

## **TRANSITIVITY PATTERN IN ONLINE NEWSPAPER HEADLINES REPORTS ON BOKO HARAM TERRORISM:A STUDY OFNIAJ.COM**

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### **Abstract**

Terrorism is a global menace that has bedevilled man from time immemorial. Effective management of it requires competent use of a number of approaches one of which is effective use of language in reporting acts of terror. This work entitled: Transitivity Patterns in Online Newspaper Headlines Reports on Boko haram Terrorism: A study of Naij.com studied selected Naij.com (Online) News Headlines Reports on Terrorism, particularly the activities of the dreaded Boko-Haram sect in Nigeria. The paper identifies how terrorism and terrorists were portrayed through the use of language by online newspaper reporters. Halliday's theory of Transitivity in Systemic Functional Linguistics which identifies ideational meanings realized by grammatical choices was employed. The Transitivity Theory hinges on the tripod of Participants, Process and Circumstance. The researcher used Descriptive Methods to study the problem while data were collected from news headlines of Naij.com through Documentation Methods. The data were analyzed and our findings reveal that the Material and Relational Processes dominated the other Processes which confirm that the whole activities of terrorism are concerned with actions and event.

**Keywords:** Terrorism, Transitivity, Newspaper Headlines and Systemic Functional Linguistics

### **1.1 Introduction**

From the ancient times, man has been battling with the challenges of terror. What rather vary about terrorism from generation to generation are its nature, dimension and magnitude. In our modern times unfortunately, acts of terror of unprecedented degree, dimension, proportion and frequency are witnessed. With a flip of a finger, millions of humanbeings are massacred, no thanks to weapons of mass destruction; products of advancement in technology. Terrorism is therefore a challenge that man has got to surmount or at least effectively grapple with.

Defining terrorism, Enders and Sandler(2012) say: terrorism is the premeditated use or threat to use violence by an individual(s) or sub-national groups to obtain political or social objectives through the intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the

immediate victims. This definition is in tandem with those of other scholars in the literature- Hoffman (2006) and Rand (2012).

Violence is the hallmark of terrorism with some terrorist group engaging in gruesome attack to create widespread anxiety or revulsion. It is important to note that not all acts of violence qualify to be branded terrorism. To qualify to be tagged terrorism, an attack must have some political motives.

All over the world, terrorism is an albatross confronting man. It is usually a very slippery concept to explain in that even individuals labeled terrorists often do not see themselves as such. It is common for opponents in a violent conflict to describe the other side as terrorists or practicing terrorism.

\*Historically, terrorism, according to Zalman (2007) can be traced at least to the first century AD when a group called Sicarii Zealots assassinated collaborators with Roman rulers in the then province of Judea. In English, the first use of the term occurred during the French Revolution's reign of terror when the Jacobins who ruled the revolutionary state employed violence, including mass execution to compel obedience to the state and intimidate the regime's enemies.

The Hashhashin, whose name gave us the English word "assassins," were a secretive Islamic sect active in Iran and Syria from the 11th to the 13th century. The dramatically executed assassinations of Abbasid and Seljuk political figures terrified their contemporaries. Zealots and assassins were not, however, really terrorists in the modern sense.

Terrorism is best thought of as a modern phenomenon. Its characteristics flow from the international system of nation-states, and its success depends on the existence of a mass media to create an aura of terror among many people.

\*On the global front, terrorism continued to develop in varied dimensions and perspectives. It became a prominent issue in the late 1960s, when hijacking became a favoured tactic. In 1968 for instance, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine hijacked an El Al flight. Twenty years later, the bombing of a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie, Scotland, shocked the world. The era also gave us our contemporary sense of terrorism as highly theatrical, symbolic acts of violence by organized groups with specific political grievances.

Terrorism is not only a western affair; African countries generally are also experiencing the effects of the menace. This has led scholars and researchers to delve into studying all the various aspects of ways of tackling it. Studying transitivity in newspapers' headlines on terrorists attack in Westgate Mall, Nairobi Kenya, Ong'onda observes that:

Terrorism in Africa has become a frequent occurrence. Kenya has been the scene of various attacks attributed to terrorist elements. In 1998, the United States embassy bombings occurred on 7th August 1998, in which over 200 people were killed in nearly simultaneous truck bomb explosions in two East African cities, one at the United States Embassy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; the other at the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. Since 2012, Kenya has seen an upsurge in violent terrorist attacks. In 2013, terrorist attacks were

spurred by the Kenyan Army's active participation in the African Union Mission in Somalia, supporting the extant government of Somalia. Al-Shabaab, or "The Youth," is an al-Qaeda affiliate Somalia based terrorist organization (New York Police Department, 2013).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, terrorism took a rather confusing dimension. While it is strongly attached to religion, some of its operational modalities are actually at variance with the creed of such religion to which it is attached. Corroborating this view Zalman (2007:41) says:

Religiously motivated terrorism is considered the most alarming terrorist threat today. Groups that justify their violence on Islamic grounds- Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah —come to mind first. But Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and other religions have given rise to their own forms of militant extremism. In the view of religion scholar Karen Armstrong this turn represents terrorists' departure from any real religious precepts. Muhammad Atta, architect of the 9/11 attacks, and "the Egyptian hijacker who was driving the first plane, was a near alcoholic and was drinking vodka before he boarded the aircraft." Alcohol would be strictly off limits for a highly observant Muslim. Atta, and perhaps many others, are not simply orthodox-believers-turned-violent, but rather violent extremists who manipulate religious concepts for their own purposes.

