Review

Language and Ideology in the Media: A Study of Nigerian Newspaper Editorials

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This paper examines the use of processes in the editorials of Nigerian print media to achieve a meaningful and effective communication. The paper derives its theoretical framework from Halliday's (1994) and Eggin's (2004) Systemic Functional Linguistic theory, with a focus on the ideational metafunction. The study specifically identifies and categorise the types of processes that help in the realisation of the messages of the selected editorials. The messages are interpreted according to the identified process options and related to the ideological opinions expressed in the editorials. The study reveals that editorials help to articulate a better understanding of the news media and the unique use of language and text. It further reveals that editorials express different process types, which are used to describe or make references to authorities in the nation, citizens, social bodies, political and social values, education, unemployment, the economy and the world as a whole. It also revealed that editors use these process types in editorials to make appeal to relevant authorities to proffer solutions to certain problems. The paper concludes that the systemic functional linguistic (SFL) analytical framework makes it possible for the readers of editorials to bring out deeper nuances of meaning from the editorials.

Keywords: Editorials, Systemic Functional Linguistic, Transitivity, Ideology, Media, Communication

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Editorials are public, mass communicated types of opinion discourse par excellence. Editorials are not only found in newspapers, they are also found in magazines, periodicals, journals, among others. According to Akpan (2000), editorials are probably the widest circulated opinion discourses of society, whether or not all readers of the newspaper read them daily. Their influence may not so much be based on massive popular influence, as rather on their influence on the elites.

The next point to be stressed, therefore, is the fact that editorial opinion is generally institutional, and not personal. Even when written by a single editor, editorials count as the opinion of the newspaper (Van Dijk, 1996). This means that they will generally be shared among several editors, or between editors and management, or between editors and other social groups they belong to. Important, therefore, is the realization that whatever specific opinions about specific events are being

formulated, they will tend to be derived from social representations, rather than from the personal experiences or opinions of an editor.

According to Akpan (2000), this socio-cognitive foundation of editorials also shows in their structures: First person pronouns and stories about personal experiences will be quite rare in them. On the contrary, editorials are impersonal, focus on public (news) events, and support general (social, economic, cultural or political) opinions, usually shared by other elites. Also other elements of style will mark this institutional, public, more or less formal properties of the context, e.g., in the selection of lexical items, syntactic structures and modes of argumentation (Ukonu, 2005).

An Editorial, by way of definition, is a corporate voice or position of a media organization on any given issue of public interest (Afolabi, 2012). The editorial is also known as the leader. The two synonymous terms, according to Duyile (2005:63), are the "opinion of the newspaper simply written for the understanding of readers, leading them to take decisions on the issues being discussed".

Throwing more light on the issue of editorial or leader, Duyile (2005) describes it as the explanatory texts, the opinions of the newspaper on any topic. Duyile (2005) also defines editorial as a "comment or an argument in support of a particular policy, an action, or an idea whether expressed or latent. It can be an argument exhibiting the logical reasoning of the newspaper using the thoughts of the proprietor for the purpose of persuading the readers (audience) to kick against an idea, policy or an action based on facts available."

Okoro and Agbo (2003:125) consider editorial as "a critical evaluation, interpretation and presentation of significant, contemporary events in such a way as to inform, educate, entertain and influence the reader". Hoffman (2007:113) defines editorial as a "statement of opinion from an editor or publisher about you and your business". Daramola (1999) defines an editorial as a journalistic essay which attempts to inform or explain, persuade or convince and stimulate insight in an entertaining or humorous manner.

Daramola (1999) views the subject matter as a presentation of facts and opinion in concise, logical, pleasing order for the sake of entertaining or interpreting significant news in such a way that its importance to the average reader will be clear.

From the definitions so far examined, it is clear that an editorial is based on expression or corporate opinion. It interprets issues from a deeper perspective and entertains the average reader with its substance and depth of analysis. According to Ukonu (2005), a good editorial must be plain and unambiguous, always be exact, be rich in human interest, be catchy and attention arresting, be original in tone and substance, be well-researched, and be based on concrete facts, not speculations.

The aim of the study is to examine process types in selected Nigerian newspaper editorials. The study specifically identifies and categorise the types of processes that help in the realisation of the messages of the editorials. The messages are interpreted according to the identified process options and related to the ideological opinions expressed in the editorials.

