

REPORTING VERBS AND STANCE IN FRONT PAGE STORIES OF GHANAIAN NEWSPAPERS

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ABSTRACT

Newspaper reportage has been a focus of research among scholars in Media Studies and Applied Linguistics. However, less attention has been given to newspaper reporting in the Ghanaian setting. This paper, therefore, examines the use of reporting verbs in front page stories of Ghanaian newspapers: “Daily Graphic” and “the Ghanaian Times”. Eighty newspapers were randomly selected from the “Daily Graphic” and “Ghanaian Times” and analysed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis pointed to two key findings. It was realized that out of the reporting verbs used, reporting verbs which showed speaker’s stance were more frequent than reporting verbs which showed writer’s stance. These findings have implications for the understanding of reporting verbs and stance and further research.

Keywords: Newspapers, Stance, Reporting verbs, Ghana

1. Introduction

Sinclair (1994) explains that one of the special features of human language is that it can talk about itself. Reporting is an important linguistic phenomenon in both written and spoken discourse. An aspect of written discourse in which reporting is most dominant is in newspaper

reportage. Reporting verbs are the most important feature of a reporting clause and occur in most reporting sentences.

Newspapers as a written discourse have gradually and ultimately become an integral part of today's society by providing primary and secondary information. Newspapers have provided vast information for the people to discern and a platform for oral discourse. Reporting is a feature that characterizes newspapers. It is for this reason that this study seeks to do an analysis of selected Ghanaian newspapers specifically, the "Daily Graphic" and "The Ghanaian Times".

It is against this background that the present study seeks to do an analysis of reporting verbs in front page stories of selected Ghanaian newspapers.

2. Statement of the problem

Reporting is a feature of newspapers - a news genre. Reporting as a skill has an effect on the interpretation and understanding of an utterance. Taking into consideration the features of reporting, reporting verbs have been the focus of many researchers. Areas such as categories of reporting verbs in academic writings have been of great interest to researchers. However, as far as the use of reporting verbs in newspapers in the Ghanaian setting is concerned, relatively few studies do exist. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate the use of reporting verbs in front page stories of selected Ghanaian newspapers. This study attempts to find out the how reporting verbs employed in newspapers show stances in front page stories of the "Daily Graphic" and "The Ghanaian Times" newspapers.

3. Research questions

The objectives of this paper are to seek answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency distribution of reporting verbs in the front pages of the selected newspapers?

2. How are reporting verbs employed to show stance in the front pages of selected Ghanaian newspapers?

4. Conceptual framework

Reported speech shows the structure and feature of communication and basically, reflects the interactive aspect of language (Sakita, 2002). Greenbaum (1996) states that there are two major categories of reporting the words of a speaker or writer. These are the direct and indirect reported speech. Reporting is introduced by a reporting verb; however, reporting verb is only one sign of reporting (Swales, 1990). Thompson (1996: 506) views reported speech to include “any stretch of language where the speaker or writer signal in some way that another voice is entering the text, in however muffled or ambiguous fashion”. Voloshinov (1973) is right in arguing that any attempt to treat indirect speech solely in terms of mechanical transformation is bound to distort the picture. In reporting, whether direct or indirect reported speeches is introduced with a reporting clause, which comprises the subject and reporting verb. The accessibility to direct news sources is important in making a newspaper report objective and reliable. These sources of news reports appear as the subjects of reporting verbs in reporting. The range of verbs used is wider in written dialogue since they provide additional information to the words being reported such as voice quality, attitude and manner of speaking of characters which may be imaginary or real (Downing and Locke 2006). It is worth mentioning that newspapers front page news is very important and fulfil several functions. They attract readers, reinforce the newspaper’s identity through easily recognizable features and demonstrate clearly what the newspaper’s attitude is towards the news of the day. It also shows that a particular edition of newspaper contains certain stories. Front page stories can be categorized into lead and secondary lead stories. A lead story is one that has been chosen as being of most interest to most readers while a secondary lead story is

still an important story but less than the lead story (http://www.chez-alice.fr/mon_site_web.html). One of the features of newspapers which also manifest in front page stories is the use of reporting verbs.

