



TRANSITIVITY CHOICES AND IDEOLOGICAL REPRESENTATIONS IN MURDER STORIES IN THE KENYAN MEDIA

Elizabeth Nafula Khaembaⁱ

PhD Student,
Moi University,
Kenya

Abstract:

Murder news events, like all other news events, can be presented in a number of perspectives to reveal different ideological perspectives advanced by varied media houses. This article studies different ideologies advanced in the murder news through transitivity choices made by reporters. On the basis of the purposively sampled news stories on murders in Kenya from the year 2018 to 2019, the study qualitatively examines the efficacy of the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), as a theoretical tool in the analysis of ideology in four different newspaper in Kenya i.e the Daily Nation, the Standard, the Star and the Nairobi, in relation to the representation of murder stories. The study hypothesizes that ideological forces have altered the main purpose of the media through the way news is written, organized and delivered, and that, from a socio-linguistic point of view, the consequences of these forces are observable at a transitivity level of linguistic analysis. The findings indicate that news reporters use transitivity choices to propagate and perpetuate certain ideologies either tacitly or overtly in newspaper headlines.

Keywords: transitivity, ideology, representation, perspectives

1. Introduction

Since time immemorial, Media has been used to report about events happening in the societies and the world at large. The Media intentionally uses both textual and/or visual language to represent attitudes, entities, individuals, ideals and institutions. It is from these representations that they position and differentiate themselves from each other. In Kenya, there exist various media groups which report events through different platforms: prints, online and audio. These include among others the Nation Media group, The Standard group, The Kenya Times, Citizen, Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation etc. These

ⁱ Correspondence: email khaembaliz2011@gmail.com

papers operate under different ownership structures. The Nation Media group is owned by the state while the rest are under different ownerships. Through these different ownership structures, the need to create ideological positioning of the said media houses in reference to murder reports is inevitable.

Despite the varying ownership structures of these newspapers, many other aspects of the papers are similar. Not only do they operate within the same geographic locations and therefore have similar markets comprised of very similar demographics but also all these papers are communicating to the same general type of people in the same specific region of the country giving rise to a state of affairs that creates a situation that has a commercial implication to the media houses. Given the social contexts within which these newspapers operate, it is thus logical to assume that these different newspapers in Kenya will use language distinctly to position themselves, differentiate themselves from each other, promote their efforts and attract the attention of distinct audiences including politicians, the masses, political analysts etc. thereby creating different stories of the same event reported. This study is therefore keen to show how transitivity choices in murder reports work towards achieving certain communicative functionality of the language use and ideological stances assumed by the concerned media houses in murder stories.

1.2 Language and Ideology

Many studies eg Fairclough N. (1989), Jalbert (1983, 282), Corner (1983, 279-280), Fowler R. (1991) carried out on language in relation to media and ideologies have shown that social, political and economic factors have an effect on how the world is represented in the media and that anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position and as such, language is not a clear reflection of the world reality but its refraction, Fairclough N. (1989) introduces the concept of ideological struggle, which takes place in and over language. He asserts that at the centre of this struggle lies the power to decide things such as which word meanings are "appropriate" or "correct" (pp. 88-89). This means therefore that the way events are represented on the basis of the elements of linguistic structure is key in news report. Fowler asserts that ideology is already imprinted in the available discourse and that news reporters do not select events to be reported and then consciously wrap them in value-laden language which the reader passively absorbs, language values which are ideological are already in the language, independent of both the news reporter and the reader. Fowler R. (1991) further on notes that news does not merely reflect reality but actively constructs it. Fairclough N. (1989) supports this view by stating that the ideological nature of media language entails specific constructions of the world and of social identities and relations. Fowler R. (1986) regards language as a social practice which endeavours to maintain social and institutional relations through the continuous propagation of ideology. According to Fowler values and ideology differ, for instance, in the different choices of words that are found in newspapers. However, it is not only vocabulary that may be ideologically invested. Any feature of linguistic structure can be ideologically significant,

whether it be grammar, syntax, semantics, etc. It is upon this observation that this study sets to find out how different ideologies are hidden in murder news by reporters via transitivity analysis.

