A Socio-pragmatic Analysis of the Use of the Names of Public Figures in Nigerian Newspaper Headlines

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Abstract
This paper undertakes a sociopragmatic analysis of the use of the popular names of public figures in some headlines of Nigerian newspapers. Five headlines were selected for the analysis, while the extra data used in analysing the observed behaviour and its effects were collected through observation, administration of questionnaire, and consultation of relevant articles. Adopting a socio-cognitive approach, the paper draws on some core concepts of Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010) Reasoned Action Approach and Wilson and Sperber's (2004) Relevance Theory as theoretical framework to identify and situate the beliefs that motivate headline crafters to front just one name of an unpopular news referent, especially that which is the same as the popular name of a public figure, when reporting news about the referent, the socio-psychological factors which fuelled these beliefs, and the success level of the behaviour vis-a-viz the achievement of the intended results. The findings show that while the strategy of using the popular names of public figures is effective in attracting readers' attention, it appears not substantially effective in getting them click on the news link because the majority of Nigerian social media users do not often read news stories after they had read the headlines.

Keywords: socio-pragmatics, socio-psychological factors, ostensive stimulus, optimal relevance

Introduction

News outlets in Nigeria, just like their counterparts all over the globe, are constantly faced with the problems of how to effectively get their news across to the target audience and generate revenue from their efforts (Molek-Kozakowska, 2013; Oberiri & Elif, 2020; OECD, 2021). To deal with these challenges, journalists often devise means of getting the reader's attention to patronize their outlets, hence facilitating wider coverage of the audience and winning the confidence of business owners to continue promoting their businesses through their platforms (Scacco & Muddiman, 2015). Thus, the headline has been one of the ways through which journalists compete tactically for the attention of news consumers (Rasmus et al., 2016). The advent and ubiquity of the internet with its attendant online platforms and electronic devices have made these problems appear somewhat gigantically perplexing (Abdulraheem, et al., 2013). This is because most news consumers now access news reports via the internet (Kuiken et al., 2017). Breaking news can now be accessed easily by individuals in the comfort of their homes by just clicking on the news headline once it pops up on their mobile devices. Chen et al. (2015) observe (as cited in Kuiken et al. 2017) that there is so much competition on the internet among news sources for readers' attention. This is why news headlines are cultivated in such a way that they can effectively grab readers' attention.

With this apparent change in the mode of news consumption, the function of the news headlines has also changed. It was previously held (van Dijk, 1988, p.53) that the primary function of a headline was to give the reader, who is scanning through the newspaper, a clear understanding of what the article was about. This function has been since criticized (Dor, 2003, pp.697-698) due to the view and observation that news headlines have a pragmatic function rather than just the summarizing function as posited by van Dijk (see also Chiluwa, 2007)

According to Mirabela and Ariana (2010), the pragmatic function of the news headline is achieved through the deployment of certain linguistic features in the process of crafting the headline (p.187). One of these techniques, which is the concern of this paper, is the fronting of just one of the collective names of a news referent (a name that is similar to the popular name of a famous person in the society) as an ostensive stimulus to their target audience. Thus, the aim of this paper is to investigate the socio-pragmatic corollaries of this trend in journalism. To achieve this aim, the paper adopts the socio-cognitivists' approach to pragmatics (Jiang, 2017; Kecskes, 2008, 2010; van Dijk, 1977, 2006, 2009, & 2015) to identify and situate the sociocultural and psychological factors which inform such constructions and the extent to which they achieve the intended results. As a corollary, Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010) Reasoned Action Approach (henceforth RAA) and Wilson and Sperber's (2004) Relevance Theory (RT) are eclectically selected as the methodological frameworks.

Literature Review

The News Headline

The news headline is one of the media genres unique to the written press. According to Crystal (1987), the headline is "one of the most distinctive features of a newspaper" (p.388). Even though a myriad of research lights has been beamed on the subject, it appears no overarching definition has been proffered so far on news headline. Isani (2011) observes that the difficulty in providing an all-encompassing definition on the subject can be attributed to its textual, linguistic and pragmatic complexity. Consequently, while attempting to provide working definitions, scholars have confined themselves to the textual functions of the headlines as artefacts or visual marks on a page (Bell & Garrett 2001, as cited in Isani, 2011). In her study on the linguistic aspects of the headline, Mardh (1980) notes that there is "no unambiguous definition of the headline known to be in existence" (p.14). What can be garnered from existing literature on news headlines is that they perform two main functions: informative and pragmatic. Apart from informing the reader about the contents of the newspaper, headlines also attract readers' attention to the paper by obscuring relevant information or creating ambiguity in order to elicit curiosity in readers and then lure them to the news story. Isani (2011) also observes that informative headlines are contentcentered, whereas pragmatic headlines are reader-centered (p.6).

