

## Thematic Structure of Nigerian Newspaper Reports on Corruption

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### **Abstract**

*The thrust of this paper is to examine the thematic structure of newspaper reports on corruption in Nigeria. The main objective of the research is to expound how the Nigerian newspaper journalists arrange their reports on corruption-related issues. Six newspapers with national spread have been selected for study. The corpus is gathered within 2010 and 2011. The newspapers so selected are Daily Trust (March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010), The Sun (April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010), The Nation (May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010), The Guardian (September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010), The Punch (Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2010), and National Mirror (March 7<sup>th</sup> 2011). The choice of these newspapers is influenced by the fact that they have spread and wide readership in Nigeria. The reports on corruption are the main concerns of the study. We established the relationship between the title of each of the selected news items and its content, whether each of the reports makes a coherent whole or is disjointed (discourse coherence). We then showed how, with their choice of thematic patterns, the news writers have sustained or repelled readers' interest as well as the perspective from which the reports are written. The clauses are numbered for ease of reference. A stroke (/) is used to separate the theme from the rheme. Our findings show that Nigerian news reporters on corruption fail to thematise corrupt tendencies per se but rather seemingly corrupt individuals. The findings corroborate Van Dijk's who found out that themes and schemata, though related in news discourse, are realized discontinuously in news texts.*

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**Key Words:** Corruption, theme, report

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### **Introduction**

Discourse analysis is concerned with analyzing discourses in social contexts. Stubbs defines it as 'an attempt to study the organization of language above sentence or above the clause and therefore relevant to the study of larger linguistic unit such as conversational exchanges or written texts' (1). Against this background, this study seeks to investigate the thematic structure of the reports on corruption in six Nigerian newspapers, The Punch, The Nation, The Guardian, The Sun, Daily Trust and The National Mirror, to reveal sustainability of readers' interest.

### **Information Structure**

The term, 'information structure', is generally used to refer to the partitioning of sentences into categories such as focus, background, and topic (Daniel Buring 1). Krijff-Korbayova and Steedman (v) construe it, in a broad sense, 'as comprising structural and semantic properties of utterances relating to the discourse status of their content, the actual and attributed attentional states of the discourse participants, and the participants' prior and changing attitudes

(knowledge, beliefs, intentions, expectations, etc.)'. They further define it as 'a **Sentence Internal** partition of the information in an utterance according to its relation to the discourse context under dichotomies such as topic/comment, theme/rheme, given/new, focus/background...' (1)

For Gundel, Higarchy and Borthen (41), the term refers to the bifurcation of material in an utterance into what has been called focus versus ground, comment versus topic, or rheme versus theme.

The above scholars' explications of the term clearly show substantially mutual agreement on its meaning, which is also the stance taken in this paper. Therefore, the information inherent in any clause or sentence, following Krijff-Korbayova and Steedman, can be split into two: given information and new information. The given information is the information shared by the speaker (or writer) and the listener (or reader), and it is usually found at the beginning of the clause or sentence. The given information is similar to what Krifka (5) calls common ground. The new information, on the other hand, is the focus of the speaker's (or writer's) message. These two form the information unit or structure of a clause. There are also instances in English where the whole information can pass for new information especially when the clause or sentence begins with a dummy or an empty *it*. It is the social context of a text (especially the spoken one) that normally provides the source of the given information. Spoken texts are more likely to be produced with assumptions and more situational (exophoric) references than written texts.

### **Thematic Structure**

Thematic structure has been one of the major issues in discourse analysis, discourse semantics and textlinguistics. According to Halliday (38), thematic structure gives the clause its character as a message in English. The clause is organized as a message and a 'special status' of *theme* is assigned to one part of it while the rest is called *rheme*. In her own contribution to the subject of thematic structure, Gill (2) states that, in the theme system, the clause is configured into two functional components: theme and rheme. Specifically, one element in the clause is enunciated as the theme. This then combines with the remainder (rheme) so that the two parts together constitute a message. In other words, while the theme is the element that functions as 'the starting point for the message' and, in this sense, it typically conveys familiar or given information, the rheme is part of the clause in which the message is developed and 'typically contains unfamiliar or new information' (Eggins, 275)

An important system of thematic structure is the theme markedness which depends on the conflation of the theme constituent with different clausal constituents. In other words, theme and subject often overlap in function. When the subject in the declarative sentence is in the theme position, the theme is labeled *unmarked theme* (Halliday and Matthiessen, 67). In sentences where other elements are given prominence by being placed at the initial position such elements are given by being placed at the initial position such elements are given thematic status and are labeled *marked theme* (Taiwo 91). The most common elements that occur as marked theme are the adverbial groups functioning as adjuncts in the clause in which they appear. Complements can also be fronted for some special effect.