Theoretical Concepts of SFL

Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is an approach to linguistics that considers language as a system. It was developed by Michael Halliday. Halliday incorporates two central dimensions of language. The term 'systemic' foregrounds Saussure's paradigmatic axis' in understanding how language works. In other words, for Halliday, a central theoretical principle is that any act of communication involves choices on many scales. The choices can be mapped using the representation tool of the 'system network'. In addition, his linguistics is termed 'functional', because it has evolved in the service of 'certain functions' that have left their mark on the structure and organisation of language.

Thus, Halliday (1994) notes that the term *systemic* refers to the view of language as a network of systems, or interrelated sets of options for making meaning. The term *functional* refers to Halliday's view that language is as it is because of what it has evolved to do. In other words, SFL is the study of the relationship between language and its functions in social settings. Systemic Functional Linguistics treats grammar as a meaning-making resource and insists on the interrelation of form and meaning.

Chapelle (1998) observes that Systemic Functional Linguistics is a study of functions and semantics which is claimed to be the basis of human language and communicative activity. As opposed to structural approaches that focus primarily on syntax, SFL-oriented linguists begin with an exploration into social contexts and move on from there to look at how language acts upon, and is constrained and influenced by this social context. Halliday (2003) also describes grammar as systems and not as rules on the basis that every grammatical structure involves a choice from a describable set of options. Language is thus a *meaning potential*. Grammarians in SF tradition use system networks to map the available options in a language.

SFL considers language as a semantic layout of meanings that are generally bound up with a particular context. According to Wang (2010), language cannot be separated from either its speakers or its context. The non-congruent ways of encoding language are referred to as Grammatical Metaphor (GM) (Halliday, 1985, 1994;

Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999). Thus, GM is a resource that language utilizes to encapsulate information by conveying concepts in an incongruent form which is very worthwhile in scientific genres as a way of expressing *objectification* and *abstraction* (Kazemian, Behnam, & Ghafoori, 2013). Halliday (1994) further categorized GM into Ideational Grammatical metaphor (IGM) and interpersonal Grammatical metaphor, which IGM includes process types and nominalization.

An Overview of the Metafunctions

Kazemian & Hashemi (2014a) observe that grammatical metaphor can be recognized in terms of the metafunctions. Halliday (1994) refers to his functions of language as metafunctions. He proposes three general functions: the *ideational*, the *interpersonal* and the *textual*. Each of the three metafunctions is about a different aspect of the world, and is concerned with a different mode of meaning of clauses. In each metafunction, an analysis of a clause gives a different kind of structure composed from a different set of elements. In the ideational metafunction, a clause is analysed into *Process, Participants* and *Circumstances*, with different participant types for different process types. In the interpersonal metafunction, a clause is analysed into *Mood* and *Residue*, with the mood element further analysed into *Subject* and *Finite*. In the textual metafunction, a clause is analysed into *Theme* and *Rheme*. The ideational metafunction is described briefly below.

Ideational Metafunction

The ideational metafunction is about the natural world in the broadest sense, including our own consciousness, and is concerned with clauses as *representations* (Eggins, 2004, Halliday, 1994). The ideational metafunction is the function for construing human experience. It is the means by which we make sense of "reality" (Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014b). Halliday (1994) divides the ideational function into two functions: the logical and the experiential metafunctions. The logical metafunction refers to the grammatical resources for building up grammatical units into complexes, for instance, for combining two or more clauses into a clause complex. The experiential function refers to the grammatical resources involved in construing the flux of experience through the unit of the clause.

This study is focusing on the experiential function alone as presented by Eggins (2004). According to Eggins (2004), the experiential metafunction, also called 'Clause as Representation', is the clause that represents the 'content' of our experiences, answering the question

'Who does what to whom'. This metafunction uses the grammatical system of transitivity. Although sharing the traditional view of transitivity that the focus is on the verb group (the Process), the system describes the whole clause (Thompson, 1994) and does not use the labels 'subject', 'verb' and 'object', seeing that 'verb' is a word class, while 'Subject' is a functional term. Instead, different functional labels are given to *Participants (realised by nominal groups)*, *Processes* (realised by verbal groups) and *Circumstances (*realised by prepositional phrases or adverbials signifying time, place or manner) of each process type.

