

LEARNING IN FEAR: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINES ON SCHOOL ATTACKS IN NIGERIA

Akpere Geraldine. E.

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Akpere Geraldine. E.
Department of Arts, School of General Studies
Delta State Polytechnic, Otefe-Oghara, Delta State Nigeria.
geraldineakpere@gmail.com.
08053001727,0815439398.

Abstract

This paper examines, from the lens of critical discourse, the spate of attacks on educational facilities in Nigeria as reported in newspaper headlines. The main concern of this paper is that attacks on educational facilities across Nigeria are direct assault on the tenets of western education and an indirect attack on the future of the nation. This study is qualitative in nature and the data was generated from the online versions of the chosen newspapers. The period considered in this study was January 2020 to May 2021. The reason for choosing this timeframe was to ascertain if the interregnum occasioned by the Covid-19 provided a cessation period for attacks on educational facilities, namely schools, school administrators and students. The theory used for the explication of the headlines is critical discourse analysis (CDA) as propounded by Norman Fairclough (1989). The findings of the paper reveal that newspaper headlines provide an avenue for mirroring subtle power dynamics, ideologies and social identities. The paper concludes that attacks on education are hegemonic in texture and a calculated attempt to frustrate the development of education for religious, political and pecuniary purposes.

Keywords: headlines, print media, education, critical discourse

Introduction

This paper is an investigation of how language use and patterns of its organisation in online newspaper headlines constitute discourse of power. The focus of the paper is on headlines that reported attacks on educational facilities, administrators and students. The paper argues that newspaper headlines are a veritable standpoint for the explication of power subtleties which have hegemonic and multihued propensities. The paper examines the linguistic and discursive strategies employed in the headlines as textual evidence of the various forms of power negotiations and ideological projections which are espoused both overtly and covertly against the Nigerian State. By exploring the functional and structural constituents of the headlines which are the texts, this paper provides new insights into the linguistic interpretations of meanings in news headlines and different shades of meaning which are indexical of power struggles, ideological projections and social identity .

Newspaper Headlines as Discourse of Power

The term ‘discourse’ suffers from definitional fluidity because of its varied dimensions. It is often loosely seen as language in use or language at work. This perception sets it apart as a subset of all social processes and as social practice. It is also perceived as register, language used in a given area of specialty. It is also defined in social practices as ways of representing the world, ways of interacting and ways of reflecting identities (Fairclough, 2003:27). The term ‘newspaper’ is a fusion of two words, namely news and paper. The former denotes a plethora of meaning, namely recent information, current events, programme, somebody or

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something interesting, something previously unknown while the latter is also a polysemous genus. However, the basic meaning of 'paper' as any thin flat material made from wood pulp suffices in this case. The knowledge of compounding as one of the major morphological imperatives is of essence here as it helps us to understand that agglutination is one process of forming compounds. As noted by Carstairs-McCarthy (2002:61) 'It is with nouns that compounding really comes into its own as a word.' Crystal (1994:129) had argued that a compound comprises a unit of vocabulary with one lexical item which on the surface may appear to be two or more lexemes but in reality, the constituents function as a single item with its grammar and meaning configuration. A newspaper, therefore, is seen in this study as any publication printed on large sheets of paper that are folded together and that contains news and comments on topical and current events, alongside features and advertisements that usually appear daily or weekly with a national spread.

Richardson (2007: 10) in his book *Analysing Newspaper: An Approach from Critical Discourse Analysis*, situates the book on a tripod of society, journalism and language. For this paper, the last is worthy of note even though they all affect one another in varying degrees. In his view of language use or discourse in newspapers, he notes five critical assumptions about language which are its social nature, its centrality to all human affairs, its defining nature of the human species, its meaning potentialities, and its power to delete meaning. He puts it thus:

Language use exists in a kind of dialogue with society: language is produced by society (through the effect of language use on people) it goes on to help to recreate it. Language *first* represents social realities and *second* contributes to the production and reproduction of social life and social reality. The social-ness of language is revealed in a number of ways.: for example, the way in which people speak to each other is in part a product of social context.... As well as the physical and institutional setting, language use reflects 'speakers' identities, expectations as to what speakers intend to accomplish in a particular cat of communication, elements of a wider social structure in which speakers are caught....

