THE SEMANTIC IMPLICATIONS OF MEDIA REPORTS ON VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

By

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ABSTRACT

This paper is on semantics of words and expressions of various grammatical constructions that make reference to violence as reported in the Nigerian media, particularly, the newspaper where such words and sentences about violence are prominent. Twenty-four (24) headlines/captions on violence were randomly selected from Nigeria dailies for data analysis. Semantic roles were used to analyse the different words and expressions that made up the headlines/captions. Halliday's Scale and Category theory showing how text boundaries can be split have been employed to facilitate the analysis. The items (instruments) used for violence are meant to cause damage, havoc and loss of lives. The events (eventive) of violence are devastating and can enhance more restiveness in any society. The analysis of the data, show that semantic implications for the media, journalists and the Nigerian State is that most of the citizens in the Nigerian state become afraid or worried at the sight of newspaper captions/headlines carrying violent expressions. Also, other people in other countries who read Nigerian dailies carrying violent expressions/words are discouraged to visit Nigeria because of safety concerns. Lastly, certain locations in Nigeria which are prone to violent activities are avoided by both Nigerians and visitors to Nigeria.

Keywords: Violence, Semantics, Media Reports and Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Semantics is the area of linguistics that deals with the study of meaning. The ways in which words and sentences of various grammatical constructions are used and understood by speakers of a given language are explained in semantics. Semantics, therefore, is the science of meaning. Although it deals with the meanings of different words and sentences of various grammatical constructions, generally, the interest of this study is on violence in media reports. Violence as a noun can be defined in different ways. According to Merriam-Webster (on-line) dictionary, violence is an exertion of physical force, so as to injure or abuse (as in warfare effecting illegal entry into a house) or an instance of violent treatment or procedure. It can also mean an injury by distortion, infringement or profanation. Wikipedia also adds that: "Violence is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or a group of community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting into injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation".

According to Wikipedia, violence can be divided into three broad categories according to characteristics of those committing the violent act:

1. Self-directed violence

2. Interpersonal violence

3. Collective violence

The above types can be further explained below thus:

- Self-directed violence is subdivided into suicidal behaviour and self-abuse. The former includes suicidal thoughts, attempted suicide, also called 'para-suicide' or 'deliberate self-injury' in some countries, and completed suicide. Self-abuse, in contrast, includes acts such as self-mutilation.

- Interpersonal violence is divided into sub-categories: family and intimate partner violence, i.e. violence largely between family members and intimate partners usually, though, not exclusively taking place in the home. Community violence refers to violence

between individuals who are unrelated, and who may or may not know each other, generally taking place outside the home. The former group includes forms of violence such as child abuse, intimate partner violence and abuse of the elderly. The latter includes youth violence, random acts of violence, rape or sexual assaults by strangers, and violence in institutional settings such as schools, workplaces, prisons, and nursing homes, the psychological consequences of which can affect parents, children and their relationship in the short and long terms.

- Collective violence is subdivided into social, political and economic violence. Unlike the other two broad categories, the sub-categories of collective violence suggest possible motives for violence committed by a larger group of individuals or by states. Collective violence that is committed to advance a particular social agenda includes crimes of hate committed by organised groups, terrorist acts and mob violence. Political violence includes war and related violent conflicts, state violence and similar acts carried out by larger groups. Economic violence includes attacks by larger groups motivated by economic gain such as attacks carried out with the purpose of disrupting economic activity, denial of access to essential services, or creating economic division and fragmentation. Clearly, acts connected by larger groups can have multiple motives.

There is also domestic and psychological violence. When we talk about domestic violence, we refer to the various forms of assault perpetrated by one member of a family or members of a family to another (Okpaga and Ansah, 2008). This, according to CIRDOC (2002) (as cited in Okpaga & Ansah, 2008) signifies that there must be an existing relationship or a relationship must have existed in the past to warrant such an assault. This can take place in the form of physical or mental violence. Violence, whether physical or psychological, can be meted on an individual not presently found in a relationship, but for whom a relationship must have existed in the past. Also, Okpaga and Ansah, (2008 p. 322) state that:

Domestic violence is about the desire of one party in a relationship to dominate and control his or her partner. She further states that it is about power and the breakdown and distortion of an intimate relationship. This means it can happen with couples who are living under the same roof but 'separated' or non-couples who have had an intimate relationship in the past. Violence here can take the form of emotional as well as physical assault.