Halliday (1994) calls the function 'experiential' in that it is concerned with the clause in its experiential function, its guise as a way of representing patterns of experience. Language enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of what goes on around them and inside them. This is the function of language with which we represent the world to ourselves and others, with which we reflect our experience of the world, with which we construct ideas about the world. Thus: representational, experiential, ideational meaning.

This function of language takes us to the heart of the status of language as 'social semiotic', a cornerstone of Halliday's theory. While the textual and interpersonal functions of language are also deeply implicated in how language creates social meanings, it is probably easiest for us to see this power of language in the experiential function. As Halliday (1994) says, it is what ordinary people (non-linguists) usually have in mind when they say something about what a piece of language 'means' (the idea of the world or some part of it represented in that piece of language).

There are three basic elements to all process structures - the process itself, the participants in the process, and the circumstances associated with the process. Halliday (1994) distinguishes six process types:

1. *Material* (i.e., what is going on outside oneself)
2. *Mental* (i.e., inner experience—awareness of our own states of being and reaction to our outer experience)
3. *Relational* (i.e., classifying and identifying one experience with other experiences).
4. *Verbal (*i.e., symbolic relationships are recognized and constructed in human consciousness)
5. *Behavioural (*i.e., expressing of inner workings)
6. *Existential (*i.e., phenomena are recognized to exist or to happen)

In summary, in analysing transitivity structure in a clause, we are concerned with describing three aspects of the clause:

1.   The selection of a process, which is realised in the verbal group of the clause;

2.   The selection of participants, which is realised in the nominal groups; and

3.   The selection of circumstances, which are realised through adverbial groups or prepositional phrases.

However, this study focuses on the process aspect (verbal group) alone.

METHODOLOGY

This study is both quantitative and qualitative. As a quantitative research, the study has a more logical and data-led approach which provides a measure of data analysis from a statistical and numerical point of view. The study largely uses a method of surveys which are measured in number of frequency and percentages. This made the study flexible and ensures that we have a greater range of reliable data. Quantitative analysis also allowed us to answer the research questions listed in chapter one.

As a qualitative research, the study focused on the ideological opinions expressed in the texts. This involves examining how people (editors and concerned citizens) feel, what they think and why they make certain choices as certain events unfold.

The editorials focused on different themes including transportation, education, economy, unemployment, health, legislation and judiciary. Each editorial is broken down into clauses. They are also categorised as active and passive sentences. These categorisations enable us to know which sentence or clause can be analysed and which can't be analysed based on the process type, participant and circumstantial options. Only the main clauses in each sentence are analysed.

Data Analysis

Seven texts were selected for analysis in this study. The texts are labelled T1 (Text 1), T2 (Text 2), T3 (Text 3), T4 (Text 4), T5 (Text 5), T6 (Text 6), T7 (Text 7) respectively. In the course of this study, the texts are captioned T1 … T7. Each sentence (main clause) in each text has also been numbered. Consequently, for example, Text 1 Sentence 1 will be described as 'T1, S1'.

The study focuses on the simple sentences (main clauses) in the texts alone. There are 26 sentences in Text 1 titled, Highway Rule 15, with 27 main clauses. The text is predominantly of the simple sentence type. Text 2: Nigeria's Unknown Unemployed has 36 sentences with 49 main clauses. Text 3: Size of Corruption is made up of 26 sentences with 31 main clauses. Text 4: Oaths, Oath-

Takers has 17 sentences with 19 main clauses. Text 5: Nigerian Women and Cervical Cancer has 27 sentences with 30 main clauses. Text 6: Judiciary and the Anti-Graft War has 21 sentences and 21 main clauses. Text 7: The CBN Cap on Lending is made up of 24 sentences with 27 main clauses.

Identification and Categorisation of Process Types

As this Table 1 shows, relational processes (50.9%) are dominant in most of the texts (T2, T3, T4, and T5). T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5 use a high proportion of relational (attributive) processes, with T2 and T3 having the highest number. This indicates that T2 and T3 are descriptive and concerned with describing participants. Relational (identifying) processes are also well used. Their use in T1, T2, T3, T4, and T5, though not significant, indicates that the texts are also concerned with defining participants. However, there is only one occurrence of Relational (Possessive) process, which is in T2.