2. Literature Review

Many scholars in Linguistics eg Thompson, White & Kitley (2008) have carried out studies on the language of news report in general and news report about murder and crime-related events in particular Lombardi, D. (2018), Adhoch, J. (2016) which have taken several angles in Linguistics ranging from the structures of the news report, language used in reporting and many other issues. Some have explored the rhetorical properties of the modern newspaper report so as to account for the distinctive style of news report e.g White (1998); Aini, N. and Widodo, P. (2018) Adhoch, J. (2016); Ononye C. F. (2017) ; Hudock, L. 2005) while others have tried to explore the relationship that exists between the ideological positions of the media and language use e.g (Ononye C. F. (2017).; Lombardi D. (2018); Timucin, M. D. (2018). The study conducted by Ononye is worth noting. It explored the relationship that exists between the ideological positions of the media and the linguistic choices made in their reports of the ND conflicts and concluded that both the paradigmatic and syntagmatic features have largely been used to achieve ideological ends. Ononye's study greatly informs the article at hand in terms of the ideological aspects advanced by the media in reporting. This study observes that many studies on the media have focused so much on pragmatic, sociolinguistic, critical Linguistics perspectives and lexico-stylistic approaches rather than on transitivity concerns. The novelty of the article in hand is that it is studying a new area of research; transitivity analysis in the language used in the newspaper headlines and introductory paragraphs depicting murders. Its findings will go a long way to give the readers of the newspapers insights on how these reports are composed for their better comprehension of the report.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

As a linguistic theory, Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) is based on the main assertion that language is a (social) semiotic system and that its users have unlimited choice in the creation of meanings. Systemic linguists, just like critical discourse analysts, share a common interest in language as a social semiotic. They claim that the function of language use is to create meanings that are informed by the cultural and social context of their exchange; therefore, language use is a semiotic process. The functional aspects of the systemic approach are concerned with how language is used by people and how language is structured for use, whereas the semantic aspect questions the types of meanings made with the use of language and how language is used to make such meanings. Halliday M. A. K. (1985). observes that there are three main kinds of

meanings, known as metafunctions, used simultaneously in the structure of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The functions of a clause are integrated in three systems of choices that correspond to these meanings: Transitivity, Mood, and Theme.

Since the central concern of this study is on Transitivity, the other two systems of choices will not be dealt with in this study. Transitivity is a linguistic aspect that deals with “*semantic structure of clauses... and refers to who does what to whom and how*” Simpson & Mayr (2010). This study thus examines the processes and participants encoded in the verbs. These processes according to Halliday’s Systemic Functional Grammar are six: Material processes are encoded in clauses having verbs expressing action, the so-called “doing-words” while the Mental process clauses entail the description of states of mind, cognitive and psychological events through verbs such as think, feel, hate, like, know, fear, want, see, hear, enjoy, etc. Relational processes are construed by copular verbs, such as be, become, seem, appear etc. while Verbal processes are realized through verbs introducing or describing speech. Lastly, there we have the Existential and behavioural processes. All these processes are typically realized in verbs.

4. Methodology

The approach taken in the analysis is descriptive in nature. Specifically, the study purposefully sampled a total of 22 samples of both headlines and introductory paragraphs from four newspapers in Kenya: the Daily Nation, the Standard, the Star and the Nairobiian covering different murders that occurred across the country in the years 2018 and 2019. Since different media houses were covering the events, the news consumers were actively searching for information about those coverages and naturally, different media groups being aware of this, would alter, edit and update content accordingly. Through these efforts, different representations of the murder events emerged on the basis of transitivity choices as exemplified below:

1. DN Article 1 (2018)

Governor goes off radar as detectives Piece together the web of relations

Behaver process: behavior circumstance agents Process: material goal

2. STD Article 2 (2018)

Security officers have spread their dragnets for three missing suspects in Nairobi

Agent process: material Goal circumstance

The DN author chooses a complex clause having two processes: a behavioural and a material one. The circumstance of manner describing the behavioural process in the same report is the adverb **radar**. It emphasizes on the governor’s efforts to conceal the information and consequently the detectives’ hard work to unearth the hidden information. The detectives’ efforts are well revealed in the material process **piece** combined with the circumstance of manner **together** to show that the detectives are using

all possible means to get to the truth of the matter: An ideology that could be in line with the concerned media house.