\*In Nigeria, Prior to 2009, terrorism was never witnessed in great magnitude. What we had were few pockets of skirmishes occasioned by ethnic misunderstandings. However, the problem of insurgency and terrorism began to rear its ugly head with the activities of the deadly Boko Haram sect: a militant Islamist group which started in 2002. It greeted Nigeria with deadly attacks in 2009 following the clash between them and security forces in Bauchi State and has continued almost unabated. This group has snowballed into a quagmire for Nigeria, wrecking national havocs. Across several geopolitical regions in Nigeria, particularly in the north east, the Boko Haram sect has killed over 100,000 persons with more than 700 from the city of Maiduguri, Borno State alone.

At the annual Murtala Mohammed memorial lecture held at Shehu Musa Yaraducentre Abuja, Governor Kashim Shettima of Borno State gave quite a revealing statistics. He said: "the Boko Haram insurgency has led to the death of almost 100,000 persons going by the data of our community leaders over the years." Speaking further he said: "... over 2,114,000 persons have been internally displaced as at 2016. Official records have 52,311 orphans who are forcefully separated from their parents. 54,911 widows have lost their husbands to insurgency in Borno State alone."

Since their inception, there have been attacks and counter attacks particularly in the three Northeastern States of Bauchi, Borno and Yobe but not limited to there as the sect has also claimed responsibilities for attacks even in Abuja, the nation's capital. A few statistical data about the attacks of the sect from 2009 is given below:

Between July 2009 and May 2010, over 1,000 persons had been killed by the Boko Haram sect at Maiduguri, Bauchi, Potiskum and Wuldi. Then, on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2011, 21 persons were killed and 73 injured in an attack at the United Nation's Building in Abuja.

By the end of November 2011, over 150 persons had been killed at Damaturu the Yobe State capital.

Statistics abound about the bombing of churches and mosques; open parks and even force headquarters to mention but a few. The 2011 Christmas-bombing in St Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla; the 2014 Nyanya Park early morning bombing as well as the attack on Force headquarters in Abuja are still very fresh examples of Boko Haram attacks in our memories.

\*According to terrorism research.com, there are three perspectives of terrorism: the terrorist's, the victim's, and the general public's. The phrase "*one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter*" is a view terrorists themselves would gladly accept. Terrorists do not see themselves as evil. They believe they are legitimate combatants, fighting for what they believe in, by whatever means possible to attain their goals. A victim of a terrorist act sees the terrorist as a criminal with no regard for human life. The general public's view though can be the most unstable. The terrorists take great pains to foster a Robin Hood image in hope of swaying the general public's point of view toward their cause. This sympathetic view of terrorism has become an integral part of their psychological warfare and has been countered vigorously by governments, the media and other organizations.

\*In recent times, there has been an increasing global interest in studies on terrorism. Johansson (2016) et al attributes it to the quest to demystify the ideological underpinnings behind the entire activities of terrorists. Katie (2014) observes that the activities of terrorists are so worrisome and their effects on the victims so grave that they cannot just be swept under the carpet; they ought to be investigated.

Globally, there have also been a lot of researches carried out on terrorism from the linguistic point of view. These however adopted different theoretical approaches outside the theory of transitivity. Some of such studies include: Atef (2016): Towards understanding the Linguistics of Terrorists and Radical Groups. Xiaoqin (2016): A Corpus-based Analysis in Comparison of popular views on Terrorism before and after 9/11. Makoni (2013): Discourse of Terror: the U. S. from the viewpoint the 'other'. Staun (2009): A Linguistic turn on Terrorism Studies. etc

A brief review of some of these scholarly inquiries into the linguistic study of terrorism shows that Ong'onda (2016) for instance, did a Transitivity analysis of Newspaper Headlines on terrorism attacks in Kenya, studying more particularly the attack on Westgate mall in Nairobi. The study adopting Halliday's Transitivity theory in Systemic Functional Linguistics reveals that due to how the actions of terrorists are presented using the resources of language, linguistic features contribute immensely to the image and opinion formed about terrorists. It also exposes the fact that grammatical choices in newspaper reports play a vital role to covertly express the writer's perspective towards the terrorist group.

From the above, it is clear that efforts have gone into studying the activities of terrorists in general with no specific sect emphasized more than the other. The review above for

instance, concentrates on the activities of the Al-shabaab group as they perpetrated their attacks in Kenya. The review shows clearly that all works examined and others not reviewed due to constraints of space focused on the activities of other terrorists groups.