Material process (41.6%) also has a high frequency in the texts. This indicates that most of the texts (4 of the 7 texts) are concerned with actions and events and the participants who carry them out or who are expected to carry them out. These texts are, thus, predominantly about tangible, physical actions.

The verbal, mental, existential and behavioural processes are used sparingly in the texts. Verbal process (2.9%) is used in T1, T4, T5 and T7, with T1 having the highest use (3) and the rest having one occurrence each. This indicates that the texts are not really concerned with words or speaking but actions and description of events (problems or national issues).

The use of existential process (1.4%) in T1, T2 and T6 suggests that these actions are sometimes framed as taking place within settings which are asserted simply as existing. However, its use is not significant in the texts. The use of mental processes (2.4%) in T1, T4, T5 and T7 suggests that conscious cognition is also required in the process of resolving the issues raised in the texts. There is only one occurrence of behavioural process (0.4%).

Interpretation of Content of Process Options

In this section, the content expressed by the options are interpreted and related to the opinions expressed in the texts.

A. Material Process

Many clauses in the texts describe processes of doing concrete, tangible actions. Consider the following examples:

Table 1. Process Options in Newspaper Editorials

S/N	Process Type	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5	Text 6	Text 7	Total	% 100
1.	Material	13	14	10	06	12	11	19	85	41.6
2.	Mental	01	0	0	01	01	0	02	05	2.4
3.	Verbal	03	0	0	01	01	0	01	06	2.9
4.	Behavioural	0	01	0	0	0	0	0	01	0.4
5.	Existential	01	01	0	0	0	01	0	03	1.4
6.	Relational	09	33	21	11	16	09	05	104	50.9
	Total	**27**	**49**	**31**	**19**	**30**	**21**	**27**	**204**	

Example 1
1. … we treated it as a national emergency … (T1, S9)
2. Their compliance with the law saved the heavy build up of traffic on the highways … (T1, S15)

The processes 'treated' and 'saved' describe processes of doing, telling us about the rate of road accidents in Nigeria, its effects on Nigerians and the effectiveness of highway rules in Nigeria.

Example 2
1. … he had to adopt an "anecdotal figure" of 40 million … (T2, S3)
2. … unemployment affects the entire economy … (T2, S14)
3. The global economic meltdown has caused job losses in many countries … (T2, S17)

The material processes 'adopt', 'has caused', 'affects' describe processes of doing, telling us the role certain people and events have played in the battle against unemployment in Nigeria.

Example 3
1. The prosecution has worsened matters. (T3, S21)
2. Corruption thrives … (T3, S24)

The material processes 'has worsened' and 'thrives' describe processes of doing. These acts of doing also make us understand the message of the text further. They reveal that there is no sector of the country's life that is exempted from corrupt practices and this should worry all those who have the interest of the country at heart. They also emphasize that the prosecution has worsened the matter. They make us understand that corruption thrives because those engaged in it are no loser, they are the nation's greatest statesmen.

Example 4
1. … the owners of the pictures have admitted … (T4, S2)

2. The Constitution … prescribes two oaths in the Seventh Schedule … (T4, S11)
3. Each state legislature swears or affirms thus … (T4, S14)

In text 4, the material processes 'have admitted, 'prescribes', and 'swears' describe processes of doing. Their actions realise the message that the nude pictures of some members of the Ogun State House of Assembly published in the papers truly belong to the owners and the owners had sworn to an oath different from the one in the constitution.

B.   Relational Process

1.   Relational Attributive Options

Some relational clauses are of the attributive type.

Example 1
1. It is an offence … (TI, S1)
2. The road remains uncompleted (T1, S22)
3. A starting point could be education of road users (T1, S25)

The processes '*is*', '*remains*' and '*could be*' describe the events that relate to High Way Rule 15 which realise the message that it is an offence for a large and slow moving vehicle to allow smaller or fast moving vehicles queue behind it whenever the driver can pull over safely to make way for other vehicles. Additionally, the Federal Government awards contract for the expansion of roads, but the roads remain uncompleted. As a result of this, the education of road users and enforcement of provisions like Rule 15 could reduce road accidents to the barest minimum.

