

Lexical Features of Editorial Comments of Tell Magazine in Nigeria

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Abstract—The Editorial Comment of news print is highly significant for the negotiation of meaning. This is made possible through linguistic features that characterise the comments, one of which is the lexical cohesive ties that provide a distinct linguistic connection in the text. The analysis of selected editorial comments is based on Halliday's and Hasan's (1976) Lexical Cohesion Theory. The study therefore investigates the social functions of the observed lexical devices in the editorial comments in order to demonstrate how meanings are being foregrounded in the editorial comments of the news print.

Index Terms—lexis, editorial comments, stylistics, cohesion, linguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

In language skills, speaking and listening are classified as oracy, which is primary while reading and writing are regarded as literacy. It is along this reasoning that Akinkulere and Kumuyi (2016) argue that 'the print media came as a later development to new media, just as spoken language is primary and preceded written language.' In fact, Hasan (2013) submits that

It took thousands of years for human beings to develop speech and language. After that, it just took few hundred years for writing to be developed. Thus, print media range from phonetic writing to alphabetical writing, and it is basically the spread of literacy that gave rise to the general acceptability of the print media across the globe.

In Nigeria, the English language serves as the popular language in media. In fact, it is more popular than all the indigenous languages. Indeed, Ayeomoni (2012), cited in Akinkulere (2015a), submits that 'as far as the written mode is concerned, English can be said to be the predominant language at all levels....' Categorically, the language of TELL Magazine, which is published on a weekly basis, is English. This is premised on the fact that Nigeria has become one of the largest populations of speakers of English as a second language (ESL) as rightly observed by Owolabi (2012) cited in Ijadimine and Aminu (2014).

TELL magazine is a popular News magazine in Nigeria which is published in both print and digital forms. Ijadimine and Aminu (2014) observe that:

TELL Magazine in Nigeria is one of the prominent news magazines in Nigeria. In fact, it has gained widespread recognition across the globe to an extent that it has won several awards for a clear and unbiased portrayal of social, economic and political issues of the nation. In essence, media as viable tools for projecting the national image of the nation has been adequately captured through the TELL Magazine

The freedom of expression bill passed under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan in Nigeria has further encouraged editors of new magazines to express true and clear positions on issues. The word 'Editor' has been variously defined by different scholars. To Ogunwole et al (2006), an editor is the "key to the operation and nerve centre of the newspaper industry." Sulaiman (2008) describes an editor as one of the major gatekeepers before news appear in print while Hasan (2013) argues that part of the duties of the editor is to design the layout of newspaper; deciding on which story to run, recruiting and training as well as editing other writers' work.

The significance and functions of the editorial comment can never be over-emphasized in the print media. No wonder, Ijadimine and Aminu aver that:

The importance, relevance and function of editorial comment in news magazine can never be overemphasized. The editorial comment emanates from the desk of the editor. Editing is a major aspect of the newsprint. This stage could also be referred to as 'filter stage', and the Editorial board serves as the strainers that remove any text material that have error and thereby make the newsprint good for its purpose(s).

The section of editorial comment carries the opinion of the editorial board of the TELL Magazine and as such, deserves a linguistic attention.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is observed that certain approaches have been applied to the study of TELL Magazine in Nigeria. These include Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Ariyo, 2015), Discourse Analysis (Akinkulere and Kumuyi, 2016), Speech Act Analysis (Ijadimine and Aminu, 2014) among others. Despite these, the study of the editorial comments of TELL

Magazine from the approach through lexical cohesion has not received much attention. In view of the yawning gap, this study intends to conduct a lexical analysis into select editorial comments of the magazine.

III. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to conduct a lexical analysis of the editorial comments of select TELL Magazine. Hence, the specific objectives are to

- I) identify the lexical devices in the editorial comments;
- II) analyse the identified devices; and
- III) relate the social functions of the analysed devices to the context.

IV. LINGUISTIC APPROACH: LINGUISTIC-STYLISTICS

Specifically, Stylistics is a sub-linguistic field that studies style. Scholars, like Wales (1989), have provided substantive evidence in support of this submission. Indeed, Akinkulore (2015b) citing Ayeomoni (2007) posits that 'Stylistics grew out of the work of great scholars like Sebeok (1960), Fowler (1966), Leech (1969) and Freeman (1971) in the second half of the twentieth century' Despite this, Stylistics is considered as the scientific study of style of all forms of spoken and written texts. This implies that style is the central concept in stylistics, and the understanding, explanation, evaluation and description of style that are the major concerns of researchers in the field.