There is still a significantly great dearth of linguistic studies on the activities of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria; more so using the Hallidain model of transitivity. That therefore provides the gap in research this work came to fill.

The choice of the Boko Haram is appropriate because with the exception of the IPOB which was recently declared a terrorist group (even though the rationale behind the declaration is still questionable) and the recently dreaded Fulani Herdsmen who are wrecking havoc of unprecedented magnitude in the north central part of Nigeria; only the boko haram is the known terrorist group in Nigeria.

## 2.1 Language and Terrorism Reports

The importance of language in the general activities of man cannot be overemphasized. In reporting acts of terror, it is no less so in reporting acts of terror. In philosophy of language as well as in Pragmatics lies an unsettled argument that between what is said and how it is said; which is more important? That goes to inform the importance the level of importance attached to language use.

Scholars have variously studied language use in reporting e acts of terror. For instance, Ingram (2018) in his work “Terrorism: Language when reporting terrorism” states thus:

*We must report acts of terror quickly, accurately, fully and responsibly. Terrorism is a difficult and emotive subject with significant political overtones and care is required in the use of language that carries value judgements. We try to avoid the use of the term "terrorist" without attribution. When we do use the term we should strive to do so with consistency in the stories we report across all our services and in a way that does not undermine our reputation for objectivity and accuracy.*

*The word "terrorist" itself can be a barrier rather than an aid to understanding. We should convey to our audience the full consequences of the act by describing what happened. We should use words which specifically describe the perpetrator such as "bomber", "attacker", "gunman", "kidnapper", "insurgent", and "militant". We should not adopt other people's language as our own; our responsibility is to remain objective and report in ways that enable our audiences to make their own assessments about who is doing what to whom.*

In his work: Crime, Terrorism or Nightmare: News Representations of the 2011 Norway Attack, Markkula (2014) states:

Media texts create representations of the world through language and both contribute to, and are themselves influenced by, the views and ideologies of people who create and consume the texts. These social aspects of language are especially salient in texts concerning controversial events such as terrorism or serious crimes. Such events are bound to raise strong opinions and feelings in

people, and the way in which they are represented through media to the public can directly and indirectly influence the tone of these opinions and feelings. In addition, the opinions and the feelings of the journalists producing these texts are likely to influence how the events are represented in the media.

From here, one can clearly understand the roles of language in reporting acts of terror. The opinion of the reporter often reflects on the manner he presents his reports. This clearly shows in his use of language.

Often, a reporter may overtly or covertly disclose his divide in reporting activities of terrorists. What he or she fronts, the agents he assigns what role etc. all contribute to exposing the side of intent of the language user in exposing acts of terror.

## **2.2 Transitivity and Language Use in Newspaper Reportage**

Language can be used in many different ways in order to reinforce and manipulate a message. Language is a means of expressing and transferring ideas or experiences among people. Halliday (1985) posits that a language is interpreted as a system of meanings, accompanied by forms through which the meanings can be realized and answer the question, "how are these meanings expressed?"

Newspapers are often assigned a very powerful role when it comes to having influence over their readers. The current study aims to identify and explain how the Boko Haram are portrayed and represented through language used in the headlines of Naij.com (online) Newspapers by the reporters.

Though linguistic scholars have studied language use with regard to terrorism in general and activities of Boko Haram in particular, Transitivity Theory has not been very commonly employed. The few places where they are, the online Newspaper headlines have not been studied. Given that the emergence of computer with its attendant style, method and system of writing is gradually taking centre stage of things; equally, given that these computerized system of writing is particularly peculiar and seemingly not yet conventionalized, it requires special attention. That therefore accounts for the gap in research this work has come to fill.

## **2.3 Transitivity in Systemic Functional Grammar**

**2.3.1 Systemic Functional Grammar:** Whether it is called Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG); Systemic Functional Theory (SFT) or Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), they all mean the same thing. Any of them is a term used to refer to what was started by J. R. Frith as Scale and Category Grammar. This was later developed by M. A. K. Halliday. The Hallidayan grammar emphasizes functionality of language as against the hitherto structural approach to it.

Halliday (1985) posits that language a system of choice. He says whatever that is done with language is as a result of certain choices made by the user and of course, others avoided. Similarly, Van Dijk (2006) observes that Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) is an approach to understanding written texts as creating meaning, not just from the rules of grammar but also in the meanings that emerge from the choice of words used to describe the action, the person speaking, or the object and person being spoken of.

Fair Clough (1989) on the other hand notes that using language is the most common form of social behaviour and we depend on language in our public and private interaction, determining our relationships with other individuals and the social institutions we inhabit. Fair Clough (2001) further claims that language is a material form of ideology, and language is infested by ideology. Thus, for Fair Clough, social language or discourse is not only representational but intervenes in social change because discourse contributes to the creation and recreation of the relations, subjects, and objects which populate the social world. From the above therefore, it is noticed that the functionality of language is being emphasized.