Despite all this abundant literature on news headlines covering a wide range of theoretical and empirical areas, surprisingly, it is comparatively little that deals with the headline as a communicative act. Among these works include Chiluwa (2007), Ismail (2016), Isani (2011), and Kuiken et al (2017). More surprising is that only few attempts have been made among the scholarly efforts in this regard to investigate the socio-cognitive contexts responsible for the effective achievements of those communicative acts. Haiyan (2013) and Ifantidou (2009) employed such socio-cognitive approach to the study of news headlines. While Ifantodou focused on the hearers' judgement, Haiyan examined cognitive effects of metaphorization in headline cultivation without any field-based data. In their online article titled "Investigating the Influence of 'Clickbait' News Headlines," Scacco and Muddiman (n.d) examined the different reactions which headlines written with varying levels of uncertainty can prompt in readers, especially in political news. The current paper uses data from both primary and secondary sources, supported by the author's introspection or context model (van Dijk, 2006) to probe into the socio-cognitive correlation of using only single names (taken from their individual collective names) of news referents, as a feature of news headlines, in performing communicative acts. This involves identifying some of the social-psychological contexts that could instigate this communicative behavior among journalists and facilitate the behavior's effectiveness in achieving the intended perlocutionary effects.

The Concept of Name

A name is a marker of identity. It is "a word or a combination of words by which a person, place, or thing, a body or class, or any object of thought is designated, called, or known" (dictionary.com). Grammatically speaking, a name is a noun. A noun that names anyone of the same kind or class is called a common name while a noun that names a particular member of a class is called a proper name. Selfa (2014) notes that "proper names serve as signals or markings whereby some individuals can identify some others" (36). The study of proper names which includes personal names (anthroponyms) and place names (toponyms) is called onomastics. The type of proper name that is the concern of this study is the personal name, particularly the popular name. Blount (2015) submits that everyone has at least two personal names, typically three, and sometimes more, which are used collectively to designate them. These names are usually classified into a (1) surname (usually the family name), (2) the first or given name (the one mostly used and informal), and (3) the second or middle name (Blount, 2015, p. 616). Although people's names individually and collectively differentiate them, each of the names serve different referential and social roles. What must be noted, however, is that a particular name (maybe first, middle or even surname) out of the collective names of a person may become more popular than the rest because of its frequent use by, for example, the person's schoolmates, colleagues, or other social groups. For political and religious leaders, as well as superstars, the particular names singled out from their collective names and used often by media houses become their popular names (Blount, 2015).

Socio-Pragmatics and Socio-Cognitive Approach

Sociopragmatics, according to Leech (1983), is the "sociological interface in pragmatics, and it is concerned with studying how social conditions and

situations influence language use and interpretation" (p.11). To some scholars, sociopragmatics is the combination of sociolinguistic and pragmatic principles in the analysis of discourse (Emezue, 2012). It is the same with what Kecskes (2014) referred to as socio-cultural interactive pragmatics or what Alba-juez (2016) called macro-pragmatics. It is not entirely different from a socio-cognitive approach to pragmatics, only that the socio-cognitivists emphasized more than other things the epistemic aspect of those social conditions and situations, which are the main concern of sociopragmatics. In carrying out a socio-pragmatic evaluation of the use of names as ostensive stimuli in news headlines of some Nigerian newspapers, this paper gives attention to the cognitive aspects of context, bearing in mind that the core claim of the socio-cognitive approach to discourse is that discourse and society are mediated by cognition (van Dijk, 2015). Again, the socio-cognitivists believe that while accounting for utterances, recourse should not be had only to the hearers' perspective but from both the speaker and hearer, and as such "interlocutors should be considered as 'complete' individuals with different possible cognitive statuses, and with possible different interpretations of the same core common ground information and actual communicative situation" (Kecskes, 2010, p.58). In essence, this subjective interpretation of communicative situations determines what the same linguistic structure means to each discourse participant. Thus, in this study, attention is given both to the writers' and audience's perspectives. Also, according to van Dijk (2006), "both participants and analysts use introspection constantly in order to understand and participate in discourse" (p. 165). This position justifies the employment of introspection in this paper in examining and accounting for the possible contexts which motivated the behaviour of fronting only first names of news referent.

