

Transitivity Processes and News Representation of Boko Haram Terrorism in Online Newspaper Reports in Nigeria: A Study of Headline Reports of Naij.Com Reporters.

¹Amaechi Uneke Enyi and ²Nwani Grace Ugwu

¹*Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria.*

²*Department of English Ebonyi State College of Education, Ikwo, Nigeria.*

Abstract: Terrorism is now a global phenomenon that has continued to spread and infest the global community to such an extent that it will be correct to state that no country is immune to or free from acts of terrorism. Every incident of terrorist attack is often followed by a flurry of activities especially by news reporters from the print and the electronic media. These reporters, through the medium of language, transmit different shades and angles of the events or incidents as news to the general public and elicit different reactions. This scenario also plays out in Nigeria, a country that has been grappling with Boko Haram terrorism since 2002. This study, therefore, was an examination of transitivity patterns and representations of terrorism in the online newspaper headline reports on Boko Haram by Naij.Com reporters with the aim of interrogating the reporters' manipulation of transitivity patterns in their representation and portrayal of Boko Haram terrorist activities in Nigeria. The transitivity system is a theoretical framework within the Halliday (1978) model of Systemic Functional Linguistics that conceptualizes the clause as processes of happening, doing, sensing, saying, behaving, and being or having. These processes have participants that are usually involved or are affected by them as well as circumstances of time, place, manner, etc that may surround them. Transitivity resides in the ideational metafunction which is part of Halliday's tripartite functions of language; the others being the interpersonal and the textual functions. The data was sourced from headline news reports of Naij. Com, an online Newspaper in Nigeria and in terms of method and design, the study was basically qualitative and descriptive. Our findings showed a significant difference in the reporters' choice of process types. They made preponderant choice of Material Processes of different configurations of participant roles to report both the terrorist acts of the Boko Haram sect and the counter - terrorism reactions of the Nigerian Armed Forces. Out of a total of 32 independent clauses identified in the data, 27 of them are material action and event processes. The choice of Material Processes, coupled with the use of temporal, spatial and manner circumstantial details made their story clearer, more vivid and believable. Other process types found in the data are: 2 process verbal, used by reporters to attribute their account to other sources, and 2 process behavioural, used to report the physiological effects of the acts on the people. By representation is meant that news reporters, not merely transmit an already existing meaning, but also tactfully select, frame and structure words and sentences to make them mean what they want them to mean.

Keywords: Terrorism, Transitivity, Naij. Com, Representation, Headline Reports

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is an indispensable tool for reporting and portraying human activities and happenings. This also applies to the reporting of the activities of terrorist groups and the concomitant traumatic effects of their dastardly acts on their victims as well as the usual counter terrorist activities of the security agents. Nations of the world have been battling with the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism since the ancient times. What has changed over the years is only the dimension, frequency and proportion of terrorist acts as well as the sophistication of their modes of operation. Terrorism is now a global phenomenon that has continued to escalate and devastate the global community to such an extent that it will be correct to state that no country is immune to or free from terrorist acts. Every incident of terrorist attack is often followed by a flurry of activities: people will gather and begin to talk, snap shots of the scenes will be taken, which will later be beamed on television screens; journalists (print and electronic media) will begin to ask questions and gather information, bystanders and onlookers will recount their personal experiences of the incident, etc. Regardless of the specific details of these accounts, there are all interpretive acts achieved through language. The media plays an important role in disseminating the story or the narrative about acts of terror. By the use of language, they construct the narrative, name the protagonists, describe motivations and provide explanations. Their reports also generate abundant attentions and reactions which will reverberate the whole nation and the larger world. No wonder the BBC 2017 Editorial Guidelines on "Language: when reporting terror" states:

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 judgments. 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 (p.1).

Under the sub-heading: "Value Judgments", the guidelines cautions:

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(p.1)

It is this centrality of language and the media in the reporting of terrorist acts that has inspired the present study as it sought to interrogate how online reporters manipulate the resource of language to construct their experiences of terrorist acts. The study, while following the example of other earlier studies on language use and media reports on terrorism, is a departure from these studies as it concentrates on the online media reports and that provides the gap which the work has come to fill.

Terrorism is a term that has defied a generally acceptable definition. This is because the label connotes different things to different people or institutions. As [1] observes, "terrorism is a pejorative term with an intrinsic negative connotations and is often used adversatively to describe one's opponents or enemies. The meaning of the label therefore depends on whether one has sympathy for or is opposed to the person or group or the cause in question". If one is a sympathizer of the person/ group and their cause, one is more likely to describe or refer to them in such mitigating and less incriminating terms as militants, insurgents, bombers, rebels, etc. On the other hand, if one is opposed to the person/group and their cause, one is more likely to describe them, pejoratively as terrorist. In his work: *Crime, Terrorism or Nightmare: News Representations of the 2011 Norway Attack*, [2] 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 (p.21)

The above, succinctly foregrounds the role of language and the antics of reporters who, in reporting acts of terror may overtly or covertly disclose their divide through what they front, the agency they assign and the participant roles they choose. It is therefore logical to reason that, some news outlets, for some political, religious and ideological reasons, linguistically represent terror and terrorist acts according to their inclinations. This provides a justification for our linguistic investigation of the choices that online media reporters make from the transitivity system in representing the acts perpetrated by the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria.