Halliday identifies three major functions of language. He also calls them meta-functions. They include:

- The Ideational function
- The Interpersonal function and
- The Textual function

### **2.3.1 (a) The Ideational Meta-Function:**

This refers to how language is organized, used and understood in the perception of our world and of our own consciousness. It has to do with the ways language represents our own experiences (actual or vicarious) of the world as well as the inner world of our thoughts and feelings. The ideational meta-functions in other words concerns itself with how we talk about actions, feelings, beliefs, situations, states etc; the people and things involved in them and the relevant circumstances of time, place, manner degree etc.

The ideational meta-functions are typified into two: the Experiential and the Logical. While the experiential is concerned with the contents or ideas, the logical is concerned with the relationships between these ideas. Other typology calls it the Transitivity and the Ergativity.

### **2.3.1 (b) The Interpersonal Meta-functions:**

The Interpersonal meta-function, in the words of Enyi (2017) refers to how language is used to enable us participate in communicative acts with other people; to take on roles; to express and understand feelings, attitudes and judgments. It specifically has to do with ways in which we act upon or relate with one another through language – giving and requesting information, getting people to do things or offering to do them ourselves – and the ways in which we express our judgments and attitudes about such things as likelihood, necessities, obligations, desirability etc.

### **2.3.1 (c) Textual Meta-function:**

The concern of the textual meta-function is to examine how language is used to relate to what is said or written to the rest of the text and to other linguistic events. It also has to do with the ways in which a stretch of language is organized in relation to its context.

Talking about textual meta-function Locks (1996) says: textual meaning and interpretation is concerned with text creation as well as cohesion and coherence in spoken and written texts.

The textual can be classified into two structures, namely: Thematic Structure (Theme and Rheme) and Information Focus (New and Given).

### 2.3.2 The System of Transitivity:

Halliday (1981) summarizes transitivity as the cornerstone of the semantic organization of experience; it subsumes 'all participant functions' and 'all experiential functions relevant to the syntax of the clause'. Transitivity is usually considered to be a property of an entire clause (Hopper and Thompson, 1980). It is, broadly, the notion that an activity is transferred from an agent to a patient. In Halliday's (1973) terms, transitivity is a part of the ideational function of the clause. The ideational function represents processes or experiences: actions, events, processes of consciousness and relations.

Expressed more simply, transitivity talks about how language is used to create reality. It is usually employed to demystify ideological underpinnings or opaque messages.

Fowler, in referring to Halliday, explains that "transitivity is the foundation of representation: it is the way the clause is used to analyze events and situations as being of certain types" (Fowler 1991:71). Transitivity, then, makes it possible to describe an event from different angles and could therefore be said to be indicative of different ideological viewpoints.

Transitivity patterns can reveal the certain worldview framed by the authorial ideology in a literary text (Fowler, 1986). Clauses represent events and processes of various kinds, and transitivity aims to make clear how the action is performed, by whom and on what. Transitivity is an essential tool in the analysis of representation. Different social structures and values require different patterns of transitivity.

There are three components of what Halliday (1994) calls a "transitivity process," namely:

- i. The Process itself: what kind of event or state is being described
- ii. Participants in the process: the entities involved in the process, e.g actor, sayer, senser, goal
- iii. Circumstances associated with the process: specifying when, how, where and why of the process

Halliday (1994) identifies six process categories in his system of transitivity. They include:

**Table 1: Process types, their meanings and key participants**

Process Types	Category Meaning	Participants Roles
<b>Material Process</b> (Action and Events)	Doing, Happening-e.g. kick, run, paint, repair, send, burn	A c t o r , G o a l
<b>Behavioural Process</b> (Sensing and Doing)	B e h a v i n g	B e h a v e r
<b>Mental Process</b> (Perception, Affection, Cognition, Reaction)	Sensing, Seeing, Feeling Thinking -e.g. see, hear, know	S e n s o r , Phenomenon
<b>Verbal Process</b>	Saying-e.g. say, tell, warn, argue, ask	Sayer, Target / Receiver
<b>Relational Process</b> (Attribution and Identification)	B e i n g , A t t r i b u t i n g , Identifying-e.g. be, have, become	Carrier, Attribute, Identified, Identifier, Token, Value
<b>Existential Process</b>	E x i s t i n g	E x i s t e n c e



#### 2.4 Newspaper Headlines: Nature and Characteristics

Headlines have major role in the newspapers. In fact, their roles cannot be over emphasized.

A headline's purpose is to quickly and briefly draw attention to the story. The term headline has pretty much the same meaning from one Newspaper to another Newspaper but is often confused by the public. Any line or collection of display type that precedes a story and summarizes or introduces it can be called a **headline**. Some people used the term incorrectly to apply only to the banner line across the top of page one. Others use it incorrectly to apply only to the top until of a series of decks in a headline-the separate units that make up a compound headline. But all its parts add up to a single line. A head of two or more decks is still one headline.