It is expedient that Allan B. et al (1988) gives an all encompassing definition on the concept of style and stylistics thus:

A branch of linguistics which studies the characteristics of situationally distinctive uses of languages with reference to literary language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language.

Leech and Short (1981), on their part, say that:

The goal of stylistics study is not simply to describe the formal feature of texts for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text; or in order to relate literary effects to linguistic causes where they are relevant

No wonder, Chapman (1973) posits that styles are the product of the social situations of a common relationship between language users. In the light of the foregoing, we can postulate that stylistics is the study of literary and non-literary work as observed by Ayeomoni (2004) that 'linguistic stylistics is an analytical approach which helps readers to objectively study both literary process and non literary materials'. The stylistic analysis approach data at all levels of language analysis which include semantic, syntactic, lexical, graphological and phonological. Hence, a stylistician employs these linguistic tools to in carrying out investigation.

V. LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK: LEXICAL COHESION THEORY

The linguistic framework of any linguistic research serves as the tool for the analysis of data. The stylistic tool for the study is the lexical cohesion theory of Halliday and Hassan (1976). In essence, our analysis is at the level of lexis. It has been observed that editors employ lexical devices in the course of performing their statutory functions. To us, these lexical devices are not only crucial, but of high significance. It is this background that informed the choice of a theoretical framework in line with lexical cohesion theory of Halliday and Hasan (1976). In the view of Halliday and Hasan (1976) cited in Akinkulore (2015b) 'lexical cohesion refers to the connective effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary'. The lexical devices that will be identified according to the framework are Repetition, Synonymy, Antonymy, Superordinate and Collocation. They are precisely explained as follows:

Repetition- This implies reiteration of a lexical item by repeating it either in a simple or complex manner

Synonymy- This refers to a manner of reiterating meaning by employing a lexical item that shares same or near-same meaning with the initial item

Antonymy- This connotes oppositeness of meaning which occurs in lexical items.

Superordinate- It means inclusion of meaning of a particular lexical item in the meaning of another item.

Collocation- The term covers the relationship that exists between words that could co-occur in the same environment.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Two out of the five editions of June 2015 publication are selected and analysed through the lexical cohesion framework of Halliday and Hassan 1976. The first and fifth editions are selected based on the fact that they are the two special editions in the same month. All the sentences in the two editorial comments are examined for lexical cohesion devices. The editorial comments are labeled Text A and Text B. Also, the lexical types are labeled thus: R -Repetition, S - Synonymy, A- Antonymy, SP- Superordinate; and C- Collocation. After which, a summary table is drawn to show the frequencies and simple percentages of each lexical cohesion device. The discussion and conclusion are based on the analysis.

VII. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Presentation and Analysis of Text A

TEXT A- Farewell to Power June 1

- 1) True, he has advisors.
- 2) He has at his beck and call any number of men with whom he can consult; but when all the chips are down, he has to face the world alone, as it were.
- 3) His advisors do not face the cannon fire of public opinion that comes to the leader.
- 4) This is the thought of a preacher, Gordon B. Hinckley, in a devotional address in November 1969.
- 5) He was talking about loneliness of leadership, with reference to then President Richard Nixon of the United States of America.
- 6) Since the elections were decided last March, I have watched as the cup of President Goodluck Jonathan literally swells on a daily basis.
- 7) Aside from party leaders who have jumped ship, because they suddenly realised that People's Democratic Party, was hell on earth, some of those left behind have put the blame of the direction of government and fate of the party on the head of president Jonathan.
- 8) Majority of these people were favourite advisers who functioned in the inner recesses of power, while others were often the uncommissioned public relations experts of the administration, who sometimes leave observers worried about implications of their statements on the administration.
- 9) But Jonathan has become the victim of the loneliness of leadership; he has to carry the can, even for actions committed in private by some of his loquacious associates and strategists.
- 10) One of the people who caused harm to his government and ambition to continue in office will retire to Otuoke with him.
- 11) He cannot shake off that adviser, as long as she does not play the part of Frederick De Klerk's wife and walk out on him.
- 12) That person is patience, the woman who stood by the president and is also believed to have caused him electoral harm.
- 13) They probably will write the advertised memoirs together, so that in no distant future we will know what drained the goodwill of 2011 to deny Jonathan an election he had no reason to lose in 2015.
- 14) We will also know the truth about some snippets of reports about happenings in Aso Villa.
- 15) But while we await the memoirs, we serve you some of the not-so-classified occurrences about the first couple, in this story They Came, They Saw, They Conquered written by Anayochukwu Agbo, general editor and head of Abuja bureau, who has covered the villa for some years now.
- 16) One of the issues that made the president unpopular is the vexed issue of fuel subsidy.
- 17) Ayuba Wabba, president of the Nigeria Labour Congress, NLC, says the debate will continue with the incoming government.
- 18) In this interview with Tajudeen Suleiman, senior associate editor, Wabba says Fuel Subsidy is Fraud.
- 19) The special report, Hope Rises for Small Businesses, is written by Abiola Odotola, senior writer.
- 20) The story is about the lifeline that the Bank of Industry dangles for small and medium scale enterprises.
- 21) Last week, we said on this page that the special publication on the legacies of Dr Emmanuel Uduaghan (the man who was in Lagos last week to showcase another achievement of his government, see separate story in this edition) of Delta State would accompany the edition of last week.
- 22) We are sure you would have been wondering what happened
- 23) You will yet discover that the special publication is no just a little pamphlet.
- 24) We are deeply sorry we could not serve you last week.
- 25) It was due to challenges at the printing stage.
- 26) We have redeemed the promise this week.
- 27) Thank you for your patience and do have a blessed week.