The STD clause captures the same event with only one material process; **have spread** combined with a goal **their dragnet** to show the effort of the security officer. It uses the lexical item **security officers**; a term which is quite general in the sense that security officers can range from administrative police, Traffic police, guards all the way to detectives. Being an umbrella term, it reduces the seriousness of the work done and the credibility of the story. Consequently, it reduces the readers' interest on the story. On the other hand, The DN chooses to use the lexical item **detectives** which is very specific. This usage shows the seriousness of the work done, it thus increases the credibility of the story hence attracts the readers' interest on the story.

3. DN Article 3 (2018)

Obado's PA still in custody as police intensify watch over all

Carrier attributive conj. agent Process: material goal circumstance

4. STD Article 4 (2018)

Man at the epicenter of murder misery Michael Oyamo is a quiet Man with intimidating physique

Circumstance Carrier process: relation Attribute

The relational processes are used in both stories. In the DN, the relational process is used to attribute Obado's PA as a man in custody but lacks the relational verb *is*. This lack of relational verb is ideological since it effectively transforms the writer's opinion into a fact or an acceptable state of affairs (Reah, 1998). Additionally, choosing to thematize the clause with **Obado's PA** supports the said fact since such positioning is usually reserved for known information (Fries, 1994:231). This implies that the readers' know this information, a fact that is further supported by the clause that follows encoded in a material process. In this process **the police** is reported as **agents** who have placed Obado's PA in custody as investigations go on. The use of the lexical item **mystery** within the heavy pre-modification of the pronominal, **Michael Oyamo** has, in this case, a negative connotation. It introduces uncertainties in the report leaving the readers asking themselves questions about the murder. The readers thus become suspicious and curious about the circumstances surrounding Sharon's murder and more so about Oyamo, who is the carrier of the attribute in that relational process.

The DN doesn't raise anything curious about the murder and Obado's PA. The report is factual but STD author uses heavy pre and post-modification for Oyamo making the report subjective, speculative and as such, ideological. This use of language aims to entertain the readers, make them want to read on but it poses the danger of credibility on the story unlike the DN version

Both news papers use relational process to enact this information. The DN article introduces the suspect in a more favourable light as **Obado's PA** while the STD refers to him as **Michael Oyamo**. Introducing the suspect as Obado's PA reveals him as an

innocent person until proven guilty. It thus ideologically accords him a positive image in the society.

The STD introduces the same person differently, as a murderer who needs to be harshly charged in the court of law because of his looks and character traits. Its usage of the word **Michael Oyamo** with no title identifies him as a nobody, he is just like any other person in the society who is capable of committing the said crime. Through the addition of the mysterious side of the murderer by reinforcing the unfavorable stance in portraying Michael Oyamo through contrasting his quiet nature with an intimidating physique; the STD could ideologically be developing or creating a case against him. This strategy can therefore have an implication on the charges leveled on him.

5. DN Article 5 (2018)

Investigations boss say arrests of key suspects to be made soon

Sayer process: verbal reported

Police say probe will not spare anyone and arrest will be made soon

sayer process: verbal reported

6. STD Article 6 (2018)

Police question 12 in murder of varsity student

agent process: material goal circumstance

As observed in van Dijk (2001:357) referring to Nesler et al (1993) “*recipients tend to accept beliefs, knowledge and opinions (unless they are inconsistent with their personal beliefs and experiences) through discourse from what they see as authoritative, trustworthy or credible sources such as scholars, professionals or reliable media.*” This makes sense to the DN author who desires to provide credible sources whose words are projected through a verbal process **says**. Here the sayers are the **investigations boss** and **the police** who are very authoritative and much respected people in the society. The strategy helps in building confidence and credibility of the story to the reader’s that indeed the culprits will be arrested. Certainty is further cultivated by the circumstance of time **soon** which specifies the time frame within which the arrests will be made.