Studying the characteristics of Newspaper headlines, Shafeer (2012) says:

Although headline- writing practices vary from newspapers to newspapers within a small range of differences, newspaper headlines tend to have five obvious distinguishing characteristics.

1. Headlines are defined as the sentences that are built by around action of verbs.
2. However, they must be adjusted to a pre-determined space and typographical style.
3. Therefore they are skeletonized to save space. Omitting articles and other unnecessary encumbrance's leaves room for more detail in the restricted space headlines are allowed. But more importantly, skeletonizing contributes to a sense of urgency, the rationale being that no words should be wasted in getting the latest intelligence to the reads as quickly as possible. Even though today's increased freedom in shaping and presenting stories has correspondingly given the headline writer freedom from strict skeletonization.
4. They are present tense to convey immediacy and also to save spaces. Usually present tense forms of verbs are shorter than the past tense forms.
5. They used to be set in the style of titles, that is, with all principle words capitalized. Early in the 1970's a new view swept the country and a down style became all but universal. That is to say, headlines were capitalized in the manner of text, rather than in the manner of titles. The idea was to help readers read them as sentences, rather than as titles of magazine articles or books.

Looking at the function of newspapers and of course their contents, Fowler (1991) opines as follows: News reports help in shaping and sustaining the opinions of the powerful elements, groups, and countries in the international community. These opinions are then passed off as the natural or the inevitable reality. The publication of newspapers is considered to be an industry and a business like any other business that should be profitable

The media has a great deal of impact on people's opinion. This implies also that those who own or sponsor such media outfits implicitly impose their views and opinions on the readers.

In this context, Ong'onda (2016) says:

People's opinions and beliefs are always formed and shaped by commercial media institutions, which usually further the social, political, and economic interests of the dominating elites (Fairclough, 2002; Herman and Chomsky, 2002). Thus, what the media will reflect is support for the social interests of the elite.

The linguistic framing of issues and the proliferation of a particular point of view help in the interpretation of what constitutes reality to the general public. In fact, Gee (2005) claims that language has a magical property: when we speak or write, we design what we have to say to fit the situation in which we are communicating. The choice of words can reveal the writer's perspective of how the subjects should be represented. Hall (1997) states that representation is the active work of selecting, presenting, structuring and shaping; not merely the transmitting of an already existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean.

### **2.5 Naij.com:**

Founded in 2012, Naij.com has its headquarters in Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria and launched an editorial hub in Abuja in May 2015. Naij.com is part of the global consumer internet company called Genesis Media which also owns Tuko (in Kenya) and Yen (in Ghana).

As at July 2015, prior to its website being attacked by hackers, it has more than 13 million monthly readers and is ranked as the 7th overall most visited website in Nigeria by Alexa. Currently the website's Facebook community is over 4.0 million. Subscribers on Facebook stand at over 3 million as at July 2016. Data from Facebook statistics about online media in Nigeria shows that NAIJ.com news site now has over three million of fans on the world's major social network. This means in 4 years, NAIJ has overtaken Sahara Reporters and other online news sites.

### **3.1: Source of Data**

The data used for the research are taken from News headlines of Naij.com. The researcher collected 20 news headlines. The headlines were separated and analyzed individually. To prepare the data for analysis, the texts have been divided into numbered clauses to make it easy to refer to in the analysis. These headlines deal with the same subject matter namely the activities of Boko-Haram sect.

### **4.0 Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion:**

Data will first of all be presented in the form of News headlines. The headlines will henceforth be referred to as H1-H20. Afterwards, they will be individually analysed to determine their transitivity pattern.

#### **4.1 The Data:**

The data H1- H20 constitute material for analysis. The data are as presented below:

H1: Boko Haram launches fresh attack in Adamawa

H2: Boko Haram Insurgents hits Borno again; kills several people, abduct 10

H3: Army kills dozens of Boko Haram, rescues 6 year old boy

- H4: Nigerian Air force destroys Boko Haram building in Sambisa forest, neutralizes mass gathering of fighters.  
H5: Troops kill many Boko Haram terrorists in ambush, recovers weapon  
H6: Army saves the day as Boko Haram attacks for the second time  
H7: Many feared dead as Boko Haram bombers attack Maiduguri  
H8: Soldiers launch deadly attack against Boko Haram in latest operation  
H9: 8 soldiers dead, several reported missing as Boko Haram terrorist attack military camp in Borno  
H10: Jubilation as Nigerian troops delivers lethal blow against Boko Haram insurgents in Borno, kills 11, rescues 85 hostage  
H11: At least six dead in Boko Haram's double suicide attack  
H12: Twin explosion kill five in Gombe  
H13: Suicide bomber kills 10 people in northeast Nigeria's Potiskum  
H14: Boko Haram insurgents attack northeast Nigeria's capital city  
H15: Car bomb explodes in Nigeria's Gombe after Jonathan rally  
H16: Suspected suicide bombers kill at least 11 in Nigeria's Borno state  
H17: Boko Haram separate attacks kill 21 in northeast Nigeria  
H18: Female suicide bomber kills 13 in Nigerian bus station  
H19: Bomber dies in Borno  
H20: Four die as soldiers discover bomb factory in Yobe

#### **4.2 Data Analysis:**

##### **H1: Boko Haram launches fresh attack in Adamawa**

H1: Boko Haram (Actor) launches (process= material) fresh attack (goal) in Adamawa (circumstance).

