

Short statement type sentence english language essay

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Graphological features When we pick any Yorùba newspaper and look at its front page, we are attracted by the masterhead or nameplate presented in Gothic style, a heavy-face type of printing with thick, pointed letters with variation in size and shape. Often there are many headlines on front page with an average of 8. The headlines also have a variety of sizes and shapes. They appear in different colours. Photos are generously used on the front page. All these are used to catch the reader's eye and rivet his attention on what is most important and yet most attractive and easy to read. Some headlines are printed in 16.5 mm high, heavy, lower case roman letters. Some headlines are short while some are long covering one or two to three lines, called either as flush left, a head that flush to the left margin without considering the margin on the right; as headline could also be in drop form, that is, a headline occupying several lines with the end lines indented, each further inwards from left margin; as some headlines are in inverted pyramid form, this is a headline occupying several lines in which the top line is the longest, and the other lines are shortened in proper order so that it looks similar to an inverted pyramid. The inverted pyramid can be traced to the American civil war. Due to the fear that telegraph might break down before their transmission is complete, correspondents put the most important information in the first paragraph. Thereafter, they present the supporting facts in a descending order based on the value of the news. Examples of inverted pyramid headline include: Yorùbá newspaper headline could be a centered form, that is, a headline occupying several lines that are placed in the middle of respective lines as in the following examples: Another type of headline used by Yorùbá newspaper writer is the over-line or kicker. Over-

line or kicker is usually a short phrase set above the headline. In most cases it is set in a smaller type. Yorùbá newspaper writer uses this style to form a visual signpost that helps reader assess a story or report before committing to reading the whole thing. Beyond the assessment function, writers use kicker to afford the reader a small hint as to what is to expect in the report. It is usually only a word or phrase in length. Example are: The Yorùbá newspaper writer sometimes uses jump head, that is a headline that is continued on other pages such as: The headlines discussed above are employed by Yorùbá newspaper writers for eye-catching and easier-to-read effect. Using variety of headlines with different colours entices the reader and presents him with choices of stories and reports from which to chose. Another graphological feature which Yorùbá newspaper writer uses for eye-catching and easier to read effect is the way in which news story is spilt into smaller units. This involves the use of subheadings, very short paragraphs (sometimes one-sentence paragraphs of a few lines each). In a news story titled: The news story consists of four subheadings and twenty-four paragraphs. The subheadings are: Splitting news story into smaller units under several subheadings is used when the news story is quite long and there is possibility of the reader getting bored. To avoid boredom and lack of interest, the writer devices splitting to guide and direct the reader to specific information that will sustain reader's interest. In such a situation the reader might chose to skip and quickly jump to any subheading that strikes him the most or he is anxious to read. In the above example and several others I examined, it is discovered that when a whole paragraph is made up of a sentence, writer wants reader to pay more than usual attention to the

paragraph because it contains information central to the news story. From the above example, the 13th paragraph goes thus: Lóòótó, kì í ẹ̀ pé èmi gan-an nífẹ̀ẹ́ sí ohun tó jọ mọ́ eré náà, tàbí mo fẹ́ mú un bìi iṣẹ́, ẹ̀gbọ̀n ifẹ́ témi kàn ní sí orin ni mo ẹ̀ máa ńlọ síbẹ̀, ki n sì tún lọ wòran wọ̀n. The one-sentence paragraph contains the key information that the entire story revolves around because the news story discusses how and why Olóyè Bíḍún Ládipọ́, the wife of late Duro Ladipo, took to acting at a time when everyone wanted white collar job in Nigeria. This tactic of splitting is generously used in all segments of Yorùbá newspaper and it aids easy ready, comprehension and 'fast forwarding' reading to any part of the story as desired by the reader. Still on the graphological feature, there is characteristic use of punctuation in Yorùbá newspapers. Inverted commas are frequently used for direct, or indirect quotation as in the following excerpt taken from a news story about inefficiency and arbitrary charges of National Electric Power of Nigeria which incur people's wrath to the extent of placing curse on the staff of NEPA. The writer assumed that these curses have impact on the performance and service delivery of the organization. Using inverted comma as in the above example is to spotlight the clause 'ńígbà tí èpè bá tí pàpọ̀jù, aláìsàn kò ní san' for particular attention of the reader. The writer wants reader to know that beyond organization's hindrances, NEPA has not been performing to expectation because of frequent curses people placed on the organization. The writer inferred and wants his readers to share same thought because both the writer and reader share same Yorùbá worldview on curses and their potency. Yorùbá believe that when curses are placed on individual or organization, they have effect