Sometimes, elements expressing a speaker's own angle of judgement can be placed in the initial position. Such elements are called *modal adjuncts* by Halliday (49), *comment adjuncts*, by Eggins (280). The commonest form of marked theme is when the theme conflates with an

adjunct: circumstantial (Egins 296). In sum, the choice between marked and unmarked themes contributes to the thematic structure of the text.

We are adopting Halliday's explication of thematic structure for this study. This is because of the explicitness in the two items (theme and rheme) that make up a clause. We also agree with markedness of theme for special effect.

### **Relationship between Information Structure and Thematic Structure**

From the discussion so far, one is tempted to conclude that theme is equivalent to given information and rheme to new information. According to Firbas in Downing,

The term 'theme' is defined under two concepts: one as starting-point of an utterance, that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation, and from which the speaker proceeds, and two, as the foundation of the utterance, as 'something' that is being spoken about in the sentence. Rheme will be what the speaker says about, or in regard to starting point of the utterance. Theme then is 'something' that can be gathered from the previous context. (3)

Discourse analysts are therefore divided on this notion. Some distinguish between the information structure and the thematic structure while others make no distinction. However, in a bid to follow one or other of these strands, linguists have adopted what Fries describes as 'the combining approach' equating theme with given information, or the 'separating approach' disentangling the two. The former is in line with the idea of Van Dijk, Firbas, Grundel and Kuno, and the former is the idea of Halliday and the systemic school in general. Downing (5) claims that the separation of the terms is useful, because, although theme typically coincides with given information while new information tends to fall within the rheme, the opposite is also common, especially in spoken English: new information signaled by prosodic prominence may conflate with theme as in the following:

A: How did you get here so early?  
B: I came with TOM today.

*Given= Theme*  
*New= Rheme*

A: How did you get here so early?  
B: TOM brought me.

*New= Theme*  
*Given= Rheme*

Correspondence between theme-rheme and given-new in English (Downing 3)

### **Thematic Progression (TP)**

This has to do with the organisation of information within the text or the distribution of the themes within a text. According to Downing (2), there are two observations about the property of being 'new' and that 'new' may mean two things: not mentioned before in the preceding context or relate as rheme to a theme to which it has not been related. In the former, the property 'new' is

assigned to the expression itself whereas, in the latter, it is the theme-rheme nexus that appears to be new.

Danes in Taiwo (95) identifies four types of thematic progression. These are: the constant theme pattern, the linear theme pattern, the split rheme pattern, and the derived theme pattern. In the first type, a common theme is shared by the succeeding clause. In the second type, the rheme of a clause emerges as the theme of the subsequent clause. In the third type, the rheme of a clause has two or more components, each of which is taken up as the theme of the following clauses while in the fourth type, the theme is not explicitly stated but is derived (most time through extra-linguistic cues) from the context. This Danes' typology has been adopted for this study.

### **Theoretical Framework: Critical Discourse Analysis**

Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) is an approach to Discourse Analysis which focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge, and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in communities, schools and classroom. It also reveals the way discourses are used everyday for signification of power relations and development of new knowledge. Words, spoken or written, have power ( Luke, quoted in Taiwo 219). CDA in this wise, according to Van Dikj quoted by Taiwo (219), is concerned with studying and analysing words used in discourses to reveal the source of power abuse, dominance, inequality and bias, and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social economic, political, and historical contexts.

Fairclough, basing his ideas on the multifunctional linguistic theory in Halliday's functional systemic linguistics, states that CDA is concerned with the investigation of the tension between two assumptions about language use: that language is both socially constitutive and socially determined. The interpersonal function creates social subjects or identities or the relationship between them. At the textual level, content and form are analysed. Fairclough, cited in Olateju (16), notes that the analyses are based on heterogeneous data in which distinction is normally made between text and discourse.