The study subscribes to [3] explication of terrorism as a deliberate act of creating and exploiting fear through violence and threat of violence against civilian targets in the pursuit of political change. [4] define terrorism as "the premeditated use of threats to use violence by individuals or sub-national groups to obtain political or social objectives through intimidation of a large audience beyond that of the immediate non-combatant victims". In the U.S.A, in Tittle 22, Chapter 38, terrorism is defined as "a premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetuated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents". [5], underlines the psychological and tactical aspects of terrorism when he defined terrorism as "political violence in an asymmetrical conflict that is designed to inflict terror and psychic fear (sometimes indiscriminate) through the violent victimization and destruction of non-combatant targets (sometimes iconic symbols). Such acts are meant to send a message from illicit clandestine organization." Concerning the tactics of terrorist, Bockslette further observes that the purpose of terrorism is to exploit the media to achieve maximum attainable publicity as an amplifying force – multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience(s) and by so doing, achieving their short and medium term political goals. It can be deduced from the above observation that the success of terrorism depends, to a large extent, on the mass media to attract attention, attract reaction and create an aura of terror among the people. As already stated, it is upon this premise that terrorist acts are generally carried out in a way that they will attract maximum publicity that this study is anchored.

In order to differentiate terrorism from other criminals,

[6], identifies some key characteristics that distinguish terrorist acts from other criminal acts as follows:

- (i) Ineluctably political in aims and motives.
- (ii) Violent or, equally important, threatens violence.

- (iii) Designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target.
- (iv) Conducted either by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure ... or by individuals or a small collection of individuals directly influenced, motivated or inspired by the ideology.
- (v) Perpetrated by a sub- national group or a non- state entity. (p. 89).

Boko Haram is an Islamic Jihadist terrorist group that controls territories in the North- East of Nigeria. At times Boko Haram crosses into Chad, Niger and Cameroon thus making their terrorism a transnational one.

The study of terrorism has been an active field of research since the late 1960s. Most of these earlier studies, were carried out in the field of economics, political science, Sociology. They were mostly concerned with the evolution, characteristics and socio- economic effects of terrorism [7], [8] [9]. Studies that focus on the use of language in media reportage of terrorism are scarce. However, in recent times, a few studies have been carried out by scholars in the area of linguistic analysis of terrorist and radical groups [10]; [11]; [12]. It is therefore clear that there is still a paucity of scholarly linguistic investigation of terrorism and the mass media, especially in Nigeria, and that further justifies the present study. This study derives further justification by the fact that the activities of Nigeria's foremost terrorist group – Boko Haram has not been given enough linguistic attention hence our intention in this study to investigate how an online media platform Naija .com, represents the terrorist acts perpetrated by the group.

Terrorism in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, prior to 2009, terrorism was never witnessed in great magnitude. What we had were 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 since then, has continued almost unabated. This group has snowballed into a quagmire for Nigeria, wrecking national havoc. 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 the Shehu Musa Yaradua Centre 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 show that 52,311 children have been made orphans by forcefully being separated from their parents. 54,911 were made widows when they lost their husbands to insurgency in Borno State alone."

Since its inception, there have been attacks and counter attacks particularly in the three north- eastern States of Bauchi, Borno and Yobe. The sect has also claimed responsibilities for attacks in Abuja, the nation's capital.

Reports have it that between July 2009 and May 2010, over 1,000 persons had been killed by the Boko Haram sect in Maiduguri, Bauchi, Potiskum and Wuldi. Then, on 26th August 2011, 21 persons were killed and 73 injured in an attack at the United Nations Building in Abuja. By the end of November 2011, over 150 persons had been killed in Damaturu, the Yobe State capital.

Reports also abound on the bombing of churches and mosques; open parks and even the Force Headquarters to mention but a few. The 2011 Christmas- day bombing at the St Theresa's Catholic Church, Madalla; the 2014 Nyanya Park early morning bombing are still very fresh examples of Boko Haram attacks in our memories.

Newspaper Headlines: Features and Functions.

