UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

LEXICAL COHESION AND TONE IN NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS

ZUBAIRU MALAH

FBMK 2016 86

LEXICAL COHESION AND TONE IN NIGERIAN NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS

By

ZUBAIRU MALAH

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

November 2016

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my beloved daughter Habiba Zubairu (Nuri), and all my dear nephews and nieces.

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September 2016

Chairman : **Helen Tan, PhD**
Faculty : **Modern Languages and Communications**

Drawing on the notion of *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL), researchers have variously explored texts of different registers and genres in attempts to account for the varying features of texts responsive to different conditions of their production in authentic social interactions (see, for example, Li, 2010; Ansary and Babaii, 2009; Taboada, 2004; Martin, 2001; Hasan, 1984). Among the fields of research in this tradition is cohesion analysis, which is concerned with discourse relations that transcend grammatical structure (Halliday, 1994; Halliday and Hasan, 1976). Similarly, this study drew on SFL and focused on Lexical Cohesion and Tone in Nigerian newspaper editorials. The objectives of the study were the following: to identify the types of lexical cohesion used in the editorials, to examine how lexical cohesion is utilized in building coherence in the editorials, and to examine how the lexical devices are used to signal the writers' tones. The research approach was qualitative. The data, which was culled online from websites of 4 major Nigerian newspapers: *The Guardian*, *The Nation*, *Leadership*, and *Vanguard*, comprised editorial texts written on social issues only. The editorials were sampled for a period of 6 months: May to October, 2015. This gave a total of 40 editorial texts and 24,456 words. For the analysis of lexical cohesion, the study applied Eggins' (2004) lexical cohesion framework; and for examining writers' tones, the study utilized a constructed framework based on adaptation of Flemming (2012), Flemming (2011), Kolins (2009), and Kane (2000). The analyses revealed 3,186 lexical ties intersententially, and that the major sources of lexical cohesion in newspaper editorials were *repetition* (49%), *expectancy relations* (15.78%), *synonymy* (11.29%), and *class/sub-class relations* (11.11%). It was also observed that lexical cohesion, in forms of *long chains*, *short chains*, and *simple ties* were used in building coherence in the editorial texts. On relation between lexical ties and tones of writers, the data suggested that 1,170 (36.7%) ties contributed in signalling the writers' tones.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sastera

KOHESI LEKSIKAL DAN NADA DALAM LIDAH PENGARANG AKHBAR NIGERIA

Oleh

ZUBAIRU MALAH

September, 2016

Pengerusi : **Helen Tan, PhD**
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Dengan berdasarkan tanggapan Linguistik Fungsian Sistemik (SFL), para penyelidik dengan pelbagai cara telah mengkaji teks yang berlainan laras dan genre dalam usaha untuk memperlihatkan kepelbagaian ciri sesuatu teks mengikut suasana penghasilannya yang berbeza dalam interaksi sosial yang sebenar. (sebagai contoh lihat: Li, 2010; Martin, 2001; Ansary dan Babaii, 2009; Taboada, 2004; dan Hasan, 1984). Antara bidang penyelidikan dalam tradisi ini ialah analisis kohesi, yang meneliti pertautan wacana yang melangkaui struktur tatabahasa (Halliday, 1994; Halliday dan Hasan, 1976). Begitu juga, kajian ini berdasarkan SFL dan memberikan tumpuan terhadap kohesi leksikal dan nada dalam lidah pengarang akhbar Nigeria. Objektif kajian ini adalah seperti yang berikut: untuk mengenal pasti jenis kohesi leksikal yang digunakan dalam lidah pengarang, untuk mengkaji cara kohesi leksikal digunakan untuk membina koheren dalam rencana pengarang, dan untuk mengkaji cara alat leksikal digunakan untuk menyampaikan nada penulis. Kajian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Data terdiri daripada teks lidah pengarang yang hanya menyentuh isu sosial yang diperoleh daripada laman sesawang dalam talian bagi 4 surat khabar utama Nigeria, iaitu *The Guardian, The Nation, Leadership, dan Vanguard*. Rencana yang dipilih sebagai sampel adalah dalam tempoh 6 bulan, iaitu dari bulan Mei hingga Oktober, 2015. Semuanya berjumlah 40 teks editorial dengan 24.456 perkataan. Untuk analisis kohesi leksikal, kajian ini menggunakan kerangka kerja kohesi leksikal Eggins (2004); dan untuk meneliti nada pengarang, kajian ini menggunakan kerangka kerja yang dibina berdasarkan adaptasi daripada Flemming (2012), Flemming (2011), Kane (2000), dan Kolins (2009). Analisis menunjukkan bahawa 3,186 leksikal bertaut antara ayat dalam wacana, dan bahawa sumber utama kohesi leksikal dalam lidah pengarang akhbar ialah pengulangan (49%), hubungan terduga (15.78%), sinonim (11.29%), dan hubungan kelas/sub-kelas (11.11%). Didapati juga bahawa kohesi leksikal dalam bentuk rantaian panjang, rantaian pendek, dan tautan mudah telah digunakan dalam pembinaan koherens bagi teks lidah pengarang. Dari segi hubungan antara tautan leksikal dan nada pengarang, data menunjukkan bahawa 1,170 (36.7%) tautan menyumbang untuk menyampaikan nada pengarang.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 18 November 2016 to conduct the final examination of Zubairu Malah on his thesis entitled "Lexical Cohesion and Tone in Nigerian Newspaper Editorials" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Arts.