Theoretical Framework

Since socio-cognitive approach does not only look at what is produced or reproduced and what is comprehended but also at how it is planned, executed and understood (van Dijk 1977), we have combined two theories to conduct this analysis: Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010) Reasoned Action Approach and Wilson and Sperber's (2004) Relevance Theory. These theories are considered suitable in accounting for the contexts that motivated journalists to adopt the strategy under study and the effects of such strategy on the target audience.

Reasoned Action Approach

Fishbein and Ajzen's (2010) Reasoned Action Approach (also known as Theory of Behavioural Prediction) is a theory of socio-psychology that hinges on the assumption that a set of beliefs influences, to a large extent, the behaviour of people, and that these beliefs originate from certain background factors (which in this study we prefer to call situational contexts). According to Fishbein and Ajzen, these background factors vary from behaviour to behaviour and are virtually unlimited (p. 224).

In this theory, beliefs are seen as subjective probabilities which have four elements—the action performed, the target at which the action is directed, the context in which it is performed, and the time at which it is performed (p. 29)—and they can be categorized into three: behavioural, normative (injunctive and descriptive), and control. These behavioural, normative and control beliefs respectively shape attitude, perceived norm, and perceived behavioural control towards the behaviour under consideration which in turn encourage or discourage the performance of the behaviour. In this study, we are interested in identifying and outlining these beliefs and the various situational contexts from which they originate.

Relevance Theory

This is a cognitive model of inferential pragmatics. Cognitive in the sense that it gives attention to the epistemic aspects of context while accounting for hearers' interpretation of speakers' propositions/utterances. According to Wilson and Sperber (2004), "the goal of inferential pragmatics is to explain how the hearer infers the speaker's meaning on the basis of the evidence provided" (p. 607). Thus, RT is an attempt to buttress Grice's claim that "utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer toward the speaker's meaning", expectations he described in terms of the "cooperative principle and maxims of quality (truthfulness), quantity (informativeness), relation (relevance) and manner (clarity), which speakers are expected to observe" (p. 607).

Of interest to this study is RT's demonstration of the interconnectivity between relevance and processes of cognition, communication and comprehension. Speakers manipulate their audience's

cognitive tendency to maximize relevance by creating ostensive stimuli to elicit certain cognitive effects which in turn raise the expectation of optimal relevance in the audience and lead them to exert effort in processing the speaker's meaning, meaning that may or may not match the triggered expectations. This is what RT referred to as ostensive inferential communication. In processing the speaker's meaning, hearers make use of contextual factors available at their disposal to interpret the meaning of the speaker's utterances. This process involves what is called in RT the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure which is provoked by the presumption of optimal relevance.

Methodology

The data for this study comprises five news' headlines picked in 2019 from three different Nigerian Newspapers: Vanguard Newspaper (two), Daily Post (two) and Guardian Newspaper (one). One headline was selected from Guardian Newspaper because it was the only one that featured the use of individual names and accessible to the researcher at the time of the study; other available headlines from the Guardian only featured names of organizations instead of those of individuals. Additional data, employed in analysing the effects of the names used in the headlines, as well as the factors that facilitated the elicitation of presumption of optimal relevance by the names in the target audience, were collected through observation, administration of questionnaire, and focus group discussion as well as through the intuitive knowledge of the researcher as a Nigerian citizen with interest in socio-political developments in the country.

The author observed, on Facebook and Twitter, the reactions of participants who commented on the platforms where the selected news headlines were advertised, and he then randomly selected some participants and sent a questionnaire to them through their Facebook messenger and personal Twitter handles' direct message (DM). Twenty participants were selected for each headline, making a total of one hundred on the whole. Their responses were obtained and analysed to ascertain the extent to which the strategy achieved the intended result of attracting traffic to the digital platform. In addition, some online articles and reports were consulted to determine some of the factors which could influence headline crafters' belief that this strategy can achieve the intended result of grabbing readers' attention, thereby leading them to click on the story link, and hence resulting in traffic generation for their digital platforms.