5. Previous studies on reporting verbs in newspapers.

Reporting verbs have been a subject of research by scholars from many perspectives. This section focuses on the study of reporting verbs in newspapers. The choice and semantic implications of reporting verbs in academic writing has been the focus of researchers: Thompson and Ye (1991), Thomas and Hawes (1994), Graney (1994), Hyland (1999), Williams (2004), Charles (2006), Malstrom (2008), Zhang (2008), Dontcheva-Navratilova (2008), Clugston (2008), Miller and Vellaris (2009), Coelho (2009), Bolch (2009) and Hampton (2010). However, relatively few studies exist on reporting verbs used in Newspaper reportage. Based on her studies of The Time and Wall Street Journals, Bergler (1991) states that there are two levels in newspaper articles: the pure information and the meta information. The meta information embeds the pure information within a perspective by the use of a reporting verb. She establishes that the reporting verb adds important information about the manner of the original utterance, the preciseness of the quote and the temporal relationship between the reported and reporting clause. It also carries a varying amount of information regarding time, manner and factivity or reliability of the utterance. In addition, the source of the original information provides information about the reliability or credibility of the pure information.

In his study on the contrastive analysis of discourse representation in American and Japanese newspaper reports, Yamashita (1998) divides the representing verbs into reporting verbs, mental, manner- of -speaking and speech act verbs. Reporting verbs give a neutral evaluation of represented discourse. It is not controlled by the reporter but is presented to the

reader objectively. Mental verbs present the internal states of the subject to the reader. Manner-of speaking verbs present physical characteristics of the represented discourse to the reader. Speech act verbs give illocutionary force to the represented discourse by the reporter. He emphasizes that the use of reporting verbs is predominant in Japanese and American newspaper reports as compared to the speech act verbs, manner-of speaking verbs and mental verbs.

Floyd (2000), studies on reporting verbs and bias in the press. He shows that although news reports aim at neutrality, the choice of reporting verbs show the underlining preferences of journalists. In his study to find out how reporting verbs are used to present two sides in an international conflict, he mentions that reporting verbs show the reporters' attitude towards the speaker. The way different people are reported using different reporting verbs influences the opinion of readers towards them. Generally, some reporting verbs are favourable to the speakers reported. The reporting verbs which are considered favourable have some positive connotations or indicate that there is some truth in the reports. These include *reiterate, repeat, appeal, disclose, reveal, divulge, confirm, explain, say, tell, announce, points out, spell out* and *state*. Usually, these reporting verbs are used to reports words of elites people, British and American sources. However, unfavourable reporting verbs such as *allege* and *claim* are used to report the other side, specifically, the Iraqis.

Alternatively, Murphy (2005) investigates the markers of attribution in opinion articles English and Italian newspapers. In his research, six reporting attitude groups are established. The writer's attitude towards the reported proposition can be found in the choice of verb. These types of reporting attitudes are neutral reporting or saying, subjective interpreting, recognizing evidence of the status-quo, creating or reporting an argument, knowing and reflecting on beliefs and attitudes, feelings and reactions. It was found that English opinion

articles used more of creating or reporting argument verbs like claim and maintain while Italian opinion articles made use of knowing and reflecting on beliefs verbs such as know, take note of and realize. The difference in the choice was ascribed to the fact that English newspapers present a more argumentative stance because the ultimate aim of opinion articles is to persuade while the Italian newspapers presents objective facts to its audience.

Methodology

6.1. Research design

Data collected in any research becomes meaningful only when it is well organized and explained (Krippendorff 2004). This study, therefore, found the qualitative method of research very useful. A qualitative method used in research is any method for doing a research that uses general observations, depth and verbal descriptions in place of numerical measures (Priest1996).

The qualitative content analysis emphasizes an integrated view of speech or texts and their specific contexts. It is a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). It emphasizes an integrated view of speech or texts and their specific contexts. Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner. The qualitative research content analysis focuses on descriptive data and so aided the researcher in explaining the data. However, the study is complemented by some quantitative techniques such as frequency counts and percentages. Quantitative research reduces the data to numbers and so enabled the researcher to present figures and facts on tables in order to aid understanding.

6.2. Source of data

The major source of data considered for this study is a collection of front page stories of the “Daily Graphic” and “The Ghanaian Times” newspapers. These two newspapers were purposively selected out of the 136 Ghanaian newspapers. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest to the researcher. This presupposes that the choice is based on the judgment of the researcher when it comes to the data to be studied. The newspapers mentioned above were chosen because they regularly published front page stories, state owned and without any political affiliation and both reach a large percentage of the newspaper reading public, specifically, the elites. The researcher considered these factors since they are likely to influence the choice of reporting verbs and their indication of stance in Ghanaian newspapers.

