Applying Language Resource of Transitivity to the Study of Newspaper Report

Saminu Isyaku
Department of English and Literature Studies,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

Abstract
The essence of this paper is not just to demonstrate familiarity with the notion of transitivity system in relation to newspaper reporting but also to investigate the extent to which Halliday's framework helps in the study of the language of newspaper reporting. The theoretical standpoint adopted for this article is "systemic functional theory as proposed by M.A.K. Halliday. The significance of this paper lies in the fact that it provides an insight on how the logical components of a language interact with the grammatical components in the process of construction of a report. This is known as transitivity resource, a resource for reporting goings-on. The paper provides a useful insight for the understanding of the role of transitivity system in the characterization of newspaper reporting. The paper also highlights the significant relationship holding between linguistic system and text(such as newspaper report). A textual analysis of newspaper report is demonstrated to indicate the relationship between language resource and news reporting.

Introduction
Transitivity analysis of a text (such as report) grew out of the work of M.A.K. Halliday. In Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, transitivity system is an aspect of the experiential meaning of a text within the context of use. It is a system that is concerned with the ideational function of language which is construed through the different types of *goings-on (proces$),* the *participants* and the *circumstances* associated with the process (Halliday, 1994). By this assertion, Halliday attempts to describe how transitivity system could be used to characterize text genre (for example, newspaper reporting). This paper therefore attempts to examine how the language of newspaper reportage portrays meaningful choices generated from a linguistic system.

News reporting is a perfect example of language in use, language being used to achieve a particular communicative purpose. It is an instance of how meaning plays a significant role in creation and analysis of a text.

Newspapers have important functions in the development of language and culture. They inform the readers about what is happening around them and in the world generally. However they are filtered/influenced by the language used in their production. In view of the functions they perform, newspapers reports must be situationally relevant because newspapers are produced to serve certain readership. Scanlan (2006:66) defines news reporting as "the act of collecting, information". "It is also the act of communicating information". The two activities of collecting and communicating information are required in news reporting. One cannot do one without having done the other. In another instance, Scalan asserts that 'if idea are the seeds of stories, then reporting is the fertilizer, the compost of fact statistics, quotes and interpretations that allow the reporter to produce a functional complete, clear and accurate story (lbid:6).

Scholars classify news reporting according to their subject matter. Some news reports pertain to rural communities, science, sports, health-related issues accidents and some other areas. A

good reporter may not have knowledge of every field before transferring information to the general publics, what is required is the use of language functionally. For example, It is common for scientists to define 'compound' by its structure. But in the mass media, it is what the compound does or its function that is important.

Similarly, the mass audience need not be scientists to understand a report that covers the area of science. The most important link between a reporter and the audience is the language used. How the reporter encodes his experience and how he presents his experiences to his audience through the grammar of the clause is very important. The representation of the reality is a possible resource provided by transitivity system within the structure of a clause (from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics).

Alfred and John (1996), in describing the language of reporting, assert that "many editors tell their reporters to think 'SVO' when they write.... The idea is to write straight- forwardly and directly". According to them, a "strong, lively writing is dominated by sentences with active verbs. In addition good new stories or worthy information answer the questions posed by the five Ws and H (P. 60). The interpretation of the five Ws and H can be seen as follow:

Who is involved or affected?	=	participant(s)
What happened?	=	Process
When did it take place?	=	circumstance/time
Where did it take place?	=	circumstance/place
How did it happen?	=	circumstance /manner

All the 'Ws' and the 'H' questions raised above are central to transitivity system of the clause structure in Systemic Functional Linguistics. The Ws and H when used in reporting reveal the various aspects of the linguistic context.

Text and Linguistic System

Text is the manifestation of linguistic system in a situation of use. It is an instance of use which de Saussure (1916) refers to as 'Parole' that is, language in use. Text, according to Nesbitt (2004), is the system potential in actual situation of use. He asserts that the relationship between text and linguistic system is seen as one of instantiation. From this view point, it could be asserted that a particular kind of text is a particular instantiation of a linguistic system. Text is the representation of choice as demonstrated in the following diagram.

