

Event and Actors Representation in Selected Nigerian Daily Newspapers

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Abstract

The 2011 Nigerian presidential election newspaper reports were not just to inform the public about the outcomes of the election. The representations in the newspaper reports were ideological and, by implication, judgmental. The main actors (presidential aspirants), were also represented differently. In this paper, we interrogate some linguistic tools that were used in the ideological presentation of the election and the main social actors. In other words, the paper examines whether the main social actors are included or excluded, genericised or specified; and the level of voice projection accorded to them. The study is anchored on Critical Discourse Analysis framework and it operationalises some aspects of van Leeuwen (2008) socio-semantic model and Hallidayan transitivity system in examining social actor differential representations and process types in the newspaper reports. These linguistic tools (*exclusion, inclusion, individualization, assimilation, collectivization, functionalisation, appraisal and voice projection*) are very pertinent because they serve as the very foundation on which further context analysis of the discourse could be based. The study observes that social actors representations and voice projection in the data do not only polarize the reportage but also lace it with bias. It also shows that the incumbent president was given more positive representation and voice projection than other aspirants.

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