

## **SOCIO-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED SECURITY HEADLINES IN NIGERIA'S DAILY TRUST NEWSPAPER.**

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### ***Abstract***

*Headlines are not just summaries of events but also embed some notions and ideologies. Languages used in Newspaper headlines also shape the attitudes of people towards the news. The pragmatic values embedded in the headlines have unconsciously created some images in the reader's mind therefore the readers would be more likely to believe what is written in the headline rather than explore the news story. Headlines expose social, cultural and national representations. This paper drawing on the assertion that when language is properly used, a readers' perception is fashioned in accordance with the script-writer perception analyzed some selected security headlines in Nigeria's Daily Trust Newspaper.*

**Key words: Headlines, attitude, pragmatic value, national representation, readers.**

### **Introduction**

Nigeria has been bedeviled with security challenges ever since its independence. However, in the last thirteen years precisely mid 2005 a new security challenge gradually crept into the fabrics of our Nationhood. It was no longer the menace of the Niger Delta youths. This was a new and more dangerous group who called themselves –BOKO HARAM. The group started out as a militia group, grew into a political group and gradually

developed into a menace threatening the unity of our great nation-Nigeria. The activities of these insurgents were initially restricted within the Borno State where its founders resided and seen as a religious group whose beliefs and tenets abhorred any act of civilization and as such their targets was government and religious institutions.

However, as days went by it became obvious that the insurgents were after the nation as a whole as their attacks cut across the different spheres of the country attacking both the young, old, government and the common man. Thus there was a need for proper enlightenment of the people about the operations of these insurgents as well as governments efforts at securing the Nigerian State from these insurgents. The Media became a veritable tool for achieving this. The media is one of tools through which people transmit their ideas, thoughts, desires, and emotions through the written form. Through it people can communicate easily with their environments. It has today become one of the most effective and widely used channels for disseminating information around the world. Its effectiveness and speed makes it an important tool capable of offering constructive contributions to nation building or negative influence to the detriment of national development.

Generally, the media refers to institutions that deal with the packaging and dissemination of information to the public. Broadly, there are two categories – the electronic media and the print media. The print media comprises of newspapers, magazines, and journals among others while electronic media comprises of, radio, movies, television, and the internet among others. Media discourse involves not only texts but also visual images and their presentation, in conjunction with texts. Fairclough explains that “media texts constitute a sensitive

barometer of socio-cultural change, and they should be seen as valuable material for researching change. Change in society and culture manifest themselves in all their tentativeness, incompleteness and contradictory nature in the heterogeneous and shifting discursive practices of the media” (Fairclough, 52). Thus media texts have been a key area of common focus for CDA theorists. Newspaper is a publication that contains news opinion, features, advertising and so on. It is usually distributed on a daily or weekly basis (Elmore, 1992) the way newspaper publication reports news depends on its publication policy. Publication policy is generally based on the types of newspaper, quality and popularity. Newspaper does not contain only news; in fact, it harbors various kinds of information and knowledge.

Reach (2002) sees newspaper headline as a unique type of text that consists of a range of functions that specifically dictates its shape, content and structure and it operates within a range of restrictions that limit the freedom of the writer. Headlines can be easily identified by their placement; they are always placed above the news story in bigger font size. A newspaper Headline serves as a forerunner to news report. It provides a brief summary of what to expect in the news story. 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: This day, Leadership, Punch, Sun, Tribune, Vanguard,

Nation, Guardian, Daily Times, among others. These newspapers are published in English, the Nigerian official language. Inside newspapers we usually have sections or sub-genres that are dedicated to various issues. These include editorials, world news, classifieds, feature articles, letters to the editor as well as sport, news, health, business, politics, life style, entertainment sections among others. Newspapers are a very important source of information. Many in Nigeria today depend on newspapers for all kinds of information pertaining to the nation and the outside world. As such, newspapers play an important role in disseminating information to the Nigerian populace.

Newspapers can be considered as one of the fastest and most trustworthy means of news. Although some people have turned towards online news in recent years, large numbers still persist with the behaviour of newspaper reading. Therefore, it can be claimed that the newspaper plays a major role in the society. Language used in newspapers can make a great impact on readers and society in many different ways. One essential structure of any newspaper is its headline. A headline acts as a forerunner to the news report. It gives the reader brief information about the news being reported and are also responsible for catching the reader's attention. Headlines provide brief summary of the main news, abstract attention and often provide an initial indicator in their content and style of the news value of the Newspaper Headlines expose social, cultural and national representations.