From the foregoing, language, is no longer perceived as a mere reflection of reality but an integral factor in its creation. Generally speaking, language use by gatekeepers such as editors plays a crucial role in shaping issues in society and setting the borderlines of discourse with reference to what is talked about and how it is talked about (Henry and Tator, 2002).

Online Newspaper Headlines as Discursive Elements

For Van Dijk (1998), there are seven areas of cardinal consideration in the examination of newspaper headlines. He insists that the analyst should consider the headlines from the broad spectrum of its position, the boldness of the headline, the vocabulary deployed, the deployment of punctuation marks, the syntax, the frequency of occurrences on the same event and the power of the presenter. In the study carried out by Sari (2019), the discourse dimensions of headline news were explored with particular focus on online media, detik.com, using the Faircloughian theory in the analysis of data. The result revealed that newspaper headlines deployed figurative language and subjective language as a way of attracting readership.

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The troika of functionality as summarised by Van Dijk are first, the provision of a concise synopsis of the main news elements; second, the deployment of varied font sizes and vocabulary to win the reader's attention and third, the indication of content and style of the newspaper. The first point gives the reader the pith of the news and the other ones make the presentation appealing. Undoubtedly, this is for aesthetic reasons (Conboy, 2007).

The advent of the Internet and its social media cousins has provided a fertile ground for the blossoming of the electronic versions of newspapers. A lot of scholars had feared that the electronic age might result in the near 'death' of the traditional print media. This worry is expressed covertly by Newman *et al.* (2017) in their observation that online news constitutes the biggest source of information today while printed newspapers have witnessed a significant nosedive in readership in the past decade. Apparently, one of the plausible corollaries of the development of information and communication technology for the media industry is digitalisation which has seriously affected production and distribution of content. Digitalisation and consumption behaviour of digital media affect the sustainability of the print media industry (Sari (2019). However, both forms are not absolutely independent of each other, but exist in complementary relationships.

Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Fairclough, (1989:73), CDA is concerned with the manner power is enacted and exercised in discourse which describes how the whole social order of discourse is driven by language. CDA proponents posit that language 'provides a timely articulated vehicle for differences of power in social hierarchical structures', Wodak (2007:210). Therefore, CDA is interested in how linguistic forms are used in expressing and manipulating power. Fairclough, a major proponent of CDA, identifies the major task of this theory as identifying how relations of domination and inequalities, arising from societies are produced, and reproduced in discourse. Therefore, the application of the analytical tools provided by CDA to power relations in the society reveals the power holder, and the linguistic elements of enacting power in a specific text. CDA is also concerned with the ways in which power relations, dominance and inequality, produced by discourse are enacted, maintained and reproduced by text and talk in social and political context, van Dijk, (2001:352). It is differentiated from other forms of DA by its 'critical nature'. 'Critical' implies showing connections and causes which are hidden; and intervention as in providing resources for those who are disadvantaged through change, Fairclough, (1995:9). The term 'critical' is considered by Wodak and Meyer (2009:7) as 'making visible the interconnectedness of things' to 'produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves through self and group reflection.' In this study, this unveiling of hidden meaning is vital because such are not always obvious to the powerless and the oppressed, hence they may not be resisted. Fairclough clarifies three levels of doing CDA of any text. First is the context in which the text is produced. The second is the discourse practice level that is the way the text is received. The third level is the details of the text itself also referred to by him as the 'textual level'.

Ideology is a concept in CDA that is believed to be intrinsically critical to how language is shaped or framed in communication with reference to how it authenticates, validates and legitimises language, Ghaderinezhad (2015). Simpson (1993: 5) provides a succinct definition of ideology as 'assumptions, beliefs, value-systems which are shared collectively by social groups.' Acquiescing to the opinion held by Simpson, Dijk(2006:2) notes that there are no personal ideologies but shared belief systems upheld by a social group who draw their ideologies from the shared social pool. For Fowler (1991:10) 'anything that is said or written

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about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position' is a pointer to the fact that language is not ideologically neutral and any attempt to represent it in either of the forms would leave imprints of ideology for scrutiny.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is the theoretical paradigm adopted in this paper. This theoretical choice is taken with a view to examining and explaining how newspaper headlines on attacks on educational facilities communicate diverse forms of both covert and overt power relations. This theory is expected to help us realise how the communicative functions of language demonstrates forms of power and ideology in the headlines, especially the ability to make transparent what has been previously hidden from public consciousness by introducing a process of self-reflection in individuals.