[13] defines a headline as "a device for describing briefly, in legible type, the most salient point in a story". A headline therefore is a particular medium's index as well as its showcase. The headline is analysable in terms of the key words or their synonyms which are necessary to give an idea of what the story contains. Newspapers use headlines to denote explanatory note, usually a summary that goes with news stories, features, editorials, adverts and so on. It summarises, sells, advertises, indexes, or grades the story. It performs one or a combination of these functions at once. Regarding the functions of headline, [14] lists five main functions of headlines as follows: grade the news, sell the news, summarize the news; help draw readers' attention to the story, and make the entire newspaper/magazine more attractive. He further observes that a good headline must suit the shape of the story, the space available, the mission, the philosophy and ideology of the newspaper/magazine and meet legal and ethical standards.

Every news platform has its house style, therefore, it is difficult to make generalizations about styles of headline. However, a number of linguistic forms have consistently been identified with the domain of headline

writing. Some of these, at the grammatical level and as given by [15], include: The elimination of articles and adjectives as in:

(a) VC Catches Student Cheating in Exam, and not The VC Catches a student in Exam.

(b) Man killed by a hit- and- run driver, and not A fat Man...

(ii) The use of verbs in the active form as in

Buhari to Visit China, and not China to be visited by Buhari.

(iii) Deletion of main verbs as in: Keshi Fit After Incident in Lagos.

(iv) The use of proper nouns when the person involved is popular and can easily be recognized by readers and the use of generic nouns when that is not the case, as in: Obi Attacks UBE.

Varsity Don attacks UBE.

For the purpose of this study, headlines are considered based, not only on the systematic appearance of linguistic forms in the text or the linguistic features characteristic of the text, but also on the linguistic framing of issues and the proliferation of particular points of view that could help in the interpretation of what constitute reality to the general public as well as other linguistic features which enable writers to privilege or suppress certain readings, or certain ways of seeing things. Representation is seen in this work as selecting, presenting, structuring and shaping meaning as opposed to merely transmitting an already existing meaning.

The Metafunctions of Language.

[16] identifies three independent but complementary functions of language which he also calls linguistic metafunctions. They include:

-The Ideational function (language as reflections)

-The Interpersonal function (language as action)

-The Textual function (language as texture, in relation to the environment).

According to [17], each of these metafunctions is about a different aspect of the world and is concerned with a different mode of meaning in the clause.

The ideational function refers to how language is used to organize, understand and express our perceptions of the world and of our own consciousness [18]. 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 and that of our speech community. The ideational metafunction, in other words, concerns itself with how we talk about our actions, reactions, 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. The experiential function refers to the grammatical resources involved in constructing the flux of experience through the unit of the clause. More simply put, it serves for the representation of our external and internal world. The logical function, on the other hand, refers to the grammatical resources for building up grammatical complexes, for instance, for combining two or more clauses into complex clauses [19]. It serves to reflect the relations holding between events and phenomena represented in discourse [20]. Put aptly, while the experiential function is concerned with our ideas of the world the logical function is concerned with the relationship between these ideas.

The interpersonal function refers to how we use language as a tool with which we participate in communicative acts with other people, to take on roles, to express our feelings and understand other people feelings when expressed, and to understand attitudes, judgments and evaluations.

The textual function serves as an instrument for both the ideational and interpersonal functions as it is concerned with the internal organization of the text as well as connecting the text with its situational context [21].

The System of Transitivity:

[22] explains transitivity as the cornerstone of the semantic organization of experience and says “they are semantic categories that explain, in the most general way, how phenomena of our experience of the world are constructed as linguistic structures” [23] He expatiates that the English language structure each experience as a semantic configuration of “Process”, “Participants”

Fowler, echoing [24] 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” [25]. 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 is usually considered to be the property of an entire clause. Clauses represent events and processes of various kinds, and transitivity aims to make clear how the action is performed, by who 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 [26] 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-goal, sayer, sener,
- iii. Circumstances associated with the process: specifying when, how, where and why of the process

[27] identifies six process categories in his system of transitivity. They include:

Material Process:

These are process of “doing”. They express that an entity does something or to be more elaborate, does something to another entity [28]. They include concrete physical events and abstract happenings. They are two inherent participant roles in material process. The “Actor”- which expresses the doer of the process an optional “Goal”- which expresses the person or entity, whether animate or inanimate, affected by the process. Another optional element, “circumstances” captures the circumstances which are peripheral to the process, but which may be associated with them. According to [29], the material clause can be active in which case, there is an explicit goal or passive, in which case, the Goal is suppressed. To test material process, the following questions may be used: what did X do? What happened to X? What did X do to Y? [30].

The following examples illustrate these processes.

Active: John (Actor) kicked (Proc. Mat) the ball (Goal).

John (Actor) hit (process Material) the ball (Goal) very hard (circumstance).

Passive: The ball (Goal) was hit (Process Material) by John (Actor.)

In the material process, a distinction is still being made between “material action process”, when the process is performed by a conscious being, capable of thought, plans and action, and “material action event process”, when the process is performed by an inanimate and inorganic actor that is not capable of conscious thought and planned action. Still within material action process, a further distinction is still made between “material action process- intention, when there is a clear will to do something, and “material action process- supervention”. [6].