Proper and deeper comprehension of these headlines requires a thorough pragmatic analysis. Headlines are not just summaries of events but also embed some notions and ideologies. Languages used in Newspaper headlines also shape the attitudes of people towards the news. The pragmatic values

embedded in the headlines have unconsciously created some images in the reader's mind therefore the readers would be more likely to believe what is written in the headline rather than explore the news story. Headlines expose social, cultural and national representations. Therefore the impact of newspaper headlines is stronger upon the readers due to certain linguistic features which make them memorable and effective. The researcher discovered that many Nigerians seemed to be lacking in understanding the deep pragmatic principles and implications of the headlines. In other words, they could not fathom the performative force of most of the Newspaper headlines. They could not equally explain the communicative strategies employed by the correspondents to achieve their aim. It is believed that understanding these choices would help readers understand the headlines better. It is these linguistic choices and their inherent pragmatic values and notions of politeness that this research examines. This paper also investigates the sociolinguistic effects of these choices on a multi-lingual nation like Nigeria.

## **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

### **An Overview of Pragmatics**

Pragmatics is the study of how context influences our use and interpretation of language. In other words, the pre-occupation of pragmatics are the language users and the contexts of an utterance. While Akmajian, Demer, Farmer and Harnish observe that the focus of pragmatics is on the intentions, purposes, beliefs, and desires that a speaker has in speaking (308), Mey opines that pragmatic studies language as it is used by people, for their own purposes and within their own respective limitations and affordances (207). This definition reveals that

certain social etiquettes or factors in our societies impose certain limitations and affordances on us when we come to use language.

The major proponents of pragmatics, such as Austin, Searle, and Grice, among others were philosophers who took the position that our utterances are used to perform certain acts and that what is performed is the concern of pragmatics, not the sentence itself. For example, although the statement: 'It is hot in here' is declarative, it is functionally or pragmatically a request to open the window or put on the fan or air conditioner. Conversely, 'It is cold in here' could be a request to close the window or put off the fan or air conditioner. The ability of the listener to interpret statements such as these effectively is the crux of the matter in pragmatics. It is on this basis that Akmajian et al also observe that much goes into using a language besides...being able to produce and recognize sentences in it (308). In line with this, Raj submits that pragmatic competence is the ability to understand another speaker's intended meaning (12-13).

Linguistic and situational contexts (such as physical environment, socio-cultural aspects and the psychology of the speaker as well as other participants) are, key in pragmatic studies. According to Mey, pragmatics studies the use of language in human communication as determined by conditions of society (6). It is the study of speaker meaning, contextual meaning, how more gets communicated than is said; and the study of the expression of relative distance (Yule 3). The relative distance here could mean the kind of relationship that exists between the speaker and the listener as well as the spatial and time distance between them. Adegbite posits that:

Pragmatic meaning must always be contextualized, where the context is verbal, cultural and situational. In contrast, the interpretation of the utterance in terms of sentence meaning would, because of lack of context, reveal lack of definite referents and sense (62).

Pragmatics is not concerned with the users and contexts of language alone; it is also concerned with the hearer's extra-linguistic reactions which results from the effect of an utterance. This is what Austin terms perlocution. All the definitions and explanations on pragmatics point at contexts and users as the rallying points for a meaningful pragmatic interpretation of language (Olaniyi 51).

Historically speaking, many linguists trace the origin of pragmatics to Charles Morris whose concern was to outline the general shape of semiotics (Osisanwo 56). Morris distinguished three branches of semiotics thus: syntax (the study of formal relation of signs to one another); semantics (the study of relation of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable); and pragmatics (the study of the relation of signs to interpreters).

However, what may be described as 'pragmatics proper' began with the earliest writer on speech act, J. L Austin, who was followed by Searle and Grice, among others. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* was a posthumous collection of his lecture notes at Harvard University (Saeed 222). The lecture notes, and indeed, the book was a reaction to some philosophers (among his contemporaries) known as logical positivists (223) who proposed that any sentence that cannot be verified or tested for its truth or falsity should be regarded as emotive and therefore meaningless (Lawal 151). This position is of little or no

interest to many scholars because people rarely utter something in order to be proven true or false (Mey21). In addition, we can understand a sentence even when we are unable to tell whether it is true or false (Fromkin and Rodman 187). In challenging the logical positivists' views therefore, Austin links words with deeds, arguing that many utterances are produced without any intentions to be true or false but to perform actions, hence his *How to Do Things with words* and his theory of 'Speech Act'.