The Faircloughian model of discourse exploration sets out to contribute to social and cultural analysis, by combining the tradition of textual analysis, an aspect that explains language in an enclosed space within the wider context of society. Fairclough views language as social practice where power is enacted rather than a personal activity or reflection. CDA is a multidisciplinary and analytic school of Discourse Analysis (DA) that emphasizes the way power related issues are exposed by text and talk. Nwagbara, (2008:120) posits that the theoretical principles of CDA analyses language use as a communicative event, probing the social and ideological outcomes of language use as well as considering the extent to which language use represents the exercise of power and authority. It also involves an analysis of the relationship between language, power and ideology. The theory views language as a phenomenon that possesses meaning and conveys power relations in particular contexts and is used for describing, interpreting, analysing, and critiquing language use in social life as reflected in texts. The implication of the above is that language centrally involves power and its control, which also involves the ideological properties of language. In agreement, Fowler (1996:6) supports the 'view' as he argues that the ordinary readers (the oppressed) is not theorized, so he has to be equipped to engage in 'demystifying' readings of ideology laden texts.

Language as Power Correlate

Power is a central concept in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and it is investigated in a given context. It is defined in terms of control whether implicitly or explicitly. This must be the reason Bullock, (2000:678) presents it as the 'ability of the holder to exact compliance or obedience of others to his will.' Thus, people are assumed to be in possession of power if they can influence the acts and minds of others because they have access to scarce resources like force, knowledge, information, social position, which other do not have, Weiss and Wodak, (2003:210); van Dijk, (2001:254) and Luke, (1997:53). In examining how the possession of the 'scarce social resources' results in the possession of power and control, the discursive nature of the newspaper headlines is described against the backdrop of how language is used in effecting the power clause.

Language, an important medium of emphasizing or de-emphasizing information is a means of mirroring power and the struggle to control it in societies. Kress, (1999:52) and Fairclough (2003:218) attest to the fact that language is entwined in social power by indexing and expressing it and getting involved whenever there is contention over and challenge to power.

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Therefore, language usage is definable, within social boundaries such as social, religious, political, security and educational issues.

Methodology

This study is descriptive and analytical in nature. It is an investigation of language use in newspaper headlines on attacks on educational facilities, personnel and students to elicit patterns of human language behaviour and the reasons for such behaviour. The data for this study are thirty-two (32) online versions of some national dailies in Nigeria, namely, *Vanguard*, *ThisDay*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Punch*, *Daily Sun* and *The Nation*. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in the gathering of the data from the online sites of the media organisations. The period investigated in this study was January 2020 to May 2021.

Analysis

Following the Faircloughian model that focuses on text (the object of linguistic analysis), discourse practices (the practices, distribution and conception of texts) and social cultural practices (power relations, ideologies and hegemonic struggles that discourse reproduce, challenge or restructure), the analysis of this paper explicates the different perspectives enunciated by Fairclough.

Textual Analysis

In this analysis, an attempt is made to account for the linguistic configuration of the headlines of the different online newspapers at the different levels of language description. At the level of the lexicon, the headlines have a preponderance of words that are indexical of wanton destruction of life and property in the country. The lexemes of the headlines are built around content words which are reflections of the social actors and events in the headlines.