and make the targeted individuals miserable. The writer then implores the public to desist from cursing NEPA and spotlights what needs to be done with inverted comma as in: *Şùgbọ̀n ẹ̀bẹ̀ tí mo fẹ̀ bẹ̀ ẹ̀yin èyàn ni pé, 'ẹ̀ má ẹ̀pẹ̀ fún NEPA mọ́ láti òní lọ, àdúrà ni kí ẹ̀ jẹ́ kí a máa gbà fún wọ̀n'. Bí a bá ń gbàdúrà fún NEPA dájú-dájú àìsàn ara wọ̀n á kúrò ... mo bẹ̀ yín lórúkọ́ Olódùmarè Ọ̀ba aláàánu, ẹ̀ má ẹ̀pẹ̀ fún NEPA mọ́ adúrà ló yẹ́ kí a máa gbà fún wọ̀n.* To buttress and reinforce his message, the writer adopts a further technique. He forms an acrostic with the acronym NEPA. Acrostic is series of line in which certain letters usually the first in each line form a word or name when read in sequence. This is a memory device as well as a type of verbal play contrived by the Yorùbá newspaper writer in the above example to forcefully drive his message into the memory of the reader to stem the tide of cursing NEPA.

Syntactical features

Apart from the use of catchy headlines, Yorùbá newspaper writers tend to give minute description of a character or an event. The description is either physical, concentrating on things which have space or time extension. Such physical properties include size, shape, colour, movement, speed and events, which can be registered by the senses. At times such description might be abstract, concentrating on mental and social properties of certain phenomena and events. While doing this, the writer may give prominence either to physical or abstract, objective or subjective phenomena; these emphases are simply choices to specify details of one kind and not of another. Either physical or abstract, the details of the character being described or event being reported are the ultimate concerns of the Yorùbá

newspaper writer. A major tool he uses to achieve this is sentence. a sentence is an arrangement of words which expresses a complete thought. It often starts with a capital and ends with a full stop. Sentence is also known to be the un-interrupted utterance of a single speaker or writer. According to Bamgbose (1967), there are different types of elements within the sentence structures. These are subject, verb, object, constituents and adjuncts. However, exercises on text analysis have shown that the sentence structure of the Yorùbá newspapers do not conform to the sentence structure described by Bamgbose. The Yorùbá newspaper writer most times constructs sentences to suit either the function or structure of the context in which it is used. The functional parameters exhibit the uses to which sentences are put in the Yorùbá newspapers. These functions are sometimes to make a statement otherwise known as declarative, to ask a question (interrogative); to give a command (imperative); and to express a sudden feeling or emotion (exclamatory). On the other hands, the structural parameters are simple, compound complex and some amazingly compound-complex sentences. In this section, I attempt to describe and analyse a few type of sentences used by contemporary Yorùbá newspaper writer.

Sentence types in Yorùbá newspapers

More than any other varieties of language, Yorùbá newspaper writer makes artistic use of sentence variety such as simple , complex, periodic, loose and even length which could either be short, long or combination of both.

Short Simple Sentences

In order to be specific, sharp and straight to the point, Yorùbá newspaper writer uses phrases and short sentences. This is mainly used in the cartoons and headlines. The following are examples from headlines: The above sentences are simple, and each of them contains one verb or present one main thought. In other words, each of the examples has one clause. There are times when phrases are used in the headlines and this has almost become a cliché just as we find them in Yoruba news broadcast. For example; The above examples are nominal phrases, they are devoid of any predicate. The omission of the predicate notwithstanding, the message is very clear to the reader. The use of simple sentences in headlines and body of the news enhances quick delivery and saves time and space.

Long statement-type sentence

This variety of sentence is used only in three segments of Yorùbá newspapers. These are: news reporting, entertainment and sports. For example, in a news report about incarceration of Gani Adams, the factional leader of Odua people's Congress, we read: Using long sentences cuts across every segment of Yorùbá newspaper. The following is taken from an entertainment column which discusses reason why some married men have sexual intercourse with their house maids. One of such reason is presented thus: In the first sample, there are 69 words in a sentence while there are 102 words in the second sample. Each of these sentences is longer than that of spoken speech, that is, longer than what a person can utter in a breath. But the writers use them due to the type of information they want to pass

across and the rhythmic effect writer want to convey. While first news is urgent pathetic and discriminatory, the second one is ridiculous, shameful and unacceptable both require quicker rhythm and long sentences to ensure dynamic movement that will lead the reader to the end of the sentence in order to bring the importance of the message into reader's mind. The use of long sentence in sports and entertainment segments of Yoruba newspapers performs different function in addition to message conveyance. Long syntactic units in entertainment and sports convey a rhythmic effect of tranquillity and leisure. It worth being reported that Alálàyé is characteristically remarkable in the use of long sentences. There are instances of news story consisting of one long sentence running into hundreds of words. For example, in a sport news titled: The story consists of a 215-word-sentence. Initially we thought it could be a mistake of improper use of punctuations but a close examination of the constituents of the story shows it was deliberate. Our assumption was established when we examined another news story on the same page of Alálàyé newspaper where we have a 140-word-sentence under the headline: Using long statement-type sentence cuts across all segments of the contemporary Yorùbá newspapers.