TABLE 1:
TABLE OF LEXICAL DEVICES OF TEXT A

S/N	No of Ties	Connective Ties	Types	Presupposed Items and Sentence Numbers
2	2	men	S	advisors(1)
		consult	C	advisors(1)
3	3	advisors	R	advisors(1)
		opinion	C	men(2)
4	3	thought	C	advisors(1)
				advisors(3)
			S	opinion(3)
5	1	reference	S	call(2)
6	4	elections	C	President(5)
		March	SP	1969(3)
		President	R	President(5)
			C	Richard Nixon(5)
7	7	party	C	leader(3)
		leaders	R	leader(3)
		direction	S	leadership(5)
		party	C	leader(3)
		president	R	President(5)
				President(6)
Jonathan	R	Jonathan(6)		
8	13	favourite	C	advisor(1)
				advisors(3)
		adviser	R	advisor(1)
				advisors(3)
		administration	C	President Jonathan(7)
				President Goodluck Jonathan(6)
				President Richard Nixon(5)
		public	R	public(1)
C	opinion (3)			
relations	C	public(3)		
administration	C	President Jonathan(7)		
		President Goodluck Jonathan(6)		
		President Richard Nixon(5)		
9	6	Jonathan	R	Jonathan(6)
				Jonathan(7)
		loneliness	R	loneliness(2)
		leadership	R	leadership(5)
		private	A	public(3)
	public(8)			
10	8	people	R	People(8)
		harm	S	actions(9)
		government	R	government(7)
			S	administration(8)
				administration(8)
		office	C	president(5)
	president(6)			
	president(8)			
11	1	adviser	R	advisers(8)
12	6	person	S	adviser(11)
		president	R	president(5)
				president(6)
				president(8)
		electoral	C	harm(10)
harm	R	harm(10)		
13		2011	SP	March(6)
				November(4)
		Jonathan	R	Jonathan(9)
				Jonathan(7)
				Jonathan(6)
		election	R	elections(6)
			C	president(5)
				president(6)
				president(8)
		president(12)		
2015	SP	March(6)		
		November(4)		
14	5	Aso Villa	C	president(5)
				president(6)
				president(8)

				president(12)	
		reports	S	memoirs(13)	
15	10	memoirs	R	memoirs(13)	
			S	reports(14)	
		occurrences	R	reports(14)	
		general	C	election(13)	
				elections(6)	
		years	SP	1969(4)	
				2011(13)	
				2015(13)	
		villa	R	villa(14)	
			C	Aso(14)	
16	5	issues	S	occurrences(15)	
		president	R	president(5)	
				president(6)	
				president(8)	
				president(12)	
17	10	president	R	president(5)	
				president(6)	
				president(8)	
				president(12)	
				president(16)	
		continue	R	continue(10)	
government	R	government(7)			
		government(10)			
	S	administration(8)			
		administration(8)			
18	4	editor	R	editor(15)	
		senior associate	C	editor(15)	
		Fuel subsidy	R	fuel subsidy(16)	
		fraud	A	truth(14)	
19	3	report	R	reports(14)	
		senior	R	senior(18)	
			C	associate editor(18)	
21	7	special	R	special(19)	
		government	R	government(17)	
				government(7)	
					government(10)
				S	administration(8)
				administration(8)	
story	R	story(20)			
23	6	special	R	special(19)	
				special(21)	
			C	publication(21)	
		publication	R	publication(21)	
			C	special(19)	
		special(21)			
24	3	serve	R	serve	
		last week	R	last week(21)	
				last week(21)	
25	1	challenges	S	actions(9)	
26	3	week	R	week(24)	
				week(21)	
				week(21)	
27	5	patience	R	patience(12)	
		week	R	week(26)	
				week(24)	
				week(21)	
				week(21)	