Psychological or emotional violence, though not physically seen like issues of physical abuse, presents a devastating effect on the abused and the society at large. This kind of violence, according to CIRDOC (2003) (as cited in Okpaga and Ansah, 2008) is said to include the following:

- Verbal abuse: this can be in the public or before children.

- Greater preference of sons to daughters especially in a situation, where a woman has none or few male children.

- Daughters and women thought of as 'good-for-nothing'.

- Fear of husbands' reaction when there is a problem.

- Wives being desserted when sick.

- Husbands restricting their wives' movement with no good reasons (forceful confinement).

- The belief that women are better in the kitchen (not fit for public employment).

- Levirate marriage and widow inheritance.

- Fathers' sexual violation of female children or other female dependants within the home (incest).

- Threats to kill other members of the family if the husband/wife refuses to comply.

- Depriving people to use their property. etc.

Even though all these forms of violence discussed above are found at one time or the other to have been, or are still being perpetuated in Nigeria, it should be noted that violence is a global phenomenon. For example, Omotoso.G, in a Nigerian newspaper, THE NATION, Thursday, April 28, 2011 presents some issues of violence in some countries of the world. A few of such cases include:

- *Headline:* "Pro-Quattara forces clash in Ivory Coast".

Opening story line: Fighting has broken out in the Ivorian city of Abidjan between forces loyal to the new president and the "invisible Commandos", a rival militia...

- *Headline:* "Afghan pilot kills eight US troops at Kabul Airport".

  Opening story line: Eight United States troops and contractor have been killed by an Afghan air force pilot at Kabul Airport in an apparent argument, US officials say....

- *Headline:* "UN Team in Libya to Probe Human Rights Abuses".

  Opening story line: United Nations to investigate allegations of human rights violations in Libya since the start of the conflict in February.

According to Balarabe (2003), "Crisis can never be avoided in life because of individual differences, perception, needs and wants." This is so, particularly in a homogeneous country like Nigeria. The mass media have been at the forefront in spreading crises in Nigeria, especially, the print media. The print media engage in this act through the use of the language of violence. Words like: 'killing', 'massacre', 'murder', 'mayhem', 'bloodshed', etc are found in captions and stories". The above background will lead this paper to explore the intentions of meaning construction theory of media portrayals.

1. Meaning Construction Theory of Media Portrayals

Defleur and Dennis (1994:59) explain that the meaning of the construction theory is "an important explanation of certain long range influences of mass communication on habits of perception, belief and behaviour among their audiences which is called the 'meaning construction theory of media portrayals." The interpretation of the influences of mass media sees the meanings people hold for various words as strongly influenced by their exposure to the content of mass communications. Those meanings, in turn, shape their understandings of, and actions in situations, which they have to cope with in the real world. Personal meanings for features of our physical and social environments are shaped in a variety of communication processes in which our understandings for labels, that is,

words of our language, are shaped, reshaped and stabilized, so that we can interact with others in predictable ways. These communication processes take place in families, among peers, in the community, and in society at large. But each is different from one society to another.

In traditional societies, word-of-mouth was the main source of information. In modern societies, however, the mass media is a very important part of the communication processes. In a media saturated society, not only do people attend to content directly from mass communications, but they also discuss information in conversations and pass on news and interpretations in a process of diffusion. It is in these exposures and exchanges that people's meanings for words are constantly shaped, reshaped and reinforced.

Words are the basic units of communication with which people perceive, understand and communicate about what they believe to be true except fictitious items. The meaning of every word and grammatical expression can be understood as consisting of personal experiences previously recorded (imprinted) in neural cell structures in the brain. Thus, meanings can be both subjective and objective experiences that each person has in his or her head to speak. People really do not know if meanings are actually the true features of what exists in the world outside. For every word in a language, there is a constructed pattern of subjective meanings, that is undoubtedly different in some ways from the detailed and objective characteristics of the thing or situation for which the word stands. This is because, no word or other kind of symbol can capture all aspects of the objective reality to which it refers. Therefore, actual realities are not communicated, but communication is based on reference to the subjective meanings aroused by words. The word becomes far more important to people in many ways than the objective reality for which it originally is a substitute.