However, Fairclough and Wodak (55) note that CDA sees discourse as language use in speech and writing- as a form of social practice: describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situations which frame it. A dialectical relationship is a two-way relationship: the discursive event is shaped by situations, institutions and social structure, but it also shapes them.

Van Dijk's study on the news structure of the press is a remarkable one. His study proposes an analytical framework for the structures of news discourse in the press. He discovers that news schemata (summary, main event, and background) are realized discontinuously throughout the news text he studied. In Fery and Krifka's study, the focus is on how information structure, exerts a powerful force on all structural levels of language. They argue for focus, givenness, topic, frame setting and delimitation as important subconcepts in information structure.

### **Materials and Methods**

This study is a critical discourse analysis of Nigerian newspapers' reports on corruption. Six newspapers with national spread have been selected for study. The corpus is gathered within 2010 and 2011. The newspapers so selected are *Daily Trust* (March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2010), *The Sun* (April

12<sup>th</sup>, 2010), *The Nation* (May 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010), *The Guardian* (September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010), *The Punch* (Nov. 3rd, 2010), and *National Mirror* (March 7<sup>th</sup> 2011). The choice of these newspapers is influenced by the fact that they have spread and wide readership in Nigeria. The reports on corruption are the main concerns of the study. We establish the relationship between the title of each of the selected news items and its content, whether each of the reports makes a coherent whole or is disjointed (discourse coherence). We then show how, with their choice of thematic patterns, the news writers have sustained or repelled readers' interest as well as the perspective from which the reports are written. The clauses are numbered for ease of reference. A stroke (/) is used to separate the theme from the rheme.

## Data Presentation/Analysis

### Text 1 (The Punch)

S/N	Clause	TP Type
1.	Activists/ have won a major battle in their push for former military President Gen. Babangida's trial over the 12.4 billion Gulf War oil windfall	Simple Linear
2.	The Federal Government/ is to raise a panel to review the Okigbo Report, which indicted Gen. Babangida for blowing the cash to ascertain whether he should be tried or not.	No TP
3.	The panel,/ according to Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mohammed Adoke (SAN), "will confirm the authenticity of the said report and also review the allegations and recommendations...".	Simple Linear
4.	The report/ was sent to Adoke by a coalition of rights' groups pushing for Gen. Babangida's trial over the mmoney.	Simple Linear
5.	Adoke/ requested for a signed copy of the report from the groups to assist him in taking a decision on the matter.	Simple Linear
6.	They/ obliged him with a copy on May 5.	Simple Linear
7.	The groups/ are: Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), Women Advocates and Documentation Centre (WARDC),, Access to Justice (AJ), Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Partnership for Justice (PJ), Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) Nigeria Liberty Forum, London, Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA), Nigeria Voters Assembly (NVTa) and Centre for the Rule of Law.	Simple Linear
8.	Acknowledging receipt of the report, Adoke/ in a May 12 Letter by the groups yesterday, said: "I appreciate your effort in making available a signed copy of Dr Pius Okigbo Panel Report and, as appropriate,...	Constant Theme
9.	I/ shall set up a committee that will confirm the authenticity of the said report and also review the allegations and recommendation contained therein with a view to ascertaining whether these allegations can sustain a criminal charge.	Constant Theme
10.	While we/ shall keep you informed of our effort in this regard, I would like to thank you for your connected effort in sustaining the fight against corruption in our society.	Constant Theme

11.	In a statement on behalf of the groups, SERAP's Executive Director Adetokunbo Mumini/ said the Okigbo report showed that only Gen. Babangida determined what expenditure to be financed out of the said account.	No TP
12.	Quoting the report, Mumini/said the dedicated and special Accounts were a parallel budget for the Presidency during Gen. Babangida's regime.	Constant Theme
13.	Reacting, Babangida's spokesman, Kassim Afegbua/ described Adoke's response to the group's demand as "unambiguous"	No TP
14.	He/ said "The whole concept of civil society organizations bringing signed copy of a Federal Government Report to government raises a lot of curiosity and mischief on the part of the civil societies.	Simple Linear
15.	I/ have not seen a situation where the government will set up a panel, only for report to be given to it (government) by unknown bodies.	Constant Theme
16.	Despite/ all the clear-cut attempt to rubbish the good name of Gen. Babangida by this gang of sinuous fawns who want to play the 'angelic' role as civil societies...	No TP
17.	I/ am yet to find anywhere in the world where these organizations have rendered account of their own grants from foreign countries in the years of their existence.	Constant Theme
18.	This/ is our challenge to all of them.	Simple Linear