Material event process: The car backfired.

Material action process- intention: John kicked the ball.

Material action process- supervention: Mary slipped:

In addition to the two participant roles of Actor and goal in material clauses, Halliday and Matthiessen list other participant roles that that may be involved in Material Process to include: “scope”, ‘Recipient’, and ‘Client/Attribute”.

Examples:

Scope: The supper Eagles has won the final match.

Recipient: They were handed over the cup after the match.

Client: The embassy provided entertainment for the team.

Attribute: The police shot two kidnappers dead during the raid.

Mental Process:

This involves the mental process of sensing. It reflects, not our material world but the world of our consciousness. Mental process involves cognition - encoded in verbs such as thinking, wondering, knowing; reaction/emotion-encoded in verbs like: liking, hating, regretting; perception-encoded in verbs like: seeing, hearing, feeling). Participant roles involved in the mental process are: the “Sensor”- a conscious being that is doing the sensing and the “Phenomenon”- the entity/fact which is sensed, seen, liked etc. Sometimes, the phenomenon may not be there as in “John cannot see”

Examples:

Cognition: Mary (Sensor) understands (Process Mental) the story (Phenomenon).

Perception: The guard (Sensor) noticed (Proc. Mental) the trick (Phenomenon).

Reaction: John (Sensor) detests (Proc. Mental) Pigs (Phenomenon).

Relational Process:

This is concerned with the process of being in the world of abstract relation that exists between two participants but without suggesting that one entity affects the other in any way [9].

In terms of modes: [8] explains that the relationship could be:

- (a) Intensive- expressing an “X is ‘A’ relationship as in,” May is wise”
- (b) Possessive- expressing an “X” has ‘A’ relationship, as in: Mary has a car.
- (c) Circumstantial- expressing an ‘X’ is in/at on ‘A’ relationship as in: John is at home.

According to function, relational processes could be classified according to whether they are being used to identify something as in: “John is the President / The President is John” or to assign a quality to something, as in: “John’s presentation is lively”. When they are used to identify something, they are called Identifying Relational clauses but when they are used to assign quality to something, they are known as Attributive Relational clauses.

Integrating the two modes, we can have the following types of Relational processes with their inherent participant roles as follows:

Intensive Attribute: John (Carrier) is (Process Relational) talented (Attribute) Mary (Carrier) is (Proc. Rel) Wise (Attribute)

Intensive Identifying: John (Token) is (Proc.Rel) the President (value).

The President (Value) is (Proc. Rel.) John (Token).

Circumstantial Attribute: The President (Carrier) is (Proc. Rel) at home (Attribute).

Circumstantial Identifying: Yesterday (Token) is (Proc. Rel) the fifth (value).

The fifth (Value) is (Proc. Rel) yesterday (Token)

Possessive Attributive: John (Carrier) owns (Proc.Rel) a car (Attribute)

Possessive Identifying: The Car (Token) is (Proc. Rel) John’s (Value)

John’s Car (Value) is (Proc. Rel.) that car (Token.).

Behavioural Process:

Behavioural process sits at the boundaries between material and mental processes and as such, the processes it construes are partly material and partly mental as they represent both the activities of doing and states of sensing [13].

They list five sub-types of behavioural processes to include:

(i) Processes of consciousness, represented as forms of behaviour: (look, stare, watch, listen, think, worry, dream).

(ii) Near verbal processes as forms of behaviour: (charter, grumble, talk, gossip, argue, murmur, mouth).

(iii) Physiological processes, manifesting states of consciousness: (cry, laugh, smile, frown, sigh, sob, snarl, hiss, nod, and whine).

(iv) Other physiological processes: (breathe, sneeze, cough, hiccup, vomit, faint, yawn, sleep) (v) Near material processes involving bodily postures and pastimes (dance, sing, lie (down), sit (up)).

They add that behavioural process is specifically associated with certain circumstances that affect matter and group conveyed through prepositional phrases (dreaming of you, I am talking to you, smiling on me, grumbled about the food) and manner of the processes (breathe deeply cry loudly etc).

There is only one participant role involved in behavioural process, the “Behaver” – the conscious entity who is behaving whose role is also very much like that of the Sensor in the mental process.

Examples:

The students (Behaver) fall asleep (Proc. Behavioural) in the hall (Circumstance).

She (Behaver) cried (Proc. Beh) at the mess (Circumstance).

She (Behaver) gave (Proc. Beh) a faint sigh (range).