System◄——►Text Instantiation (Language as potential) (Instance e.g. news report)

From the diagram one can see that a text is a representation of the meaning potential inherent in language. It is important to note that a text can be spoken or written, long or short, it can be a single utterance, a narration, an advert, or a caption on a newspaper or a newspaper report. A text must be a product of a careful and meaningful choice in a linguistic system and the choice must be situationally relevant by means of cohesion and coherence.

According to Halliday (1994), the relationship of system to text, known as instantiation, is not as simple as it first appears; in fact, it is highly problematic. System and text are not two different things entirely; they are the same thing seen from different perspectives, from different standpoints of the observer. A helpful analogy may be that of "climate" and "weather". There is only one set of phenomena here, not two, but we call it weather when we experience it instanlially, as meteorological, and climate when we are taking a long-term

perspective in order to establish and explain the principle of the meteorological "system" that lies behind it. A text is meaningful only because it is the instantiation of a system potential: this is what is meant by saying that speaker and listener must share a "command of the language".

According Butt et al. (1998) the landscape of human experiences is a landscape in which our language can build up pictures of realities in terms of the things (which as a general term covers people and places as well as concrete and abstract things) and events and circumstances that cluster together in clauses. The most important element of the clause is the expression of the event, or 'process'. This is used to answer the question: Who did what to whom and under what circumstance? This question is central to the study of transitivity and by extension, news reports.

Circumstances indicate the aspects of the context in which an event takes place, they tell us about the manner, the time, the place, the reason, the purpose etc, 'Circumstances' are usually realized by prepositional phrases but some typesare typically realized by adverbial clauses. Halliday (1994:151). Proposes the following table of circumstances.

Extent	**Distance**	**How far?**	**We drove for five miles**
	Duration	How long? How many times	We talked for hours
Location	Place	Where?	The train goes to Parramaua
	Time	When?	The bus leaves at 10.
Manner	Means	How? What with?	I could build a house with local bricks
	Quality	How?	I ran into the final bend too fast
	Comparison	How? What alike?	The Ebola virus spreads like AIDs
Cause	Reason	Why? How?	Due to popular demand we have decided to adopt a NO SMOKING Policy on ALL our coaches.
	Purchase	What for?	He prepared the film for television
	Behalf	Who for?	I started writing letters on behalf of the prisoners
Contingency	Condition	Under what conditions?	In the event of fire, do not use lifts
	Concession	Despite what?	Despite the negativity of Howard and his conservative followers, Australia will become a republic.
	Default	Lacking what?	In the absence of objections, the motion is carried.
Accopani merit		Who with	I'm writing a play with Rowena Wallace at the moment

Role	Guise	What us?	They are not refugees, they came as tourists
	Product	Into what?	Then I take the sausages out and cut them up into pieces.
Mattel-		What about?	No one, surely, would argue about Bradman's status at the top of the batiins: tree
Angle		According to who? Who says?	And this head-in-the-sand macho behaviour is killing men, according to the experts.

Methodology

In order to examine how transitivity resource of language works in a newspaper report, data were sampled from two Nigerian Newspapers. The reports captured different events which were analysed clause by clause. The data comprised some newspaper reports of the period between May and June 2012.

Analysis of a Newspaper Report 2

Using the Transititivity Resource of Language

Federal Government Vows To Provide Quality Education
(Source: Sunday Punch Mareh 24, 2012)

The Federal Government has pledged to provide qualitative education at all levels in all pa the country. The Minister of Education. Prof Ruqayyatu Rufai, said this in Uyo on Thursday during a National Stakeholders' Summit in Basic Education on the UBE Programme Implementation. Challenges and the New Mandate Retreat. She said. "The Federal Government has demonstrated akeen interest, commitment and willingness to pioneer a fresh approach to issues in the provision of qualitative education at all levels in the country.

