

Title of Article: A Critical Linguistic Study of Language Variation and Ideological Differences in Media Discourse in Nigeria.

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Abstract: This paper demonstrates that news discourse is a product of social processes and that a strong connection exists between language and ideology. Social events are reported and mediated by the linguistic resources available to a news reporter, so that linguistic choices are determined not only by the events being reported but also the ideological position of the newspaper which the reporter represents. The Guardian and The Punch - two Nigerian newspapers are chosen for this study, especially because of their significant roles in the Nigerian media industry. Data comprise news headlines from these papers reported during the first quarter of 2004, a period when some major social crises erupted in some parts of the country. Analysis of data is based on the combination of Halliday's systemic model and critical discourse analysis which view language as social semiotic and social practice. The study shows that linguistic variation in the headline of the newspapers under study is not just a function of choice of syntactic forms but that they represent the paper's perception of events that has some ideological imprints, especially in the Nigerian crisis situations.