In analysing the data, a mixed-method was adopted. This involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis. The background factors, which influenced the belief that the strategy under study can achieve the intended results, were identified and discussed. In addition, participants' responses were presented in statistical tables, and these, together with reactions which the author had observed on the social media among other participants, were used to determine the success level of the strategy in achieving the intended results.

Analysis and Discussion

There are different strategies employed by journalists to make a headline a clickbait. One of such, which is the focus of this study, is the fronting of only one of the collective names of individual news referents, as ostensive stimuli, especially names that are similar to those of popular personalities in the society, such as the bold ones in the following headlines.

1. ***Obasanjo*** *campaigns for Buhari's re-election in US* (Guardian Newspaper, February 5th 2019)

2. *Traffic Law Violation:* ***Onnoghen****, 39 others Forfeit Vehicles to LASG* (Vanguard Newspaper, 6th May 2019)

3. ***Oyedepo****, others Endorse Buhari* (Vanguard Newspaper, 11th February 2019)

4. ***Buhari*** *Died while Undergoing Treatment Abroad* (Daily Post, 3rd April 2019)

5. *2019 Election: PDP is Dead—****Tambuwal****, Wamakko Declare* (Daily Post, 7th January 2019)

Motivating Beliefs and Contextual Facilitators

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), if we must fully understand why people perform a behaviour of interest, we must examine the underlying behavioural, normative, and control beliefs. And it is by examining these beliefs that we gain insight into the factors that produced favourable or unfavourable attitudes toward a behaviour. Bell (1991) notes that the way in which news is reported is heavily dependent on the news producer's processing, structuring and reporting of the news, and there are

fundamentals to understanding news production and choices that editors, producers and other journalists make. There are several beliefs which could motivate the behaviour of fronting only one of the names of news referents in headlines by journalists, but attention will be limited only to two beliefs considered fundamental as far as this study is concerned.

One of these fundamental beliefs is the assumption that it has the capacity to arouse curiosity in the target audience and stimulate presumption of optimal relevance, thereby leading them to click on the news link. Wilson and Sperber (2004) observe that where a communicator knows the tendency of the audience to pick out the most relevant inputs and process them to maximize their relevance, they may be able to produce a stimulus that is likely to attract their attention, activate an appropriate set of contextual assumptions and point them toward an intended conclusion (p. 611).

Another belief worth mentioning which is an offshoot of the former, is the belief that clicking on the news link will, in return, fetch them financial gains. Frampton (2015)'s observation corroborates this assumption. He notices that publishers increasingly use clickbait strategy for simple economics. The more clicks a news item gets, the more traffic it generates on the digital platform. This then results in making the platform popular, thereby attracting online advertisers. However, there are certain contextual factors which must have strengthened the identified beliefs by showing the capability of the names, used in the headlines, to deliver the required results.

Beliefs have origins; they could be potentially influenced by a multitude of background factors. It is by identifying the relevant factors associated with given beliefs that we deepen our understanding of a behaviour's determinants (Fishbein and Ajzen, 2010, p. 206). It should be noted, however, that it is not any time a particular popular person's name (say, for example, Buhari) is mentioned that people's attention is grabbed. There are other factors that will assist in making the name grab other's attention. Again, these factors might achieve the intended result with a particular name but would not if a different name was used. This is why Wilson and Sperber (2004) aver that cognitive effects result from input and context together, but from neither input nor context alone. Some of the factors we have identified in this study include:

a. Participants' shared knowledge of the name

It is observed, in the analysed headlines, that the headlines' crafters relied on the assumption that their target audience are familiar with the names on the headlines and would construe them as referring to those famous political and religious leaders in the society. For example, "Obasanjo",as used in headline 1, would be construed as General Olusegun Obasanjo, the former Nigerian head of state and former president of Nigeria. Similarly, "Onnoghen", in headline 2, would be interpreted as Justice Walter Onnoghen, the former chief justice of Nigeria. In the same vein, "Oyedepo" in headline 3 would be understood as Bishop David Oyedepo, the presiding Bishop and founder of the Living Faith Church Worldwide. Furthermore, "Buhari" in headline 4 would be interpreted as General Muhammadu Buhari, the former Nigerian head of state and incumbent president of Nigeria, and "Tambuwal" in headline 5 as Aminu Tambuwal, a former House of Representatives' speaker and current governor of Sokoto State (even Aminu Tambuwal's picture was also used). Thus, they front just these single and popular names, so that their target audience would assume they are referring to these personalities.

