

SYNTACTIC DESCRIPTION OF SEPTEMBER 22, 2020 NEWSPAPER HEADLINES FROM NIGERIAN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the syntactic structures of newspaper headlines of September 22, 2020 from about seven Nigerian newspapers which include; the Nation, Leadership, Vanguard, Punch, This Day, Daily Trust and the Sun. The purpose of headline is to get the readers to read the item underneath, to attract the readers' eye and make them interested. The essence of this study is to bring to bear that headlines do not only attract readers to read the item underneath them but are structures worthy of syntactic examination. This paper therefore gathered about two hundred and thirty seven (237) newspaper headlines and randomly selected and analysed fifty six (56) headlines. The analysis is hinged on structural grammar as its theoretical framework. The study revealed that headlines as syntactic structures are grouped into sentential and non-sentential. The sentential group has headlines as sentences according to structure and function. The study discovered that the newspaper headlines demonstrate structural and functional sentences. Structurally, the headlines are made up of simple and compound sentences. The analysis showed that there is no unique structural pattern peculiar to a particular newspaper. It is also shown that compound sentences as headlines are structurally managed to enhance brevity by omitting conjunction and replacing same with comma. The tree diagram application of the headlines (sentences) demonstrated that despite the economical use of lexical items in newspaper headlines, the structures still contain elements that would be found in grammatical sentences.

KEYWORDS: *Syntactic Description, Newspaper Headlines, Nigerian Major Newspapers*