Short statement-type sentence

In Yorùbá newspaper reporting, there is often an alternating use of long and short statement- type sentences. For instance in a report about the death of Alhaji Umar Musa Ya'Adua, a former Nigeriaa; s president who died in office in May 2010, we notice the use of short statement-type sentences such as: As expected in any informative writing, most sentences in the above are

short. In this passage, the linear chain of ideas follows the linear progress of the text, like a train with its linked coaches moving along a railway track. When Yorùbá newspaper writer uses very short syntactic units with heavy punctuation, as is shown in the passage, then we begin to feel a very different rhythmic effect, which is brusque and emphatic in style. In this passage, the punctuation is not only dense but also heavy. The full stop, the heaviest punctuation mark, is used to emphasize the autonomy of each piece of information, which is thereby asserted with the maximum force. Sometimes the Yorùbá newspaper writer's use short statement-type sentence for iconic or expressive effects.

Question-type sentence

The Yorùbá newspaper writer uses other types of sentences. Among them is occasional questions. This is prominent in feature news item. The essence of this device is to direct reader's attention to what is to follow. This will enable the reader to keep the pace of the news. When occasional question-type sentences are used, reader is carried along and prepared for possible answers to the questions. In a feature story titled: The feature begins with the address of One Mr. Saìíbù Adégòkè popularly called Sanjay. After describing the address the writer let us know that the address is a beehive of activity and always filled with people, he asks: This device is dialogic because when the writer asks questions, the answers are instantly supplied as if there is a responding audience. Question-type sentence is used to establish rapport and familiarity between the writer and the reader on one side, and between the reader and the subject being discusses on the other

hand. This strategy is used to save readers from taking time off the reading to find out answers to the question.

Question-type sentence in a sequence

Closely related to the above is the use of question-type sentence in a sequence. The Yorùbá newspaper writer resorts to this when he wants to drive home a particular point until it attains salience in the reader's mind. The use of question-type sentence in a sequence can occur in any part the news story. Sometimes, the sequence of questions can occur at the very beginning of the news story. For example, in a news story about the role of Chief Mrs Kúforíjì Olúbi, a former Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in the annulment of 1993 Nigeria's presidential election, the writer starts with a sequence of four questions: When sequence of questions occurs at the beginning of a news story, they are used to prepare reader's mind to what to expect in the news. They serve as appetisers and play a vital role in maintaining reader's attention to the story. This, in effect, gives birth to comprehension and possibly learning new information from the story. The new information the writer wants to convey in the above example is that despite that Chief Mrs Kuforiji Olubi and Chief M. K. O Abiola (who was widely believed to have won 1993 Nigeria's presidential election) are from the same town, Abeokuta, the former still colluded with the military junta to trade away M. K. O Abiola's presidential mandate. This information would be new and surprise some readers who would have thought it to be impossible but the use of questions in sequence narrow the range of reader's attention to specific message/information. When sequence of questions occur in the

middle of the news story, it is aimed at sustaining interest. This is most evident when the discussion borders on national interest that requires attention of everyone. For example, when describing how deep corruption has eaten into Nigeria's fabric, the writer asks: Using question-type sentences in a sequence as shown in the above example helps the writer to appeal to emotions of the reader and raise a sort of awareness in the reader with a view to securing the reader's support in his outburst of anger. The six questions used in succession in the above example encourages reader to pay attention to the interrelationships among the ideas in the sequence which ultimately aid better remembrance of the information the writer is conveying in the passage.

Rhetorical features (alliteration, assonance, vowel lengthening etc)

For the sake of attracting or appealing to more readers, Yorùbá newspaper writer needs vividness and humour in his use of language. To achieve this, they resort to employing various rhetorical devices. Rhetoric is one of the ancient art of discourse. From ancient Greece to the late 19th century, it was central part of western education. A rhetorical device is a technique that Yorùbá newspaper writer uses to evoke an emotional response in the reader. Kuiken (1994: 393) argues that there is a close relationship between the defamiliarizing effects of foregrounding and the emergence of feeling', suggesting that the very moment a reader comes across a strange or unfamiliar text, his mind becomes aware of this and his emotion is ignited. This emotional response is central to the meaning of the reports or story.

The rhetorical characteristics of Yorùbá newspapers would be explored from various aspects such as phonetics, lexical and syntactical devices.