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This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) were adhered to.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EGP	English for General Purposes
ESL	English as a Second Language
TGG	Transformational Generative Grammar
GSP	Generic Structure Potential
USA	United States of America
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
SSR	Social Science Research
HQDs	High Quality Discourses
LQDs	Low Quality Discourses
WT	Within Turns
AT	Across Turns
G	the Guardian Newspapers
N	the Nation Newspapers
L	Leadership Newspapers
V	Vanguard Newspapers
RQs	Research Questions
PN	Pilot Data of Nation Newspapers
PG	Pilot Data of Guardian Newspapers
PV	Pilot Data of Vanguard Newspapers
PL	Pilot Data of Leadership Newspapers
NO	Number
L	Long (Lexical Chains)
S	Short (Lexical Chains)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an overview of the study and puts it in proper perspective. It puts the study in perspective because it gives insight into the research field the study belongs, the approach the study adopts, and also the research niche the study aims to take care of. The major sections of the chapter include: background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, theoretical framework, and finally definition of terms.

1.1   Background of the Study

For their unique roles in human communication, texts have been the primary objects of prolific inquiries by different researchers. These researchers, who seriously concern themselves with texts, come from different disciplines and research fields – *Sociology , Psychology, Textliguistics, Literary Criticism, Anthropology, Sociolinguistics, Linguistics, Stylistics, Systemic Linguistics, Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis,* and so on (Kaplan and Grape, 2002; de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). By providing fruitful ideas for the systematic analyses of texts, these scholars have contributed tremendously to how texts – of different *genres* and *registers* – are understood, interpreted, and used. With these facts in mind, it is obvious to understand why texts are being glossed and approached differently today. They are powerful sites for interaction between the writers and their readers (Hoey, 2001). A text is any stretch of language in use produced authentically by people for real communication purposes (Stubbs, 2001; Bloor & Bloor 2004). It may be spoken or written, monologic or dialogic. Text producers (the writers) enact discourses in texts, while text receivers (the readers) decode or derive discourses from texts in kinds of collaborative efforts (Widdowson, 2004; Tanskanen, 2006)

1.1.1   Approaches to Text Analysis

While commenting on approaches to texts, it is good to begin by looking at approaches used in other disciplines such as *Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology* and *Literary Criticism.* For instance, the Sociologists are mostly interested in patterns of social organization and interaction, and they pursue this through *Ethnomethodology* and also the *analyses of conversations* produced by the people in the community. Scholars who focus on this include Harold Grafinkel, Emmanuel Schegloff, Gail Jeffeson and Harvey Sacksand (Taiwo, 2010; de Beaugrand and Dressler, 1981). The sociologists, through the analysis of conversations, discover how societies are structured (Jones, 2012). The concept of *frames,* mental filters or interpretive universes, was discovered by the sociologist Erving Goffman in 1974. Frames are said to be constructed by members of speech community, and determine how people in communities interpret utterances (Blommaert, 2005). On the other hand, psychologists developed interest in the *cognitive processes* surrounding text

production and comprehension. To them, both production and interpretation of texts are parts of social and cognitive processes because meanings do not reside in texts independent of mental processing for communication to take place (Kaplan and Grape, 2002; van Dijk, 1997).