S/N	VANGUARD HEADLINES	AGENTS	PROCESS	GOAL
EXT. 1	Gunmen attack catholic school, abduct 4	Gunmen (powerful)	Attack	Catholic school (powerless)
EXT. 2	Confusion over 884 student as gunmen attack Katsina school	Gunmen (powerful)	attack	Katsina school (powerless)
EXT.3	Protests rock Katsina over abducted 333 schoolboys	Protest	rock	Schoolboys
EXT. 4	Katsina abductions: 2 students killed by kidnappers	Kidnappers (powerful)	killed	Students(powerless)
EXT.5	How bandits killed students, abducted 42-Principal	Bandits(powerful)	Killed	Students, principal (powerless)
EXT. 6	Outrage, protests greet abductions of school girls	Outrage, protests	greet	Schoolgirls (powerless)
EXT. 7	Military base, school burnt in fresh B-Haram attack	B-Haram (powerful)	Burnt	School, military base(powerless)
EXT. 8	Bandits raid varsity, kidnap 23 students, attack army base	Bandits (powerful)	Raid, kidnap, attack	Varsity, students army base (powerless)
EXT.	Bandits kill three abducted	Bandits	Kill	Varsity students

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9	varsity students	(powerful)		(powerless)
EXT. 10	Pay 100m, give us 10 bikes or we'll kill 17 students- Abductors	We(powerful)	Pay, give, kill	Government (powerless)

TABLE 1

The headlines in Table 1 were gathered from the *Vanguard* newspaper. From a syntactic point, the majority of the headlines were cast in two voices, the active and the passive. In the active voice, the headlines begin with the Agent as doer which is the grammatical subject of the verb in an active clause. A prototypical agent is conscious and acts with volition (on purpose), and performs an action that has a physical, visible effect while the Goal is the receiver of the action (process) conveyed by the verb. The position of the Agent puts him/ them in the position of power to effectuate the action conveyed by the verb. The headlines that have been cast in the active voice present the Agent as having the ability to act and therefore, the Agent is a holder of power with the capacity to operationalise it. However, the Goal/object or receiver of the act conveyed by the verb is presented as someone with less power. The argument here is that the way headlines are presented, from a syntactic point, can reveal different power polarities, irrespective of the position of the Agent or what comes before it in the headline. The attempt to present the headline from the angle of the Goal or receiver does not lessen the power potential of the Agent as having power over the Goal. In each headline, the Goal (students, schoolboys, schoolgirls, government, army base, principal) which are also the objects of *attack*, *kill*, *kidnap*, *raid* *burning* are presented as being powerless against the Agents.

S/N	THISDAY HEADLINES	AGENT	PROCESS	GOALS
EXT. 1	Katsina School Abduction: We Have Located Attackers' Hideout, Says Buhari	Buhari	Located, says	Attackers' hideout, school
EXT. 2	In Gut-wrenching Video, Terrorists Torture Kidnapped School Students	Terrorists(powerful)	Torture	School students (powerless)
EXT.3	Northern States Tighten Security to Curb Abduction of Schoolchildren	Northern states	Tighten, curb	Security, schoolchildren (powerless)
EXT. 4	Name Schoolgirls' Abductors, ACF, Afenifere, PANDEF Tell Zamfara Gov	ACF, Afenifere, PANDEF	Name, Tell	Zamfara Gov, schoolgirls (powerless)
EXT.5	Insecurity Worsen as Bandits Attack Zamfara School, Abduct Students, Teachers	Bandits (powerful)	Worsen, attack, abduct	Insecurity, school, students, teachers (powerless)
EXT. 6	After 37 Days Captivity, Bandits Issue Death	Bandits (powerful)	issue	Students(powerless)

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	Threats to 29 Afaka Students			
EXT. 7	Five Days after, Kagara students, others still in bandits' captivity	Bandits (powerful)		Kagara students (powerless)

