

# Systemic Functional Analysis of *Thisday* Editorials

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## Abstract

This work is an analysis of English nominal structures in selected editorials of *Thisday* Newspaper. It aimed to analyze the structure of noun phrases in the editorial, examine the functions of the noun phrases identified in the editorials in which they occur, determine the form of noun phrase that is commonly used in the editorials of *Thisday* newspaper and to establish if the form of noun phrases as used in the editorials affect the understanding and interpretation of the editorials. To achieve these aims, the first nominal group in each of the paragraphs of the editorials was selected for analysis using the Experiential and Logical Function Model of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) theory. The analysis revealed that the nominal groups have both logical and experiential functions in the text. It, also, reveals that the form of the nominal group that is most commonly used in the editorials of *Thisday* newspaper is MH and MHQ. The study established that the frequency of nouns in the editorials indicate high information density, therefore, the presence of complex nominal group structures in the editorials indicate information density in such editorials. This high information density allows for higher understanding of the editorials. More so, the research shows that the use of modifiers in the nominal group structure helps the readers to gain fast and direct access to information transmitted in the editorials. Based on the analysis carried out, this study concludes that the forms of nominal groups used in the editorials as well as the frequency of their usage affect the understanding and interpretation of the editorials either positively or negatively depending on whether the form is complex and frequently used or not complex and frequently used as the case may be.

**Keywords:** Information Density, Editorials, Nominal Structures, Communication, Newspaper.

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## INTRODUCTION

Language is of utmost importance to humans. Man as a social being communicates and interacts with his society through language. Language has been conceived differently by various linguists depending on the function which they subject it to. From their view of language, it can be deduced that communication is a core function of language. Language in whatever form it is realized either spoken or written is saddled with the responsibility of transmitting meaning. As a communicative system, it is concerned with meaning as a function of the interaction between text and the context of situation in which the text is produced. Language can be used in both the spoken or written form. In the contemporary world, people can make their contributions or opinion about certain issues known through the mass media.

Of interest in this study is the medium of newspaper which can be viewed as a regularly

scheduled publication or periodical containing news of current events and news of general interest, information, and advertising, usually printed on relatively inexpensive, low-grade paper called newsprint. It is intended for general circulation, and published regularly at short intervals, usually daily, weekly, fortnightly, monthly or quarterly. Currently, in Nigeria, there are many brands of newspapers that are produced and circulated regularly. They include: *Thisday*, *Leadership*, *Punch*, *Sun*, *Tribune*, *Vanguard*, *Nation*, *Guardian*, *Daily Times*, among others. Inside newspapers we usually have sections or sub-genres that are dedicated to various issues such as editorials, world news, classifieds, feature articles, letters to the editor as well as sport, news, health, business, politics, life style, entertainment sections among others.

Editorials play an important role in shaping the minds of the public. As opinions rather than news, editorials are written and published for a reason which is usually to communicate a message to a mass

audience. How the message is put together using syntactic units is also important because the use of such syntactic units go a long way to affect the intended message of the editorial. To this end, the use of noun phrases as syntactic units is of importance in editorial writing.

Since communication can only be established when both the speaker and the listener have the same understanding of the words and sentences used in conversation, the study of the use of noun phrases in newspaper editorial is of utmost importance. This is so because nouns are of pivotal importance in language like English. It has been observed that along with verbs, nouns are dominant part of speech and that the semantic content of sentences is borne mostly by nouns [1].

Based on the above assertion, as part of the English sentence, noun phrases as chosen by editors embody important meanings which need to be analysed to determine how they contribute to the overall meaning of the text in which they occur. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the usage of the English noun phrase in the media, particularly in the editorials of Thisday Newspaper. In order to achieve this aim, the objectives of the study are: To analyze the structure of noun phrase in the editorial and to examine the functions of the noun phrases identified in the editorials in which they occur.

