonathan ACTOR	returns Proc. MAT.	fire for fire GOAL	at kick-off. CIRC.
11	We ACTOR	are witnessing Proc. MAT.	quite revolution GOAL	on political scene. RANGE/SCOPE
12	Lagos youths ACTOR	prefer Proc. MAT.	Ambode. GOAL	
13	APC ACTOR	deceiving Proc. MAT.	the public GOAL	on 2015 polls. RANGE/SCOPE
14	US-based group ACTOR	Debunks Proc. MAT.	endorsing presidential candidate. GOAL	

Table 8: Headlines with Material Processes in Daily Trust (January)

S/N	Headlines				
1	Kwankwaso ↓ BENF.	finally ↓ CIRC.	gets ↓ Proc:MAT.	APC ticket GOAL	for Kano central ↓ RANGE/SCOPE
2	Ones BENF.	shot Proc:MAT	others BENF.	injured Proc: MAT.	
3	INEC ACTOR	seeks Proc:MAT	stakeholder's distribution. GOAL	collaboration in PVC	in Kogi. CIRC.
4	Masari/Kanti Bello's feud ACTOR		raises Proc: MAT.	concern GOAL	inKatsina APC. CIRC.
5	Again CIRC.	Ohanaeze ACTOR	rejects Proc: MAT.		motion to endorse Jonathan. GOAL
6	Governorship candidates forum ACTOR		seeks Proc: MAT.		credible poll. GOAL
7	Akwa-ibom senators, 22guber-aspirants ACTOR			Set Proc: MAT.	to dump PDP. GOAL
8	Presidential candidates ACTOR		adopt Proc: MAT.		new campaign strategies. GOAL
9	37 ACTOR	defect Proc: MAT.	from PDP to APC GOAL		in Ondo. CIRC.
10	Masari ACTOR	constitutes Proc: MAT.	committee GOAL		
11	Scramble for women's votes ACTOR		boost Proc: MAT.		Chances of female deputy governors GOAL
12	PDP ACTOR	Inaugurates Proc: MAT.	campaign committee GOAL		
13	Fashola ACTOR	tackles Proc: MAT.	TAN GOAL		for flooding Lagos with posters. CIRC
14	NSA meeting with political parties ACTOR			postponed. Proc: MAT.	
15	6 ex-commissioners, 3 others ACTOR		join Proc: MAT.		APC in Plateau. CIRC.
16	APC ACTOR	pulls-out Proc: MAT.			of BON organised debates. GOAL

Table 9: Headlines with Material Processes in *The Guardian* (February)

S/N	Headlines					
1	President ACTOR	Banks Proc:MAT.	on developmental stride, GOAL	others		for election. GOAL
2	Agbaje ACTOR	canvasses Proc: MAT.	support GOAL			for Jonathan, PDP. RANGE/SCOPE
3	PDP ACTOR	can't postpone Proc: MAT.	May handover date. GOAL			
4	Igbide political elite forum ACTOR		endorses Proc: MAT.			Okowa. GOAL
5	Mimiko ACTOR	goes on Proc:MAT	campaign, GOAL	wins Proc:MAT	converts GOAL	for Jonathan. RANGE/SCOPE
6	Agbaje ACTOR	Visits Proc:MAT	riverine areas, GOAL	Commissions Proc: MAT.	MDG projects GOAL	for Jonathan RANGE/SCOPE
7	Jimi Agbaje GOAL		cannot be pushed around. Proc: MAT.			
8	Weak institution, lack ideology ACTOR			Cause Proc: MAT.		electoral crisis. GOAL

Table 10: Headlines with material processes in *Daily Trust* (February)