The “Daily Graphic” is one of the seven publications of Graphic Communications Group Limited, the leading and largest newspaper publishing and printing company in Ghana. The company through its newspapers aims at improving lives through information and knowledge. Its mission is to empower its readers and consumers with reliable and credible information, communication and entertainment that create the possible customers’ experience. The company’s vision is to be the biggest, most influential and reliable multi-media organization in the West African Sub-region. The “Daily Graphic” covers politics, business, finance, sports development, the environment, social and international affairs. “Daily Graphic”, the company’s flagship, has the largest circulation and readership profile in Ghana. It is the company’s premier newspaper published since October 2, 1950 (<http://www.graphic.com.gh/graphic-corporate/about.html>).

Also, “The Ghanaian Times” is one of the newspapers by The New Times Corporation (NTC). The vision of the company is to become one of the best and the most profitable publishers and printers with a major impact on socio-economic development of Ghana; employing experienced, motivated and dedicated workforce; optimizing the use of available technology and always ensuring customer satisfaction and growth. “The Ghanaian Times” was first published on 3rd March, 1985 (<http://www.newtimes.com.gh.html>).

The newspapers were obtained from the periodical section of the University of Cape Coast (U.C.C.) main library. The specific months of September to December, 2011 were chosen in order to ensure recency. Eighty (80) newspapers were randomly selected for analysis from a total number of 192 newspapers collected.

6.3.Method of analysis

The analysis dwelt mainly on Thompson and Ye’s (1991) semantic categories of reporting verbs. This study therefore found this categorization in terms of evaluation very useful. Reporting verbs can be analyzed in terms of denotation and evaluation. In terms of evaluation, their study shows that; first, reporting verbs show the author’s stance towards the report which may be positive, negative or neutral; second, reporting verbs can construct the writer’s stance of acceptance (factive), neutrality (non-factive) or rejection (counter-factive) towards the cited research, and, lastly, they allow the writer’s interpretation of the author’s behaviour of discourse. The term “writer” is used to refer to the person who is reporting and “author” to refer to the person who is being reported. However, in this present study, the analysis was limited to speaker’s stance and author’s stance only. The term “speaker” was employed to refer to the speaker being reported and “writer” to refer to the reporter.

7. Analysis and Discussion

7.1. Reporting verbs and their semantic categories.

On examining the front pages of the “Daily Graphic” and “The Ghanaian Times”, the following reporting verbs in Table 1 were identified:

Table 1: Reporting verbs identified.

	Category	Examples of reporting verbs
Speaker’s stance	Positive	Pointed out, asked, told, said, advised, exhorts Commended, urged, declared, stressed, insisted, adding, pledged, called on, predicted, lauded, stressed, confirmed.
	Negative	Warned, appealed, disclosed, threatened, cautioned, complains, ordered, conceded
	Neutral	Indicated, described.
Writer’s stance	Factive	Explained, directed, advised, promised, assured, observed, proposed.
	Counter-factive	Claimed, accused, criticized, condemned, defied, denied, refused.
	Non-factive	Suggested, insisted, stated, reported, affirmed, rolled out, maintained.

Table 1 above shows examples of reporting verbs that were used in front page stories of both newspapers.

Speaker’s stance

These are reporting verbs that are used to show the speaker’s position in relation to what is being reported. The writer presents the information based on the speaker’s attitude towards the information presented. These reporting verbs can be positive, negative or neutral. Reporting

verbs which show speaker's stance relate to direct speech reports since they both presents speaker's information without the opinion of the writer.