### The Notion of Grammar

As an aspect of linguistics, grammar refers to the set of structural rules that governs the composition and study of linguistic items such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences in a language. Kembo-sure and Vic [17] Webb consider the grammar of a language as “the totality of the unit (or elements) in a language together with the rules that govern their use” (60). When talking about the concept of grammar, one is concerned with the application of grammar, that is, the grammar as used by speakers. Koll and Funk (5) view grammar in three different ways; one of which is the formal description of the rules of a language. They argue that the definition refers to the branch of linguistic science concerned with the formal description of language in an objective way which identifies the form and structure as well as the syntax of sentences. In other words, according to them, grammar is purely descriptive; it describes the composition and structures of linguistic units in a language. Tomori [13] in his text, examines four different meanings of grammar, in his opinion, he concludes that grammar is defined as the art of speaking and writing correctly. It can be inferred from his definition that it is the proper observance of the rules of a language identified from its description that makes a user speak and write correctly.

English grammar can be described as the analysis and the study of the systems and structure of the English language. It includes the structure of the

English words, phrases, clauses and sentences. Koll and Funk [6] opine that the same kind of objectivity needed to study the grammar of an unknown language was applied to English grammar by a group of linguists who came to be known as structuralists. They introduced structural grammar which is based on structuralism. They go further to say that the systemic nature of structuralism includes an analysis of the sound system (phonology), then the systemic combination of sounds into meaningful units and words (morphology) and finally, the systemic combination of words into meaningful phrase structures and sentence patterns. The aspect of grammar that is concerned with phrases, clauses and sentences is known as syntax. Radford [2] puts that grammar is traditionally subdivided into two different but interrelated areas of study which are morphology and syntax. He says morphology is the study of how words are formed out of smaller units (traditionally called morpheme), while syntax is concerned with the ways in which words can be combined together to form phrases and sentences.

The concept of phrase has been defined in a variety of ways over time. Jespersen as cited in Iria (6) defines it as a combination of words put together in order to form a sense unit. It is also described as “a sequence of words that can function as a constituent in the structure of a sentence” (Burton-Roberts 19). To Cullup a phrase is simply a group of words without a verb [14]. Therefore, what qualifies a group of words as a phrase is the absence of a verb. It is also the verb that differentiates a phrase from a clause as the syntactic unit next to it as a phrase is lower on the grammatical hierarchy than a clause [15]. Tomori refers to a phrase as a well ordered linguistic form of two or more words that has no grammatical coherence (18-19). In his definition, it also suggests that it is the verb that gives coherence to a group of words, such that without coherence, the group of words will lack collective meanings. It is in this light, that Leech et al. (37) posit that phrases are units intermediate between clause and word. They buttress this claim with an example thus: My uncle Olaf was munching his peach with relish. They argue that the sentence above is made up of nine words but these words are grouped into four phrases; as such, like words, phrases belong to a number of different classes: My uncle Olaf is a noun phrase, was munching is a verb phrase, his peach is a noun phrase, and with relish is a prepositional phrase. Therefore, they conclude that a phrase is simply a group of words.

Halliday however, identifies two structural units – groups and phrases as intermediate between clause and word and describes them as “mutations of one or the other” (1985: xxi). Halliday and Mathiessen emphasize that “a phrase is different from a group in that, whereas a group is an expansion of a word, a phrase is a contraction of a clause” (2014: 362-363). Differentiating the two – group and phrase, Tomori

claims that ‘group’ suggests syntactic coherence while ‘phrase’ suggests lack of it. As such, he goes on further to define phrase as “any well – ordered form of two or more words that has no grammatical coherence ...” (18 – 19). Halliday however goes on further to argue that, “although group and phrase are both of intermediate rank as constituents, they have arrived there from different ends: a group is a bloated word, whereas a phrase is a shrunken clause” (1985:192).