This was the earliest theory of modern pragmatics. It was propounded by the Oxford Philosopher J.L. Austin and developed by Searle and other scholars. The theory holds that utterances are made to perform acts of requesting, denying, accusing, warning, naming, declaring, etc. and that to realise these, people do not need to subject the meaning of their utterances to truth condition of the logical positivists. It challenges the positivists' views on the ground that not all sentences are statements and that much of conversations between people are made of questions, exclamations, commands and expressions of wishes, which cannot be said to be false or true (Saeed 223). Examples of the above kinds of expressions include: a. Excuse me! b. Hello. c. Congratulations! d. How much? e. Are you serious?

Based on the logical positivists' view, none of the above sentences can be accounted for because we cannot on hearing them say they are true or false. Yet, they are not meaningless; certain acts are contextually performed through them. For instance, 'excuse me!' Could mean let me pass or keep quiet, which are directive acts of requesting and commanding. 'Are you serious?' could mean 'I doubt you', you are joking, or work hard while 'Hello' could mean 'listen', 'can you hear me?', or wait please! etc. These are some of the examples of what can be



performed with the sentences above. Speech act theory aims to tell us when it is that we ask questions but mean orders and requests or when we say one thing with a special (Sarcastic) intonation and mean the opposite (Fromkin and Rodman 186).

### **Levels of Speech Act**

Austin divides speech act into different but interconnected types of locution, illocution and perlocution. The locutionary act refers to the literal meaning of an utterance. In other words, it simply represents the physical sounds uttered or written; it is a mere utterance of a statement. This, according to Akmajian et al means that performatives seem to be both saying and doing (319). Of main interest to the proponents of pragmatics is illocutionary act.

The illocutionary act, also known as performative act, is the communicative force that is intended to be achieved by an utterance (Jackson and Stock-well 180). It deals with what the speaker does or what he is understood to have done with his utterance. It is central in pragmatics studies and sometimes used interchangeably with the speech act in general. An illocutionary act is a nonlinguistic act performed through a linguistic (locutionary) means. In other words, it is what is meant but not stated explicitly in a sentence. It can be direct or indirect, intended or unintended, conventional or nonconventional (Lawal 155). It includes acts of warning, denying, threatening, vowing, etc. It can be achieved overtly (through the use of performative verbs) or covertly (without the use of performative verbs). For example, the sentences: 'I promise to be there' and 'I will be there' are both illocutionary acts of promising. The only difference between them is just that the first one is explicit because it contains the performative verb 'promise' and the second one is implicit because it does not. The implicit and

explicit illocutionary force of an utterance is what preoccupies the speech act theory (Mey 96).

The third type of speech act is perlocutionary. It has to do with the effect an utterance or illocutionary act has on the hearer or reader. In other words, perlocutionary act is the effect that language has on the hearer/reader which may lead to physical or psychological reaction from the hearer. For example, if a speaker says to his noisy and lively addressee: 'The man with whom you have just had a hand shake has tested ebola positive', the addressee is most likely going to be silent, inactive and disturbed. The addressee's silence and inactiveness resulting from the speaker's statement is the perlocutionary act. In addition, an act of sudden screaming and fleeing that result when speaker X says to listener Y: 'See a snake behind you!' is also a perlocutionary act. This is why Austin defines language as a way of doing and making others to do things with words. Mey posits that perlocutionary act is the most interesting aspect of speech acting (96).

In summary, it can be said that while locutionary act is what is said, illocutionary act what is done or meant, the perlocutionary act is the effect of what is done or said (Grundy 73). Kempson puts the distinction between the three speech act types thus:

...speaker utters sentences with a particular meaning (locutionary act) and with a particular force (illocutionary act) in order to achieve a certain effect (perlocutionary act) on the hearer (qtd in Osisanwo 58).

The classification of speech act into direct and indirect acts is to among other things show that in human communication, there is usually a difference between the structure of a sentence or an

utterance and its communicative value. Grundy views direct speech act as the conventionally expected function of language and indirect speech act as the extra-actual function of language (230). Finegan submits that one of the characteristics of indirect speech act is that, at least, it violates one of the Grice's maxims of cooperative principle (290). In direct speech act, the structure of a sentence tallies with its communicative functions while in indirect speech act, the sentence or utterance structure does not correspond with its communicative function (Osisanwo 69). Examples:

- i. Could you put on the fan? (is an indirect act of commanding performed through a direct act of questioning)
- ii. Put on the fan (is a direct act of commanding)
- iii. Shall I pick you up at 8:00 am? (is an indirect offer performed through an act of questioning).

Other striking examples of indirect speech act can be found in rhetorical questions (Leech and Thomas 192). For example, the question: 'Who cares?' is an indirect act of informing the addressee through annoyance; it means I do not care.