Positive reporting verbs

These are reporting verbs which reflect positive attitudes and imply that what the speaker said was true (Thompson and Ye, 1991). In other words, such verbs, when used, usually indicate an affirmation to the stance or position of a speaker. It will, therefore, not be far-fetched to assert that a positive reporting verb, when used, is indicative of the authenticity of the utterance or assertion. The analysis of the data collected shows that in both sets of data, reporting verbs that denoted the truth of an utterance were predominantly used. Indeed, these reporting verbs were wide-spread and, therefore, pervasive in both sets of data. The examples below from the data illustrate the use of positive reporting verbs in the front page stories of the two newspapers:

1. He **said** Donkor picked a quarrel with Nsiah about three weeks ago, accusing her of infidelity and she left Donkor's house to stay with her parents in the same village. "THE GHANAIAN TIMES, Saturday, December 10, 2011".
2. The President, Prof. John Evans Atta Mills, **has declared** the determination of the government to mobilise adequate resources to equip the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) to discharge their constitutional duty, to protect and defend the territorial integrity of the nation. "DAILY GRAPHIC, Saturday, September 3, 2011".

It can be noticed from the examples above that the reporting verbs "said" and "has declared", in the context of the sentences in which they have been used, are positive in nature. This assertion stems from the notion that the two verbs affirm that which is said by the speaker. The use of "said" and "has declared", thus, suggests that of a truth "Donkor picked a quarrel with Nsiah..." and President Mills did indeed declare the government's determination to equip the Ghana

Armed Forces. The use of the positive reporting verbs shows the positive attitude of the speaker towards the reported clause.

Negative reporting verbs

Negative reporting verbs usually introduce harsher statements and comments (Graney 1997). Thus, such reporting verbs, intrinsically, are pejorative and therefore have some derogatory connotations. Although negative reporting verbs do not necessarily contradict or deny the truth in an affirmative statement, they are generally not mild in their nuance meanings. Unlike the positive reporting verbs, the use of negative reporting verbs was not very frequent in the two sets of data collected. The following examples from the data highlight the use of negative reporting verbs in the front page stories of newspapers:

3. The Commanding Officer of the Police Motor Traffic and Transport Unit (MTTU), ACP Angwubotge Awuni, **has warned** banking institutions and private security operators against the misuse of sirens by their vehicles. “THE GHANAIAN TIMES, Thursday, September, 1 2011”
4. The commission **has** consequently **cautioned** men against patronising their activities as they face a high risk of infection. “DAILY GRAPHIC, Monday, November 28, 2011”.

From the examples above, it can be realized that the reporting verbs “has warned” and “has cautioned” implicitly seem to be negative in that they can be associated with harsh statements. It is, therefore, not likely that the commanding officer warned the banking institutions and the commission cautioned the men in a mild tone.

Neutral reporting verbs

Neutral reporting verbs are neutral in meaning and usually show how indifferent the speaker is towards the reported clause (Yamashita, 1998). When neutral reporting verbs are used, the

speaker does not give his or her own opinion about the utterance. Neutral reporting verbs, therefore, denote some form of detachment or being impersonal to an assertion. The use of such verbs is, therefore, most likely to demonstrate a sense of objectivity on the part of the speaker. The use of neutral reporting verbs was rare in the two sets of data. Given below are examples of neutral reporting verbs sampled from the data collected:

5. Winners of this year's Blood Donors Awards in the Volta Region **have described** the items to be presented to them as an insult and discouraging. "THE GHANAIAN TIMES Wednesday, November 30,2011"
6. He **indicated** that as far as he was aware, the cabinet in his chambers where exhibits were kept was neither broken into nor tampered with. "DAILY GRAPHIC, Tuesday, December 20, 2011"

It can be inferred from the examples above that "indicated" and "have described" are neutral reporting verbs. This is because the speakers do not show a positive or negative attitude towards the assertion. Indeed, the speakers' stance towards the proposition is unclear.

Writer's stance

The writer's view of a proposition can be conveyed by the choice of a reporting verb. These reporting verbs show the writer's attitude towards what is reported. They are used when one wants to show his or her own opinion about the information a speaker presents. Writer's stance is indicative of what the writer thinks about some information. These reporting verbs are factive, counter-factive or non-factive. Writer's stance in a way relates with indirect speech reports since they both look at reporting not exactly the information of a speaker.