Verbal Process;

This is a process of “saying” or the exchange of any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning. The word saying extends to any kind of exchange of meaning as the speaker must not be a conscious being. The verbal process exists on the borderline between mental and relational processes [19]. The participant roles consist of an obligatory “Sayer”- which could be a conscious being or anything that has the ability of exchanging meaning or information; the “Receiver” – the entity to whom the saying is directed – could be a human being, a group or an institution; could also be in the subject position of a passive clause, the “Verbiage”- what is said- could construe the content, topic or the even; the “Target”- the entity that is targeted by the process; could be a person, an object, or an abstraction.

Examples: The report (Sayer) says (Process Verbal) that there is an accident (Verbiage)

The booklet (Sayer) tells (Proc. Verbal) you (Target) how to find a job (Verbiage) .

She (Sayer) Praised (Proc. Verbal.) Him (Target) .

Tell (Proc. Verbal) the court (Receiver) the whole truth (verbiage).

Existential Process.

This represents that something exists or happens. [15]. It exists in the borderline between the relational and the material processes.

The existential clause typically begins with “there” or with the verb exist and such verbs as: happen, arise, flourish, ensure, remain, occur, come about, follow, emerge, grow, erupt, etc. [18].

“There”, in this context is a dummy subject as it is neither a participant nor a circumstance and only serves to indicate the feature of existence. There is only one participant involved in existential process – the “Existent”- the phenomena, entity or event, which is said to exist. It could be a person, an object, institution, action, or event.

Examples:

There was (Process Existential) an assault and a phone call (Existent.).

There is (Proc. Exist) a robbery (Existent) in the street (Circumstance).

Life (Existent) exists (Proc. Exist) in this place (Circumstance.)

Culled from [4].

Source of Data.

The data used for the research were sourced from news headlines of NAIJ.COM. Naij.com was founded in 2012, and has its headquarters in Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria. It 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 websites 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.COM has overtaken Sahara Reporters and other online news sites. It is the perceived popularity of this news platform that informed our choice of source of data.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings:

The data for the present study consists of 20 headline news reports which were conveyed in a total of 32 clauses with various transitivity patterns. The analysis consists of breaking down the selected headlines into clauses and then proceeding to identify the process types, the participants and the circumstances associated with the processes. The headlines are categorized, for the purpose of analysis, into those that report the terrorist acts of the Boko Haram terrorists, those that report the counter-terrorist reaction of the Nigerian security forces and other actions that were not accredited to any conscious being. Each segment is outlined and discussed below:

Representations of Terrorist Acts of Boko Haram:

HL1: BOKO HARAM INSURGENTS HIT BORNU AGAIN, KILL SEVERAL, ABDUCT 10:

CL1- Boko Haram insurgents (Actor) hit (Proc. Mat) Borno (Goal) again (Circumstance)

CL2- Kill (Proc. Mat) several (Goal)

CL3- Abduct (Proc. Mat) 10 (Goal)

HL2: SUICIDE BOMBER KILLS 10 PEOPLE IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA'S POTISKUM

CL4- Suicide bomber (Actor) Kills (Proc. Mat) 10 People (Goal) in Northeast Nigeria's Potiskum (Circumstance)

HL3: BOKO HARAM INSURGENTS ATTACK NORTHEAST NIGERIA'S CAPITAL CITY.

CL5- Boko Haram insurgents (Actor) Attack (Proc. Mat) Northeast Nigeria's Capital City (Circumstance)

HL4: SUSPECTED SUICIDE BOMBERS KILL AT LEAST 11 IN NIGERIA'S BORNO STATE

CL6- Suspected suicide bombers (Actor) kill (Proc. Mat) at least 11 (Goal) in Nigeria's Borno state (Circumstance).

HL5: BOKO HARAM SEPARATE ATTACKS KILL 21 IN NORTHEAST NIGERIA

CL7- Boko Haram separate attacks (Actor) kill (Proc. Mat) 21 (Goal) in Northeast Nigeria (Circumstance).

HL6: FEMALE SUICIDE BOMBER KILLS 13 IN NIGERIAN BUS STATION.

CL8- Female Suicide bomber (Actor) kills (Proc. Mat) 13 (Goal) in Nigerian bus station (Circumstance).

HL7: Six DEAD IN BOKO HARAM'S DOUBLE SUICIDE ATTACK.

CL9- Six (behavior) dead (Proc. Beh.) in Boko Haram's attack (cir).

HL8: 8 SOLDIERS DEAD, SEVERAL REPORTED MISSING AS BOKO MILITARY CAMP IN BORNU

CL10- 8 soldiers (Behavior) dead (Proc. Behavioural)

CL11 - Several (Verbrage) reported (Proc. Verbal) missing (Attribute 8)

- HL9: BOKO HARAM TERRORISTS ATTACKS MILITARY CAMP IN BORNU
CL12- Boko Haram terrorists (Actor) attack (Proc. Mat) military camp (Goal) in Borno (Circumstance).
HL10: BOKO HARAM LAUNCHES FRESH ATTACKS IN ADAMAWA
CL13 - Boko Haram (Actor) launches (Proc. Mat) fresh attacks (scope) in Adamawa (Circumstance).
HL11: MANY FEARED DEAD AS BOKO HARAM BOMBERS ATTACK MAIDUGURI
CL14- Many (Sensor) feared (Proc. Mental) dead (Phenomenon)
CL15- Boko Haram bombers (Actor) attack (Proc. Mat) Maiduguri (Goal).