In this headline<sup>1</sup>, the reporters present the bokoharan as the actor who uses the material process 'launch' to execute their action of attack which is the goal of the process. The place they attacked is Adamawa state which is the goal.

In this headline, the reporters hid the identity of those attacked for unspecified reasons. The hiding of the identity of the victim may be as a result of the ethnic, religious, social etc linings of the reporters. He may not want to expose the direct sufferers of the action.

Adamawa, the place was specified also for some possible reasons. It could be that the said Adamawa has been a serial sufferer of the activities of those men. It therefore means that Adamawa requires more and urgent attention, possibly before other places that are also prone to the attacks.

##### **H2: Boko Haram Insurgents hit Borono again, kill several; abduct 10**

Bokoharam Insurgents (Actor) hit (process = material) Borno (goal) again (circumstance) kill (process = material) several (goal); abduct (process = material) 10 (goal).

In this headline, the actor, the process and the circumstance were distinctly spelt out. However, like in H1, this headline also made conscious efforts at hiding the actual sufferers of the attack. The real identity of the sufferers is not disclosed here. There are

also no ideological or social or religious or ethnic linings of those attacked that were mentioned. It was just a blanket report where emphasis was laid on the actor and the circumstance.

Once again, the reporter is seen here exhibiting his intention not to be vocal about the actual people affected. This may be in order not to cause more panic or not to raise unnecessary alarm.

### **H3: Army kills dozens of Boko Haram, rescues 6 year old boy**

Army (Actor) Kills (process = material) Dozens of Boko Haram (Goal); Rescues (process = material) 6-year-old boy.

This headline has a different approach from the first two discussed above. We find out here how the actor was mentioned, the processes clearly spelt out, and unlike in the first two, the goals are also spelt out. Here the goal is the dozens of bokoharam which was killed by the army as well as the 6 year old boy which was rescued.

This could be interpreted to mean that the reporter may have clearly mentioned the goals to make a point. Mentioning that dozens of boko haram were killed by the army would be a source of relief for the people whom obviously are worried by the activities of those men. It is meant to give credit to the soldiers for doing a great job. Similarly, specifying the age of the rescued boy was also an effort consciously made to paint the boko haram in bad light. It reveals how heartless the men of the sect are as to abduct such a minor.

### **H4: Nigerian Air force destroys Bokoharam buildings in Sambisa forest, neutralizes mass gathering of fighters.**

Nigerian Air force (Actor) destroys (process= material) boko haram building (goal) in Sambisa forest (circumstance) neutralizes (process=relational) mass gathering of fighters (goal).

Here, every component is known: the actor, the processes, the goals. The actor is the Nigerian Air force which destroys the bokoharam building which is the goal. In Sambisa forest is the circumstance and it is very vital here. The reporter portrays the Nigerian Air force as being powerful and gallant. This is because the air force was able to not only destroy the boko haram building but do so in sambisa forest- the acclaimed hideout of the sect. Destroying their house in their hideout symbolizes efforts at conquering or at least weakening them.

### **H5: Troops kill many Boko Haram terrorists in Ambush, recover weapons**

Troops (Actor) kill (process = material) many boko haram terrorists (goal) in ambush (circumstances) recover (process = material) weapons (goal).

Here, the reporter is silent about whom the troops are. Their target which is the bokoharam is clearly mentioned and the quantifier-many- is to emphasize that it's not one person who was killed. The circumstance of ambush is significant too. It signifies the tact employed by the troops and the fact that they were able to recover weapons is equally a commendable one.

### **H6: Army saves the day as bokoharam attacks for the second time**

Army (actor) saves (process= relational) the day (goal) as (circumstance) bokoharam(actor) attacks (process= material) for (circumstance) the second time (goal).

In data H6, the reporter clearly mentions who saved the day, who attacked and the frequency of the attack. He or She is however silent about who was the goal. The goal here is the recipient of the attack. The silence is equally interpreted to mean a purported attempt at not disclosing the identity of those attacked.

**H7: Many feared dead as Boko Haram bombers attack Maiduguri**

Many(Goal) feared (process=mental) dead (goal) as (circumstance) Boko-haram (actor) attacks (process= material) Maiduguri (goal)

Data H7 is also like majority of other data presented. The reporter reports that it appears like many have died as a result of the bokoharam striking in Maiduguri. Here it is clearly noticed how the reporter carefully hid the identity of the “many” who were feared dead. He only revealed the actors as well as the circumstances. The hiding may not be unconnected with intentional attempt made not to further demoralize the people whose morale must have been down owing to the repeated nefarious attacks of the dreaded bokoharem.