Arema (3) defines a noun phrase as a sequence of words consisting of a noun and its modifiers in which the noun is regarded as the head or central word. However, arguing for noun phrases consisting of only one word, Bloor and Bloor noted that the nominal group is “typically a group with a noun (or pronoun) as its head, and that noun may be modified but it does not have to be modified in order to constitute a group in this technical sense” (3). Kirkpatrick (68) posits that a noun phrase, also called a nominal phrase is a group of related words in which the main word is a noun and which functions like a noun in a sentence or clause. For example:

The most dreadful road accident has happened.  
A terrible storm is forecast.

The underlined words above are noun phrases. They function as nouns in the sentences above.

One of the criteria for establishing or identifying a group is substitution. That is, if one word or group of words can be exchanged for another in a sentence without changing the grammatical class of the first word or group of words so exchanged or altering its meaning. In the case of noun phrases, these words will be pronouns. As such noun phrases can be identified by the possibility of pronoun substitution. Any sequence of words that can be replaced by a single pronoun without rendering the sentence grammatically unacceptable is a noun phrase [3]. For example in the two sentences above, the pronoun ‘it’ can be used to replace the noun phrases underlined without changing the meaning of the sentence as could be seen below:

It has happened.  
It is forecast.

Any listener who is aware of the phrase which has been replaced will know that the pronoun which replaces it refers to the same thing.

Noun phrases perform the same grammatical functions as nouns in a sentence. They are important and versatile syntactic elements in all languages. Thus, Payne and Huddleston state that [18] “NPs are prototypically capable, when placed in an appropriate case – form, of functioning as a complement in clause structure, i.e., as subject (the doctor arrived), object (we

need a doctor), or predicative complement (Kim is a doctor)” (326). That is to say, they can function as subject (S), as object (O), or as Complement (C) in a sentence:

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| The house was quite empty | NP=S |
| We have bought the house  | NP=O |
| This must be the house    | NP=C |

In the same vein, Stockwell [4] emphasizes that noun phrases typically bear argument functions. That is, the syntactic functions that they fulfill are those of complement of the main clause predicate, particularly those of subject, object and predicative expression (55). Moreso, Koll and Funk (132) opine that a noun phrase occupies at least one slot in every sentence pattern which is that of the subject of the sentence. They go further to say that rarely noun phrases occupy one or more slots in the predicate as well: direct object, indirect object, subject complement, and object complement; as well as the object of the preposition.

Noun phrases act as modifiers in other noun phrases. For example,  
My friend the professional driver      NP=M

This construction in which one noun phrase is defined by another one is called APPPOSITION [5]. Koll and Funk [6] also subscribe to the notion of apposition; they say a noun phrase that adds information to a sentence by renaming another nominal is called an appositive. They further argue that the three other phrases that can perform the grammatical functions that noun phrases generally perform are: gerund phrase, the infinite phrase, and the nominal clause. They are described as noun phrase substitutes which perform the primary functions of subject, direct object, subject complement, object of a preposition and appositive.

The relationship in the nominal group is that of modification. The element preceding the head is called premodifier and that which follows the head the postmodifier. That means that modifiers are of two kinds, premodifier and the postmodifiers. For example: the noun phrase awful weather has awful as a premodifier while something awful has the same word awful as a post modifier. In Halliday’s terms premodifier equates modifier (M) while post-modifier equates qualifier (Q)[16].

Taylor [12], points out that noun phrases, or nominals, may exhibit considerable internal complexity. Similarly, Arema [7] argues that a noun phrase can be much longer and a lot more complicated. He says it may contain more than one determiner. It may contain one or more types of premodifiers used instead of, or in addition to determiners. In some cases, he says the noun phrase may contain no premodifier at all; rather it may

contain one of various kinds of post modifiers. Lastly, he says the noun phrase may contain both premodifiers and post modifiers.