The important principle underlying the meaning construction theory of media portrayals is that the personal and subjective interpretations people experience for words constitutes the world to which they adjust. People cannot relate accurately to the objective world of reality itself because people's access to that world is both selective and limited. In the absence of direct experience with many

aspects of the world, people create both their cultural and private worlds' meaning through communication. It is these shared representations – the pictures in people's heads that they perceive, think, and shape their responses to the world outside.

Mass communication provides experiences from which people collectively shape their meanings for words. The meaning theory explains that people learn or modify, at least, some of the meanings they associate with words through exposures to portrayals encountered in mass communications. Thus, in their interpersonal communications, the meanings they derive from the media are further shaped and reshaped into conventions about what words are supposed to mean, which they share with others so that, they become part of the general language and culture. The media also play a key role in stabilizing these meanings. Thus, the mass media is a source both of changes in language, as they modify meanings for individuals, and of stabilization, as they reinforce conventional usages. These may be the suitable influences of media content, but they are of profound importance.

The influence that the media have on meanings may be simple or complex. For example, by exposure to the print and electronic media, the audience can learn new words with new meanings or can acquire new meanings for old words. For instance, in recent years, the media brought new words into existence. Substances called "carcinogens" which cause cancer is one of such new vocabularies. Media audiences also learn new meanings for old words. Consider the following as examples: "neat" may mean orderly, as it once did, but likeable; "heavy" may not simply mean weighty in a physical sense, but "important" or "significant", and describing someone as "gay" does not necessarily mean that person is jovial and light-hearted.

According to the meaning construction theory, there are, at least, four ways in which media portrayals can play a part in shaping the process whereby people achieve new or modified social constructions of meanings for reality. These can be called establishment, extension, substitution and stabilization. Each term refers to a relationship between a symbol and the learned subjective experiences of meaning to which that symbol refers. Defleur and Dennis

(1994) as cited in Abochol (2001) look at these terms in the following way:

- Establishment is a process by which new words and new meanings become part of the language system through audience exposure to media portrayals. A good example is the acronym, AIDS, which meant nothing to most people decades ago. Because of extensive media presentations of the term (AIDS) as a dreaded disease, it is now a part of the world vocabulary. In this way, individuals acquire meanings for symbols that they were not familiar with before.

- Extension, that is, an expansion of meanings, can also take place as an outcome of media portrayals. In this way, people learn additional meanings, that can be attached to symbols with which they are already familiar. Consider this as an instance, a few years ago, the word "crack" meant a physical defect that one found in a surface. Introduced in a story in the "New York Times"in 1985, it now has extended meanings referring to a dangerous drug.

- Substitution consists of a displacement of older meanings of words in favour of newer ones as a result of media portrayals. An example is the term "Vietnam Veteran". Prior to about 1980, it implied a person who had served his or her country in the armed forces during a particular period in a particular place. Then, for years, the news media, entertainment television, and the film industry presented content that modified, at least, some of the implications of that term. Instead of simply meaning courageous people who served their country in a difficult time, the term came to represent individuals with deep psychological problems. The connotative meanings imply mental instability.

- Stabilization or standardization of meanings is still another outcome of certain kinds of media portrayals. In this case, members of the audience already share a more or less similar set of meanings for symbols in the portrayal. By repeatedly showing the accepted meanings for these symbols, the media re-enforce (that is, more firmly establish) the conventions regarding their interpretation. For example, the public

now holds certain beliefs about Americans to be aggressive. Certainly, some are, but the majority clearly are not. This may be a result of endless TV shows and movies in which these categories of persons have been portrayed as repeatedly engaged in drug dealings, shootings, theft, and other deviant acts. Generally, then, the ways in which the mass media, particularly, journalese, link words and people's personal and shared meanings through their depictions and portrayals of reality play an important part in changing and stabilizing the language. Because people's actions are shaped by the labels and meanings they use in responding to the world around them, the media have subtle, complex, long-range, and significant influences on behaviour (27-31). This paper intends to briefly discuss the study of meaning.

2. Meaning: An Overview

Semantics is the study of meaning. The problem now is to explain meaning. This is because of all efforts by linguists to define meaning have not yielded definite results as expected. Sometimes, we hear people say that a particular linguistic item (word or expression) has no meaning or has similar meaning with another or have different meanings, etc, but it is often not clear what sort of thing or entity that meaning really is. To define a particular word, we often end up using other words in that definition. For instance, 'boy' could be defined with the following semantic properties or features: (+ human), (+ male) and (+ young). One will still want to know the meaning of 'human', 'male' and 'young', so the quest for meaning continues without an end.