b. Perceived personality's level of influence

It is not all famous political and religious leaders that are influential in society. Before using a name in headlines, crafters consider this factor. If the single name of an unpopular news referent is similar to that of a particular popular public figure, journalists may not use it in promoting the news value of the story where they feel that the personality is not that influential with respect to the subject matter in question, and as a result cannot command public attention. It can be recalled that in the build-up to the 2015 presidential election, Obasanjo (OBJ) tore his Peoples Democratic Party's (PDP) membership card and threw his weight behind Buhari's candidacy for the presidential position. That gesture caused many PDP members and apologists to defect to or support the All Progressive Congress (APC). Thus, it can be said that when it comes to the election in Nigeria, many people may consider Obasanjo an influential figure to reckon with. For Bishop Oyedepo, he commands large followership, and his opinion counts on whom he supports in an election. Aminu Tambuwal is a force to reckon with in northern Nigerian politics. These are some reasons headline crafters must have considered their names effective in promoting the news values of their stories. This corroborates Galtung and

Ruge's (1967) findings that reference to an elite person is one of the factors that enhance news values and increase its relevance to the readership.

c. *Perceived level of public emotional attachment to the person*
Apart from the person's influence, journalists may also consider the public level of emotional attachment to the person. For someone like Onnoghen, many Nigerians developed some sort of sympathy towards him because of the controversy surrounding his removal from office. As a result, his name still rings a bell and will attract readers' attention in many socio-political issues. For Muhammadu Buhari, the majority of our study respondents note that he enjoyed, at the time, enormous goodwill from many people particularly those from the northern part of the country, not necessarily because he is the incumbent president but because of the narrative that he is a man with impeccable integrity, who also represents northern Nigerian and Islamic interests. Thus, any news involving his name will grab attention, mostly from people in that region.

d. *The unexpectedness of the event*
Where an event involving a referent, who shares the same name as that of a popular public figure, is unexpected, the belief that such an event will attract readers' attention will be high. For example, it was reported in several news outlets on 11th October, 2018 that OBJ, Oyedepo and others had endorsed Atiku Abubakar as their candidate for the upcoming 2019 presidential election. Nobody would expect that in February 2019, they would turn around to endorse Muhammadu Buhari. And it would also be unexpected that Aminu Tambuwal whose defection to the PDP was reported in the national dailies on 1st August, 2018, and who contested the presidential ticket under the PDP on October the 7th the same year, could declare PDP as dead.

Many people would want to know why he made such a statement. Concerning the headline that Buhari died in London while undergoing treatment, many people would consider it unexpected because President Muhammadu Buhari just won an election, as officially announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission on the 26th of February 2019. Again, it was never announced that he would be traveling to the UK after that.

e. *Assessed interest of the target audience on the topic*
People's reactions towards related events or events affecting the news referent are usually assessed to ascertain whether subsequent related news will attract readers' attention. With respect to events affecting Onnoghen, Nigeria's former Chief Justice, many people became interested in such events because of the controversy surrounding his suspension and eventual removal from office, which attracted different ethno-religious and political interpretations from Nigerians. Even legal minds differed in so many aspects vis-a-viz interpretation of extant laws. For instance, some lawyers see the removal as a breach of Section 292 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) because the president did not obtain the support of the two-third majority of the senate provided for in the Constitution; some lawyers claim that the removal was in order because the CJN was not above the law, which requires him to properly declare his assets (see Odugbemi, 2019). As a result of all this, some people became sympathetic to Onnoghen that any news headline suggesting his further ordeal (such as the one reporting that he forfeited his vehicle to the Lagos State because of traffic offence) would attract the public attention. Concerning the headline which says that Buhari died in London while undergoing treatment, there had been insinuations from different quarters that President Muhammadu Buhari has been dead; some of our interview respondents hold this view. Also, among the peddlers of this narrative is the leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Chief Nnamdi Kanu, who claims on his different social media platforms that Buhari is dead. So many other Nigerians appear to believe this narrative. According to *AFP Fact Check*, about five thousand social media users shared Kanu's post on Facebook, a post that claims Buhari is dead (see the article titled "Repeated claims that Nigeria's president is dead promoted by supporters of separatist group" on www.factcheck.afp.com). Thus, any headline suggesting the man has died was expected to attract such people's attention, including that of those who heard the narrative but had refused to believe it.