Determiners as premodifiers in noun phrases are of many kinds. Quirk *et al.* in Aremo [7] say determiners fall into three distinct classes: pre-determiners e.g. half, all, double, central, *et cetera*; determiners e.g. the article: the, a/an; and post determiners e.g. cardinal and ordinal numbers: many, few, *et cetera*. These three classes of determiners, the author explains have been set up on the basis of their position in the noun phrase in relation to each other.

Areomo [7] argues that pre-determiners are often placed immediately before determiners to modify their meanings (as distinct from the meaning of the noun head). These items include words like: about, almost, approximately, nearly, *et cetera*. For example, in nearly all the boys, nearly is the pre-determiner modifying the meaning of all, the determiner before the noun phrase the boy. He concludes that it should be noted that the pre-determiners are not themselves a class of determiners; rather, they are a class of items that are used as premodifiers of determiners. They are of interest to this study because their use usually brings about complexity and variety within the noun phrase structure.

In the same vein, Leech and Svartvik, identifies three types of determiners which they named group 1 determiners, group 2 determiners and group 3 determiners. Group one determiners always occur before group 2 determiners while group 3 determiners occur after group 2 determiners (281- 283). According to them, there are four types of group 1 determiners: (1) all, both, half that occurs before articles, possessives or demonstratives. (2) double, twice, three times, four times etc that occur with singular and plural count nouns or mass nouns denoting amount, degree, etc. (3) the fractions- one-third, two-fifth, three-quarters etc., which usually occur with the construction 'of', and (4) what and such that occur before the indefinite article with singular count nouns (284). They claim that there are five types of group 2 determiners, namely (1) the articles (a, an, the), (2) the demonstratives (this, that, these, those), (3) the possessives (my, your, his, her, their etc), (4) the quantifiers (some, any, no, every, each, either, neither, enough, much etc), (5) the WH determiners (what(ever), which(ever), whose, etc) (281). They go on further to assert that the group 3 determiners are of four types, which includes: (1) cardinal numerals (one two, three, four etc), (2) ordinal numerals (first, second, third, fourth etc), (3) general ordinals (next, last, other etc), (4) quantifiers (many, few, little, several, more, less etc) (281).

Leech *et al.* [8] put that the premodifiers of noun phrases can be determiners, enumerators, adjectives, nouns, gentive phrases, adverbs (in the

initial position) and assortment of other categories, such as adjective phrases and other phrases, compound words of various kinds, -ven and -ing forms of verbs. They go further to add that the post modifiers of noun phrases can be prepositional phrases, relative clauses, adverbs, adjectives, and noun phrases in apposition). They conclude that because of the various kinds of modifiers, it is possible for noun phrases to reach considerable complexity (72). Therefore, it is noted again that various kinds of modifications in addition to the possibility of having indefinite subordinate phrases, are two major reasons by which a noun phrase can be very complex, as such its complexity makes its analysis and explanations somewhat difficult and confusing.

Areomo (222) puts that apart from determiners and adjectives, nouns also serve as premodifiers in the noun phrase, such that a noun may be used as a premodifier to another noun functioning as a head word. In this case, the nouns usually come after adjectives and take the position closest to the noun head, for example in the sentences:

City boys are fashionable  
She has met the city boy

Here, the nouns serving as premodifiers of the head word are underlined. He further claims that when a premodifying noun is preceded by an adjective, the adjective may modify the noun phrase head with the premodifying noun or modify only the premodifying noun, e.g. a new car engine, an old style engine, *et cetera*. Areomo (225) also argues that other items sometimes used to premodify the noun head include certain adverbs of place or time, prepositional phrases, noun phrases and whole sentences. For example:

He has told the inside story (with adverbs)  
It was an off-the-cuff remark (with prepositional phrase)  
We enjoyed the two-kilometer drive (with noun phrase)  
That is a very disturbing i-know-everything view (with a whole sentence)

All these further show the complexity of the structure that a noun phrase can take. This explains why Areomo (226) concludes that there is no theoretical limit to the number of adjectives or nouns that can be used as premodifiers, as such; it will be clear that it is not possible to illustrate a noun phrase with the maximally premodified noun word. This explains why Payne (64) posits that a noun phrase can have a very simple or a very complicated internal structure. He cites examples thus:

The dog (Simple noun phrase) the big black dog that always barks at me as I try vainly to sneak past the junkyard on my way home from piano lesson. (Complicated noun phrase).