Factive reporting verbs

Factive reporting verbs show that a writer accepts or agrees with what he or she is reporting. The writer portrays the speaker as presenting true information or a correct opinion. (Thompson and Ye, 1991). In other words, the writer thinks that the information the speaker presents is true. Simply put, when factive verbs are used, they indicate that the writer agrees or is in support of the assertion put forward and therefore, considers the proposition to be a fact or the truth. Factive reporting verbs were not used extensively in both data. The following are examples to illustrate the use of factive reporting verbs in the two newspapers:

7. The government **has assured** the business community and the investing public of a sustained macro-economic environment prior to next year's elections. "DAILY GRAPHIC, Friday, November 25, 2011"
8. President John Atta Mills **has directed** the Economic and Organized Crime Office (EOCO, formally the Serious Fraud Office) to investigate the circumstances surrounding the payment of Gh 42 million to Vamed/ Water-ville Engineering and Alfred Agbesi Woyome, a businessman as a judgment debt. "THE GHANAIAN TIMES, Wednesday, December 21, 2011"

In the examples above, it can be realized that the reporting verbs "has assured" and "has directed" show that the writer admits that what was said by the government and the president was true. The writer, thus, sees the speakers as presenting true information and therefore accepts or agrees with their assertions.

Counter-factive reporting verbs

Counter- factive reporting verbs show that a writer rejects or disagrees with what he or she is reporting. Thus, the writer portrays the speaker as presenting false information or an incorrect opinion. (Thompson and Ye, 1991). The writer thinks that the information the speaker presents is

false or problematic. Such verbs, usually, sow some seeds of doubt in the mind of readers; they are, therefore, viewed or considered as negative. Also, they usually show a sense of inferiority, weakness or ignorance on the part of the speaker. Although not always explicit, counter-factive reporting verbs, usually, contradict or deny the truth of a proposition. In other words, the disagreement in the stance of the speaker by the writer may be subtle or tacit. Counter –factive verbs were widely-used in both sets of data. The examples below highlight the use of counter –factive reporting verbs in the two sets of data:

9. The Police and the Military High commands **have condemned** the seemingly bad blood between policemen and their military counterparts in Tamale that has resulted in assault and counter-assault by the two security agencies. “DAILY GRAPHIC, Tuesday, November 22, 2011”
10. He **claimed** that a Konongo-based pastor of the Pentecost Church requested for the blood, to prepare a concoction for the treatment of his chronic tetanus. “THE GHANAIAN TIMES, Saturday, December 17, 2011.”

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The use of the reporting verbs “have condemned” and “claimed” shows that the writers disagree with the propositions put forward by the Police and Military High commands and the gentleman accusing the pastor of wrongful doing. It appears the writers do not agree with or subscribe to the assertions and therefore reject what the Police and Military High commands said on the assault and counter-assault of the two security agencies and what the gentleman said about the Konongo - based pastor regarding the treatment of the chronic tetanus.

Non–factive reporting verbs

Non-factive reporting verbs show that a writer is neutral or indifferent in presenting his or her report. The writer gives no clear signal as to his or her attitude towards the speaker’s

information/opinion (Thompson and Ye, 1991, Graney, 1997). Such verbs are used to give information without expressing an explicit opinion about it. When such verbs are used, it is unclear whether or not the writer subscribes to the assertions put forward by the speaker. Non-factive reporting verbs, therefore, express some form of distance between the speaker and the writer regarding what has been said by the speaker. Non-factive verbs were used sporadically in both sets of data. The extracts below are discussed as being examples of non – factive reporting verbs from the data:

11. He has, therefore, **affirmed** the government’s commitment to ensure that teachers are given the needed impetus to enable them to deliver. “DAILY GRAPHIC, Tuesday, October 4,2011”
12. Saturday is the last day given to the Fulani herdsmen to evacuate their cattle from the area, Ashanti Regional Police Commander, **stated** here yesterday. “THE GHANAIAN TIMES, Thursday, November 24, 2011”

Based on the examples above, it can be seen that “affirmed” and “stated” do not give a specific stance of the writer towards the utterance of the speakers. They do not indicate whether or not the writer agrees or disagrees with the assertions put forward by the gentleman who affirmed the government’s commitment and the Ashanti Regional Police Commander. The writer simply reports to readers what they said without taking any stance.