Moving on, we must not hesitate to acknowledge the contributions of anthropologists in text interpretation and analysis. Some major scholars here are Firth, Sapir, & Malinowski. Malinowski (1923) discovered the notion of *Context* in text interpretation (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Taboada, 2004; Flowerdew, 2013). Context has been a very significant factor in textual interaction, because literal meanings of utterances are not enough to enable (near)accurate interpretations, until the utterances (or texts) are *activated* by the *contextual connection* (Gee, 2011; Widdowson, 2004). Context involves the circumstance or situation (and indeed all the extra-linguistic factors) surrounding the textual interaction. Utterances can assume different interpretations in different contexts (Blommaert, 2005; van Dijk, 2008; Fetzer, 2004).

Literary Criticism, as an approach to written texts analysis (Kaplan and Grape, 2002), is also worth looking at. This is an academic activity that explores the linguistic features of texts, but does not focus on finding faults in literary texts. It is a way of skillfully studying and commenting on the *Literariness* of literary works (Baldick, 2001; Peck & Coyle, 2002). Although literary critics have abundant approaches to employ in criticizing works of art –*Maxis Criticism, Feminist Criticism, Sociological Criticism, Historical Criticism* and so on, one that comes closest to text analysis is the *New Criticism*. This is a literary critical approach developed in the 1940's and 1950's by some American writers and intellectuals like Cleanth Brooks, Allen Tate, Robert P. Warren, and John Crowe Ransom, who advocated the practice of *closed reading*. Unlike earlier approaches where, for example, references were made to authors' lives (Biographical Criticism) in attempts to criticize their works, the New Critics said attention should be focused solely on the *linguistic features* of texts (the surface wordings), and no reference should be made to *externalities*. Some critics termed this situation as *death of the author* (Mikics, 2007). The approach of the New Critics reigned until there was a shift of attention to the *Reader-Response Criticism,* where readers were thought to be at liberty to express what they felt was happening in texts. But Reader-Response Criticism was not as popular as the New Criticism because literary scholars like Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) drew attention to *Affective Fallacy* (the fallacious critical judgement based on the text's emotional effects on the reader) and *Intentional Fallacy* (the fallacious critical judgement based on what is assumed as the author's intention) (Child and Fowler, 2006). Therefore, the New Critics' approach to literature is also a form of text analysis.

1.1.2 Linguistic Approaches to Text Analysis

In the field of linguistic studies, we must concede the fact that earlier approaches to language did not accommodate the analysis of texts (or structures 'above the clause or sentence') (Bloor & Bloor, 2004; de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981). To begin with, contributions of *Traditional Grammarians* to the analysis of language should be acknowledged. This is because most of the categories and labels –*word classes, tense, active and passive voices, gender, number, person* and so forth – used by the different grammatical theories of today actually came from *Traditional Grammar*. But the traditional grammarians' highest level of analysis was the *parsing of sentences;* they did not provide any framework for text analysis (Lyons; 1981; Yule, 2014). Even after the posthumous publication of *Ferdinand de Saussure's Course in General Linguistics (1916),* where the Swiss linguist drew attention of linguists to *la langue* and *Parole*, no specific analytical tool for handling texts was proposed. De Saussure only drew attention to *la langue,* the abstract linguistic system that underlies *Parole* (the language performance of language speakers). These ideas of *langue* and *Parole* are closer to Chomsky's *competence* and *performance* than theories of text analysis like the Systemic Functional Linguistics, which do not attempt to account for the language user's innate linguistic capabilities. The only slight difference in focus is that while de Saussure focuses on the community of speakers, Chomsky is concerned with individual speakers (Trask, 2007).

Still in linguistics, the first few attempts to study 'language above the clause or sentence' (Jones, 2012:45) were not successful simply because they lacked tangible criteria or analytical frameworks for gauging the *textness* of texts. They were merely extensions of the scope of grammar. Examples of these attempts include Harris (1952), Pike (1967) and also the *Konstanz project* anchored by van Dijk (1972), who pursued the notion of *text grammar*. Zellig Harris' (1952) paper, *Discourse Analysis,* was the first attempt to account for the relations that exist between different parts of texts. Harris focused on the distribution of morphemes as *equivalences* across sentences. He showed how sentences were related by having those exact elements in the same environments. For equivalences to multiply and analysis to be more cumbersome, the scholar introduced the idea of *transformation,* so that the transforms of texts emerge with more equivalence (Jones, 2013; de Beaugrande and Dressler, 1981; Widdowson, 2004). This idea of *transformation* was later taken up by his student Chomsky in the development of his *Transformational Generative Grammar* (henceforth TGG) but for a different purpose. The worst criticism labelled against Harris' approach is that the equivalent structural properties that he identified among sentences did not reflect meaning relations, when meaning should actually be central in any discourse analysis.