"Early in the life of this administration, the government in recognition of the centrality of education to economic, social and political transformation, convened a summit personally presided over by Mr. President to address the myriad of challenges bedeviling the education sector".

Sheimplored stakeholders and participants at the retreat to find solutions to the challenges of qualitative education at the end of the summit. Rufaistared that the retreat was a major step at ensuring a successful implementation of a basic education programme up to secondary level.

She inferred that a successful implementation of the programme would include the funding and management of unity colleges nationwide the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education. Prof Nicholas Damachi said policies affecting education should be deliberated upon by all the tiers of government.

Damachi urged the participants to take the resolutions of the retreat to their different states for discussion and implementation.

He said all hands must be on deck towards the success of the Universal Basic Education Commission programme of restructuring education in the country.

He stated that the government had vested the coordination of the development of the development of senior secondary school education on UBEC. Declaring the retreat open, Governor Godwill Akpabio, represented by his Chief of Staff, Mr. Godwin Afahgide, urged UBEC to ensure that qualitative basic education was given to the children.

Akpabio said that primary education was the bedrock of all other levels of education, adding that UBEC could not afford to fail this time around.

The Analysis

The Federal Government	has pledge	to provide		
Sayer	*process verbal*			
qualitative education	at all levels	In		
Verbiage	*circumstance: extent*			
all parts of the country				
circumstance: Extent				
The Minister of Education Prof. RuqayyatuRafai				
Saycr				
Said	this	in Uyo	on Thursdiiv	
Process verbal	*verbiage*	*circumstance spatial*	*circumstance time*	
during a National Stakeholders' Summit in Basic Education				
Circumstances time				
on the UBE Programme Implementation Challenges and the new mandate retreat				
Circumstance: Matter				

She	said	The Federal Government	has demonstrated
*Sayer	*process verbal	*verbiage (Behave r)	*Process: behavioural*
a keen interest	Commitment and	willingness	
Range	*Range*	*Range*	
to Pioneer a fresh approach to issues			
Circumstance — cause			
In the Provision of qualitative education at all levels in the country			
"Circumstance: Extent			
Early in the life of this administration			The government
Circumstance: Time			*Actor*
Convened		a summit	Personally
Process material		*Range*	*Manner*
Presided over	By Mr. President		
Process material	*Actor*		
to address the myriad of challenges bedeviling the education sector			
Circumstance: cause			
She	implored	stakeholders and participants	at the retreat

Saver	*Process verbal*	*Target*	*Circumstance spatial*
of qualitative education at the end of the summit			
Circumstance: Time			

Rufai	Stated	that the retreat was a major step
*Sayer	*process verbal	* Verbiage Carrier process Attributive Attribute
at enduring a successful implementation of basic education programme up to secondary level		
Circumstance: cause		*Circumstance: Extent*

She	Inferred	That a successful implementation of the programme would [carrier process Attributive Include
Sayer	Process verbal	Verbiage
funding and management of Unity colleges nationwide		
[attribute]		Circumstance: extent
he permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education Professor Nicholas Demachi		
Sayer		
Said		Policies affecting education should deliberated upon
Process verbal	*Verbiage*	
by all the tiers of government		
Circumstance: Angle		

Damachi	Urged	the participants	to take the
Sayer	*process: verbal*	*Target*	*Process: material*
Resolutions of the retreat to their different status			
Range	*Circumstance: location*		
For discussion and implementation			
Circumstance: Cause			

	Said	all hands deck must be on
	Process verbal	*Verbiage*
towards the success of Universal Basic of Education Commission Programme restructuring education		
Circumstance: cause		
In the country		
Circumstance: extent; location		

He	Stated	That the government had coordination vested the

Saver	*Process verbal*	*Verbiage*
of the development of Senior secondary School education on UBEC		
	Circumstance: cause	