**H8:Soldiers launch deadly attack against Boko Haram in latest operation**

Soldiers(actor) launches (process=material) deadly(circumstance) attack (goal) against (circumstance) Bokoharam (Goal) in (circumstance) latest (circumstance) operation (goal)

The analysis of this data reveals that both the actor and the goal are clearly mentioned. This is usually noticed when the reporter talks about the activities of the soldiers on the terrorists. The circumstance is also for emphasis sake. It suggests that probably the operation by the terrorists before the one being reported may have left the people more hopeless. Reporting the gallantry of the soldiers now will be a kind of morale booster for the people.

**H9:8 Soldiers dead, several reported missing as Boko Haram terrorist attack military camp in Borono**

8Soliders (goal) dead (circumstance) several (goal) missing (process=material) as (circumstance) Boko-haram (actor) attack (process= material) military camp (goal) in (circumstance) Borno (goal)

In H9, the reporter shifts from what appears to be the norm. We find the reporter mentioning both the goal as well as the actor. The goal here is the soldiers while the actor is the boko-haram. A careful analysis here shows that the reporter appears to be pro boko-haram and that’s why they were mentioned as perpetrators of the attack. Also, the fact that the terrorists can attack a military camp, kill soldiers and get away with it shouldn’t form a major headline if such a reporter is not in support of their action. The report is also silent about whatever efforts the soldiers must have made to resist the attack.

**H10: Jubilation as Nigerian troops delivers lethal blow against Boko Haram insurgents in Borono, kills 11, rescues 85 hostages.**

Jubilation (goal) as (circumstance) Nigerian troops (actors) delivers (process) lethal blow (goal) against (circumstance) Bokoharam (goal) in (circumstance) Borno (goal) kills (process= material) 11 (goal) rescues (material process) 85 hostages (goal)

The reporter in this headline is fronting certain news elements to project his own ideologies and beliefs. He didn't hide any of the components of the headlines. He presents the Nigerian troops who gallantly killed 11 of the terrorists and rescued 85 persons held hostage by the group. Here, both the actors and the goals were specifically mentioned and even the circumstances in which they acted.

**H11: At least six dead in Boko Haram's double suicide attack**

At least (circumstance) six (goal) dead (goal) in (circumstance) Boko Haram's (actor) double suicide attack (goal)

Here, the reporter is seen carefully hiding some elements. He hides the identity of the attacked as well as the place. He probably did so because specifying the attacked or the place may send signal of a possible domination of such area by the insurgents. It is most likely that the insurgents either attacked a military base or an area they have very often attacked.

**H12: Twin explosion kill five in Gombe**

Twin explosion (actor) kills (material process) five (goal) in (circumstance) Gombe (goal)

There is a deliberate effort by the reporter to hide who were responsible for the twin explosion. The same way, he carefully hides the goal of the action. The aim of such hiding as in other such headlines is to keep some information undisclosed for the purpose which the reporter may not make known.

**H13: Suicide bomber kills 10 people in northeast Nigeria's Potiskum**

Suicide bomber (actor) kills (process = material) 10 people (goal) in northeast Nigeria's Potiskum (circumstance)

The reporter here discloses the identity of the actor as a suicide bomber. It doesn't necessarily mean that the person is of the dreaded sect. The actual identity of the goal is not made known. This is suggestive of the fact that the goal may be people who have suffered attacks before. Mentioning them again might arouse a feeling of greater insecurity.

**H14: Boko Haram insurgents attack northeast Nigeria's capital city**

Boko Haram insurgents (actor) attacks (process) northeast Nigeria's capital city (goal)

The actor and the goal are mentioned. However, the goal is not specified as there is no particular city that is known officially the capital of northeast. There could be a purported attempt at hiding some information which the reporter might have considered injurious for some reasons.

**H15: Car bomb explodes in Nigeria's Gombe after Jonathan rally**

Car bomb (actor) explodes (process) in Nigeria's Gombe (goal) after (circumstance) Jonathan's rally (goal)

In this headline, an actor is mentioned but there was no agent specified. Somebody must have planted the car bomb but the identity of the person is carefully hidden as probably the reporter may not know the person and may not want to make unnecessary allegations. The goals and the circumstances are specified.

**H16: Suspected suicide bombers kill at least 11 in Nigeria's Borno state**

Suspected Suicide bomber (Actors) kill (process) at least (circumstance) 11 (goal) in (circumstance) Nigeria's Borno state (goal)

Here, every component is specified: the actor, the process the goal and the circumstances. There is no information that is not disclosed here.

**H17: Boko Haram separate attacks kill 21 in northeast Nigeria**

Boko haram separate attacks (actor) kills (process, material) 21 (goal) in Northeast Nigeria (circumstance)

Every component is specified here. There is however no specific information given about the number of deaths per attack. Only the sum total of the casualties was mentioned. Also, there is an attempt to hide the particular cities on the northeast where the attack took place.