The second clause of the DN further cultivates the certainty of the report through the use of the modal **will** which communicates a high degree of surety that indeed it will happen. However, in the first clause of the DN the certainty level is reduced through the use of **infinite to**. As Thompson (1996) observes, **infinite to** in reporting clause are used to express uncertainty; thus, the report in the first clause speculates about arrests that may be made soon. This language use therefore ideologically implies that the key suspects are innocent until proved guilty. This language is speculative since it doesn’t specify the suspect in any way.

The STD author, on the other hand, uses material process, which specifies the agent and the goal, to report on the same event. The information is presented in a factual manner. No uncertainties are projected here, thus the reader tends to believe in this report. The material process **question** is in present time. This means that the action is

happening presently and thus there is no need of using circumstance of time **soon**. This strategy further increases the credibility of the story. The fact that the report specifies the number of the suspects to be twelve further increases the level of credibility thereafter makes the readers believe in the story.

7. STD Article 7 (2018)

Life cut short: Kenyans react with shock to broad day light

Senser process: mental phenomenon

killing of Ivy Wangechi, a sixth year medical student at Moi University.

phenomenon

The clause shows the effect of the mental process **react** having **Kenyans** as the senser. The senser slot thus has a lexeme that enables the reporter to bring in witnesses to support the fact that the murder was a great loss to the deceased's family since her future would have been a great one to herself and the family at large; a view well captured in the summarized thematized phrase **life cut short**, and also in the phenomenon **with shock to broad day light killing of Ivy Wangechi**.

8. STD Article 8 (2018)

Police Boss says man traveled to Eldoret last Friday after student

sayer process: verbal report

ignored his calls after he sent her money

Enacted through a verbal process, the above clause employs **police boss** as the sayer and **man traveled to Eldoret last Friday after student ignored his calls after he sent her money** as the report. The lexeme **man** in the reported slot does not have the same semantic equivalence the lexeme **killer** or **murderer** has; thus the news does not focus on the action of killing but it focuses on the reaction of the killer after sending money to the student. The reporter here intends to hide the man's identify (of being a killer on a murderer) by the lexeme **man**. Semantically, the report aims to describe him on the basis of his being masculine rather than a killer. Choosing such hedging device can be interpreted as either a display of the writers' non-committal nature to the report or covert support of a perpetrator's innocence: an ideology that could be in line with the media house concerned. On the other hand, the student is thrust into the actor position carrying a negative connotation as **she** consciously **ignored his calls after he sent her money** causing the man to travel to Eldoret. The student is therefore ideologically represented as the initiator of the problems that led to her death.

9. The Star Article 9 (2019)

Kori's wife, Mary was allegedly murdered

Goal process: rel circ. Process: material

This clause depicts the effects of the material process by the goal of the clause. The identity of the killer is hidden by not mentioning it; as a known fact, passive structures

allow for the omission of the agent or actor. Through the representation of the goal as **Kori's wife** the author wishes to focus on the emotional aspect of the relationship between the killed and the killer who's not mentioned here. Previous reports depicted Kori and his lover as the alleged killers of Mary. Through this interpretation, the readers are called upon to condemn a husband's heinous act on a wife. Through the lexical item **wife**, the authors wish to allude to the societal role of Mary and also her feminist aspect (of being a woman) and not so much about the murder event. This clause is thus seen to depict Mary's killer as merciless people who need to be judged harshly.

10. The Star Article 10 (2019)

Court Document tell tangled tale of frantic efforts to dispose off body

Sayer process: verbal report

The above clause is enacted through a verbal process **tell** having **court documents** as the sayer and **tangled tale of frantic efforts to dispose off body** as the report. The verbal process **tell** personifies the sayer while the lexeme **tangled tale** depicts the crafty nature of the killers concerned in their attempt to hide the truth. In both clauses, the reporter seems to be advancing a case against the perpetrators by either showing their cruel nature as in clause 1 or their crafty nature as in clause 2.

11. The Star Article 11 (2019)

Plot: Victims were in car boot all that time as police argued whether to kill them.

carrier process: rel circumstance conj sayer process: verbal verbiage

The report is enacted through two processes; relational and verbal so as to give the readers information about the event. The clause complex uses active voice structure and for that reason foregrounds the victims of the crime.