Our analysis shows that, in this segment, the terrorist acts of the Boko Haram sect was reported in 11 headlines (HL1- 11) that were composed of 15 independent clauses. The transitivity structures of the clauses are distributed as follows: Material Process - 11; Behavioural Process - 02; Mental Process – 01 and Verbal Process– 01. It thus reveals a preponderance of material process of Actor – goal configuration. The Material process represents events and actions by showing clearly, how events happened or how the actions are performed by whom, and on what .The choice of material processes here is strategic as it imbues the reports with objectivity and clarity. It provides the reporters with a frame to construe the deeds or events, the actors, who are responsible for them, the entities affected by them, and even the spatial, temporal circumstances that, most times, are associated with the deeds or events. The eleven material process clauses in this segment of the text: (CL-1 to 6, 9 10,13,and 15) were cast in the active voice thus drawing attention to the Actor by making it the first element of the clause and shifting the Goal towards the end of the clause. In fact they are Material action process intention types with conscious beings that are capable of planned action as Actors. This places considerable emphasis on the Actors –the Boko Haram terrorist- who are responsible for the terrorist acts.

The contrast between operative (active voice) and receptive (passive voice) is highly significant in message framing. In Material processes that represent processes of doing and happening, they convey the notion that an entity ‘does’ something to some other entity. So, such processes can be probed with the questions; ‘what did the Actor do to the Goal?’ or what happened to the Goal? Extending this to the present study will clearly show Boko Haram as Actor, doing something to some entities as can be seen below.

Boko Haram insurgents (actor) **hit**- Bornu (Goal), **kill**, Several (Goal); **abduct** 10(Goal). –HL1

Suicide bombers (Actor) **kills** 10 people (Goal). –HL2

Boko Haram insurgents (Actor) **attack** northeast Nigeria (Goal) - HL3

Suspected Boko Haram Bombers (Actor) **kill** 11 (Goal) HL4

Boko Haram separate attacks (Actor) **kill** 21 (Goal).-HL5

Female suicide bomber (Actor) **kills** 13 (Goal). – HL6

Boko Haram terrorists (Actor) **attack** military camp (Goal). HL9.

Boko Haram bombers (Actor) **attack** Maiduguri (Goal). –CL-15.

The clauses are also predominated by ordinator and indefinite pronominal as Goals. This also confers brevity and explicitness to the reports.

Boko Haram insurgents hit Bornu ... kill **several** (Goal 10; abduct **10** (goal). HL1(CL2 and 3).

Suspected Boko haram bomber (Actor) kill **11** (Goal). HL4.

Boko Haram separate attacks kill **21** (Goala). HL5

Female suicide bomber kills **13** (Goal). HL6.

The circumstantial elements found in these material clauses are also characteristics of stories, narratives and news reports as they strategically manipulated the temporal, spatial and manner circumstances in framing their news. Temporal and spatial circumstances in such texts are usually used to signal the time and location of the actions or events. The preponderant use of spatial circumstance makes the reports to be more objective, specific and credible and is also suggestive of the spread, consistency and frequency of the activity of Boko haram. It seems to lead the readers to the interpretation that Boko Haram strikes can take place at any location of the country, including the nation’s capital city.

The only verbal process in this segment is CL. 11:” Several, **reported** missing”. This illustrates the tendency of news reporters to use verbal processes to attribute their reports to other sources.

HL7 (CL -14) and HL8(CL10) are behavioural processes used to represent physiological effects that result from the acts of terror. “Six **Dead**”, “8 soldiers, **dead**”.

HL11 (CL-14) is a mental process of representing our inner experience in terms of our perception, emotion and imagination of the activities of terrorists. The use of mental process by the reporters strategically serves to mitigate or hedge the truth -condition of the news as the reporter may not be sure of the truth of the condition of the victims of the acts of terror he is reporting.