f. *Time of the event*
The time in which the event takes place also determines the level of its relevance to the readership. The time of the event will determine the level of emotional attachment to the event. For example, any news relating to an election during the election period will invariably attract people's attention. The headlines about Obasanjo, Oyedepo, and Tambuwal, drew most people's attention because the election was around the corner. If the headlines were advertised a year before the election, many wouldn't attend

to them. For that of Onnoghen, it caught our attention because it was during the period of his trial. The first thought that came to mind was that he could have broken the traffic rule while trying to meet up with his trial. If it were when people had forgotten about his ordeal that such a headline about his forfeiting of the vehicle appeared, many people would not have given attention to it, except very few who may be interested in traffic offence and punishment as applied in Lagos. Furthermore, time also played a crucial role in attracting attention to the headline about President Muhammadu Buhari. It was during the time people were questioning the true identity of the man sitting as the Nigerian president. Also, President Muhammadu Buhari's refusal or inability to grant media interviews contributed to fuelling this suspicion
.

Effectiveness of the Strategy in Achieving Intended Results
In this subsection, we shall determine, from participants' responses, the extent to which the strategy achieved the results intended by the headline crafters. In analysing this, a statistical table is used to present participants' responses to questions.

Intention One: To arouse presumption of optimal relevance in the audience
Question 1: At first, did you assume the news was about:

Table 1

Headlines	Assumed Personality	Yes	No	Total
Headlines 1	Chief Olusegun Obasanjo	18	2	20
Headlines 2	Justice Walter Onnoghen	20	0	20
Headlines 3	Bishop David Oyedepo	20	0	20
Headlines 4	President Muhammadu Buhari	20	0	20
Headlines 5	Governor Aminu Tambuwal	20	0	20
	Total number of participants			100

It can be seen from Table 1 that almost all of the respondents assumed the names were those of these individuals. It is only in headline one that two participants claimed they didn't assume the person being mentioned was Olusegun Obasanjo because they had seen the news headline in Premium Times, which used "Obasanjo's son," instead of only "Obasanjo".

Question 2: Was it because of this assumption that you responded to the headline and commented on the platform in which it was advertised?

Table 2

Headlines	Yes	No	Total
Headline 1	18	2	20
Headline 2	20	0	20
Headline 3	20	0	20
Headline 4	20	0	20
Headline 5	20	0	20
Total number of participants			100

Table 2 shows that from headlines 2 to 5, all participants were moved to comment on the headline because of the names involved. In headline one, only two participants noted that their responding to the comment section of the platform where the headline was advertised was not really because of the name, but out of curiosity to find out what people will be saying because of the name used in the headline. This is because they had already known that the headline was not talking about OBJ but his son.

Question 3: Would you have responded to the headline(s) if it were designed in this manner?

Table 3

s/n	Headlines	Yes	No	Total
1.	Obasanjo's son campaigns for Buhari in London	0	20	20
2.	Thomas Onnoghen and others forfeit vehicles to LASG	0	20	20
3.	Hezekiah Oyedepo and others expressed support for PMB	3	17	20
4.	Buhari, father of former speaker died in a London Hospital	4	16	20
5.	PDP is dead: Umaru Tambuwal, Wamakko declare	3	17	20
	Total number of participants			100

From Table 3, we may deduce that most people would not have given attention to the first headline because OBJ's son "has no political clout to reckon with": this was the response of one participant. In headline two, nobody will waste their time to know who Thomas Onnoghen is because his forfeiture of the vehicle does not affect them in any way. In headlines 3 to 5, as can be seen in the table, some would want to know who the people who bear those names are and whether they have any political influence in the society. This interest is only elicited because the news is about the

election. Based on the findings above, it can be said that the intention to attract readers' attention was, to a large extent, successful.