Example 2
1. That honest admission is commendable … (T2, S2).
2. The minister's anecdotal figure is depressing … (T2, S8).

3. … its social cost <u>is</u> also high (T2, S12).

The excerpts above show how relational attributive processes help to realise the message of text 2. The text is about Nigeria's unknown unemployed labour, and productivity minister admitted that Nigeria has no accurate figure of its unemployed population. The editor of the editorial describes the admission as honest and commendable. However, he later describes it as depressing considering the country's enormous resources and the economic, physical and psychological effect of unemployment. He also emphasises that the social cost of unemployment is high.

The relational attributive clauses used in text 3 help to realise the message of the text. E.g.,

Example 3
1. … the legislature <u>is</u> a close circuit system … (T3, S9).
2. … the interests <u>are</u> as selfish as those of the people … (T3, S10).
3. This <u>seems</u> a ploy to free suspects. (T3, S23).

The attributive clauses help to realise the message that corruption is in most places in Nigeria. Corruption is being practised by public officers, especially the legislature that also has a way of covering up for its members. When legislators accuse one another, their interests are as selfish as those of the people initially accused of tampering with public fund. They create the impression that the government is fighting corruption, however, the impression is only created as a ploy to free suspects. The attributive clauses help to describe these events in a logical manner. Relational attributive clauses '*are*' and '*is*' used in text 4 describe the events that surround oat-taking in the legislative house in Ogun State. E.g.,

Example 4
1. Nude pictures of some members of the Ogun State House of Assembly … <u>are</u> minor indices … (T4, S1).
2. Allegiance <u>is</u> to Nigeria … (T4, S15).

The relational options '*are*' and '*is*' describe the fact that the nude pictures of the concerned members of Ogun State House of Assembly were taken when the said members wanted to take an oath which is considered different from the official oath of office. The oath takers however said that the oath was a forced pledge of their allegiance to the governor. On the contrary, allegiance should be to the country, Nigeria and the Nigerian people and not the governor.

2. Relational Identifying Options

In text two, relational identifying options are used to assign certain participants (token) some identity (value). The attributive clauses used are shown in the following sentences, e.g.

Example 1
1. The unemployed <u>represent </u>about 32 percent of the population. (T2, S4).
2. Unemployment <u>equals to</u> higher levels of family breakdowns, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide and crime. (T2, S13).

In sentence 1, the unemployed is identified as 32 percent of the population while in sentence 2, unemployment is given the attribute of family breakdown, alcohol and drug abuse, suicide and crime. Relational identifying options '*include*' and '*range*' used in Text 3 help in realising the message of the text by assigning certain participants (token) some values, as in the following excerpts:

Example 2
1. Suspects <u>include</u> federal, state and local government officials. (T3, S4).
2. Their responsibilities <u>range</u> from electricity to education … (T3, S5).

In the two examples above, '*include*' and '*range*' are used to identify different tokens. In sentence 1, '*include*' is used to identify '*suspects*' as '*federal, state and local government officials*'. In sentence 2, the option '*range*' is used to identify '*their responsibilities*' as '*electricity and education*'.

3. Relational Possessive Option

The relational possessive clause '*has*' in text 2 (35), e.g., 'Government <u>has</u> an obligation to create job opportunities …', show that Government possesses an obligation (possessed). This can be interpreted that Government has the responsibility to create job opportunities for youths in the country.

C. Mental Processes

The mental process options employed in the selected texts are all cognitive.
In text 1, '*forget*', in the sentence, 'we <u>forget</u> the promises to mitigate the factors …. (T1, 24)', is used to show the mental state of the senser (we) about the phenomenon (the promise).
 '*Thought*' is also used to describe the mental state of the senser (we) about the phenomenon (the days of allegiance) in the sentence, 'We <u>thought</u> the days allegiance to individuals were through …, (T4, S9)'.
Similarly, in text 5, sentence 23, '… PACA <u>believes</u> that cervical cancer is comparable to something more than

HIV', *'believes'* shows the mental ability of the senser (PACA) about the phenomenon (that cervical cancer is comparable to something more than HIV).

D. Verbal Processes

Verbal processes are used in some of the texts to realise their messages. They are used in Text 1, 4, 5 and 7. There are three instances in text 1, e.g.