S/N	Headlines					
1	Ex-minister Pate ACTOR		defects Proc: MAT.		to APC. GOAL	
2	Elle ACTOR		dumps Proc: MAT.	PDP GOAL		for APC. RANGE/SCOPE
3	Esep ACTOR		Plots Proc: MAT.		topospone election. GOAL	
4	Lalong ACTOR		tackles Proc: MAT.	PDP GOAL		for frustrating electoral process. CIRC.
5	Kebbi deputy governor ACTOR		Meets Proc: MAT.		Wamako GOAL	to defect to APC. CIRC.
6	Thugs ACTOR		destroys Proc: MAT.		APC's structures GOAL	in Gombe. CIRC.
7	Nigerians ACTOR		await Proc:MAT.		2015 polls GOAL	amid threat of violence. CIRC.
8	Dakingari's wife ACTOR		slams Proc: MAT.		Aliero GOAL	over senate ambition. CIRC.
9	PDP Kaduna group ACTOR		sacks Proc: MAT.		chairman. GOAL	
10	Zamfara indigenes in Lagos ACTOR			endorse Proc: MAT.		Buhari, Yari. GOAL
11	16 southern Kaduna groups ACTOR			canvass Proc: MAT.	votes GOAL	for PDP. RANGE/SCOPE

Table 11: Headlines with Material Processes in *The Guardian* (March)

S/N	Headlines					
1	Umuoji women ACTOR	mobilise Proc: MAT.		support GOAL		forBuhari,APC. CIRC.
2	Mimiko, Kashamu ACTOR	berate Proc: MAT.	APC, GOAL	canvass Proc: MAT.	support GOAL	for Jonathan. CIRC.
3	Day northerners living in south ACTOR			endorsed Proc: MAT.		Jonathan. GOAL
4	Pwajok ACTOR	rallies Proc: MAT.			stakeholders GOAL	for oneness. CIRC.
5	LP ACTOR	will use Proc: MAT.	rotary model GOAL		to govern Proc: MAT.	Kwara. GOAL
6	Jonathan’s focus on south west GOAL					belated. Proc: MAT.
7	I ACTOR	’ll find Proc: MAT.		political will GOAL		to transform Abia. CIRC.
8	Vice-president, Namadi Sambo BENF.			loses Proc: MAT.		ward. GOAL

Table 12: Headlines with Material processes in *Daily Trust* (March)

S/N	Headlines					
1	Nassarawa PDP ACTOR		suspends Proc: MAT.	45 officers Maku. GOAL		for working for CIRC.
2	Crisis ACTOR	hits Proc: MAT.	Kwara Labour Party GOAL		overguber candidate. CIRC.	
3	LP guber candidate BENF.		receives Proc: MAT.	royal blessings GOAL		in Plateau. CIRC.
4	River’s deputy governor ACTOR			defects Proc: MAT.		to PDP. GOAL
5	Buhari ACTOR	will produce Proc: MAT.	4 million home owners GOAL			by 2019. RANGE/SCOPE
6	CPP presidential candidate ACTOR			steps down Proc: MAT.	for Jonathan. CIRC.	
7	Former Kogi speaker ACTOR		defects Proc: MAT.		to APC. GOAL	
8	INEC ACTOR	extends Proc: MAT.	elections GOAL		in three Borno councils. RANGE/SCOPE	
9	Oduah ACTOR	defeats Proc: MAT.	Obaze GOAL	for Anambra north senatorial seat. CIRC.		

Table 13: Headlines with Material processes in *The Guardian* (April)

S/N	Headlines			
1	Nigerians ACTOR	react Proc: MAT.	to Buhari's victory. GOAL	
2	Ondo APC ACTOR	schemes Proc: MAT.	for senate principal position. GOAL	
3	APC victory ACTOR	will consolidate Proc: MAT.	good governance GOAL	in south west. CIRC.
4	Time frame for election petitions ACTOR		limit Proc: MAT.	fair hearing. GOAL
5	NASS ACTOR	cannot ignore Proc: MAT.	president's letter GOAL	on constitutional amendment. RANGR/SCOPE
6	Gbajabiamila, Williams ACTOR		top Proc: MAT.	contenders' list. GOAL
7	Militarily, CIRC.	Boko Haram BENF.	is defeated. Proc: MAT.	