Phonetic devices

Language is the vehicle of mind, and it releases the mind in oral or written form. In Yorùbá newspaper, readers seek the combination of communicative function and aesthetic requirement in the language used. This quest when met makes text appealing and helps readers to get information pleasantly and leisurely. To meet this need, Yorùbá newspaper writer patterns Yorùbá phonemes to wet reader's reading appetite and sustain the reading to the last word. Two main types of patterning are used in Yorùbá newspapers. They are: alliteration and assonance. Alliteration: Pairing of similar or identical consonant sounds is alliteration. It is used in newspaper headlines or sentences that are intended to be memorable. If effectively used, it creates a comic effect and amuse the reader. In a report appraising Lagos State government's efforts to tackle noise pollution and disturbances caused by religious activities of some churches who hang loud speakers outside, we read; By using alliteration in 'gbogbo, gbóhùn gbàròyé' from the example above, reader can feel the urgent need to comply with Government directive as the consequences of non compliance would be grave. Besides, the alliteration shows that God is capable to hear prayers even in silence because he hears the voice (ohùn) and the entreaties (àròyé). The next example of alliteration is more apt because the initial consonant sound is repeated in adjacent words. In the immediate example above, the initial consonant sound b is repeated in the adjacent words to humiliate and

ridicule Blessing's father. The eye immediately sees the alliteration in the 'b'. His pleading is likened to a child's. Apart from humiliating him, alliteration is contrived to make the headline memorable to the reader who will not have to struggle with memory to recall the headline. Like rhyme, alliteration is a great help to memory. It is powerful a device that Yorùbá newspaper writer has borrowed it. It is the alliteration which makes us remember such phrases as; 'bàbá bá Bólá bọ bàtà', 'òbọ gbọbọ gọpẹ', etc. In both examples, alliteration helps sentences to flow easily and it also draws attention to the particular adjective used and/or the subject/verb involved. Assonance: This is resemblance or similarity in sound between vowels followed by different consonants in two or more stressed syllables. It involves the pairing of vowel sounds and has a gentler effect than alliteration. Assonance helps reader determines the pair of words that has the potentiality of co-occurrence and sound good. When used, only the vowels would be repeated. Examples include: The above excerpt is taken from a news report about student unrest in Ìdànrè. The excerpt is made up of 24 words with vowel sound 'a' paired in 11 of them. When writers want to direct reader's attention to particular words with a view to making them stand out, they articulate the use of assonance. This device makes such words memorable to the reader. By doing this, the writer leads readers to make associations between words. In the second example the writer wants reader to see relationship among àdà, aké and yánna-yánna which is the effect of the mayhem. Assonance is of great use to the Yorùbá newspaper writer because it is like an enriching ornament. When effectively used, alliteration and assonance enable the newspapers establish rhythm within a text.

Vowel lengthening

Unlike English, Yorùbá words do not have closed vowels where consonants sounds can occur at the end of words. This suggests that Yorúbá words usually have open vowels which makes it possible for Yorùbá newspaper writers to protract almost every vowel of the language at the end of the words. For example: In the above examples, we notice the long stretch of vowel sounds ẹ in fẹ́ẹ́ and e in rẹ̀ẹ̀. The vowel sounds are protracted to achieve rhythmic fluidity in the headlines and make them orally lighter. When Yorùbá newspaper writer lengthen vowels as in the above examples, they create sound effect that suggests a mood which is capable of arousing reader's emotion and create a feeling that implores reader to read at all costs. This strategy is only used in casting the headline as there are o instances of vowel lengthening in the body of reports, articles and features. This is imperative because, the writer is aware that in the language of everyday, Yorùbá do not lengthen vowels, we come across such only in oral poetry. Therefore the use of vowel lengthening in Yorùbá newspapers is strictly restricted to captions and headlines. If it were to be used in the body of the reports, it will slow down reading and retard comprehension.

Heavily modified nominal groups

The Yorùbá newspaper writer uses heavily modified nominal groups. Prominent is the use of much complex pre- and - post modification of the nominal group in the headlines and the body of the story. This feature allows the writer to wrap a large amount of information into the group to enable reader understands the message. In everyday usage of Yorùbá language this

is not obtainable save for situation where the addressee is a new learner of the language. In the next example, the writer supplies all necessary information to establish the particular date and day the event being referred to in the news story will occur. while the use of heavily modified nominal groups underlined in the above examples make the sentences lengthy and wordy, yet it serves better function because it prevents ambiguity and deautomatizes by giving more information about Mọ́ndè in example one and being specific in example two. These two characteristic features are fundamental to newspaper language in terms of clarity, effective dissemination of information. It does not leave the reader to guessing in the case of example two if the headlines had just read 'Àwọn ọmọ ilé-ìgbimọ Aṣòfin wọ gàù'. The question that might likely follow is which of the House of Assemblies? But by supplying enough information, the reader accelerates the reading.