He explains that the phrase in the second sentence has quite a bit of internal complexity, and therefore, requires a lot mental processing. However, once it is processed, it can enter into larger structures as easily as simple structures.

In comparison, Leech et al. [8] conclude that Prepositional phrases and Genitive phrases can be thought of as Noun phrases with an extra particle or marker added to them. Prepositional phrase is a phrase that has a preposition at the beginning while a genitive phrase is one that has the marker ('s) at the end of the phrase. For example:

The bride of the heir apparent  
The heir apparent's bride

Here, of the heir apparent in the first example is a prepositional phrase while the heir apparent's in the second example is a genitive phrase. They conclude that the difference between them is that the preposition is added to the front of the prepositional phrase, whereas the genitive marker ('s) is added to the end of the genitive phrase. It is in this light of similarity that Biber et al. [9] conclude that noun phrases and prepositional phrases can have particularly complex structure in written texts, with several layers of the phrase embedding. They argue that the simplest structure occurs in conversations and the complexity in the written structure increases through fiction and newspaper writings. Therefore, it can be deduced that the complexity of the noun phrase in written texts is usually so because writers always make efforts to compress messages and information in their expressions and these meanings are usually tied to the use of premodifiers and post modifiers such that their multiple use bring about complexity in noun phrases. Also this explains why most newspaper editors employ an increased number of noun phrases in order to put information in a compact and integrated form perhaps to maximize space and time as well as to increase informality. This brings the study to the area of noun phrases in editorials, how noun phrases are used in newspaper writings and the media in general.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **The Nominal Group in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar**

Since the primary concern of this study is on the form and functional aspect of language, this study adopts Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar as its theoretical framework. This stems from the fact that it focuses not only on the structure of language but also on its functions in specific situations. In SFG, the nominal group (NG) is synonymous with noun phrase (NP) in other grammatical models. The ideational metafunction in the nominal group structure is divided into two components: experiential and logical [10]. The nominal group has a central element, a noun, which is surrounded by other elements whose function is to specify the reference of the noun. These elements or components in the nominal group occur in a certain sequence which is largely fixed though some variation is possible [10]. The logical component is mainly concerned with the order of the elements in the nominal group (structure) while the experiential component deals with the meaning (semantic) relations between the head and the elements that surround it. Systemic Functional Grammar has continued to enjoy wide acceptance and patronage from various linguists as they attempt to "make possible a coherent account of what grammar is and of its place in language" [11].

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sampling technique employed in this study is the random sampling technique. The editorials of March 2015 to May 2015 are sourced. Five editorials are selected based on the title of the editorials to make up ten editorials in total. Due to the high frequency of noun phrase in the editorials and time constraint, the first noun phrases in all the paragraphs of the editorials are selected for the analysis.

### **Method of Data Collection**

The primary source of data is the editorials of Thisday newspaper. The researcher would download the on-line version of the editorials. A total of five editorials would be downloaded and printed. The five editorials would consist of an editorial at piece for each newspaper.