Intention Two: Making the audience click on the news link to generate traffic

Question 4: Did you eventually read the news content?   HL = Headline; TNP = Total Number of Participants

s/n	Response	HL1	HL2	HL3	HL4	HL5	TNP	%
1.	Yes, because I wanted to know what really happened	9	8	7	12	10	46	46%
2.	No, because I learned from the comment thread that it was not him	5	10	8	8	6	37	37%
3.	No, I just concluded it was him, and I didn't go back to the comment thread again	6	2	5	0	4	17	17%
Total		20	20	20	20	20	100	100%

From the responses of the respondents, it can be deduced that not up to half of the social media users, who saw the headlines, would eventually click on the news link. But it is possible that those who viewed these headlines from sources other than social media would be tempted to read the news contents. Again, some may not read just like the 17% in the table above who just saw the headlines, made their conclusions, and then commented on their social media platform's comment sections. If we put together the number of those who did not eventually read the news contents, we would see that they are more than those who read the news. This, therefore, shows that while the assumption that using such names would be effective in drawing readers' attention to the headlines appears completely successful, the belief that the response to the headlines would lead to traffic generation in news websites may not be that successful, especially where the news is advertised on social media. This is because some would learn from the comment sections of the social media platforms that the person they had initially assumed to be the news referent was not the one, so they would not bother reading up the news contents.

Findings
From the analysis, we discovered that the strategy of fronting only one of the collective names of individual news referents succeeded substantially in arousing presumption of optimal relevance in the audience and made them respond to the headlines where they were advertised. However, it did not significantly achieve the main expected result, which is to make most of the readers click on the news link. This can be attributed to the fact that most social media users, especially Facebook users, only read the headlines and make comments based on the assumption that the persona in the news is the individual they already know. Thus, they do not bother clicking on the news link (either to save data, time constraint, volume of materials available on the Net, or because of Nigerians' widespread aversion for reading…). Some just read other people's comments to understand the true position of things. Thus, instead of the website to generate traffic, it is the social media platforms of the news outlets that get busier, and this may not suggest the optimal achievement of the target. It can be concluded that while the clickbait strategy works in climes where people enjoy reading stories, it may not effectively work in places where most people lack interest in reading or where they lack the discipline to find information by themselves via reading.

Again, though the strategy is meant to attract readers to the news story and make them click on the link which will take them to the newspaper's digital store, it ended up performing some other illocutionary acts. Some of these acts include campaigning, satirizing or taunting and sensitizing. With respect to campaigning, some discourse participants (as observed) believe that the headlines, which reported that Obasanjo and Oyedepo have declared support for Buhari and that Tambuwal said PDP was dead, were meant to campaign for the APC because some audience, without reading, will simply believe that many people, including their leaders, are now supporting the APC; therefore, they too should follow suit. A participant even claimed that those news outlets were paid by the APC to promote their image, by making it look like people are now supporting them because they had realised PMB was working. For the headline that said Buhari died while undertaking treatment in London, it also indirectly taunted those who hold the opinion that he was truly dead. This is because the majority of them will quickly read up the story so as to corroborate their belief but will be disappointed at finding out it was a father of a former speaker that the news was all about. The headline about Onnoghen can also serve as a form of sensitization. For example, motorists will reason that if Onnoghen could forfeit a vehicle to Lagos State as a result of a traffic offence, it shows that Lagos state does not take traffic transgression lightly.

Conclusion

News organizations employ clickbait strategies with the intention that such could help in grabbing readers' attention and then lead them to the news websites, thereby resulting in generation of traffic within their digital stores, which will technically provide them opportunities for financial gains. One of these clickbait strategies, which was the focus of this study, is the fronting of just one of the collective names of individual news referents as ostensive stimuli, especially those single names that are the same as those of popular political and religious leaders in the country (Nigeria). The socio-pragmatic corollaries of this behaviour were examined from the sociocognitivists' perspective by identifying the various situational contexts which could possibly help in making the names achieve the intended results and the extent to which the target results were achieved. It can be concluded from the findings that this kind of strategy is very effective in grabbing people's attention. But it may not always get people to click on the news link when the headlines are advertised on social media, especially in societies where people lack discipline for reading.

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