Representations of Counter - Terrorist Reactions of the Nigerian Security Forces:

HL12: ARMY KILLS DOZENS OF BOKO HARAM, RECUES 6 YEAR OLD

CL16 - Army (Actor) kills (Proc. Mat) dozens of Boko Haram (Goal)

- CL17: Recues (Proc. Mat) 6 year old (Goal)
HL13: NIGERIAN AIRFORCE DESTROYS BOKO HARAM BUILDINGS IN SAMBISA FOREST, NEUTRALIZES MASS GATHERING OF FIGHTERS.
CL18- Nigerian Airforce (Actor) destroys (Proc. Mat) Boko Haram buildings (Goal) in Sambisa forest (Circumstance).
CL19-Neutralizes (Proc. Mat) mass gathering of fighters (Goal).
HL14: TROOPS KILL MANY BOKO HARAM TERRORISTS IN AMBUSH RECOVER WEAPONS.
CL20- Troops (Actor) Kill (Proc. Mat) many Boko Haram terrorists (Goal)
CL21- Recover (Proc. Mat) weapons (Goal).
HL15: ARMY SAVES THE DAY AS BOKO HARAM ATTACKS FOR THE SECOND TIME.
CL22- Army (Actor) saves (Proc. Mat) the day (Goal)
CL23- Boko Haram (Actor) attacks (Proc. Mat) for the second time (circumstance).
HL16: SOLDIERS LAUNCH DEADLY ATTACKS AGAINST BOKO HARAM IN LATEST OPERATION
CL24-Soldiers (Actor) launch (Proc. Mat) deadly Attacks (Scope) against Boko Haram (Recipient) in latest operation (Circumstance).
HL17: NIGERIAN TROOPS DELIVERS LETHAL BLOW AGAINST BOKO HARAM INSURGENTS, KILL 11, RESCUES 85 HOSTAGES.
CL25- Nigerian troops (Actor) delivers (Proc. Mat) lethal blow (Scope) Against Boko Haram (Recipients) in Bornu (circumstance)
CL26- kill (Proc. Mat) 11 (Goal)
CL27- Rescues (Proc. Mat) 85 Hostages (Goal).
HL18: FOUR DIE AS SOLDIERS DISCOVER BOMB FACTORY IN YOBE
CL28- Four (Behaver) die (Proc. Beh).
CL29- Soldiers (Actor) discover (Proc. Mat) bomb factory (Goal) in Yobe (Circumstance).

Discussion:

Our analysis, in this segment, shows a deliberate and predominant use of material processes in reporting the counter terrorist reactions of the Nigerian security agents. This choice is strategic as the reporters strive to portray the Nigerian security agencies as an all action agency who is capable of confronting and countering the Boko haram Terrorists, action to action. A total of 7 headlines, deployed in 13 material action intention clauses were used. These material processes, used in representing acts of terror, have the same Actor-Goal and (circumstances) configuration with the material processes used in reporting acts of terror. The difference is in the ‘who’ that plays the participant role of the ‘Actor’ responsible for the action, and the role of the ‘Goal’ or the affected, that is affected by the action. In this case, it is the Nigerian security agents, who are the conscious actors, who perform the actions, that were placed at the subject position of these clauses as Actor while the Boko Haram set, was placed in the object position as Goal (the affected, sufferer and victims).

Again, unlike the representations of the acts of terror performed by the Boko Haram, there are a few instances where the reporters used spatial circumstance to indicate the location of the actions or events. However, the Sambisa forest is the only spatial circumstance associated with the Boko Haram in “Nigerian Airforce destroys Boko Haram Building in **Sambisa Forest**” (Circumstance)’ – HL13 (CL18). Nevertheless, there is evidence of the use of circumstantial elements of manner and that of frequency in the data which is perhaps used to signal the tactical supremacy and consistency of the Nigerian security agencies as in “Boko Haram attacks. **For the second time**” HL15 (CL23); Soldiers delivers lethal blow... **in latest attack**.

Representations of Acts Not Attributed to Conscious Beings:

- HL18: TWIN EXPLOSION KILL FIVE IN GOMBE
CL30- Twin explosion (Actor) kill (Proc. Mat.) five (Goal) in Gombe (Circumstance)
HL19: CAR BOMB EXPLODES IN NIGERIA’S GOMBE AFTER JONATHAN’S RALLY
CL31- Car Bomb (Actor) explodes (Proc. Mat) in Nigeria’s Gombe after Jonathan’s Rally (Circumstance)
HL20- BOMBER DIES IN BORNO
CL32- Bomber (Behaver) dies (Proc. Beh) in Borno (Circumstance)

II. DISCUSSION

In this segment, the reporters chose to select process types that do not directly attribute the responsibility of the acts of terror to Boko Haram. Following up the “what or ‘who’ does ‘what’ to ‘whom’ or ‘what’ axiomatic transitivity question, will readily reveal that the Actors in this process types are inanimate and inorganic and unconscious beings that are incapable of planned thought and action. HL18-CI 30 is a material clause that expresses an action process of the superintention type where “twin explosion” could best be regarded as

a Medium through which the Boko Haram carried out their act. HL 19- CL31 is a material process that expresses an event process of the supervention type, where the events are presented as ones that just happened. To report the fatal effects of the activities of Boko Haram on their victims, a Behavioural process, which represents physiological states was used in HL20(CL32). The reports also were embellished with temporal and spatial circumstances to account for the objectivity and specificity of the reports. Thus, 'in Gombe', 'after Jonathan's rally' and in Bornu gives credence and clarity to the reports.