### **Data Presentation**

The texts for the study and their titles are as follows:

Text I – Chibok Girls: One Year after...[19]

Text II – Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa [20]

Text III – The Execution of Four Nigerians in Indonesia

Text IV – The Task before IGP Arase [21]

Text V – Biometrics for the Banks [22]

**Table-1: Noun Phrases for the Analysis**

| Newspaper | Text | No. of Noun Phrase | Noun Phrase  |
|-----------|------|--------------------|--|
| Thisday   | I    | 1                  | one year that some 276 girls were abducted by Boko Haram insurgents from Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State  |
|           |      | 2                  | the political landscape of the country   |
|           |      | 3                  | the last one year  |
|           |      | 4                  | the one million women in Mexico to the hundreds of thousands from the United States of America, Pakistan, UK, Syria, Afghanistan, Canada, Japan and many African countries   |
|           |      | 5                  | the whereabouts of the abducted girls  |
|           |      | 6                  | Nigeria  |
|           |      | 7                  | indeed noteworthy that about six months ago, parents of the girls (some of whom have died) told the world that they would rather the bodies of their daughters be brought home than continue to live in such suspended animation |
|           |      | 8                  | the past few years hundreds of women   |
|           |      | 9                  | the situation  |
|           | II   | 10                 | a recent rally in the northern KwaZulu-Natal province  |
|           |      | 11                 | his lamentation  |
|           |      | 12                 | the monarch  |
|           |      | 13                 | that statement   |
|           |      | 14                 | the fact that there were forewarnings that the nationals of other African countries running shops, stalls and other businesses within the informal economy   |
|           |      | 15                 | the situation  |
|           |      | 16                 | South Africans   |
|           | III  | 17                 | Four Nigerians convicted of drug trafficking   |
|           |      | 18                 | The Indonesian government  |
|           |      | 19                 | the executions over  |
|           |      | 20                 | Part of the problem  |
|           |      | 21                 | other challenges   |
|           |      | 22                 | the families of the executed Nigerians   |
|           |      | 23                 | an elusive greener pasture   |
|           |      | 24                 | better enlightenment   |
|           |      | 25                 | all Nigerians  |
|           | IV   | 26                 | The Council of State, last week  |
|           |      | 27                 | Corruption   |
|           |      | 28                 | his seriousness  |
|           |      | 29                 | Arase on his elevation   |
|           |      | 30                 | many Nigerians   |
|           |      | 31                 | the country today  |
|           |      | 32                 | the police whose officers and men are supposed to be at the epicentre of restoring law and order within our national territory   |
|           |      | 33                 | Arase  |
|           | V    | 34                 | The new IGP Arase, who holds degrees in Political Science, Law and Strategic Studies   |
|           |      | 35                 | the last few months  |
|           |      | 36                 | The introduction of the BVN authentication   |
|           |      | 37                 | 2014 by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Bankers' Committee   |
|           |      | 38                 | The BVN  |
|           |      | 39                 | the view of Mr. Nnamdi Okonkwo, the chief executive officer of Fidelity Bank Plc   |
|           |      | 40                 | the Bankers' Committee   |

In Table 1 above, the noun phrases that will be used in the analysis are presented as they will be labelled in the study. The newspapers where they are located as well as the editorials are also indicated. A

total of 61 noun phrases are used in the analysis of which 40 from the corpus. The total number of noun phrases from each of the editorials is explicated in the Table 2 below:

**Table-2: Thisday Editorials and the number of noun phrases**

| Text  | No. of Noun Phrase |
|-------|--------------------|
| I     | 9                  |
| II    | 7                  |
| III   | 9                  |
| IV    | 9                  |
| V     | 6                  |
| Total | 40                 |

## DATA ANALYSIS

### The Noun Phrases and Their Frequency of Occurrence

The noun phrases are analysed to show their forms and the frequency in which they occur in such forms. The forms are: MH, MHQ, H, and HQ [23, 24].