Another problem with meaning is that it has several functions and meanings. For instance, the following words or phrases can be used to refer to what something means: 'stands for', 'signifies', 'denotes', 'symbolises', 'means', 'implies', etc. Cherry (1957) (as cited in Omachonu, 2011) considers meaning as "a harlot among words…"(p. 204). This means that meaning is not a constant phenomenon; it is amendable to series of variables. The meaning of an expression to the receiver of a message is the selection of a particular response which the hearer actually makes, but to the sender, it is the selection of an response in the receiver which the sender intends to achieve. Speaking on the problem of meaning as a concept, Cherry's study (as cited in Omachonu, 2011, p. 204) observes that:

> … the meaning of an utterance is a descriptive phrase. Indeed, to speak of utterances and their meaning is almost to make a dualism like 'body' and 'soul', 'substance' and 'form'. The meaning and the utterance form a unit: a meaningful utterance. A meaning is not a label tied around the neck of a spoken word or phrase. It is more like the beauty of a complexion which lies altogether in the eye of its beholder (but changes with the light).

Meaning as used in the English language may therefore, have an equivalent in other languages, while in other languages, there may not be any equivalence. The meaning of 'meaning' or 'to mean' or any other word must be approximately the same not only in some contexts within other languages. If it is not possible, then attempting to provide any comprehensive semantic theory will be a futile enterprise.

There are, however, two popular ways in which the meanings of expressions can be conceived. They are the naturalist view of meaning and the conventionalist point of view. The naturalist view of meaning holds on the belief that the meaning of a word is the thing or entity that it represents in the physical world. This means that there is a connection between sound and meaning. The problem with this view is that there are quite a number of words in human language without a physical representation. Such words include 'love', 'sympathy', 'feeling', etc.

The second view of meaning is that of the conventionalists. Proponents of this view are of the opinion that the connection between sound and meaning is arbitrary and never direct. For every word, there is an associated concept. It is this concept which is formed in the mind of the users of the language that links the sounds associated with the word to the actual thing or entity represented by the word. There are also roles which words and expressions carry out in order to produce meaning. Akase quoted in (Omachonu, 2011, p. 215) explains that:

> There are role types that are found in human

language. This is because the meaning of words in human language cannot be adequately explained. Consequently, the roles that these words play in sentences have been studied. These roles are known as semantic roles. For instance, in a simple sentence, the role describes the action, while the noun phrases describe the different semantic roles involved in the action.

The roles includes: agent, force, patient, experiencer, instrument, benefactor or possessor, location, source, goal, object and maleficiary. The semantic roles selected for use in this study are preferred, because they will assist to bring out the meanings of violent expressions as presented in the selected newspaper headlines/captions which serve as the data for this study. The roles are briefly explained as follows:

- Agent is an entity that is responsible for an action or event taking place.

- Force is a situation where inanimate things initiate some action.

- Patient is an entity that is affected by the action carried out by an agent or force.

- Experiencer is an entity that undergoes some physiological effect. It is an animate entity that is psychologically affected by an event or state.

- Instrument is a thing or entity with which an action is carried out. The instrument is usually an inanimate entity.

- Benefactor or possessor refers to an entity that possesses a thing or benefits from an action or state.

- Location refers to the place where something is situated, or where an entity moves.

- Source is the place or direction from which something originates or comes. It is usually a location.

- Goal is the direction towards which something moves or goes.

- Object is the entity that is most neutral. It is the entity whose function is determined by the semantics interpretation of the verb.

- Maleficiary is a role performed by the object which

loses from the performance of certain action on another entity.

The stated semantic roles above will assist in the analysis of selected data for this paper.

Reports in the newspapers leading to violence are found in the captions and the stories. How such have influenced the people's reaction is based on the way language is manipulated and used to pass across the information at that point in time. These reports on violence have encouraged people to take laws into their hands leading to unbridled confusion and chaos.

3. Methodology

An analysis of the data collected from some dailies in Nigeria is featured in this paper. Eight (8) items (headlines/captions) were randomly selected from the "Sun newspapers" for the year, 2011, specifically, the months of April and May. Also, sixteen (16) items from Balarabe's (2003) data containing violent headlines and captions were used. Both groups form the data for this study. Although, there are numerous headlines and captions in Nigerian dailies, this study limits its analysis to a manageable number of twenty-four (24).