Table II

The extracts in Table II were gathered from *This Day* newspaper. This media organisation has a different way it has presented its headlines even though the areas of reportage do not markedly differ from what the *Vanguard* newspaper had reported. Each of the headlines has been presented without directly conceding power to the enemies of State. This style of headlining is a subtle way of deemphasising the power of agency exercised by those identified as terrorists and bandits. The newspaper's preference for beginning their headlines with other information before the Agent lends credence to the fact that it does not wish to give much recognition to the power they possess. Consequently, the headline becomes a graphic field for reducing the power of the terrorists and bandits by not giving them linguistic prominence. However, it is tenable to argue that irrespective of this power reduction strategy deployed by the media, the positions of the participants in the power quadrangle are not obliquely projected. The identification of one of the polarities of power makes access to the other pole inevitable. Therefore, identifying the Goals (students, security, schoolchildren) as victims or powerless entities provides one side of the coin with the other side as the powerful one. This position is implicitly occupied by any Agent capable of performing the actions denoted by the verbs such as *torture*, *attack*, *abduct* are lexemes of coercion of force. Unarguably, it stands to reason that the terrorists and bandits are the power holders. The attempt to cast those who hold political power as power holders fails the test of coercion adequacy because of the verb types used to describe their actions such as *located*, *says*, *tighten*, *curb*, *name* and *tell*. The underlying import of these interactions lies in the fact that the government has failed in the protection of citizens' life and property. The abduction of schoolchildren by terrorists and bandits underscores their palpable aversion to western education.

S/N	DAILY SUN HEADLINES	AGENTS	PROCESSES	GOAL
EXT. 1	Uproar as bandits kill, abduct students, other in Niger State	Bandits (powerful)	Kill, abduct	Student(powerless)
EXT. 2	Katsina Students Attack: PDP KNOCKS BUHARI as president orders army, police to go after attackers	PDP	Knocks, orders, go	Katsina students, Buhari(powerless)
EXT.3	Kidnappers attack primary school	Kidnappers (powerful)	attack	Primary school (powerless)
EXT. 4	Confusion over fate of Zamfara schoolgirls			Zamfara schoolgirls (powerless)

Table III

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The Extracts in Table III were taken from the *Daily Sun* newspaper. Only four headlines were taken from this paper. This newspaper's position is not different that of the *Vanguard's*. The bandits, kidnappers, and the PDP are presented as power holders while the students, President Buhari and the educational institution are cast as powerless entities. Extract 4 is a verbless headline and is also without a subject. However, the position of the schoolgirls as victims is not in doubt.

S/N	THE NATION HEADLINES	AGENTS	PROCESS	GOALS
EXT. 1	Fresh mass abduction from school hostel spark outrage	Abductors (powerful)	Spark	School(powerless)
EXT. 2	27 abducted forestry college students freed after 57 days	Abductors (powerful)	freed	Forestry college students (powerless)
EXT.3	Govt negotiating through ex-bandits to free schoolgirls	Govt/ ex-bandits (powerful)	Negotiating, free	Schoolgirls (powerless)
EXT. 4	Hundreds missing as bandits attack Katsina secondary school	Bandits (powerful)	attack	Secondary school (powerless)
EXT. 5	We were negotiating, didn't expect kidnappers to kill our children- parents	kidnappers	Negotiating, expect, kill	Parents, children (powerless)

Table IV

The headlines that make up Table IV were taken from *The Nations* newspaper. The headline posture of this paper is almost similar to *ThisDay's*. The lexemes of power reside with the abductors, bandits and kidnappers while the school, forestry college students, schoolgirls, children are presented as powerless victims. The power holders are presented as people whose actions can create a reaction. They are also viewed as people who have the weapon of violence that can make their victims' relations and even the State to do their bidding. Negotiation has been shown as an unpredictable process of engaging the power holders as victims had been killed in the process of negotiations.

S/N	NIGERIAN TRIBUNE HEADLINES	AGENTS	PROCESS	GOALS
EXT. 1	Outrage greets abduction of katsina schoolboys	Abductors (powerful)	greets	Schoolboys (powerless)
EXT. 2	NSA, IGP rush to Minna over kidnap of 27 students	NSA, IGP	rush	Students NSA, IGP (powerless)
EXT.3	How bandits moved abducted 333 Katsina schoolboys- DHQ	Bandits (powerful)	moved	Schoolboys, DHQ (powerless)

Table V

Table V extracts were taken from the *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper. The lexemes of power reside with abductors, bandits and kidnappers while the students and schoolboy are the Goals or the receivers of the actions of being moved. Though in Extract 3, the NSA and IGP are

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presented as doing the verb ‘rush’, they still fall outside the matrix of power because their action is only reactionary in nature.