Table 14: Headlines with Material processes in *Daily Trust* (April)

S/N	Headlines				
1	Yarima ACTOR	consolidates Proc: MAT.	grip GOAL	onZamfara politics. RANGE/SCOPE	
2	Battle for NASS speaker ACTOR		gets Proc: MAT.	Hot GOAL	in north east. CIRC.
3	Nnamani, Nnaji ACTOR	battle Proc: MAT.	for Enugu East Senatorial Zone. GOAL		
4	Suspended Nassarawa PDP members ACTOR		Defect Proc: MAT.	to APC. GOAL	
5	Onoja, Saraki, Kalu's mother, others ACTOR		Defect Proc: MAT.	to APC. GOAL	
6	Over 70,000 PDP bigwigs ACTOR		defect Proc: MAT.	to APC GOAL	in two weeks. RANGE/SCOPE
7	APC ACTOR	Wins Proc: MAT.	assembly seat GOAL	in Bayelsa. CIRC.	
8	Oyegun ACTOR	Meets Proc: MAT.	other APC, NWC members today. GOAL		over May 29 handover RANGE/SCOPE
9	Ishaku, Okoracha, Ikpeazu ACTOR		win. Proc: MAT.		

Table 15: Headlines with Verbal processes in the *Guardian* (January)

S/N	Headline				
1	Afenifere, Ojudu SAYER	urge Pro. V.	Jonathan TARGET	to declare emergency on economy. VERBIAGE	
2	Adebanjo, Taiwo, Mabogunje, others SAYER		extol Pro. V.	political virtues of shonibare A.G. funding member. VERBIAGE	
3	Group SAYER	promises Pro. V.	to deliver Delta central for Okowa. VERBIAGE		
4	Bayelsans SAYER	urge Pro. V.	Jonathan TARGET	to secure home first. VERBIAGE	
5	US-based group SAYER		debunks Pro. V.	endorsing presidential candidate. VERBIAGE	
6	Defection of members SAYER		Threaten Pro. V.	PDP chances VERBIAGE	in Taraba. CIRC.
7	Emergency of Buhari SAYER		Shows Pro. V.	what APC stands for. VERBIAGE	

Table 16: Headlines with Verbal processes in the *Daily Trust* (January)

S/N	Headlines			
1	Bauchi APC SAYER	promises Pro. V	justice to aggrieved aspirants. TARGET	
2	Governorship candidates forum SAYER		seeks Pro. V	credible polls. VERBIAGE
3	PDP SAYER	Vows Pro. V	to win back lost states. VERBIAGE	
4	Kanke youths elders SAYER		Deny Pro. V	Endorsing Pwajok. VERBIAGE
5	Lamido SAYER	praises Pro. V	Buhari TARGET	at PDP rally. CIRC
6	Masari SAYER	Alleges Pro. V	plan to use adhoc staff, SURE-P workers VERBIAGE	In Katsina. CIRC.
7	Fashola SAYER	tackles Pro. V	TAN TARGET	for flooding Lagos with posters. CIRC.
8	Akala SAYER	promises Pro. V	to conduct council polls VERBIAGE	in three months. CIRC.
9	Buhari SAYER	urges Pro. V	security agencies TARGET	to arrest trouble makers. VERBIAGE
10	Gombe APC SAYER	alleges Pro. V	plans by PDP to cause violence. VERBIAGE	
11	UPP presidential candidate SAYER		says Pro. V	Buhari can't be disqualified from race. VERBIAGE

Table 17: Headlines with Verbal processes in the *Daily Trust* (February)

S/N	Headline				
1	APGA women SAYER	Oppose Pro. V	election postponement. VERBIAGE		
2	Ohanaeze SAYER	in Umuahia CIRC.	explains Pro. V	endorsement of Jonathan. VERBIAGE	
3	Nyako SAYER	accuses Pro. V	FG TARGET	of witch-hunt. VERBIAGE	
4	PDP SAYER	says Pro. V	poll shift is for national interest. VERBIAGE		
5	Senatorial candidate SAYER	alleges Pro. V	arms build-up VERBIAGE	in C/ River. CIRC.	