Example 1
1. NEMA Assistant Zonal Coordinator Apollos Jediel said this … (T1, S7).
2. About 70 percent of the accidents, he said, could be avoided … (T1, S10).
3. Mr. Jediel spoke in the heat of the loss of a colleague … (T1, S18).

These verbal processes are used to realise the message of the text by revealing what certain sayers (NEMA Assistant Zonal Coordinator Apollos Jediel, he, Mr. Jediel) said to certain receiver (this).
Only one incident of verbal process is used in text 4. In the following sentence, 'The oath-takers said oath was a forced Pledge of their allegiance to the governor … (T4, S6).'
The verbal process *'said'* employs a sayer (the oath-takers) who relates the process to the receiver (the oath …), which the sayer says is a forced pledge of their allegiance to the governor.
The only verbal process *'say'* in text 5 employs an unconscious sayer (accounts), who is responsible for the verbal process e.g., 'Accounts say that over 500,000 women die of maternal mortality … (T5, S16).' The verbal process *'say'* tells us the fact that over 500,000 women die of maternal mortality, of which cervical cancer is said to be responsible for 300,000 deaths annually in the universe.
Another incident of verbal process is found in Text 7: 'The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) said last month … (T7, S1)'. In the sentence above, one choice of verbal process was made. The verbal process, *'said'*, was made by a 'sayer' (The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)) to relay the message that the CBN will limit business of banks with their preferred customers in the public sector, which will make some more room for the private sector that had been crowded out of the banking halls.

E. Behavioural Process

In all the selected texts, Text 2 only makes use of behavioural process. Consider the following example:

Example 1
… governments all over the world worry about rising unemployment … (T2, S16).

The behavioural process, '*worry*' is used in the text to show the psychological state of the behaver (… governments …). This means that unemployment is a critical issue worldwide that governments all over the world worry (are affected psychologically) about the rate at which it is rising.

F. Existential Process

Existential process is used in Text 1, 2 and 6. In text 1, one choice of existential process is made:

There are occasional mentions of this fact … (T1, S4).

Existential process '*are*' is used to state the fact that the rate of road accidents in Nigeria is on the increase and there are occasional mentions of the fact, but little attention is paid to addressing the situation.
One choice of existential process is also made in text 2:

There is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty … (T2, S9).

The choice of existential process *'is'* and its existent *'there'* is made to state the fact that unemployment has a strong correlation with poverty, both of which are very high in Nigeria.

The only existential process in text 6 is *'should be':*

There should be responsible criminal investigation and prosecution. (T6, S18).

The only existential process *'should be'* is chosen by the existent *'there'* to show that there should be responsible criminal investigation and prosecution. It is believed that this exists but the processes are not judiciously or effectively utilised.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis above, some insights can be gained into the study of editorials. The study reveals that editorials help to articulate a better understanding of the news media, the unique handling of language and text, and the impact on thought and culture. Some of the issues presented in the news are also represented in editorials. However, Editorials have an edge over news report because they develop the story better; they do a research on the story before they publish them; editorials reveal the editors' thoughts or ideas about the story on ground. This latter feature of editorials gives it the ability to articulate a better understanding of the news media. This also enables editorials to have a unique handling of

language and text is prominent and significant in this study.

Experiential meaning presents us with a number of ways language is used to express meaning in editorials. In this sense, different process types help in the realisation of the messages of the editorials. These options have revealed that editorials express different process types. These process types are used to describe or make references to authorities in the nation, citizens, social bodies, political and social values, education, unemployment, the economy and the world as a whole.

Process types in editorials are used to make appeal to relevant authorities to proffer solutions to certain problems such as unemployment, bad roads, the failing judicial system, partisan politics, economic instability and the poor health system. These appeals are both cognitive and verbal. They are also used to expose the ills of the society and give information about both past and current events in the nation.

We notice that these texts have a majority of relational processes and in particular, of the attributive type. This shows that editorials are not meant to only tell us what happened, but rather how things are and should be. The relational process types in the study include attributive, identifying and possessive, in which attributive and identifying are dominant. Most of the material processes in the texts are found to be emphasising physical activities. The verbal process 'say' and 'said' are common in the texts. They are used to reveal what certain 'sayer' said to certain 'receivers'.