Text 1 above contains 14 instances of TP with 8 cross referential TP simple linear, 6 instances of constant theme TP, with no instance of the derived theme and split rheme while some clauses have no TP. However, the relationship among clauses 1-7 is established through the use of simple linear type. This type suggests simplicity as readers do not need to rack their brains before making out the meaning of this part. Also, in the clauses where simple linear TP is employed, the themes convey various key factors or points that the writer intends to discuss. Thus, while clause 1 establishes a theme, Th3=Rh2, Th4=Rh3, Th5=Rh4, Th6=Rh5, Th7=Rh6. All the themes here point to the "probe" in the headline, the people involved, that is, 'Activists', 'Federal Government', 'The panel', 'Adoke' and the document to be used in the probe, 'The Report'.

Also, the six instances of constant theme are used for emphasis. The Constant theme type of TP appears at the second part of the text where Babangida's spokesman speaks in defence of him. Through the report of his reaction, we found a preponderant use of the first person singular pronominal item "I". The rhemes of most of the clauses-12, 15, and 17- state his anger towards the proposed probe. What is surprising is that he does not deny on behalf of Babangida that the money was stolen; he only attacked the credibility of those who intended to carry out the probe.

The text, however, has some shortfalls. This is obvious in some clauses that do not cohere with the rest of the discourse. In some of the erring clauses, their contents do not relate to that of the preceding clauses. In other words, ideas were not developed further having mentioned them, which presumed a disjointed one. For instance, the idea that is stated in the first clause is not developed further in the second clause, instead clause 2 takes up a fresh theme. This is, also,



obvious in some clauses that do not have thematic progression at all namely: clauses 2, 11, 13 and 16.

In effect, the strategy of TP enables the writer to report both sides of the matter in a simple way. To some extent, there is cohesion of ideas and context. The readers are intimated with what constitutes “the gulf war oil windfall” in the headline.

### Text 2 (The Nation)

S/N	Clause	TP Type
1.	“The Sokoto State High Court/ yesterday remanded former state Governor Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa and eight others including officials of the government in Sokoto prison until Monday, December 21, when a former application for their bail would be entertained by the court”.	Simple Linear
2.	Bafarawa, his brother and four officials/ were charged with defrauding the Sokoto State Government of up to #15 billion in his years as governor.	Simple Linear
3.	Our reporters in Abuja/ sighted a long convoy of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the State Security Service (SSS) transporting the former governor and some of his co-accused to the Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport at about 8 a.m. yesterday.	No TP
4.	They/ were later flown to Sokoto in a commercial aircraft, arriving at Sokoto Airport in the company of EFCC official at about 1:40 p.m.	Simple Linear
5.	They/ were then driven to the state High Court amidst tight security	Simple Linear
6.	Bafarawa and 14 others/ were then arraigned before the State High Court 3 under Justice Ahmed Gidadawa on a count 47-count charge of alleged misappropriation and diversion of funds.	Constant Theme
7.	Before the commencement of the proceedings, Bafarawa’s counsel, Sulaimon Usman/ told the court that they had just been served with the charges and he asked the court to adjourn for 30 minutes to enable him confer with his client.	Constant Theme
8.	When the court resumed,/ the judge read the 47-count charge, to which Bafarawa and eight others who were present in court pleaded not guilty.	Constant Theme
9.	Other accused persons/ present included Alhaji Naisru Dalhatu Bafarawa, younger brother of the former governor, Alhajo Maigyadi, Bafarawa’s top right hand man, Alhaji Umaru Kwabe AA, Alhaji Abdullahi Ahmed Bida, a businessman, Chief Mike Ummeh, a clearing agent, Mallam Shehu Koko, a banker, Alhaji Ubale Yahaya and Alhaji Tukur Alkali, a former special adviser.	Simple Linear
10.	Prosecuting counsel, Chief Adeniyi Akintola/ told the court that they were ready to go on with the case.	Simple Linear
11.	But Defence Counsel Sulaiman Usman/ said they were not ready as they needed adequate time to study the proof of evidence.	Constant Theme
12.	Usman and the other defence counsel/ also sought the indulgence of the court to make oral applications for bail for Bafarawa and others, saying the on-going strike action by the Judicial Staff Union of Nigeria would affect a formal application for bail.	Simple Linear