Table 18: Headlines with Verbal processes in *The Guardian* (February)

S/N	Headline				
1	PDP SAYER	roars Pro. V	laud in Rivers. CIRC.		
2	Rights group SAYER	condemns Pro. V	call for election postponement. VERBIAGE		
3	Udom Emmanuel SAYER	promises Pro. V	to immortalise Vincent Enyeama. VERBIAGE		
4	Forum SAYER	Seeks Pro. V	peaceful election, VERBIAGE	urges Pro. V	support for president. VERBIAGE
5	Ogboru SAYER	Calls Pro. V	for election time-table reversal. VERBIAGE		

Table 19: Headlines with Verbal processes in the *Daily Trust* (March)

S/N	Headline				
1	APC SAYER	Assures Pro. V	PDP defectors TARGET	of protection VERBIAGE	in C/River. CIRC.
2	Court SAYER	affirms Pro. V	Ugwuanyi TARGET	as Enugu PDP guber candidate. VERBIAGE	
3	Buhari SAYER	Challenges Pro. V	PDP TARGET	over Chatham house allegation. VERBIAGE	
4	ACD SAYER	promises Pro.	to deliver 8m votes to Jonathan. VERBIAGE		
5	New political party SAYER	seeks Pro. V	poll extension over ballot paper. VERBIAGE		
6	Senator SAYER	urges Pro. V	voters to collect PVCs. VERBIAGE		
7	Shettima SAYER	tackles Pro. V	Fani-Kayode TARGET	on campaign, Chibok girls. VERBIAGE	
8	Oyo REC SAYER	debunks Pro. V	no confidence vote on Jega. VERBIAGE		
9	Group SAYER	cautions Pro. V	Goje TARGET	against playing politics with Gombe affairs. VERBIAGE	
10	APC SAYER	alleges Pro. V	plot to assassinate Peterside. VERBIAGE		
11	Atiku SAYER	denies Pro. V	link with defecting support groups. VERBIAGE		
12	APC SAYER	alleges Pro. V	plans to use Dollars in framing party leaders. VERBIAGE		

Table 20: Headlines with Verbal processes in *The Guardian* (March)

S/N	Headline			
1	Anambra majority leader SAYER	seeks Pro. V	re-election to complete project. VERBIAGE	
2	Cleric SAYER	praises Pro. V	use of card readers in today's poll. VERBIAGE	
3	APC, PDP chiefs, others SAYER	Appraise Pro. V	elections. TARGET	

Table 21: Headlines with Verbal processes in the *Daily Trust* (April)

S/N	Headline			
1	Suswan SAYER	rejects Pro. V	senatorial result. TARGET	
2	Shagaya SAYER	rejects Pro. V	Plateau South senatorial result. TARGET	
3	Odili, Ikuru SAYER	affirm Pro. V	support for Wike. VERBIAGE	
4	Senator SAYER	urges Pro. V	Lagosians TARGET	to vote APC. VERBIAGE
5	APGA candidate SAYER	seeks Pro. V	cancellation of Reqs election. VERBIAGE	
6	Maku SAYER	blames Pro. V	INEC, soldiers TARGET	over loss of Al-makura. VERBIAGE
7	Badaru SAYER	promises Pro. V	open govt. VERBIAGE	
8	Taraba APC, SDP candidates SAYER		call Pro. V	for fresh governorship election. VERBIAGE
9	Youths SAYER	charge Pro. V	Buhari, El-Rufai TARGET	on job creation. VERBIAGE
10	PDP SAYER	insists Pro. V	APC plotting to make Nigeria one-party state. VERBIAGE	
11	PDP SAYER	advises Pro. V	Ekiti APC lawmakers TARGET	on peace. VERBIAGE
12	Benue APC chieftain SAYER		alleges Pro. V	threat to life. VERBIAGE
13	Group SAYER	blasts Pro. V	Onjeh. TARGET	over attack on Mark VERBIAGE
14	Northeast SAYER	insists Pro. V	on leadership of N/ Assembly. VERBIAGE	
15	PDP governors SAYER	insist Pro. V	Mu'azu, other officials must go. VERBIAGE	