The need for politeness in communication is the motive behind indirect speech act (Mey 13). In many languages, including English, the occurrence of imperative sentences in orders or requests is not preferred despite their status as 'genuine' speech act of ordering or requesting. Lastly, Finegan opines that indirect speech act adds humour and politeness to communication (290); indirectness helps to oil the wheels of interaction (231).

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is eclectic. It includes the textual aspect of Mey's Pragmatic Act, and Levinson's theory of Face. Considering the socio-political status of the country, there is the need to pay a special attention to the politeness strategies and principles that the newspapers employed in managing the governments image before the citizenry (public image or self- esteem). This justifies the choice of face theory. Similarly, the thrust of Mey's Pragmatic Act theory is both cognitive and sociological. It is therefore required for better interpretation of language meaning, hence the reason for its choice.

### **Mey's Theory of Pragmatic Act**

Mey agrees with Austin that in uttering a speech, the speaker does something with his or her words. He, however, disagrees with him on the nomenclature "speech act" and the idea of speech act verbs. To him, there exists asymmetry in the relationship between speech act verbs (henceforth SAVs) and speech acts (henceforth SAs) proper. He argues that not all SAs are represented by a specific SAV.

Mey also objects to speech act theory on the ground that it is not only canonical but that it also centres more on the speaker's intention, over and above the social realities or social contexts which provide limitation and affordance regarding the speaker's choice and use of words as a member of a speech community. His words:

Human activity (including language use) is not prerogative of the individual, setting goals and devising strategies...rather, the individual is situated in a social context, which means that she

or he is empowered as well as limited by conditions of her or his life (214).

That is, pragmatic act theory emphasizes the priority of socio-cultural and societal factors in meaning construction and comprehension. Mey maintains that our acting is determined by what the scene can afford and by what we can afford on the scene. That is, while the scene determines our acting, our acting equally determines and reaffirms the existing scene (218). He suggests that the indirect speech act paradox can be dissolved by moving its focus of attention from the words being said to the things being done with those words. He also questions the compatibility of speech and act (speech act), as speech, by itself, does not act; strictly speaking, there are no speech acts since ultimately speech acting depends on the situation in which an action takes place. This is the reason he divides his pragmatic act schema into activities and texts parts. As a result of the above shortcomings of speech act theory, Mey (206) came up with the idea of pragmatic act theory which, he opines subsumes speech act. In pragmatic acting, it is impossible to pinpoint a particular, predetermined use of any canonical speech act (215). In other words, pragmatic act analyst does not necessarily include a specific act of speech in his analysis.

The basic idea about pragmatic act as distinct from speech act is the fact that the former does not depend solely on the actual words being used but rather on the circumstances that lead up to and accompany those words. In Mey's words:

The theory of pragmatic act does not try to explain language use from inside out, which is from words having their origin in a sovereign speaker and going out to an equally sovereign hearer (who then may become another sovereign

speaker and so on and so forth). Rather, its explanatory movement is from the outside in: the focus is on the environment in which both the speaker and the hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation as well as what is actually being said (221).

In Mey's view, pragmatic analysis can be approached from two perspectives of 'agents' and 'act' (215). As far as agent is concerned, his or her class, gender, age, status/position, education, experience/previous life history and so on influence and affect his or her communication behaviour. In other words, from the angle of 'agent', the emphasis of pragmatic analyst is on the user's intention and attitude to language as occasioned by the above social factors, which spell out his/her (language user's) limitations and affordances (i.e. the degree of freedom he enjoys) as a participant in a speech event or as a member of a speech community. From the point of view of "act", the concern of a pragmatic analyst is on language, gestures and visual images etc., used in performing a pragmatic act. Mey concludes that pragmatic acting can be considered as adapting oneself linguistically and otherwise, to one's world (215).

As we have observed from the foregoing, pragmatic act also takes care of extra-linguistic aspects of communication such as gestures and visual images (i.e. pictures). These, in addition to linguistic aspects of communication are captured in what Mey termed *pragmeme*, the prototype or generalized pragmatic act. He termed the instantiation of *pragmeme* in a particular situation 'pract' or 'ipras' (221)

## Face Negotiation Theory

Face theory has to do with individuals' "public image or self esteem, Yule (60). It was first proposed in 1985 by Stella Ting-Toomey, a professor of Human Communication Studies at California State University, Fullerton, U.S.A. It is aimed at understanding how different cultures throughout the world respond to conflict (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/face\_negotiation\_theory).