Declaring the retreat open [ ]			Governor GodswillAkpabio
Circumstance: time			Goal
Represented	By his chief of staff Mr. Godwin Afanhgide	Urge	UBEC
Process: material	*Actor*	*Process verbal*	*Target*
To ensure that qualitative basic education was given to the children			
	Circumstance: cause		

Akpabio	Said	that primary education	was
*Sayer	*Process: verbal	*Verbiage: Token	*Process identifying*
the bedrock of all other levels of education			Adding
Value			*Process verbal*
that UBEC could not afford to fail			this time around
Verbiage			*Circumstance: temporal*

"Beware of the Ivorians, Arnadu warns Falcons"

Musa Amadu, the General Secretary Nigerian Football Federation (NFF), says Cote d'Ivoire and not Cameroon are the team to fear at the upcoming African Women Championship (AWC). Reacting to Tuesday's draw, which pitted defending champions Nigeria with Ethiopia and the other two countries, Amadu said on Wednesday in Abuja that the Ivorian could be more dangerous.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that Nigeria's Super Falcons were on Tuesday in Cairo, Egypt draw in Group B of the 2012 AWC scheduled for Equatorial Guinea. They will play the first group round of games against Cote d'lvoire. Ethiopia and Cameroon at the competition scheduled for October 28 to November 11 in Malabo and Bta.

It is really an interesting group, looking at the kind of opponents we have and with the fact that is looks like a mixed grill. However, I believe the team to fear are the Ivorians who are coming with a good credential", he said, Amadu said NIGERIA'S PERENNIAL RIVAL Cameroon who ousted the Falcons from the 2012 Olympic Games qualifiers, could not be the only team Nigerians should be wary of in view of the Ivorians credentials. Cameroon, who ousted the Falcons frau: the 2012 Olympic Games qualifiers, could not be the only team Nigerians should be wary of in view of the Ivorians' credentials.

It is a fact that most Nigerians will think of Cameroon as our biggest rival in the group, but I think that it should he the Ivorians. They beat Guinea 5 -I and 5-0 for a 10 - 1 aggregate in the

preliminary round, anti then Mozambique 5 -0 and 7-0 for a 12 - 0 aggregate in the final qualification round. Such a learn must be feared, and surely we have to do that" he said.

The NFA General Secretary, however, acknowledged that the draw had presented the Falcons, who beat Zimbabwe 6-0 aggregate to quality, with a tough challenge.

He said Ethipia and Cameroon would also pose a threat to the Falcons and the NFF would in anticipation of this prepare the team very well for the competition.

It is going to be a lough one for us given these kinds of opponents. But it is also a challenge to us that we must prepare very well. Ethiopia beat Egypt 6-4 and Tanzania home away on a 3 - 1 aggregate to quality, while Cameroon stopped Ghana after penalty kicks. This shows that if we must return with the trophy, we have to prepare very well for the competition especially on the other group is also lough", Amadu said.

NAN reports that hosts Equatorial Guinea, who are the 2010 competition runners-Lip and 2008 winners as host, will face Olympic-hound South Africa, Senegal and DR Congo in Group A (source: The National Sporting Life Friday July 20, 2002).

Musa Amadu the General Secretary Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) says Cote d'lvoire Sayer process verbal and not Cameroon are the team to fear at the upcoming African Women Championship, carrier process Attribute Circumstance Verbiage attribute Extent Reacting to Tuesday's draw, which pitted defending champions Nigeria with Ethiopia and Circumstance [Actor process Range cause material the other two countries, Amadu said on Wednesday in Abuja that the Ivorian could be more.] Sayer process Circumstance Circumstance carrier process verbal Time Location attribute dangerous. Attribute

The News Agency of Nigerian (NAN) reports that Nigeria's Super Falcons were on saver process verbiage verbal