Table 22: Headlines with Verbal processes in *The Guardian* (April)

S/N	Headline			
1	Labour party guber candidate Ugbo, SAYER		promises Pro. V	new era VERBIAGE in C/River. CIRC.
2	Adeniyi, others SAYER	loud Pro. V	Jonathan, TARGET	task Pro. V Buhari. TARGET
3	HID Awolowo, Presbyterian prelate SAYER			Congratulate Pro. V Buhari. TARGET
4	APC SAYER	faults Pro. V	April 11 polls VERBIAGE	in Rivers, Akwaibom. CIRC.
5	APC SAYER	says Pro. V	court verdict on Fayose raises moral question. VERBIAGE	
6	LP, APC SAYER	reject Pro. V	INEC's verdict on guber polls VERBIAGE	in Delta, Taraba. CIRC.
7	Coalition SAYER	advises Pro. V	Ambode TARGET	on governance. CIRC.
8	Edo lawmaker SAYER	denies Pro. V	submitting election results. VERBIAGE	

Table 23: Headlines with Mental processes in the *Daily Trust* (January)

S/N	Headline		
1	Ardo SENER	Wants Pro. M	Adamawa guber election postponed on error grounds. PHENOMENON

Table 24: Headlines with Mental processes in *The Daily Trust* (February)

S/N	Headline		
1	PDP SENER	wants Pro. M	INEC to conduct mock election ahead March 28 PHENOMENON

Table 25: Headlines with Mental processes in *The Guardian* (February)

S/N	Headline		
1	Women SENER	want Pro. M	a chance in all leadership positions. PHENOMENON

Table 26: Headlines with Mental processes in *The Guardian* (March)

S/N	Headline		
1	Report SENER	needs Pro. M	pressure for implementation. PHENOMENON
2	Ikale people SENER	Deserve Pro. M	quality representation. PHENOMENON

Table 27: Headlines with Mental processes in the *Daily Trust* (April)

S/N	Headline		
1	PDP SENER	wants Pro. M	INEC to declare Ikpeazu winner of Abiagov. Poll. PHENOMENON

Table 28: Headlines with Mental processes in *The Guardian* (April)

S/N	Headline		
1	Jonathan SENDER	mourns Pro. M	Chukwumerije.
2	NASS SENDER	cannot ignore Pro. M	president’s letter on constitutional amendment. PHENOMENON

Table 29: Headlines with Relational processes in *The Guardian* (February)

S/N	Headline		
1	Government CARRIER	is not Pro. R	sincere about violence-free 2015 polls. ATTRIBUTE
2	PDP CARRIER	Is Pro. R	the party to beat in Lagos. ATTRIBUTE
3	Jonathan CARRIER	Is Pro. R	the face of modern Nigeria. ATTRIBUTE

Table 30: Headlines with Relational processes in *The Guardian* (March)

S/N	Headline		
1	President Jonathan CARRIER	is Pro. R	a true democrat at heart. ATTRIBUTE
2	Jonathan’s approach to Boko Haram insurgency CARRIER	is Pro. R	the best. ATTRIBUTE
3	PDP POSSESSOR	has Pro. R	upper hand POSSESSED
			in Oyo gubernatorial poll. CIRC.