However, linguistic researchers of today have numerous theories and frameworks for the analysis of texts. *Text linguistics* and *Sociolinguistics* are two distinct linguistic approaches to text analysis. For example, some interesting ideas on *textuality* of texts were developed by the text linguists de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981). According to these scholars, texts are communicative occurrences meeting the seven standards of textuality – *Cohesion, Coherence, Intentionality, Acceptability, Informativity, Situationality, and Intertextaulity.* They argued that if any of these *standards of*

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textuality is not considered to have been fulfilled by any passage, then it is a non-text. Briefly, these scholars describe these standards as comprising seven standards: *cohesion* – how the surface components of the text are mutually connected within a sequence, *coherence* – how concepts and relations that underlie the surface components of texts are accessible and relevant, *intentionality* – focusing on the attitude of the text producer that it should be a cohesive and coherent piece worth fulfilling the producer's intention, *Acceptability* – focusing on the attitude of the text receiver that it should be cohesive and coherent enough to have some relevance or significance to be accepted, *informativity* – focusing on how informative the text should be to present both the expected and unexpected or known and unknown, *situationality* – focusing on the factors that make the text relevant to the situation in which it occurs, and *intertextuality* – focusing on the fact that for the text to be utilized, the knowledge of one or more previously encountered text(s) is highly essential. Therefore, according to textlinguists, for *textual communication* to be successful, the seven standards must be borne in mind by both producers and receivers of texts. They added that these standards can be categorized as either *text-centered* or *user-centered* notions. While *cohesion* and *coherence* belong to text-centered notions whose domain is the text material, the remaining standards belong to user-centered notions required to bear on the whole activity of textual communication by the text producers and receivers. In this light, cohesion and coherence are therefore the two most significant contributors that give text its *textuality*.

Although *Sociolinguists* were mostly concerned with dialectal variations among speech communities, in their attempts to appreciate societal dimensions of language and communication, they have extended their scope to include the analysis of *register* and *discourse*. In doing this, various theories and frameworks have been developed. Good examples include Labov's (1972) narrative story structure model and Tannen's (1989) theory of involvement. In her theory, Tannen (1989) argues that texts acquire coherence largely when readers or listeners are actively involved by the writers or speakers in the texts. For them to involve readers, writers have *eight mechanisms* to employ: *repetition, rhythm, indirection and ellipsis, detail and imagery, figures of speech, tropes, dialogues, and narratives.* Most importantly, Tannen discusses how readers are drawn to interact with the texts by filling in bits of meanings left unsaid by the writers. This drawing-in process, where readers play active roles in realizing the coherence of texts, is what she refers to as *Involvement*. On the other hand, Labov's (1972) narrative structure analysis model has six parts: *abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution,* and *coda.* This framework can be used for the analysis of either spoken or written narratives, and each segment is said to exhibit specific linguistic features.

1.1.3   Systemic Functional Linguistics and Text Analysis

Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) is the theory of text analysis on which the current study drew. It is a theory tailored for the analysis of texts, which was developed by Halliday and some of his colleagues. While discussing SFL, we must begin by referring to the contributions of some previous linguists on whom Halliday has drawn. Particularly worth mentioning here are Firth, Malinowski,

Whorf, Hjelmsev, and the *Prague School of Linguistics* (Eggins, 2004; Flowerdew, 2013; Kaplan & Grape, 2002; Bloor & Bloor, 2004; Widdowson, 2004). As the name implies, this grammar is both *systemic* and *functional*. It is systemic because it sees language as consisting of systems of choices (or paradigmatic set of choices) from where users can choose in order to make meanings. From this point of view therefore, this grammar is also *semantic,* because it considers how meanings are made. The grammar is functional (not formal) because it focuses on how people *use* language in real interactions. It is termed *lexicogrammar* because *lexis* and *grammar* are seen as working together in the meaning-making process. SFL is mostly concerned with *authentic texts* as products of naturally-occurring language use (Halliday & Mattiessen, 2004; Eggins, 2004).