### Thisday Newspaper Editorials

**Table-3: Text I: chibok girls: one year after...**

| Paragraph | No. of Noun Phrase | Noun Phrase  | Form of Noun Phrase |     |   |    |
|-----------|--------------------|--|---------------------|-----|---|----|
|           |                    |  | MH                  | MHQ | H | HQ |
| 1         | 1                  | one year that some 276 girls were abducted by Boko Haram insurgents from Government Girls Secondary School, Chibok, Borno State  |                     | *   |   |    |
| 2         | 2                  | the political landscape of the country   |                     | *   |   |    |
| 3         | 3                  | the last one year  | *                   |     |   |    |
| 4         | 4                  | the one million women in Mexico to the hundreds of thousands from the United States of America, Pakistan, UK, Syria, Afghanistan, Canada, Japan and many African countries   |                     | *   |   |    |
| 5         | 5                  | the whereabouts of the abducted girls  |                     | *   |   |    |
| 6         | 6                  | Nigeria  |                     |     | * |    |
| 7         | 7                  | indeed noteworthy that about six months ago, parents of the girls (some of whom have died) told the world that they would rather the bodies of their daughters be brought home than continue to live in such suspended animation |                     | *   |   |    |
| 8         | 8                  | the past few years hundreds of women   |                     | *   |   |    |
| 9         | 9                  | the situation  | *                   |     |   |    |
| Total     |                    |  | 2                   | 6   | 1 | 0  |

The table above shows that out of the 9 noun phrases in Text I, 2 have MH form, 6 have MHQ form, and 1 has H form while none occur in HQ form.

**Table-4: Text II: Xenophobic Attacks In South Africa**

| Paragraph | No of Noun Phrase | Noun Phrase  | Form of Noun Phrase |     |   |    |
|-----------|-------------------|--|---------------------|-----|---|----|
|           |                   |  | MH                  | MHQ | H | HQ |
| 1         | 10                | a recent rally in the northern KwaZulu-Natal province  |                     | *   |   |    |
| 2         | 11                | his lamentation  | *                   |     |   |    |
| 3         | 12                | the monarch  | *                   |     |   |    |
| 4         | 13                | that statement   | *                   |     |   |    |
| 5         | 14                | the fact that there were forewarnings that the nationals of other African countries running shops, stalls and other businesses within the informal economy |                     | *   |   |    |
| 6         | 15                | the situation  | *                   |     |   |    |
| 7         | 16                | South Africans   |                     |     | * |    |
| Total     | 7                 |  | 4                   | 2   | 1 | 0  |

The table above indicate that there are 7 noun phrases in Text II and the noun phrases take the form of

MH 4 times, MHQ, 2 times, H, 1 time and 0 for the HQ form.

**Table-5: Text III: The execution of four Nigerians in Indonesia**

| Paragraph | No of Noun Phrase | Noun Phrase                                  | Form of Noun Phrase |     |   |    |
|-----------|-------------------|--|---------------------|-----|---|----|
|           |                   |  | MH                  | MHQ | H | HQ |
| 1         | 17                | Four Nigerians convicted of drug trafficking |                     | *   |   |    |
| 2         | 18                | The Indonesian government                    | *                   |     |   |    |
| 3         | 19                | the executions over                          |                     | *   |   |    |
| 4         | 20                | Part of the problem                          | *                   |     |   |    |
| 5         | 21                | other challenges                             | *                   |     |   |    |
| 6         | 22                | the families of the executed Nigerians       |                     | *   |   |    |
| 7         | 23                | an elusive greener pasture                   | *                   |     |   |    |
| 8         | 24                | better enlightenment                         | *                   |     |   |    |
| 9         | 25                | all Nigerians                                | *                   |     |   |    |
| Total     | 9                 |  | 6                   | 3   | 0 | 0  |

From the table above, out of the 9 noun phrases in Text III, 6 have MH form, 3 have MHQ form, 0 has H and HQ forms.