The relational process has the **victim** as the carrier and **in car boot all that time** as the a circumstance of location in time which depicts a sensational fear the victims experienced since it magnifies the image of humiliation and torture they went through few hours before meeting their death such language use gets the readers ready for a dramatic and sensationalized representation in the text which has to follow. It gives the readers an impression that there will be a story of humiliation and torture in the text of the news. The subordinate clause which is enacted through a verbal process **argues** has **police** appearing as the sayer and **whether to kill them** as the verbiage. The police are thus identified as the killers of the victim as reveled in the verbiage. Through this depiction, an ironical tone is implied in the sense that instead of taking of care of the citizens as dictated in the principles guiding their line of duty, the police are the ones killing them. The lexeme **police** for the sayer doers not have the same semantic equivalence as the word **killers** or **murderers**. Thus, in its use as the sayer, it hides the police identity of being killers. To further hide this identify, the reporter selects on a verbiage that focuses more on the argument that ensued on whether to kill them or not and not on the action itself. In as much as the author struggles to hide the police identity

as killers, readers can't fail to logically link the police to the killing simply because, the victims who were in the hands of the said police were found dead later on.

12. The Star Article 12 (2019)

Murder Plot: Victims were in car boot all that time, listening

Carrier/senser process: rel circumstance process: mental

to police argue whether to execute them.

phenomenon

The clause 15 has the report of 14 repeated in almost similar sentence structure only that 15 has a mental process **listening** in the subordinate clause. According to Hawthorn(1987) and Van Dijk(1998), direct repetition of statements is among other strategies that writers can use to persuade readers to consent to their opinions. Through the repetitive nature of the sentence structure the author emphasizes on the cruel nature of the police. Having **victims** as the senser and **to police argue whether to execute them** as the phenomenon, the victims were thus made to listen to how the killers were planning to execute them. It thus reveals a high degree of humiliation and torture they had to go through. Through this language use readers are made to empathize with the victims, it also negatively impacts on the police as heartless people who should not be treated with any leniency. Furthermore, the police force is depicted as a unit that can't be relied on.

13. The Star Article 13 (2018)

GSU officer confesses to Killing woman, daughter

Sayer Process: verbal Target

The above clause is enacted through a verbal process with an active voice. The sayer is thus fore grounded and the target is back grounded. The newspaper employs the lexeme GSU Officer for the sayer which does not have the same semantic equivalence as a killer or a murderer. Through this choice of word, the reporter hides the identity of the **GSU officer** of being a killer: However, the verbal process **confesses** and the target **to killing a woman, daughter** focuses more on representing the GSU officer as a killer in the sense that he **confesses** this by himself. This representation thus incriminates the GSU officer and advances a case against him.

The representation of target as **mother, daughter** focuses on the emotional aspect of the relationship between the two members belonging to the same family. It thus heightens the magnitude of the case; it thus involves two separate murders; one is that one of the mother and the next one is that of the mother's daughter. Through this language use, the writer seems to be advancing a case against the perpetrator. On one hand and also making the readers sympathize with the two deaths due to the heavy blow their family had to endure.

14. The Star Article 14 (2018)

Moi University Student hacked to death by axe-wielding man

goal process: material circ agent/actor

The above heading shows the effects of material process by the actor and the goal of the clause. It is a passive voice clause in which the goal is foregrounded and the actor is backgrounded. The writer employs passive voice in their headings very often because it saves space. However, brevity is not the only reason behind its use. It is also employed to give a very different effect of the event to the readers, as the actor appears less prominent and the person or the thing affected appears more focused. The material process **hacked** gives a visual picture of the crime committed; not only does it tell that Moi University student has been killed, but it also tells the method used or rather how the student was killed. As such, the student was not just killed or murdered but she was **hacked**. To hack is to cut somebody with rough, heavy blows.

So, this material process gives a visual description of how the action was carried out; it is thus exploiting the readers' emotional aspect making them judge the killer harshly. It thus ideologically depicts the killer as a cruel, inhuman person who should receive harsh punishment.