TABLE 2:
TABLE OF THE SUMMARY OF LEXICAL DEVICES OF TEXT A

Types of Lexical Device	Frequencies	Percentages %
Repetition	59	46.1
Collocation	38	29.7
Synonymy	20	15.6
Antonymy	3	2.3
Superordinate	8	6.3
Total	128	100

Presentation and Analysis of Text B

TEXT B – Nigerian Politicians are Opportunistic (June 29th 2015)

- 1) The tribe of governors under the aegis of Nigerian Governors’ Forum will meet with President Muhammadu Buhari this week on the cash crunch situation in the country.
- 2) The governors may not directly be begging for bailout during the meeting, perhaps because they know that the President is not favourably disposed to doling out money.
- 3) That belongs to the old order.
- 4) But the governors would be asking Buhari to enforce the provision of the constitution that all monies accruing to the country should first go to the Federation Account.
- 5) That way they believe that more money will be available for them to share.
- 6) It remains to be seen how that will solve the crisis of the cash crunch in most states of the country.
- 7) But while they wait to see the President, the loud anger in about 18 states owing workers’ salaries threatens the eardrums of governors of the affected states.
- 8) What is the plight of workers in these states?
- 9) What have been the consequences of this development for the governors?
- 10) How did the state governments get to where they are?
- 11) And how can they get out of the woods?
- 12) These are the questions Tony Manuka, senior associate editor answered in the story: Cash Crunch:How the States Can Survive.
- 13) It is the alternate cover.
- 14) The cover interview is about an American who came on tour of duty here in Nigeria, uncertain of what he would meet on the ground but ended up loving the country.
- 15) Though he may not have been too adventurous when it comes to Nigerian food, Jeffery Hawkins, outgoing consul general of the United States to Nigeria loves the country’s way of dressing.
- 16) That is not the only thing he loves about Nigeria.
- 17) He is in love with the people, their industry and intellect, as part of the many “positives” about the country.
- 18) In this interview with Adejuwon Soyinka, deputy general editor; Juliana Uche-Okobi, assistant editor, and Paul Kuyoro, photojournalist, Hawkins bares his mind on Nigerian politicians, the war on Boko Haram, stomach infrastructure and the first lady issue, among others.
- 19) For instance, he says, “Nigerian Politicians are Opportunistic.”
- 20) This edition introduces a double-cover issue, an innovation designed to oil our contract with you, our darling readers.
- 21) So we are giving you two cover stories for the price of one.
- 22) But the two only serve as gateway to other interesting stories.
- 23) Do have a blessed week!

TABLE 3:
TABLE OF LEXICAL DEVICES OF TEXT B

S/N	No of Ties	Connective Ties	Types	Presupposed Items and Sentence Numbers
2	3	governors	R	governors(1)
		president	R	president(1)
			C	Muhammadu Buhari(1)
4	4	governors	R	governors(1) governors(2)
		Buhari	R	Buhari(1)
		monies	R	money(2)
5	2	money	R	monies(4) money(2)
6	7	cash crunch	R	cash crunch(1)
		cash	C	share(5)
		states	SP	country(1) country(4)
		country	R	country(1) country(4)
		crisis	S	situation(1)
7	9	President	R	President(2)
		states	SP	country(1) country(4)
			R	states(6)
		governors	R	governors(4) governors(2)
		states	R	states(6)
			SP	country(1) country(4)
8	5	workers	R	workers(7)
		states	R	states(7)