13.	Defence counsel/ argued that they could fulfill conditions that the law stipulates for the bail whether it was brought orally or in writing.	Constant Theme
14.	Prosecuting counsel/ objected to the oral applications for bail saying they should make it formal.	Constant Theme
15.	In his ruling, Justice Bello Abbas/ refused the plea of the defence for an oral application for bail, saying the court would be ready to entertain it notwithstanding the strike.	Constant Theme

In Text 2 above, there is a preponderant use of constant TP with seven instances of this type. This somehow makes the text look more like a list, but for the seven instances of cross reference simple linear while only one clause does not have TP. The seven instances of constant type suggest dominance of this type and this means that the writer is interested in laying emphasis on the subject to allow his information to be better understood. For instance, 'Bafarawa, his brother and four officials' (clause 2) and 'Bafarawa and 14 others' (clause 6) are meant to inform the readers about the culprit. However, the writer seems to confuse the readers in his use of figure. Although Bafarawa is a constant theme in clauses 2, and 6 and there are discrepancies in the number of people with whom he is accused, thus:

“Bafarawa and eight others” (Rheme of clause 1)

“Bafarawa, his brother and four others” (Clause 2)

“Bafarawa and 14 others” (clause 6)

“Bafarawa and eight others” (clause 8)

The clarification on the number of those present with him came rather later in the discourse in clause 9 “the other accused person present”. However, other themes that are constant are 'Sulaimon Usman' (clause 7), 'Prosecuting counsel Chief Adeniyi (clause 10), 'Prosecuting counsel (clause 14), 'defence counsel and other defence counsel (clause 11), 'Defence counsel' (clause 13).

Also, the cross referential TP type simple linear which appears seven times in the text contributes to the text coherence and cohesion in that ideas are linked appropriately. For instance, Th2=Rh1 and Th9=Rh8.

### Text 3 (The Sun)

S/N	Clause	TPT
1.	The National Judicial Council (NJC)/ has begun a full scale probe of the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN), Justice Aloysius Katsina-Alu and the President of the Court Appeal, Justice Ayo Salami, over allegations of corruption, abuse of office, breach of Judicial Oath of office and perversion of justice levelled against them.	Simple Linear
2.	The investigations/ has, however, forced Justice Katsina-Alu to step down as the NJC Chairman for the council to do thorough investigation of the allegations.	Simple Linear
3.	The decision to probe the top judicial officers/ was contained in a statement	Constant



	by the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court, Mr Sunday Olorundaunsi.	
4.	The probe/ may not take a long time, National Mirror gathered yesterday.	Constant
5.	NJC,/ according to one of its members, wanted the investigation conducted during the tenure of the two heads of the superior appellate courts for it to have jurisdiction to wield the big stick, if necessary.	Constant
6.	Justices Katsina-Alu and Salami,/ who recently traded accusations trading on their individual integrity and fitness to remain on the bench, are both near their mandatory retirement ages.	Simple Linear
7.	Justice Katsina-Alu/ is expected to bow out of the Supreme Court bench on August 28 this year while Justice Salami will follow at a later date.	Split Rheme
8.	They/ are both expected at the NJC's emergency meeting tomorrow, the second in less than 30 days.	Simple Linear

In Text 3, there are four instances of simple linear, three instances of constant theme and split rheme type is only used once. With simple linear, the first clause establishes a theme and  $Th_2=Rh_1$ ,  $Th_6=Rh_5$ ,  $Th_8=Rh_7$ . This cross reference type links and creates a relationship among the clauses in which they appear in the discourse.

Also, the constant theme type brings to fore the key actors in the proposed probe. The National Judicial Council (NJC) (clauses 1 and 5), Justice Kastina Alu (clauses 6 and 7) point at the content of the headline. The only example of split rheme picks up one of the rheme of not the preceding clause (Clause 6) but that of clause 1.