S/N	THE PUNCH HEADLINES	ACTORS	PROCESS	GOALS
EXT. 1	Niger School Invasion: Bandits tied 42 abductees in pairs, fled to bush on motorbikes- Resident	Bandits (powerful)	Tied, fled	Niger school, resident (powerless)
EXT. 2	We’ll starve schoolboys to death- Niger abductors	Abductors, we(powerful)	starve	Schoolboys (powerless)
EXT.3	Gov denies ransom as Boko Haram frees 344 schoolboys	Boko Haram (powerful)	Frees, denies	Schoolboys, govt (powerless)

Table VI

The three extracts that make up Table VI were taken from *The Punch* newspaper. Extract I is presented in the active voice. The bandits are shown as powerful persons who did the actions of tying their powerless victims and fleeing with them without being challenged by the military might of the State. The polarities of power are therefore obvious in the extract. In Extract 2, the abductors are reported as having the means to threaten, not only their powerless abductees but by extension their parents and the government. In Extract 3, though the subject is the governor of a state, who is presented as being as powerless as much as the abducted schoolboys, the real power of agency lies with the Boko Haram elements. The governor is on the defensive when he denies that he paid any ransom for the release of the abducted students. The power of the sect is again underlined by the fact that they alone can rescue their victims as the government has shown itself to be incapable of freeing the abducted student unilaterally.

Ideology in the Texts

Ideology is a concept in CDA that is believed to be intrinsically critical to how language is shaped or framed in communication, with reference to how it authenticates, validates and legitimises language, Ghaderinezhad (2015). Simpson (1993: 5) provides a succinct definition of ideology as ‘assumptions, beliefs, value- systems which are shared collectively by social groups.’ Acquiescing to the opinion held by Simpson, Dijk(2006:2) notes that there are no personal ideologies but shared belief systems shared by a social group who draw their ideologies from the shared social pool. For Fowler (1991: 10) ‘anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position’. This submission is a pointer to the fact that language is not ideologically neutral and any attempt to represent it in either of the verbal forms would leave imprints of ideology for scrutiny.

Ideology of Radicalism

This is one major ideology that is latent in all the headlines. This same ideology seems to encapsulate other ideologies because it is a multidimensional phenomenon in this age of globalisation and can be recreated to fit into new moulds to challenge new civilisational challenges or perceived oppression, (Kudriashova, 2018). It could be argued that this ideology has birthed such others forms such as terrorism, extremism and revolutionism which are characteristic of negative and destructive processes and phenomena which challenge the concept of institutional legitimacy of the State.

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Ideology of Extremism and Oppression

This ideology is one that considers and adopts severe measures in the pursuit of certain socially intrinsic goals which may be religious or political. Political extremism and political terrorism are violent means deployed by radical groups seeking relevance and space to influence State decisions. Lexemes that point to extreme forms of action are *attack*, *kill*, *abduct* as seen in the headlines.

VANGUARD NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Extract 1: Gunmen *attack* catholic school, *abduct* 4

Extract 2: Confusion over 884 student as gunmen *attack* Katsina school

Extract 4: Katsina abductions: 2 students *killed* by kidnappers

Extract 5: How bandits *killed* students, *abducted* 42- Principal

Extract 7: Military base, school *burnt* in fresh B-Haram attack

Extract 8: Bandits *raid* varsity, *kidnap* 23 students, *attack* army base

Extract 9: Bandits *kill* three abducted varsity students

Extract 10: Pay 100m, give us 10 bikes or we'll *kill* 17 students- Abductors

THISDAY NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Extract 2: In Gut-wrenching Video, Terrorists *Torture* Kidnapped School Students

Extract 5: Insecurity Worsen as Bandits Attack Zamfara School, Abduct Students, Teachers

Extract 6: After 37 Days Captivity, Bandits *Issue Death Threats* to 29 Afaka Students

DAILY SUN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Extract 1: Uproar as bandits *kill*, *abduct* students, other in Niger State

Extract 3: Kidnappers *attack* primary school

THE NATION NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Extract 4: Hundreds missing as bandits *attack* Katsina secondary school

Extract 5: We were negotiating, didn't expect kidnappers to *kill* our children-parents