4. Theoretical Framework

Halliday's (1967) Scale and Category theory showing how text boundaries are demarcated is preferred in this study. The boundaries are represented by bars as follows:

(i) Sentence carries three slanting bars at the beginning and the end of the sentence: /// ///.

(ii) Clause carries two slanting bars at the beginning and the end of the clause: // //.

(iii) Phrase group is represented by a single bar: / /.

(iv) Rankshifted clause is represented by two brackets: [[ ]] at the beginning and the end boundary.

(v) Rankshifted phrase group is represented by a single bracket: [ ] at the the beginning and the end.

(vi) Included clause is represented by two parenthesis notation each: (( ))

(vii) Included phrase group is represented by a single parenthesis notation each: ( ) at the beginning and the end of the structure.

The theory discusses the use of language by context of situation. As such the context for this study is semantic implications, while the situation is violence in the Nigerian State.

5. Data Analysis

1.   /panic over new cabinet/

Eya, W. and Olusola, B. (2011, May 22)*Sunday Sun*, pp. 7.

"Panic" is the force in the nominal group structure because as an inanimate entity, it initiates an action. "Panic" also means fear. There is an ellipsis of // there is /was panic over new cabinet.//.The ellipsis, "there was…", notwithstanding, the meaning of "Panic over new cabinet" is obvious.

2.   //Boko Haram hit list. //

Ganagan, M. (2011, May 21).*Saturday Sun*, pp. 5, 8, 22-23

'Boko haram' is the agent in the above sentence. 'Boko Haram' is a Hausa phrase meaning 'western education should be prohibited'. The meaning of the term goes against lovers of western education which will therefore result in violence.

3.   /// 50 corps members escape death///

Alofetekun, A. (2011, April 20).*Daily Sun*,pp.12

"…escape death" is the experiencer in this sentence. This is because human beings were involved, (50 corps members). The corps members must have been psychologically affected by the situation. "50 corps members…" cannot be agent in the above caption because the agent of a sentence is the animate being that causes the action described by the verb in that sentence.

4.   ///….. Rioters lock them up, // set house ablaze///

The first clause //…. Rioters lock them up// "them " is the patient because "them" which refers to human beings suffered from the action of the verb "lock". "Rioters" is the agent because it is responsible for the action of the verb "lock". The second clause //(…Rioters) set house ablaze // is also the patient because the people in the house set ablaze suffered from the verbal group /set …ablaze /.In the second clause also, there is the ellipsis of "Rioters" to avoid repetition.

5.   ///4 "corpers", 12 others killed in Bauchi///

"corpers" is the Nigerian version for 'corps members'. The "4 'corpers' and 12 others…" is an experiencer because they experienced death in Bauchi,

"…in Bauchi" refers to the location where the people were killed. The story line can result in violence.

6.   ///El–Rufai confesses, "why I worked against Ribadu and those behind post-poll violence"///

Aidoghie, P *(2011, May 21). Saturday Sun, pp.* 13-15

"El-Rufai" is the agent in this sentence."Ribadu and those behind post-poll" constitute the patient. His confession can cause change in behaviour (curiosity, hatred or bad feeling towards him) by the people mentioned.

7.   ///Bin Ladin : Al qaeda declares war///

Emewu, I. (2011, May 7). *Saturday Sun*, pp. 12, 56.

"…Al qaeda …"is the agent in this sentence. The complement 'war' contains the meaning that can cause change in behaviour resulting to violence or fear.

8.   /// Buhari moves against Jonathan ///

Tsa, G. (2011, May 7). *Saturday Sun*, pp. 11.

"Buhari" is the agent in this sentence. The predicator 'moves' and the adjunct 'against' carry the meaning that can result in violence. "Jonathan" is the patient (affected) in the caption. The structure can cause retaliation.

9.   / Violence /

The word "violence" as a group structure is a force that can result into break down of law and order. The word is self-defined. Its meaning is multifaceted. However, in the context of this usage, 'violence' refers to the act of using extreme physical force to cause harm.

10. /// Have lost their lives ///

"… their lives" in this sentence is the affected (object) because its function is being determined by the verbal group "Have lost …". The headline can result in violence particularly that those who lost their lives have relations or friends who might retaliate the action.