				states(6)
			SP	country(1)
				country(4)
9	12	development	C	states(8)
				states(7)
				states(6)
				country(1)
				country(4)
		S	situation(1)	
			crisis(6)	
		governors	R	governors(2)
	governors(7)			
	C	states(8)		
		states(7)		
		states(6)		
10	6	state	R	states(8)
				states(7)
				states(6)
		C	governors(9)	
		governors(2)		
		governors(7)		
12	10	cover	R	cover(13)
		cash crunch	R	cash crunch(6)
				cash crunch(1)
		states	R	states(10)
				states(8)
				states(7)
				states(6)
		C	governors(9)	
governors(2)				
governors(7)				
14	7	cover	R	cover(13)
			C	alternate(13)
		Nigeria	S	country(1)
				country(4)
				president(12)
		country	R	country(1)
country(4)				
15	12	Nigerian	R	Nigeria(14)
		consul general	S	American(14)
		United States	S	country(1)
				country(4)
				country(14)
		Nigeria	R	Nigeria(14)
			S	country(1)
				country(4)
				country(14)
		country's	R	country(1)
country(4)				
country(14)				
16	5	Nigeria	R	Nigeria(15)
				Nigeria(14)
		S	country(1)	
			country(4)	
			country(14)	
17	17	love	R	loves(16)
		people	C	states(10)
				states(8)
				states(7)
				states(6)
				country(1)
				country(4)
				country(14)
				Nigeria(15)
				Nigeria(14)
				country
		country(4)		
		country(14)		
SP	states(10)			
	states(8)			
	states(7)			
	states(6)			

18	4	interview	R	interview(14)
		Nigerian	R	Nigerian(15)
			C	food(15)
		war	S	loud anger(7)
19	2	Nigerian	R	Nigerian(18)
		politicians	R	politicians(18)
20	1	issue	R	issue(18)
21	2	cover	R	cover(20)
				cover(14)
22	2	two	R	two(21)
		stories	R	stories(21)
23	1	week	C	edition(20)

TABLE 4:
TABLE OF THE SUMMARY OF LEXICAL DEVICES OF TEXT B

Types of Lexical Device	Frequencies	Percentages %
Repetition	54	48.6
Collocation	25	22.5
Synonymy	17	15.3
Antonymy	0	0
Superordinate	15	13.5
Total	111	100

VIII. DISCUSSIONS OF LEXICAL FEATURES OF TEXTS A AND B

The lexical cohesion devices that manifest in the two texts were identified and classified according to Halliday and Hasan (1976) schema of lexical cohesion.

From Tables 2 and 4, we observed that the five categories of lexical devices manifested in the editor’s comment of Text A, while four out of the five categories manifested in Text B. Words that relate to the issues of the edition are predominant in repetition, which was at 46.1% for Text A and 48.6% for Text B. Though, instances of simple repetition are more than that of complex repetition. The reason for this is not far-fetched as the editors had a large audience which cut across all walks of life to address. Hence, simplicity should be ensured as much as possible. The instances of repetition were employed in the editorial comments to ensure clarity and emphasis.

Synonyms are also observed in the editorial comments. For Text A, it was at 15.6% while, it was at 15.3% for Text B. Indeed, synonyms are alternatives to repetitions. It is clear from the speech that the Speaker employed synonyms in order to avoid repetition. It is a good way of emphasizing meanings that are important to issues in the Magazine. Antonym was only observed in Text A, according to Table 2, at 2.3%. The reason for this is not far-fetched, the editor was not unaware of the fact that the readers do not have same competence in English Language. Hence, they either avoid antonym or use it minimally. The status of English language in the country has influenced choices made by the editors.

Superordinates were at 6.3% for Text A, and 13.5% for Text B. These have contributed in no small measure towards cohesion in the editorial comments. The device of superordinate has made it possible for readers to rely on continuity that eventually creates interconnecting relationships of words in the process of filling the missing information in the comments. On collocation, Text A had 29.7% while Text B had 22.5%. These percentages show that words in the two editorial comments are highly connected. By this, readers could easily interpret words that are related in the same linguistic environment and context. Moreover, diverse issues of the edition are linked up.

The analysis of the editorial comments has shown that editorial comments are usually written in simple style with lexical features that are predominantly repetition, synonym and collocation. Instances of superordinates were also observed while there might or might not be antonym. The lexical devices that manifested in the editorial comments of the TELL Magazine enhanced the interpretation of the texts.

IX. CONCLUSIONS

In the study of editorial comments, one major theory that has been effective and adequate for analysis is the Lexical Cohesion Theory, which provides the framework for researchers to explore the connectedness between what is said, what is meant and the lexical devices employed. Through the exploration of the lexical devices in the editorial comments, the foregrounded lexical features have been brought to fore. These features are highly significant for meaning in the comments. Therefore, it is recommended, in strong terms, for the analysis of any text.

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