Adebunmi views it as the emotional and social feeling of an interlocutor which he/she expects other participants in a discourse to recognize (6). In pragmatics, face is an extension or sub-theory of politeness. There are two types of face; positive and negative face. The former deals with the wants of every competent adult member of the society that his or her desires be accepted by others while the latter has to do with the wants of every member that his or her actions be unimpeded by others (Brown and Levinson 62). This means that we have positive face when an individual desires approval, respect and appreciation from others while we have negative face when an individual desires freedom to always act without a check from others. One's face can be saved, threatened, and mitigated. When an individual in a conversation meets all his face wants, he/she is said to have got his/her face saved but when the converse occurs, his/her face is said to have been threatened. Face saving act goes with polite utterances while face threatening act goes with impolite utterances.

Face threatening acts are illocutionary acts that are liable to damage the addressee's positive and negative face. It sometimes occurs when an addressee is insulted; when what he/she holds dear is given disapproval; or when an imposition is placed on his/her freedom. An utterance aimed at reducing the

severity of the damage done by a face threatening act is known as face mitigation. There are certain factors that influence face mitigating acts. These factors are, among others, the size of the threat to be mitigated and the difference in the power status between the interlocutors. Brown and Levinson propose four super-strategies that a speaker may employ to carry out a face threatening act. They are bald on-record without regressive action; on-record with regressive action towards positive or negative face or both; off record; and not carrying out FTA at all (92)

### **Methodology**

This research work is descriptive. It involves the analysis of direct and indirect pragmatic acts in Newspaper Headlines. It pays a particular attention to how the correspondents managed the government” face before the citizenry.

The source of the data for this study is primary and was collected from Daily Trust Newspaper of December, 2013 .Out of thirty Newspaper editions collected, total of thirty headlines with 15 Riders were collected from the thirty editions. A purposive sampling was employed to identify headlines concerned with only Boko Haram menace. At the end of the purposive sampling, ten headlines with fifteen riders were selected for analysis...In line with the research questions, the analysis in this study is qualitative. The researcher employs a narrative technique based on Austin’s speech act theory and Brown and Levinson’s Face Theory Principles. In other words, the analysis entails identification and interpretation of direct and indirect performative acts in the data in relation to face management and politeness strategies/principles. It also involves



giving, where necessary, the background information of the sampled headlines.

### **Data analysis**

This chapter takes care of data presentation, data analysis as well as the discussion of our findings in each of the headlines under consideration. Sociolinguistic effects of these headlines on the Nigerian political domain are also examined...The data hereby presented comprise a total of ten headlines with riders Five headlines and their respective riders from Daily Trust were analyzed.

#### **Table One:**

**Headline:** *Baga satellite images show 2,275 houses razed*

**Riders:** *Human rights alleges cover up*

*We stand by our report DHQ*

*Hundreds killed in Baga*

*How a soldier's death sparked violence*

**Jonathan:** *Death toll greatly exaggerated*

*Senators faulted report on Baga*

*Committee visited only one graveyard*

*Only 1 of 13 southern senators visit Bagas*

<b>HEADLINES AND RIDERS</b>	<b>DIRECT ACTS</b>	<b>INDIRECT ACTS</b>	<b>FACE MANAGEMENT ACTS</b>	<b>EXPECTED PERLOCUTIONARY EFFECTS</b>
Baga satellite images show 2,275	Stating alleging	Warning, advising, sympathising, cautioning	Negative face. It portrays the government in bad light	Worry fear

houses razed				
Human rights alleges cover up	Stating alleging	Accusing indicting	Negative face for the government. If the human rights indicts the government then it reduces the face and popularity of the government	Worry distrust
We stand by our report-DHQ	Asserting claiming	Asserting, reassuring	Positive face for the government. The defence headquarters tries to disabuse the citizenry`s mind on the number of casualties	Hope trust

Hundreds killed in Baga	Stating Informing reporting	Warning, sympathising, protesting	Negative face. It threatens the face of the government	fear
How a soldiers death sparked violence	Informing reporting	Cautioning Regretting threatening	Negative face for the government. The headline implies that the federal government cannot	worry
Jonathan: death toll grossly exaggerated	Asserting claiming	Accusing Alleging protesting	Positive face. The president himself comes out to give his government's position	hope
Senators faulted report on Baga	Stating	Alleging Challenging instigating	Positive face- here the government tries to	hope
Committee visited just one graveyard	Informing stating	Accusing challenging	Negative face This portrays the government in a negative way with the huge	Anger fear

			damage and loss of life they are expected to visit	
Only 1 of 13 southern senators visited Baga	Informing accusing	Accusing indicting	Negative face	anger