Tuesday in Cairo, Egypt drawn in Group B of the 2012 AWC scheduled for Equatorial Guinea Circumstance circumstance process Circumstance Circumstance Time location material Extent Location

They will play the first group round of games against Cote d'lvoire. Ethiopia and Cameroon Actor process range Circumstance Material Accompaniment at the competition scheduled for October 28 to November 11 in Malabo and Bata. Circumstance Circumstance Place Place "It is really an interesting group, looking at the kind of opponents we have process Circumstance Existent Process Range Existential manner behavioural and with the fact that it looks like a mixed grill. However, I believe the Circumstance [[carrier process comparison]]
saver process mental Accompaniment Attribute team to fear are the Ivorian who are coming with a good credential" he said Phenomenon [[ ]] Sayer process verbal Madu said Nigeria's perennial rivals Cameroon. whoousted the Falcon Sayer process [[Actor process Goal Verbal material Olympic Games qualifiers, could not be the only team Nigeria should be wary of]] Circumstance verbiage process Existent Affected process Extent Existential mental in view of the Ivorians" credentials. Circumstance Cause It is a fact that most Nigerians will think of Cameroon as our biggest rival process Existent Scnser process Phenomenon Cirumstance Existential mental in the group, but I think that it should be the Ivorians locations enscr process Projected process Existent Mental

clause Existential They beat Guinea 5-1 and 5-0 for a 10 I aggregate in the preliminary round Actor process Goal Range Role Extent material he said, sayer process verbal.

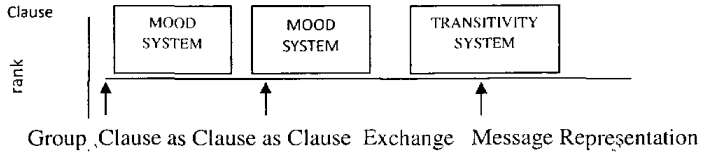
Discussion

The framework proposed by Halliday (1994) indicates the criteria that are used for the selection of 'process' types, *participants* involved in the 'process' types and the *circumstances* associated with the process types. This theoretical stand point as proposed by Halliday (1994) serves as the framework adopted for this study. This is because systemic linguistics combines both linguistic meaning and social meaning for a total description of a text.

Similarly, Matthiesen and Halliday asseit that:

> Systemic functional theory was first developed to work on the grammar of Chinese; and it has been used in educational and computational contexts from an early stage..... Systemic functional Grammatik takes the resource perspective: and it is designed to display the overall system of grammar rather than only fragments (Mathiessen and Halliday 1997:2).

From the foregoing, it could be asserted that Systemic Functional Linguistics projects the view that grammar is relative to expansion by meta function and rank. This can be shown diagrammatically.



This study is concerned however, with one strand of the three systems presented above; how language is used for representation of our internal and external experiences. This is captured by transitivity, which is the third strand of Halliday's categorization.

Finally, transitivity analysis as a linguistic framework can be a difficult task. The reason is that transitivity analysis pertains to meaning categories rather than grammatical elements, so it is not easy to handle meaning categories.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this article examined the relationship between text and linguistic system. The study also found that there was systematic relationship between the process types and the logico semantic relations of clauses in the newspaper reports under study. From the various findings, it could be asserted that transitivity analysis can be a useful tool, to some extent, in the categorization of newspaper reports.

Transitivity analysis of newspaper reports shows that there is systematic relationship between text and context of situation. The systematic relationship allows for prediction. It is possible to predict the likely range of meaning that could be generated from a given context. Likewise, it is possible to predict the context from which a text such as newspaper report was created. Analyzing a text in Systemic Functional Linguistics framework entails two moves: being able

to relate the linguistic choices in the text back to the system potential of the language and relating the text to its social environment otherwise known as context of situation.

Finally, transitivity analysis of a newspaper report as a linguistic framework can be a difficult task. The reason is that transitivity analysis pertains to meaning categories rather than grammatical elements, so it is not easy to handle meaning categories.

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