III. CONCLUSION

Our analysis has shown that reporters use words and sentences to create the shades of meaning they want. Transitive patterns provide news reporters with the frame to project, or foreground certain aspects of the message while obfuscating another and by so doing, steer the reader to a predetermined interpretation. It is therefore not necessarily the events or the actions that constitute the news but the reporter's perspective to it and that is also what shapes the opinion of the reader or the public. The data of this study constitute of reports of terrorist acts and counter terrorism reactions and that explains the preponderance of Material Processes in the reports. Material processes represent processes of doing and happening and convey the notion that an entity 'does' something to some other entity. So, such processes can be probed with the questions; 'what did the Actor do to the Goal?' or what happened to the Goal? This strategy is appropriate as it makes the reports to be clear, vivid and detailed.

The reports are also embellished with predominating temporal, spatial and manner circumstantial details that can properly inform the reader and, at same time, manipulate the reader to certain interpretations and reactions. The other process types found in the data are not significant in terms of frequency. The verbal process, 2 instances, were used as frames to enable the reporters to attribute information they are not sure of, to other sources.

Finally, the study has succeeded in showing that the transitivity system shows how clauses represent actions, events and processes of various kinds and helps to expose the actors/agents, goals/affected and the inherent circumstances that surround them. By representation is meant that news reporters, not merely transmit an already existing meaning, but also tactfully select, frame and structure words and sentences to make them mean what they want them to mean.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Bloor, T. and Bloor, M.C (2004). *The Functional Analysis of English*. London: Hodder Education.
- [2]. Bockstette, C. (2008). *Jihadist Terrorist use of Strategic Communication Management Techniques*. [Online] <http://www.marshalculture.org.../on/nav-publication-occasional-papers-en.html>. Accessed: July, 22.2019.
- [3]. Enders, W. & Sandler, T. (2012). *The Political Economy of Terrorism (2nd Ed.)* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [4]. Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and Power*. New York: Longman Group UK Limited.
- [5]. Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and Power*. London: Longman.
- [6]. Fairclough, N. (2002). *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research*. London: Routledge.
- [7]. Fowler, R. (1986). *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- [8]. Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge.
- [9]. Gee, J. P. (2005). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. London: Routledge.
- [10]. Hall, S. (1997). *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage.
- [11]. Halliday and Matthessien (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London and New York: Routledge.
- [12]. Halliday, C. (1987). *Language as a Social Semiotic*. London: Arnold.
- [13]. Halliday, M.A.K. (1973). *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- [14]. Halliday, M.A.K. (1981). *Explorations in the Function of Language*. London: Arnold.
- [15]. Halliday, M.A.K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold.
- [16]. Halliday, M.A.K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar (2nd ed.)*. London: Arnold.
- [17]. Hodges, Adams (2011). *The war on Terror Narrative: Discourse Intertextuality in the Construction and Contestation of Socio-political Reality*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [18]. Hoffman, B. (2006). *Inside Terrorism*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.
- [19]. Hopper, S. Thompson. (1980). *Transitivity in Grammar and Discourse*. *Language*. 56. 2. 251-299.
- [20]. Lock, G. (1996). *Functional English Grammar: An Introduction for Second Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- [21]. Markkula, S. (2011). *Crime, Terrorism or Nightmare News Representation of the 2011 Norway Hacks: An Unpublished M.A Thesis University of Jyvaskyla*.

- [22]. Naftali, T. (2006). *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counter terrorism*. New York: Basic Books
- [23]. Okoye, I. (2000). *Newspaper Printing and Publication in the Computer Age*. Lagos: Mgboyi and Associates.
- [24]. Ong'onda, N. (2016) Transitivity analysis of newspaper headlines on terrorism attack in Kenya: a case study of westgate mall, Nairobi. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* . 6, 7. 54-68.
- [25]. RAND (2012) RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents. ([http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism incidents.html](http://www.rand.org/nsrd/projects/terrorism%20incidents.html)).
- [26]. Shafeer, V.U. (2012). *Studies of Headlines in Newspaper*. Retrieved from www.indiastudychannels.com
- [27]. Todd, Sandler (2015). *Terrorism and Counter Terrorism: An Overview*. *Oxford Economic Paper*, 67,1.1-20.
- [28]. Van Dijk, T. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11. 2. 115–40.
- [29]. War, Terror and Emergencies- BBC Editorial Guidelines-section. [Online] <http://www.bbc.com/editorial/guidelines/guidelines/war-terror-emergencies>. Accessed: July,2017.
- [30]. Zalman, A. (2007). How Militancy is made: the Case of Pakistan Bombings. <http://terrorism.about.com/od/usforeignpolicy/a/pakistaniboming.htm>.>2007, May 16.