It is important to note that there is no clear-cut distinction between reporting verbs which are positive, negative or neutral. Most of the reporting verbs upon appearance do not always evoke positive, negative or neutral implications. Although some are suggestive of positive, negative and neutral meanings upon appearance, in most cases, it is the context of situation that contributes to the meaning of a reporting verb. Examples of reporting verbs which evoke

implications upon appearance include; negative: *claimed, threatened and cautioned*; positive: *pointed out, explained and declared*; neutral: *stated, indicated and suggested*. It should be noted that in context, each of these reporting verbs can function as positive, negative or neutral reporting verbs

Table 2: Distribution of reporting verbs in both newspapers

Stance	Category	Daily Graphic		The Ghanaian Times		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Speaker's stance	Positive	64	69.3%	113	70.2%	177	65.8%
	Negative	13	12%	16	9.9%	29	10.8%
	Neutral	7	6.5%	8	4.9%	15	5.6%
Writer's stance	Factive	6	5.5%	8	4.9%	14	5.2%
	Counter-Factive	10	9.3%	9	5.6%	19	7.1%
	Non-factive	8	7.4%	7	4.3%	15	5.6%
Total		108		161		269	

It is observed that the highest number of positive reporting verbs in both newspapers indicates that reporters made use of positive reporting verbs a lot, because out of a total number of 269 reporting verbs, 177 (65.8%) were positive reporting verbs. The second highest reporting verbs in both papers were reporting verbs with negative connotations 29 (10.8%). The third highest reporting verbs were counter-factive reporting verbs with 19 (7.1%). However, non-factive reporting verbs and neutral verbs recorded 15(5.6%) for both newspapers while the least number of reporting verbs were 14 (5.2%) for factive verbs.

It is important to note that these findings, partially, confirm the findings of Zhang (2008) who also recorded the highest number of reporting verbs in Chinese and English thesis to be positive reporting verbs. The difference in figures with the other areas may be because this study focused on newspapers but the study of Zhang (2008) was based on academic writings. In other words, the differences in data account for the discrepancy in findings. Based on the data analysed, it can be construed that the highest number of positive reporting verbs used in both data implies that writers affirm the statements of speakers without their (writers) opinion, while the second highest reporting verbs which were negative reporting verbs may be attributed to speakers' use of harsher or stronger statement. Usually, the use of negative reporting verbs requires a positive reaction, obedience or sanctions on the addressee or audience. The minimal use of neutral and non-factive reporting verbs in speaker's stance and writer's stance may be due to the fact that writers do not want to take a definite stance but aim to present the report objectively and not show preference. The number of factive verbs recorded suggests writers' intention not to disagree with speakers in order not to influence readers' interpretation of utterances. Consequently, the use of reporting verbs which indicate speaker's stance recorded was high as against writer's stance. This shows the aim of reporters to ensure the authenticity of the message reported. It is likely that the choice of newspapers influenced the findings since both newspapers are state-owned and so present an objective reportage. It, thus, appears that the need to affirm the truth of a proposition is the major concern of "Daily Graphic" and "The Ghanaian Times" reporters, hence, the high number of positive reporting verbs in their reportage.

6.3. Key findings & conclusion

The first question that informed this research was to find out the frequency distribution of reporting verbs in the front pages of selected newspapers. The research revealed that the

reporting verbs used there were 269 reporting verbs used in front pages of the selected newspapers. 108 reporting verbs were found in the “Daily Graphic” newspaper and 161 were identified in “The Ghanaian Times” newspaper. This contributes to the fact that reporting verb is a feature of reported speech.

Furthermore, this research revealed that the reporting verbs used in front pages expressed either speaker’s stance or writer’s stance. The reporting verbs which expressed writer’s stance were positive, negative or neutral. In the same way, those which expressed writer’s stance were that of acceptance or factive, rejection or counter-factive and neutral or non-factive. It was realized that verbs which expressed speaker’s stance were used more frequently (82.2%) than those which expressed writer’s stance (17.9%). For speaker’s stance, positive reporting verbs were used frequently as against the negative and neutral verbs. For writer’s stance, reporting verbs which showed rejection were frequently used as against verbs of acceptance and neutrality. It was evident from the research that positive reporting verbs were predominant in front page stories of both the “Daily Graphic” and “The Ghanaian Times”.

In conclusion, this study revealed that positive reporting verbs were predominant in front pages of the “Daily Graphic” and “The Ghanaian Times” newspapers. These findings confirm the findings of Floyd (2000) that the use of reporting verbs shows the preferences of journalists. It, however, contradicts the findings of Yamashita (1998), since this study reveals that positive reporting verbs are frequently used as against neutral reporting verbs which are frequent in Japanese and American newspaper reports. This research will, therefore, add to existing knowledge on reporting verbs because it looks at an aspect of written discourse which has been overlooked.

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