15. The Star Article 15 (2018)

Final year medical student way laid by man as she returned to her hostel

goal process material actor circumstance

The clause above is passive having foregrounded the goal and backgrounded the actor. It thus leaves a very different effect about the event on the readers. This is because, the actor appears less prominent and the thing or person affected more focused. In this heading, the process **way laid** gives a visual picture of the crime committed. To way lay is to stop somebody who is going somewhere especially, in order to attack them. Therefore, through this choice of language, the actor though backgrounded is revealed as culpable. On the other hand, the innocence nature of the goal is implied despite the fact that she is foregrounded.

16. Nairobi Article 16 (2019)

Actor Jamal Nasser was stabbed to death and his lover, Grace Kananu charged for murder

goal process: material circ conj goal process: material circ

The above coordinated clause is made up of two clauses both of which are passive in nature and are enacted through material processes. Actors in both clauses are omitted and the goals are foregrounded. Even though the identity of the actor in the first clause is omitted, it's hinted at in the second clause as his lover, Grace Kananu. It is worth noting that even though the hint for the killer is implied, the lexical item for the killer his lover, Grace Kananu still hides the identity of the actor as a killer. The lexical item does not have the same semantic equivalence the killer or the murderer has.

To further hide the perpetrator's identity the author chooses to use the lexeme **his lover** as a goal. Remember this lexeme does not focus on the action of the clause, it rather focuses on the emotional aspect of the relationship between the killer and the killed.

The material process **stabbed** hints at the action of the clause. To stab is to push a sharp pointed object especially a knife into somebody killing or injuring them. As such, the reporter here aims to reveal the cruel nature of the killer and thus advance a case against her.

17. Nairobi Article 17 (2018)

Husband stabs wife to death, attempts to take his own life

actor process: material goal circ process: behav behaviour

The above clause is in active voice. The reporter employs the word **husband** for the actor which does not have the same semantic equivalence as the lexeme killer or murderer. Thus, in its usage for the actor, it does not focus on the action of killing but it reveals the emotional relationship that existed between a husband and a wife. In this usage, the identity of the husband as a killer is hidden. However, the process **stabs** encodes the action of killing by focusing more on the how the action was done. The author could have used **kills** or **murders** instead of stabs, but by using stabs, it has given a picture of how the action was done. The result of the clause action is presented in the circumstance **to death**.

18. Nairobi Article 18 (2018)

Irungu bragged to police that "This case will go nowhere"

Sayer process: verbal quoted

The clause carries a verbal process **bragged**. The sayer is identified as Irungu. The process thus refers to the pride of the sayer as he talked to the police. Through this language use, Irungu is revealed as an arrogant man. The use of the quoted words **this case will go nowhere** intensifies his arrogance and makes the readers not sympathize with him.

19. Nairobi Article 19 (2018)

Dad, I can't believe I killed Ivy - Naftali

quoted sayer

I can't believe it's me who killed Ivy.

quoted

The clauses carry verbal processes with the 1st clause lacking in the lexical verb enacting **Naftali** as the Sayer. The process refers to the regretting act of the Sayer. Naftali regrets why he killed Ivy. He is thus represented as one who never intended to kill and that he is remorseful due to the action. As noted in Hawthorn (1987) and Van Dijk (1998), direct repetition of statements is one of the many strategies writers can use to persuade readers to consent to their opinion. Through the repetitive nature of the sentence structure, the

reporter emphatically manages to convince the readers that indeed the killer is remorseful and thus seeks pardon or forgiveness since he never intended to kill.

20. Nairobi Article 20 (2018)

Unrequited love drove varsity girl's killer over the edge

Actor/agent process: material goal circ

The clause shows the effects of material process **drove** by an actor and a goal. Unrequited love is an agent which is the driving force behind the crime. The goal is thus portrayed as **unrequited love driven killer**. Through this language use, the reporter hints at the difficulties the goal was facing due to unrequited love. The process **drove** portrays him helpless, he was thus driven or pushed to kill by unrequited love. This shows that, at that time of killing, he didn't have control over his action and for that reason he deserves to be treated with leniency. To further his plea for leniency, the writer continues to show why the killer should be forgiven in the following clauses:

21. Nairobi Article 21 (2018)

A Sh.14,000/= birthday gift to Ms. Ivy Wangechi could have been the last straw that

token receipt modal process: rel attribute

drove Naftali Njahi Kinuthia to butcher her with an axe

Actor/agent process: material goal circ

22. Nairobi Article 22 (2018)

Attacker says he was angered that she refused to be his girlfriend yet

sayer process: verbal quoted

he would send her money

The writer in clause 21 through a relational process **have been** effectively enacts a cause - effect relationship between the token and the attributed to show the cause of the killer's action and even justify it. Clause 22 is enacted through a verbal process **says** which projects the attacker's voice in a reported speech. Through this language use the reporter effectively manages to reveal that the attacker's provocation might have been motivated by his girlfriend's behavior. She consciously provoked the situation when **she refused to be his girlfriend**. At this point, the girlfriend is thrust into an actor position, carrying a negative connotation, in the subordinate clause.

5. Findings from the analysis of the data

Different processes are used to enact the murder events in the stories chosen. From these processes, different circumstantial types are employed: cause, location and manner. The one for manner is the most occurred of all, followed by location and lastly cause. It means that these news articles talk more about the manner in which the crime was committed than the reason for the action. In the Star, the circumstance of location and reason dominated the report. This means that the authors wanted to report on the location in

space and time and on cause of the crime more than on the perpetrators. Material process dominated the clauses followed by verbal, then relational. The mental and behavioral appeared in the least order. The material process linked the perpetrators to the crime, while the victims were portrayed vulnerable and helpless. **Say** is the most common reporting verb within the verbal processes identified. **Say, tell** are neutral or nearly neutral but **confess and brag** may be viewed as slightly biased since they can represent the speakers' statement in a clearly positive or negative light. As such, the reporting verb may affect the reader's interpretation of the utterance that follows e.g. when the Star report uses **confess** instead of **says**, the reporter in a way guides the interpretation of the statement which the verb introduces.

It is thus concluded that transitivity has largely been used to represent murder events in different angles and in the long run enable the reporters achieve different ideological ends which included:

- Framing victims innocently or as initiators of the murder events in the discourse.
- Framing perpetrators innocently and supporting the fact that they have no case to answer or as culpable and thus liable for punishment.
- Choosing such hedging devices that can be interpreted as either a display of the writers' non-committal nature to the report or covert support of a perpetrator's innocence.
- Putting the readers into a social group of the vulnerable group which seeks for protection and justice over the killing, from the government.
- Construing the investigative unit positively, as a unit set out to bring the murder culprits to book.

In relating the ideologies to specific newspapers, these different ideological moves were invariably employed in the murder discourses sampled. No specific ideology was associated with a particular newspaper.

References

- Adhoch, J. (2016). *A Critical Examination of Media Representation of Terrorism in Kenya*. University of Nairobi: Published M.A Thesis.
- Aini, N. and Widodo, P. (2018). Critical Discourse Analysis of The Bombing Attack News: An Analysis of Tuen A. van Dijk's Model. *Advances in Social Science Education and Humanities Research Journal* Vol 165.
- Fairclough, N. (1995a) *Media discourse*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. 1989. *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fowler, R. (1991). *Language in the news: Discourse and ideology in the press*. London: Routledge.
- Fowler, R. (1986). *Linguistic Criticism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.

- Lombardi, D. (2018). *Critical Discourse Analysis of Online News Headlines: A Case of the Stoneman Douglas High School Shooting*. Malmö University: Published Master Thesis
- Ononye, C. F. (2017). Lexico-Stylistic Choices and Media Ideology in News Paper Reports on Niger Delta Conflicts. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics* Vol. 7 No 1.
- Simpson, P. and A. Mayr (2010). *Language and Power* London: Routledge.
- Thomson, E. A., White, P. R. R. and Kitley, P. (2008). Objectivity' and 'hard news' reporting across cultures: Comparing the news report in English, French, Japanese and Indonesian journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 9 (2), 212 – 228.
- Timuçin, D. D. (2018). *Different Language Styles in Newspapers: An Investigative Framework*. Journal of language and linguistic studies vol.6, no.2.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Literary Studies shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).