**H18: Female suicide bomber kills 13 in Nigerian bus station**

Female suicide bomber (actor) kills (process) 13 (goal) in a bus station (circumstance). The actor is disclosed but the goals and the circumstance are not distinctly disclosed. The 13 persons killed were not properly disclosed nor was the particular bus station mentioned. The omission may be deliberate. It may be to cover some information.

**H19: Bomber dies in Borno**

Bomber (goal) dies (process) in Borno (circumstance)

The goal is known- the bomber. However, what is not disclosed is the actor. It was not specified whether he was killed or he killed himself or just what was responsible for his death. Only the information about his death is disclosed. The headline raises certain possible questions: Could it be he killed himself? Could it be he was killed either by the soldiers or by the people? Is it possible the bomb exploded on him? These are salient questions raised by the report.

**H20: Four die as soldiers discover bomb factory in Yobe**

Four (goal) die (process) as (circumstance) soldiers (actor) discover (process) bomb factory (goal) in Yobe (circumstances)

All the elements are specified here. The reporter however was not specific about who the actual people that died were.

**4.3 Discussion of Findings:**

From the analysis, one discovers that reporters use words to create the meaning they want. They manipulate the linguistic resources at their disposal to pass information. A reporter may choose to hide some information or to display it. By so doing, such reporter projects information that will bring him to a vantage point.

Reporters who are pro the insurgents, for instance, tend to project their actions and by so doing give the impression that they are still dominating or at least taking the upper hand in their quest "conquer" Nigerian government. On the other hand, reporters who are pro

government or pro people tend to hide the mayhem caused by the insurgents in their reports. They rather project only that which is advantageous to the Nigerian nation.

The findings also reveal that when reporters want to whip up sentiments, they manipulate language to do that. This is often achieved through manipulating the circumstance. To create emphasis for instance, the circumstance will be used to do so.

In general, the reporter uses language to navigate the minds of the reader and get him act or react in accordance to the reporter’s emotions and feelings as reflected in the report.

It is therefore not necessarily the actual actions that form what happened but the reporters’ perspective to it that constitutes the news which is what shapes the opinion of the news readers and by extension the general public.

**4.4 Frequency Table for Process Types**

<b>Process Types</b>	<b>No of data</b>	<b>Percentage of occurrence in data</b>
Material process	2 8	28/28 (100) =100%
Mental process	0 0	00/28 (100) = 0%
Behavioural process	0 0	00/28 (100) = 0%
Verbal process	0 0	00/28 (100) = 0%
Relational process	0 0	00/28 (100) = 0%
Existential process	0 0	00/28 (100) = 0%
<b>T o t a l</b>	<b>2 8</b>	<b>1 0 0 %</b>

In interpreting this frequency table, it is very obvious that everything here revolves round the material process. The Material Process is the process of doing, happening, acting etc. What this means is that the entire activities of the BokoHaram sect are all action-oriented. There is nothing sensed, said, thought about etc. All the entire activities of the terrorist group as portrayed by the news headlines which are their activities in line with their aims are all geared towards actions.

The actions here are destructive actions. The destruction is either by the BokoHaram which is aimed at causing harm to the masses or by the soldiers which is aimed at destroying their negative plans and by so doing protecting lives and property as well as defending the nation’s territorial integrity which is key in their mandate.

**4.5 Frequency Table for Participant Roles**

<b>Participant roles</b>	<b>No of appearances</b>	<b>Percentage of appearances</b>
A c t o r	2 1	21.21% =21%
P r o c e s s	2 9	29.29% =30%
G o a l	2 7	27.27% = 27%
Circumstances	2 2	22.22.% = 22%
<b>T o t a l</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1 0 0 %</b>



The Actor, though usually an obligatory element and appeared in all the sentences ironically has the least percentage, the Process dominates with the highest percentage. This is followed by the Goal and then the Circumstance.

The interpretation of this is that the Actors or Agency uses all possible processes to achieve their goal. The Goal is the target. In some cases, one actor could aim at many goals as reflected by the frequency table. In one occasion, one actor could achieve more than one goal.

It could be concluded therefore that the philosophy of the terrorist is to use whatever process possible to achieve as many goals as possible within any circumstance.

### 5.1 Conclusion

From the analysis, it is clear that all reports about the Boko Haram, their activities and those of all security agents which counter them are all material processes. What that means is that all they are involved in is “doing”; “acting” etc. Terrorists naturally aim at destruction and instilling fear in people. They certainly can’t achieve such by mere words. Action, they say, speaks louder than words. To effectively counter them too, the soldiers have to equally act.

The closeness between the number of the circumstances and the Actors indicates a particular style of reportage employed by the Naij.com. It means that their reporters will always emphasize the place, time, manner, result, reason etc. of the actions. It forecloses options of vagueness and exposes explicitness of message. The preponderance of the processes indicates that every possible tactics should be employed to achieve as many destructive goals as possible.

Finally, the research has succeeded in making open the intentions of naij.com’s reporters in reporting the activities of the dreaded Boko Haram sect which has lately bedeviled Nigeria.

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