In all, the eight manifestations of TP in this text provide the text with cohesion. Also the interconnectivity, simplicity and clarity of the text make it an interesting one. It was later learnt that the report is false. For instance, Kastina Alu neither steps down as the NJC Chair nor did the commission probe him. The question is why the newspaper would feed the public with a blatant lie all in order to make sales. This unprofessional scheme could discourage the readers from patronizing such a paper. Even if they read it, they might take their news report as unimportant.

#### **Text 4 (The Guardian)**

S/N	Clause	TPT
1.	A probe of huge financial malfeasance at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)/ is due to open in the days ahead as the senators resume from their Easter break to uncover a ring through which the Federal Government had allegedly been short changed to the tune of billions of naira with frivolous payments on joint ventures and partnership contracts.	Simple Linear
2.	Daily Sun investigations/ revealed that the Senate had been inundated with petitions and complaints bordering on massive fraud being perpetrated in the corporation through which revenues that could have accrued to the federal coffers had ended up in private pockets.	No TP
3.	Some of the petitions,/ it was learnt, detailed how crude oil sales were allegedly not accounted for because sales were done at times without proper record and correct payment into government's coffers.	Simple Linear
4.	13 senators/ had sponsored a motion directing the immediate pas Group	Derived

	Managing Director (GMD) of the NNPC, Mohammed Barikindo to go on compulsory leave to allow unfettered probe of the corporation.	
5.	The Senators, who included senate leaders including Senator Teslim Folarin, Victor Ndoma Egba, Olorunnimbe Mamora,/ claimed that the Senate Committee on Petroleum (Upstream) headed by Senator Lee Maebeba had written the NNPC management on five occasions between April 20, 2009 and October 14, 2009, requesting the GMD to furnish the committee with the corporation's revenue and expenditure profile on a quarterly basis.	Constant
6.	But he/ refused to acknowledge any of the letters let alone honouring them	Simple Linear
7.	The Senators,/ in the planned motion, accused the former Petroleum Minister , Dr Rilwan Lukman of aiding and abetting the former GMD to disrespect the Senate, thus frustrating the efforts of the committee to perform its constitutional roles, a development sources revealed might not be unconnected with the removal of Barkindo as the GMD.	Constant
8.	Shehu Ladan/ was announced as the new GMD last week by Acting-President Goodluck Jonathan.	Simple Linear
9.	Senator Maebeba/ confirmed to Daily Sun in Abuja at the weekend that they were still pushing ahead with the motion to probe the NNPC, despite the change of GMD, saying Order 103 of the Senate Standing Rules and Section 88 of the Constitution empowered the Senate to direct or cause to direct an investigation into any matter or thing with which it has power to make.	Derived
10.	Therefore, the motion/ among others will seek to compel the Senate Committee on Petroleum (Upstream) to investigate the profile of all revenues from all sources accruing to and paid to the NNPC, including all income statements from January to September 2009; total crude oil sales and remittances into the federation account if any within the period with their receipts and payment invoices.	Simple Linear
11.	Others/ are all the statement of bank lodgements, including lodgements into stakeholders' accounts and the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN); the contracts and projects approval by the board, including joint ventures and payment for such contracts; and the internal approvals and intra-corporation expenditure and audited accounts of the corporation for the period.	Simple Linear
12.	The motion/ already slated in the order paper was to have been taken on the floor of the senate earlier but for the urgent need to screen and clear the ministerial nominees then.	Split Rheme

Text 4 exhibits six instances of simple linear progression in clauses 1, 3, 6, 8, 10 and 11. "A probe of huge financial malfeasance", "Some of the petition", "shortly before the senate", "A development", and "Shehu Ladan" are all cross reference strategy to hold the discourse together and help a free flow of it.

The derived theme also features in clauses 4, and 9. "13 Senator" and "Senator Maebeba" respectively are derived from the hyper theme "the Senate" in clause 2. Constant theme in

clauses 5 and 7 emphasises the key players (The Senators) in the proposed probe. The appearance of “the Senate” and those items that have part-whole relationship with it at the thematic position is a pointer to the fact that the main issue as contained in the headline is deemphasized. These could make the reading public to believe that the Senate is more important than the probe.