We note that the editorials also share important cultural assumptions, values and ideas. The impact of thoughts and culture cannot be underestimated in the study. The root of ideology is in thoughts and culture. The issues raised in the editorials have their roots in the participants' thoughts-participants being the editors, the readers and those referred to in the editorials. There can be no ideology if certain participants have not thought about something, which in some cases require some processes such as material (action), verbal (spoken), behavioural or mental. All these reactions occur together in the context of a particular culture. Stronger ideological opinions and experiential meaning are expressed when the issue being discussed contravenes the cultural expectations of the society where the issues are raised. Thus, editorials help us understand news, by using language carefully and skilfully to articulate thoughts and ideas about burning issues

The editorials analysed in this study contain contents that capture facts about our social world. Social world in this study include politics, economy, finance, education, security, health, transportation and corruption. All the issues raised in all the editorials relate to the ills of the society, or better still, the problems facing Nigeria, created by Nigerians and suffered by Nigerians. The use of process types clearly bring out all these social vices

and enable the reader, especially the linguist, to have a good understanding of the message of the editorials.

The process type options also reveal that editorials share a broadly secular, humanist, rationalist view of the world. When the rich for instance, tend to unjustifiably exploit and manipulate the poor, editorials rise up in defence of the latter. The relationship among different members of the society is often monitored by the media and an advocacy role played by editorials to defend the course of the wretched of the earth. The poor often belong to the unemployed group. They are usually neglected. Consequently, the rate of unemployment continues to rise. Editors, thus employs relational processes to describe the events that unfold in the unemployment circle. They do not exhort the readers to pray for a solution nor to submit to Destiny; they believe in the efficacy of human action. Thus, editorials can be said to share a commitment to national interests and identification with fellow nationals.

Our findings also reveal that editorials criticise or attack socio-political, economic and moral dilemmas in the society. Editorials criticise and attack these social ills or vices with a view to proffering a solution to them. By doing this every day, editorials illuminate the day's intelligence. By throwing more light to complex issues of the day, editorials often try to look at the two sides of an issue. They highlight and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of public issues while proffering solutions to complex issues of public concern.

The process options also reveal that editorials are biased. The transitivity system has enabled us to understand how editorials are written by employing certain processes, which help to critically examine editors' tone and mood as they are expressed in their language.

A good and powerful editorial usually have impact. In Nigeria for instance, good editorials often galvanize policy formulation on the side of government and relevant stakeholders for the betterment of the society. On the side of the governed, editorials mobilize them either to reject or accept a policy or a burning issue of the day.

Editorials can create a pathway for lawmakers for instance, to initiate bills that would eventually become laws in the nation's statute book. If an editorial is to create impact on its audience, it must reflect the wisdom, integrity and voice of the society.

CONCLUSION

The analysis presented here shows that SFL provides an analytical framework which is interesting, useful and powerful for the analysis of texts. However, this is not to be understood as being to the exclusion of other possible theoretical approaches, which may well come to similar conclusions. However, it should be stressed, particularly

for readers who are less familiar with SFL, that this approach is not simply a technique of textual analysis, but rather a useful theory of language. As it has been shown in this study, the experiential metafunction in SFL helps highlight the features of the text in a particularly clear, powerful, and objective fashion.

The systemic functional linguistic (SFL) analytical framework made it possible for us to analyse the data linguistically; hence making it possible for the readers of editorials to bring out deeper nuances of meaning than would otherwise have been possible if either perspective had been adopted.

The linguistic analysis of editorials also has pedagogic relevance for students, applied linguistics, text and corpus linguistics. This study attempts to impart to students a sense of the primary purposes of grammar. It is an attempt to counter the prevailing sense of formalism in the study of grammar and promote an approach that not only describes the function and purpose of grammar but also the meaning. It is assumed that students will respond more positively to a focus on meaning rather than on form, because they themselves are more conscious of meaning in their own use of language, especially in its spoken mode. Students and linguists will have the capacity to form and express their own opinion of texts and develop strategies of applying linguistics to the communicative use of language. A good understanding of the corresponding grammatical features of processes can help students use them in expressing their experiences of the world in the appropriate register, and define the syllabuses for students learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or Academic Purposes (EAP).

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