**Table-6: Text IV: The Task Before Igp Arase**

| Paragraph | No. of Noun Phrase | Noun Phrase  | Form of Noun Phrase |     |   |    |
|-----------|--------------------|--|---------------------|-----|---|----|
|           |                    |  | MH                  | MHQ | H | HQ |
| 1         | 26                 | The Council of State, last week  |                     | *   |   |    |
| 2         | 27                 | Corruption   |                     |     | * |    |
| 3         | 28                 | his seriousness  | *                   |     |   |    |
| 4         | 29                 | Arase on his elevation   |                     |     |   | *  |
| 5         | 30                 | many Nigerians   | *                   |     |   |    |
| 6         | 31                 | the country today  |                     | *   |   |    |
| 7         | 32                 | the police whose officers and men are supposed to be at the epicentre of restoring law and order within our national territory |                     | *   |   |    |
| 8         | 33                 | Arase  |                     |     | * |    |
| 9         | 34                 | The new IGP Arase, who holds degrees in Political Science, Law and Strategic Studies   |                     | *   |   |    |
| Total     | 9                  |  | 2                   | 4   | 2 | 1  |

The table above shows that out of the 9 noun phrases in Text IV, 2 have MH form, 4 have MHQ form, and 2 have H form while 1 occur in HQ form.

**Table-7: Text V: Biometrics For The Banks**

| Paragraph | No of Noun Phrase | Noun Phrase  | Form of Noun Phrase |     |   |    |
|-----------|-------------------|--|---------------------|-----|---|----|
|           |                   |  | MH                  | MHQ | H | HQ |
| 1         | 35                | the last few months  | *                   |     |   |    |
| 2         | 36                | The introduction of the BVN authentication                                       |                     | *   |   |    |
| 3         | 37                | 2014 by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Bankers' Committee             |                     |     |   | *  |
| 4         | 38                | The BVN  | *                   |     |   |    |
| 5         | 39                | the view of Mr. Nnamdi Okonkwo, the chief executive officer of Fidelity Bank Plc |                     | *   |   |    |
| 6         | 40                | the Bankers' Committee   | *                   |     |   |    |
| Total     | 6                 |  | 3                   | 2   | 0 | 1  |

In the table above, out of the 6 noun phrases in Text V, 3 are in MH form, 2 in MHQ form, 0 in H form and 1 in HQ form.



**Table-8: Summary of noun phrase occurrence in Thisday newspaper editorials**

| Text  | Total No. of Noun Phrase | Total No. of MH | Total No. of MHQ | Total No. of H | Total No. of HQ |
|-------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| I     | 9                        | 2               | 6                | 1              | 0               |
| II    | 7                        | 4               | 2                | 1              | 0               |
| III   | 9                        | 6               | 3                | 0              | 0               |
| IV    | 9                        | 2               | 4                | 2              | 1               |
| V     | 6                        | 3               | 2                | 0              | 1               |
| TOTAL | 40                       | 17              | 17               | 4              | 2               |

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to undertake an analysis of noun phrases in Thisday newspaper editorials aimed at determining the forms and functions of the noun phrases in the editorial and also to determine the form that is most commonly used in the corpus. From the analysis, it is clear that the forms of noun phrase used in the editorials are: MH, MHQ, H, and HQ. The study revealed that out of the 61 noun phrases used in the analysis, 22 were in MH form, 29 were in MHQ form, 6 were in H form and, 4 were in HQ form. Similarly, the study established that the form that is most commonly used in Thisday newspaper editorials are MH and MHQ as both occur 17 times out of the 40 noun phrases used for the analysis.

From the forgoing, it is apparent that the forms of the noun phrases used in these editorials will not in any way hinder the understanding of the editorials notwithstanding the educational background of the reader. It is also clear that their use in the editorials do not render the editorials ineffective or less effective in their communicative role.

## CONCLUSION

The research found that Thisday editorials have high information density on the higher frequency of noun phrase in their editorials as well as the higher number of complex noun phrase forms. The implication of this is that readers of Thisday editorials have easier and faster access to information presented in the editorials and a higher level of understanding of the information transmitted as well as against readers of Leadership newspaper editorials. In view of the findings of this work, the study concludes that the form of noun phrases used in the editorials as well as the frequency of their usage affect the understanding and interpretation of the editorials either positively or negatively depending on whether the form is complex and frequently used or not complex and frequently used as the case may be.

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