### Text 5 (Daily Trust)

S/N	Clause	TPT
1.	The 11 suspended members of the House of Representatives/ have lost about #616m findings by THE PUNCH revealed.	Simple Linear
2.	The figure/ represents the combined total of their quarterly allocations for the third and fourth quarters of the year (July to December).	Simple Linear
3.	Based on the allowances and entitlements fixed for lawmakers by the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission/ each of the 360 members of the house takes home around #28m per quarter (or 9.33m per month).	No TP
4.	There/ are three months in each of the four quarters on which the allocation of the lawmakers are calculated.	No TP
5.	This/ translates to #308m per quarter for the 11 and #616m for the two quarters.	No TP
6.	Although the 11 lawmakers/ have been on suspension for about four months (July to October) their colleagues have already collected the block sum for two quarters July to December.	Constant
7.	However, amid consistent denial by the House,/ there are speculations that the unofficial allocation for each lawmaker per quarter is #42m.	No TP
8.	If this unofficial figure/ is to be used, the 11 suspended lawmakers would have lost #462m per quarter or #924m for the two quarters.	Simple Linear
9.	The 11, who belong to a group in the House, the Progressive-Minded legislators,/ were suspended in July after lawmakers loyal to the Speaker, Dimeji Bankole, fought with some of them on the floor of the House.	Simple Linear
10.	The group,/ led by Dino Melaye, was demanding an investigation into the alleged misapplication of 9bn out of the capital votes of the House by the leadership.	Constant
11.	The group/ had demanded the resignation of the speaker, but the situation degenerated to a free-for-all, following which the 11 were suspended indefinitely for ‘disorderly conduct’.	Constant

In Text 5, there are four instances of the cross reference simple linear and three constant type, while four clauses have no TP. For simple linear  $Th_2=Rh_1$ ,  $Th_8=Rh_7$ ,  $Th_9=Rh_8$ . “The 11 suspended members of the House of Representatives”, “The figure”, “If this unofficial figure”, “The 11, who belong to a group in the House, Progressive-Minded legislators” in clause 1, 2, 8 and 9 respectively all point or relate to the headline on the suspended representatives and it is also meant to criticize those that are fighting “the corruption” that they are also corrupt. In other words, how can they explain the “unofficial” allowances that they are getting. But for the fight among them, nobody would have known about this.

Also, the constant theme type, which appears in clauses 6, 10, 11, with “The 11” and “The group” being constantly repeated to explicate and emphasise the role of this group in the fight against corruption, shows coherence.

However, the inability of the theme of some clauses-3,4,5, and 7- to either pick up the theme of the preceding clause or repeat a previous one gives room for concern. This is because it makes the text to be somehow disjointed since the points raised in their preceding clauses are not further developed. For instance, in clause 3, “Based on the allowances and entitlements fixed for lawmakers by the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission” does not relate to either the rheme or theme of the preceding clause.

In all, the text as an investigative writing succinctly explains and describes how members of the House of Representative get the frivolous allowances by adopting the cross reference TP simple linear and constant theme. While the first 8 clauses state the calculation of the amount they purportedly lose, the last 3 clauses shed light on what led to the Representatives’ suspension. The use of constant theme in this part is employed to paint the scenario of their suspension.

### Text 6 (National Mirror)

S/N	Clause	TPT
1.	Interesting time/ is here	Simple Linear
2.	In a surprise move last night at 8 p.m., the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission(EFCC)/ arrested the former Speaker of the Federal House of Representatives, Mr Dimeji Bankole.	No TP
3.	A statement by EFCC’s spokesman, Mr Babafemi / noted that the commission had to arrest Bankole ahead of the Monday (today) date he gave to surrender himself, because of its intelligence report, which indicated that Bankole was allegedly plotting to escape.	Derived Theme
4.	Bankole,/ according to the statement, was picked up at his Asokoro residence in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.	Simple Linear
5.	The commission’s sources/ revealed that there was a stand-off as Bankole resisted arrest for about four hours from 4pm Sunday evening before we eventually got the Inspector General of Police (IGP) and the Director General of the State Security Service (SSS) to withdraw their men from him.	Derived Theme
6.	Then we/ were able to arrest him, a top EFCC official affirmed.	Constant
7.	He/ arrived at commission’s office in a Toyota Corolla car with FCT registration number BJ 167KWL, wearing a black T-shirt and grey trousers.	Constant
8.	According to the statement, “the EFCC Chairman, Mrs Farida Waziri/ was compelled to order the immediate arrest of Mr Bankole after analysing an intelligence report which showed that the former speaker was planning to leave Abuja for Lagos on Sunday evening and thereafter flee the country through an illegal route.	Constant
9.	It/ will be recalled that Mr Bankole had twice shunned two invitations extended to him in the last two weeks by the EFCC.	Constant
10.	An impunity/ that climaxed last Friday when he resisted attempts by operatives to arrest him in his Asokoro residence.	Derived Theme