## Discussion and findings

### Table One

Baga is one of the major towns in Maiduguri. At the time of this newspaper report, the Boko Haram insurgents had attacked the Baga town. There were conflicting reports as to the extent of damage caused by the insurgents. The major headline though performing a direct act of stating/informing performs an indirect act of accusing, warning. We also see a negative face towards the federal government. At this time, with security challenges one would expect the federal government to adequately inform the citizenry of the correct situation in Baga. However, from the headlines and riders, we find out that the newspaper presents a gloomy and disastrous situation. The people on the other hand would believe the newspaper report because it is assumed that journalists are everywhere and would give an unbiased assessment of the situation. Riders 2,4,5,7 perform direct acts of stating, informing, alleging and indirect acts of accusation, indicting, cautioning, alleging and warning respectively. They also threaten the positive face of the federal government. This clearly accuses the senators of the federal

republic of Nigeria of insensitivity towards the citizenry. This Rider displays negative face on the path of the federal government. These acts performed by the headlines elicit a feeling of worry, fear and hopelessness on the minds of Nigerians. It also portrays the government of President Jonathan in a negative light.

Riders '4' and '5' "We stand by our report- DHQ" and "Jonathan: Death toll exaggerated" are assertive from the federal government in a bid to save their face. The two Riders try to portray the federal government in a positive way. We see the Defense Headquarters insisting that their figure of the casualties remain the authentic figure. This is a desperate move to elicit hope and faith in the federal government. The rider also accrues to Jonathan also tries to solicit the confidence and sympathy of Nigerians. President Jonathan accuses the newspaper of bias and unfairness in their reportage. These direct and indirect acts performed by these two riders are expected to redeem the positive face of the government and in turn create a perlocutionary effect of hope, trust and faith in the minds of the Nigerian people.

**Table Two**

***Headline: Shettima to Jonathan: Let's tackle Boko Haram***

***Rider: Insurgents better armed than Military***

	Direct act	Indirect acts	Face management act	Expected perlocutionary act
Shettima to Jonathan: lets tackle Boko Haram	Stating Dire	Advice suggestion	Negative to president Jonathan, positive on the	Hope anger

			side of the government	
Insurgents better armed than military	Reporting Claiming Informing	Debunking Denying disagreeing	Negative face for the government. It is sad to hear that the insurgents are better equipped than the military	Fear Anger worry

**Table Two**

The headline “Shettima to Jonathan: let’s tackle Boko Haram”. Shettima is the governor of Borno State. It is believed that the Boko Haram insurgents were created by the government of Borno State. In this headline, we see a direct act of asking, advising and an indirect act of ridicule, advising. However this headline presents President Jonathan in a negative face. This is expected that the call to tackle the Boko Haram menace should come from the president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces not from a serving governor to him. Also bearing in mind that Shettima belongs to another political party (APC) different from that of the president, this statement credited to him should be seen as a deliberate attempt to ridicule him before the citizenry.

It goes a long way to show that the president does not consider the Boko Haram menace as a security challenge, he is doing nothing to stem the tide hence Shettima’s call to him to tackle the Boko Haram. Also, Shettima is the governor of the embattled Borno state and since origin of the Boko Haram insurgents are traced to Borno state, then his call for them to be

tackled somehow presents a positive face. It is an indirect act that elicits a positive face in the minds of the people. There is a perlocutionary effect of hope that Shettima being an indigene of Borno state might have what it requires for the insurgents to be tackled. The rider to the headline “insurgents better than military” presents the government in a negative face. This is because the military is expected to be better equipped than the insurgents, therefore, if the insurgents are better equipped than the military then it shows that the government is not doing enough. They do not consider the lives of their citizens important. This headline and rider elicits the feeling of fear and worry in the minds of the citizens.

**Table Three**

**Headline: *Boko Haram seizes 200 female students, some students escape***

**Riders: *Fed.Govt under pressure to find missing girls***

***DHQ says only eight girls still missing***

***99 girls’ missing-Borno official***

***Shettima offers 50 million for information***

	Direct act	Indirect act	Face management acts	Expected perlocutionary act
Boko Haram seizes 200 female students, some students escape	Reporting Asserting	Shaming Lamenting	Negative face	Fear Worry hopelessness

Federal government under pressure to find missing girls	Reporting Informing	Ridiculing Challenging	Negative face	Worry anger
DHQ says only eight girls still missing	Informing Reporting Claiming	Claiming, self-crediting, apologizing	Negative face	hope
99 girls missing: Borno official	Informing Reporting	Cautioning Protesting	Negative face	Fear worry
Shettima offers 50 million for information	Reporting Stating Informing	Exaggerating complementing	Positive face	Hope