11. / Weekend Mayhem /

The entire nominal group is an eventive because the event was caused by humans. The qualifier 'mayhem' carries the meaning that can result in violence.

12. / Set Ablaze /

The entire verbal group is the agent. This is because some people might have caused the fire incident. The entire structure conveys the meaning that can result in any change of behaviour, particularly, violence.

13. /// Last week's violence claimed many lives and property ///

"Last week's violence" is the eventive in the news headline which is captured in a sentence form. The patient"….many lives and property" were affected by the event. The entire sentence is self defining.

14. ///51 persons were confirmed killed with over 500 others injured ///

The patient"…51 persons…" came up earlier in the sentence because it is a passive structure. Also, "500 others…"is another patient. The main verb"….confirmed …" in the verbal group "…were confirmed killed…"would have been best written as:'…were confirmed dead' and not 'killed' as used in the caption. The entire headline placed in a sentence form can result in violence.

15. /were burnt /

The verbal group above is supposed to follow a patient because it is cast in passive voice. The headline can result in violence because the story line will reveal the people or the property that / were burnt /.

16. [[who defied police warning…]]

The agent, 'who…' in the headline is a reference to 'human beings'. The "police" is the patient as their warning was defiled by some people. The action can result in violence.

17. /Disruption of peace and loss of lives/

The above headline is an experiencer because the people involved must have been psychologically affected. The caption is self defining.

18. /Death on the Plateau/

The above headline is also an experiencer because the people experienced death. The nominal group can result in retaliation.

19. ///Residents took up arms///

"Residents…" in the above headline (sentence) is the agent. "Arms" is the instrument. The action of the residents

defines violence.

20. ///Hundreds of lives were lost///

"Hundreds of lives…" is the patient in the headline. This is because the captain is cast in the passive construction. The action defined by the headline can result in violence.

21. ///Property worth millions of Naira were destroyed///

"Property worth millions of naira…" is the patient in the caption. The headline is cast in the passive construction. Here also, the action in the headline can result in violence.

22. /Blood for Blood/

The headline is an experiencer because the persons involved experienced a blood bath. The storyline can result in violence.

23. ///Many were killed and some were raped///

The headline is cast in the passive construction as the two alpha clauses have been depicted. Therefore, "many…" and "some…" in the caption are the patients. The entire caption can result in violence.

24. ///Armed in knives, bars, arrows and cutlasses///

The headline above presents the instruments used for violence. The storyline can result in violence.

According to the stabilization and standardization of meanings as postulated by the theory of media portrayal discussed by Defleur and Dennis, the following expressions from the data appear to be violent or make reference to violence: 'panic', 'Boko Haram', 'death', 'rioters', 'set ablaze', 'killed', 'worked against', 'war', 'moves against', 'violence', 'mayhem', 'injured', 'burnt', 'arms', 'destroyed', 'raped', 'knives', 'bows', 'arrows' and 'cutlasses' (20 expressions).

Conclusion

From the twenty-four (24) headlines analysed, the following semantic roles were discovered: Force appears two (2) times. Agent appears eight (8) times; Experiencer, five (5); Patient, fourteen (14); Eventive, two (2) times while Location, and Instrument, once (1 time) and twice (2 times) respectively. This, therefore, means that the agents or initiators of violence are numerous. Also, those who suffer (patients) from violence are many. Non-human agents (force) can equally cause violence. The experiences (experiencer) of violence are not always good. Violence

always has a locale or is situated. The items (instruments) used for violence are meant to cause damage, havoc and loss of lives. The events (eventive) of violence are devastating and can enhance more restiveness in any society.

From the analysis of the data, the following semantic implications for the media, journalists and the Nigerian state can be deduced: Most of the citizens in the Nigerian state become afraid or worried at the sight of newspaper captions/headlines carrying violent expressions. Most of the time, the citizens are not keen to buying newspaper to read because the stories hardly change since violence has taken centre stage. Some citizens read Nigerian newspapers carrying headlines or captions on violent events simply for research as this paper is a product of research on reports bordering on violence in Nigeria. Other people in other countries who read Nigerian dailies carrying violent expressions/words are discouraged to visit Nigeria because of safety concerns since many people can be killed at a time. Certain locations in Nigeria which are prone to violent activities are avoided by both Nigerians and visitors to Nigeria.

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