11.	The EFCC operatives/ have to be withdrawn after over five hours standoff after a commitment from Mr Bankole that he was going to surrender himself on Monday.	Derived Theme
12.	While our men/ kept surveillance around the former speaker hoping he will honour his promise to report on Monday...	Derived Theme
13.	A fresh intelligence/ gathered by the commission showed that Mr Bankole was not ready to keep his promise but rather planning other schemes to escape from the country through an illegal route or obtaining a restraining court order early on Monday to prevent the Commission from effecting his arrest or prosecution..	Simple Linear

The TP in Text 6 manifests in twelve clauses with none in one clauses. Constant theme appears in 6, 7, 8 and 9, Simple linear is in clauses 1, 4, and 13, derived theme occurs four times in clauses 3,5, 10, 11 and 12.

Moreover, in this text, the derived theme has the hyper theme “EFCC”. In clause 2, “a statement by EFCC’s spokesman” is derived from it as the theme of clause 3. Also, “the commission’s sources” in clause 5 is also a derivative of the hyper theme “EFCC”. “The EFCC operatives” in clause 11, and “Our men” are also carved out from ‘EFCC’. This strategy links the text together from the beginning to the end. Although it presupposes an advanced reading, the language is accessible nevertheless.

Constant theme which appears in clauses 6, 7, 8 and 9 also contribute to the accessibility to the overall meaning of the text in that “Bankole” is brought to focus in clause 5 as a theme and also the second person singular pronominal item, “he”, appears in clause 7 while the first person plural pronoun, “we”, replaces EFCC operatives in clause 6.

Simple linear as a cross reference TP appears in clauses 1, 4, and 13. “Interesting time” in clause 1 is a marked theme which foregrounds what the readers are to expect in the rest of the discourse. “Bankole” in clause 4 is picked up from the rheme of clause 3 to bring to focus the accused person. In clause 13, however, “a fresh intelligence” is a cross reference which is picked up from clause 8. And there is no TP in clauses 2 and 10. The use of derived theme, constant theme and simple linear makes the text accessible to readers of all kinds-the experienced and inexperienced.

From the foregoing, it is clear that the concept of thematic progression could be applied to the analysis of the news reports in the newspapers to reveal the perspectives from which the reports are written and whose interest is being promoted.

### Summary of the Distribution of Thematic Progression in the Six Texts

Thematic Progression	Text 1	Text 2	Text 3	Text 4	Text 5	Text 6
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Constant Theme	Clauses 8, 9, 10, 12, 15, 17	Clauses 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15	Clauses 3, 4, 5	Clauses 5 and 7	Clauses 6, 10, 11	Clauses 6, 7, 8, 9
Simple Linear	Clauses 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 18	Clauses 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12	Clauses 1, 2, 6, 7	Clauses 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 11	Clauses 1, 2, 8, 9	Clauses 1, 4, 13
Derived Theme				Clauses 4 and 9		Clauses 3, 5, 10, 11, 12
Split Rheme			Clause 7			
No TP	Clauses 2, 11, 13, 16	Clause 3		Clause 2	Clauses 3, 4, 5, 7	Clauses 2

### Conclusion

In view of the study findings, we could infer that the approach of thematic structure especially Danes' approach is a veritable linguistic tool that could aid the analysis of a text to reveal how writers of the selected news reports failed to condemn corruption in government in its totality. Rather they have laid emphasis on those claiming to be fighting corruption rather than criticizing the act of corruption itself.

Our findings corroborate Van Dijk's who found out that themes and schemata, though related in news discourse, are realized discontinuously throughout the news text. To this end, our findings show that news reporters on corruption fail to thematise corrupt tendencies per se but rather seemingly corrupt individuals. The findings of this study are, also, in consonance with Fery and Krifka's which, though recognized the separatedness of theme and rheme, show that there are drastic differences in the ways themes are realized in the grammars of individual languages.

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