**Table Three**

Nigerians woke up one morning to the rude shock that Boko Haram has struck again. This time around it was at a girl's secondary school in Chibok town. Conflicting reports of the incidents rent the airwaves. The government of President Goodluck Jonathan says only eight girls are missing. This view is contradicted by the headline "Boko Haram seizes two hundred female students: federal government under pressure to find missing girls" and rider "99 girls missing- Borno official". These two portray the president and his agencies- military- as lying to the country. The question then is why should the government lie? Why are they refusing to give the accurate number of



casualties? Is there collaboration between Jonathan, the military and the insurgents? These questions are elicited in the minds of the people by the headlines. It is obvious that the government's stand that only eight girls are missing is misleading, and Portrays a negative face for the president. It also elicits the feeling of despondency, fear and hopelessness in the minds of the people.

**Table Four**

**Headline: Jonathan meets governors, Security Chiefs**

**Rider: Youths, vigilante join search efforts**

	Direct act	Indirect act	Face management acts	Expected perlocutionary acts
Jonathan meets governors: security chiefs	Reporting Informing Stating	Uniting	Positive face for the government	hope
Youth vigilante joins search efforts	Informing reporting	Warning cautioning Threatening	Positive face for the government. Joint efforts to curb the situation	Hope

**Table Four**

The headline; "Jonathan meets governors, security chiefs" is a direct act of stating, expressing, reporting and indirect act of assuring, informing. The headline presents a positive face for the president. If he is meeting with the governors and security chiefs

then maybe he has decided to tackle the security challenge of Boko Haram. This headline provokes the feeling of hope and trust in the minds of the citizenry.

The rider to the headline “youth vigilante joins search efforts” also presents a positive face for the government. It means that the government has employed not only the military in the search efforts but also has allowed the youths to join in the search efforts. Rider also elicits the feeling of trust and hope.

**Table Five**

**Headline: 11 die in Abuja blast: 16 buses other vehicles destroyed**

**Riders: 2,236 affected by the blast-minister**

**Hospital overstretched, RedCross donate 50 bags**

**We will defeat Boko-Haram: Jonathan**

**Sultan: we must wake up to challenges**

	Direct act	Indirect act	Face management acts	Expected perlocutionary acts
11 die in Abuja blast: 16 buses other vehicles destroyed	Reporting Informing	Cautioning Lamenting Disillusioning sympathising	Negative face for the government	Fear worry
2,236 affected by the blast-minister	Reporting Informing	Lamenting Regretting	Negative face for the government	worry
Hospital overstretched: red cross distributed 200 body bags	Informing Reporting	acknowledging	Negative face	hopelessness

We will defeat Boko Haram: Jonathan	Asserting promising Assuring Reporting	Proving, self-committing, self-crediting	Positive face: The government tries to redeem its image	Hope
Sultan: we must wake up to challenges	Stating Assuring	Self-committing Instigating	Positive face	Hope

**Table Five**

The nation witnessed yet another bomb blast in Abuja at a motor pack. The headline: “11 die in Abuja blast; 16 buses, other vehicles destroyed, 2,236 affected by the blast”- minister is a direct act. It also gives a negative face to the government and the president. This is because the Boko Haram insurgents have also attacked the seat of power-federal capital territory Abuja and the attack was successful. Therefore, if Abuja can be attacked and successfully too with the retinue of security around then it goes to show that the government of President Jonathan lacks the will power to address the Boko Haram menace. The rider “hospital restricted” also has an indirect act of indicting, accusing. It also portrays a negative face for the government. It shows that the health care facilities in the country are inadequate. If the hospitals in the capital are restricted because of only one attack then it means that the governed has failed in health care delivery to the people. These headline and rider elicits a feeling of fear, worry, despair and fear.

The rider “we will defeat Boko Haram -Jonathan” is a direct act of declaring and an indirect act of assuring commitment,

affirming this statement gives President Jonathan a positive face. It is a declaration of his commitment to defeat the insurgents. It gives his government a positive face among all accusations and counter accusations. This statement presents a feeling of hope and trust in the mind of the citizens.

The last rider “Sultan- we must wake up to challenges” is a direct act of challenging and an indirect act of advising. It however gives a negative face to both the government and the citizens. It shows that the people blames the government for its inability to stem the Boko Haram menace, forgetting that the security challenge is affecting all and so all must contribute to the solution. This statement elicits the feeling of hope and trust in the minds of the people.