THE PUNCH NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Extract 1: Niger School Invasion: Bandits tied 42 abductees in pairs, fled to bush on motorbikes- Resident

Extract 2: We'll starve schoolboys to death- Niger abductors

Identities in the Headlines

The participants seen in the newspaper headlines, namely, the Agents and the Goals have been identified in different ways which can also be called labels. It is also noteworthy that such descriptions follow from the type of acts perpetuated by those who are the perceived enemies of State and those who are victimised by their actions. The discursive construction of identity in the headlines is the prerogative of the media, a dominant force in the shaping and reportage of varied forms of power play in society. In the headlines, the perceived enemies of State are identified and labelled with negative epithets in the *Vanguard* newspaper as *gunmen*, *kidnappers*, *bandits*, *Boko Haram*, *abductors*; in *ThisDay* newspaper headlines, they

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are described as *attackers, terrorists, abductors* and *bandits*; in the *Daily Sun*, they are described as *bandits, attackers* and *kidnappers*; in the *Nation* newspaper headlines, they are described as *ex- bandits, bandits* and *kidnappers*; in the *Nigerian Tribune*, they are described as *bandits* and in The *Punch* newspaper headlines, they are described as *bandits, abductors* and Boko Haram.

Conclusion

This paper has examined and explicated how language use and its organisation in newspaper headlines can reveal different textures of meaning in newspaper headlines in Nigeria, with emphasis on reported attacks on educational facilities, educationists and schoolchildren. The impetus for the study stemmed from the unprecedented level of incessant attacks on education and its far-reaching implications for the future of education in Nigeria and the security of life and property. The findings of the paper reveal that newspaper headline are a fertile ground for exploring the fluidity of covert power dynamics, implicit ideologies and the discursive construction of social identities.

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APPENDIX



January 10, 2020



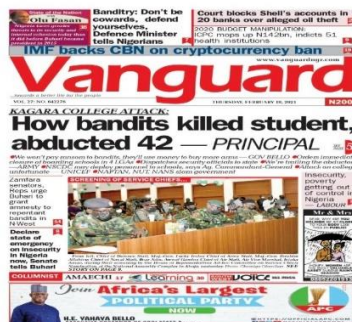
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December 14, 2020



December 15, 2020



February 11, 2021



February 27, 2021

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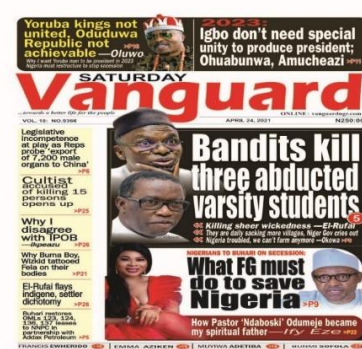
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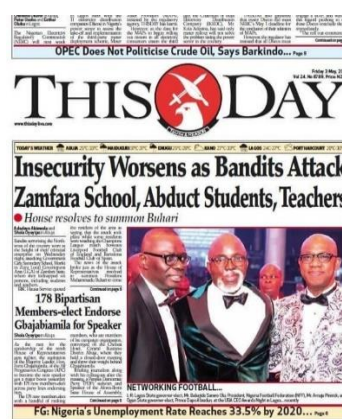
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April 17, 2021



February 21, 2021



November 18, 2020



Dec 13, 2020



16 March -2021



March 1,2021



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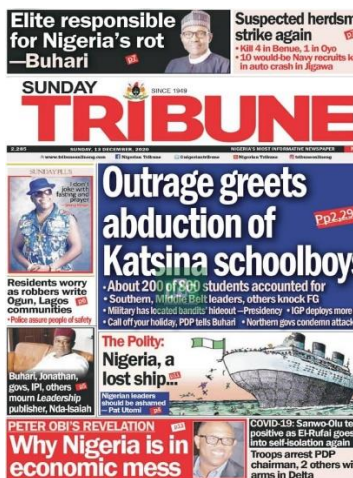
Akperere Geraldine. E.



February 25, 2021



April 24, 2021



Dec 13, 2020



Feb 18, 2021



December 15, 2020



February 18, 2021



February 25, 2021



Dec 18, 2020