Table 31: Headlines with Relational processes in *The Guardian* (April)

S/N	Headline		
1	Era of the Aisha CARRIER	Is Pro. R	here. ATTRIBUTE
2	Buhari CARRIER	is not Pro. R	a regional leader. ATTRIBUTE

Table 32: Identified prevailing Features (Functional) in Material processes

S/N	Identified Linguistic Features	DT	%	GD	%
1	Actor	42	37	35	39
2	Goal	40	35	38	42.2
3	Circumstance	19	17	10	11.1
4	Range/Scope	08	07	04	4.4
5	Beneficiary	04	04	02	2.2
6	Receiver	00	00	01	1.1
	Total	113	100	90	100

N (DT) =113 N (GD) =90

The analysis in the table 33 above indicates that there were six common functional linguistic features beside the process itself. These linguistic features were used in the selected samples. The samples were analysed in the tables 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 respectively. The use of Actor was 37% and

39%. The use of Goal was 35% and 42.2%, Circumstance was 17% and 11.1%, Beneficiary was 04% and 2.2%, the use of Range/Scope was 07% and 4.4%, and finally the use of receiver was 0% and 1.1% in the selected sample of both papers.

Table 33: Linguistic Features (Functional) in Verbal processes

S/N	Identified features	DT	%	GD	%
1	Sayer	43	41	23	43.4
2	Verbiage	38	36	19	36
3	Target	17	16	06	11.3
4	Circumstance	07	07	05	9.4
	Total	105	100	53	100

N (DT) =105 N (GD) =53

The analysis in the table 34 above has identified four functional linguistic features of verbal processes from the selected sample of both papers. The feature sayer was 41% and 43.4% in the selected sample of both, followed

by verbiage with 36% in both, then target with 16% and 11.3%, then circumstance with 07% and 9.4% respectively. These linguistic features used were analysed in the tables 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 respectively.

Table 34: Linguistic Features (Functional) in mental processes

S/N	Identified features	DT	%	GD	%
1	Senser	03	50	05	50
2	Phenomenon	03	50	05	50
	Total	06	100	10	100

N (DT) =06 N (GD) =10

The analysis in the table 35 above has identified two linguistic features in the selected sample of mental processes. Senser was used 50% and 50%, phenomenon was also

used 50% and 50%. These linguistic features were analysed in the tables 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 above.

Table 35: Linguistic Features (Functional) in Relational processes

S/N	Identified features	DT	%	GD	%
1	Carrier	00	00	07	41
2	Attribute	00	00	07	41
3	Circumstance	00	00	01	6
4	Possessor	00	00	01	6
5	Possessed	00	00	01	6
	Total	00	00	17	100

N = 00

N = 17

The analysis in the above table 36 has identified the use of carrier 00% and 41%, attribute 00% and 41%, circumstance 00% and 06%, possessor 00% and 06%, and possessed 00% and 06% as the common functional linguistic features of relational processes sample in both the selected samples. These linguistic features were analysed in the tables 29, 30 and 31 above.

1.5 Conclusion

The results of the analysis of this research established the choices of material and verbal

processes as the most predominant process types in news headlines of political news reports of the two Nigerian newspapers; *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian*. The results analysis discovered the consistencies regarding the use of material and verbal processes, whereas there were inconsistencies in the use of mental and relational, while behavioural and existential processes do not appear in the selected sampled headlines of both newspapers.

This gives an insight as regards to the use of a certain grammatical pattern in their headlines based on systemic functional linguistic approach. The results also discovered that behavioural and existential processes do not appear in the entire selected sample. Therefore, news headlines of political news reports are characterised by material, verbal, mental and relational processes. The results also revealed that the participants' roles in the headlines, which represent functional linguistic features are: ACTOR,

GOAL, CIRCUMSTANCE, RANGE/SCOPE, BENEFICIARY, RECEIVER, SAYER, VERBIAGE, TERGET, SENSER, PHENOMENON, CARRIER, ATTRIBUTE, POSSESSOR, POSSESSED associated with material, verbal, mental and relational processes identified in the headlines of both *Daily Trust* and *The Guardian* newspapers. Based on these it is clear that the styles of writing the plain headlines in both papers are similar and conform to the system of transitivity.

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