**Table Six**

**Headline: We lost 15 Troops to Boko Haram**

**Rider: Three policemen shot in Taraba**

	<b>Direct act</b>	<b>Indirect act</b>	<b>Face management acts</b>	<b>Expected perlocutionary acts</b>
We lost 15 troops to Boko Haram	Stating asserting	Regretting Lamenting Admitting	Negative face	Fear worry
Three policemen shot in Taraba	Reporting Stating Informing	Lamenting regretting	Negative face	Fear worry

The headline is a report by the Nigerian Army, it is a direct act of stating and asserting .However it performs an indirect act of lamentation, regret. This indirect act presupposes

a negative face for the government of the day. It is discrediting to the Jonathan administration that the insurgents are better equipped and have killed as much as fifteen troops. These acts elicit a feeling of worry, despair and fear in the citizens. The Rider to the headline also presents an indirect act of lamentation, and regret. It also discredits the government for if the securities agencies are killed with such impunity by the insurgents then the ordinary Nigerians have a lot to worry and fear.

**Table Seven**

**Headline: Worldbank report: Borno lost 1.9trn to Boko Haram**

**Rider: Jonathan’s Secret mission to Mali**

**How South Africa trained Nigerian military to fight Boko Haram**

	<b>Direct acts</b>	<b>Indirect acts</b>	<b>Face management acts</b>	<b>Expected perlocutionary acts</b>
World bank report: Borno lost 1.9 trn to Boko Haram	Reporting Informing	Regretting Lamentation indicting	Negative face for the state and federal government	Worry
Jonathan’s secret mission to Mali	Reporting alleging	Instigating Distrusting suspecting	Positive face for the government	Hope
How South Africa trained Nigerian military to fight Boko Haram	Educating Asserting	Assuring Promising	Positive face	Hope

The headline is a statement credited to the World Bank. It is a direct act of stating, informing and reporting the extent of damage and loss by the Borno government to the menace of Boko Haram. The World bank's statement performs an indirect act of regret, lamentation and pity. It presents a negative face for the state government and the federal government. If the government has lost such a huge amount to insurgency then it means the government is grounded and no meaningful governance is taking place. It also indirectly indicts the government; it reveals their incapability to stem the tide of insurgency. The two riders to headline are direct acts of stating, reporting, and asserting. The indirect acts for rider 'how South Africa trained Nigerian Military to fight Boko Haram include: promising, assuring .

This rider presents a positive face and negative face for President Jonathan. It gives a promise of his administration's readiness to seek help and assistance from other countries. However, it also gives Jonathan a negative face because it is an indirect act of admittance of his government's inability to stem the menace. The third rider, "Jonathan in secret missions to Mali though a direct act of informing, reporting has an indirect act of distrust and suspicion. This gives Jonathan a negative face. The underlining issue here is if his mission is clearly to find an end to the insurgents why the secrecy. This secrecy precipitated a lot of accusations and counter-accusations between Jonathan's PDP led government and the opposition party APC. The latter had accused the former of being the master-mind behind the menace while the former accuses the latter of making governance impossible in the North –east. With this political scenario, Jonathan's secrecy about his mission to

Mali leaves a lot to be questioned. This statement elicits a feeling of distrust in the minds of the people.

### **Socio-Pragmatic implication of the headlines**

It is obvious from the findings that Daily Trust newspapers seem biased and a weapon for political mechanization of the APC-opposition party. Out of the ten headlines and riders analyzed, only 4 reported on government's actions positively. It would be recalled that this Boko Haram menace heightened in 2014 a pre-election ear and as such there was a lot of political tension in the country. The opposition party desperately wanted to unseat the incumbent President Jonathan who was running for a second tenure. The security challenges became a weapon in the hands of the opposition party who accused the President of funding the Boko Haram group. The newspapers as we know are the fastest means of communicating even with the advent of information technology. The news the report goes a long way to affect the citizenry. Therefore the news headlines which the published majorly presented negative face of the Jonathan administration. At the time also the Boko Haram menace had made the north-east region of the country a living hell. Thus with daily news reportage of incessant killings and the President's insensitivity, the minds of the people gradually turned against the ruling party. This contributed immensely to the failure of the party and the president at the last general elections in the North-east.

### **Conclusion**

So far we have tried to examine the acts inherent in the newspaper headline reports on Boko –haram security challenge. It was revealed that the direct locutions though polite had indirect acts that were impolite to the government. It also discovered that these impolite and negative face constantly

employed by the newspaper helped to create a biased and hateful feeling towards the government in power thereby affecting the polity of the nation.

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