It would become apparent that SFL is unique in many ways. It is far different from many linguistic approaches because its objects of analyses are not only the grammatical units – sentence, clause, group (or word group), word, and morpheme. Other grammars, such as the Chomsky's TGG, do not provide frameworks for the analysis of units of language 'above the clause or sentence'. The highest unit TGG can analyze is the sentence, but SFL has huge frameworks for the analysis of texts of different registers and genres (Flowerdew, 2013). While TGG assumes that meaning is an epiphenomenon of syntactic structures, SFL assumes that meanings are at the heart of every language use. It is obvious that the TGG's deep and surface structures, and the finite transformational rules used to generate infinite number of sentences would have little value if semantic qualities are not considered (Bloor & Bloor, 2004). SFL identifies three broad metafunctions of expressing meanings –Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual. Ideational metafunction relates to how meanings are expressed with regard to things in the world (real or imagined); interpersonal metafuntion concerns the attitudes, or relations between writer and readers; textual metafunction, the enabling function, relates to how texts are constructed to be able to fulfill communicative functions. The three metafunctions simultaneously occur in any stretch of language (Mattiessen & Lam, 2010; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Flowerdew, 2013).

It could be recalled that Harris (1952) was concerned with textual relations but the scholar simply succeeded in showing how grammatical features manifest themselves in stretches of language and did not establish how the *equivalences* operate in forming larger units of meaning (Widdowson, 2004; de Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981). Conversely, Halliday (1994: xv) makes it clear that he aims at constructing a grammar purposely for text analysis – to be able to say 'sensible and useful things' about any text. Consequently, SFL provides different frameworks for dealing with texts analysis. These frameworks accommodate the analysis of genre, register, information structuring, cohesion, grammatical metaphor, thematic structure, interpersonal relations in discourse, and so on (Ansary & Babaii, 2005, 2009; Martin, 2002; Kaplan & Grape; 2002; Eggins, 2004; Halliday & Hasan, 1989, Flowerdew, 2013).

Therefore, this study focused on *cohesion* and *tone*, and it drew on the SFL theory. Cohesion concerns the linguistic resources used by text producers to signal relations between the different parts of texts, so that these parts can move together as a *meaningful whole*. This set of cohesive resources works like *threads* used in *weaving* the whole text, and it becomes a *unified whole* that *hung together* as a *semantic unit* than a random collection of sentences or utterances. With cohesion, all sentences of the text are well connected (Martin, 2001; Carter; 2001). Although Gutwinski (1976) and Martin (1992) are also worth commending for their awesome contributions to cohesion analysis, the fundamental work on cohesion is Halliday and Hasan (1976). To Halliday and Hasan, cohesion is essentially a semantic phenomenon. They argued that these text-forming resources give texts *texture*. These relations of meanings within the texts make it that some elements in the texts (the presupposing) can only be *decoded* by having recourse to some other elements (the presupposed) in the same text (Hallida & Hasan, 1976). Cohesion mostly results in *coherence,* and coherence simply refers to how ideas, details, and propositions expressed in the text are able to *tie together smoothly* so that readers or listeners can easily follow with understanding.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) theorize that the linguistic resources signaling cohesion can be broadly classed into two categories: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. Grammatical cohesion is further classed into Reference, Substitution, Ellipsis, and Conjunction; while Lexical cohesion is also classed into two Reiteration and Collocation. While grammatical cohesion is achieved by the use of the *closed-class* items –pronouns, auxiliaries, prepositions, and demonstratives, lexical cohesion is achieved by the use of the *open-system* items –nouns, (main) verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. Therefore, grammatical cohesion involves the use of *function words* or *empty words*, and lexical cohesion involves the use of *content words* or *full words* (Eggins, 2004; McCarthy, 1991; Tanskanen, 2006). After the Halliday and Hasan's theory, many systemicists continue to develop different models of cohesion analysis, mostly drawing on the seminal work (see, for example, Martins, 1992; Taboada, 2004; Tanskanen, 2006; Gonzalez, 2010; Gonzalez, 2011). It is academically interesting to explore cohesion in texts of different genres and registers so that the patterns of cohesion in them are unraveled. Specifically, because there is bi-directional connection between lexical cohesion and genre (Lewin, Fine & Young; 2001), exploring cohesion is especially significant.

However, besides cohesion analysis, other equally significant concepts worth focusing on, as far as preoccupation with texts is concerned include: *purpose, persona, tone, point of view, and style.* They are mostly handled in the areas of composition writing and reading comprehension. Because it also contributes tremendously in the interpretation of texts, we have chosen to concern ourselves with tone only in this study. Tone in written texts is like the tone of voice in speech. It refers to the *web of feelings stretched across the text* (Kane, 2000). The tone of any text signals the attitudes of the writer towards the subject, audience, or self. Such feelings are equally evoked in the readers. Generally, no text can be without a tone, it ranges from *impersonal* and *formal* (neutral, as in informative texts) to *personal* and *informal* (subjective, as in persuasive writings) (Kolin, 2009; Flemming, 2011). Tones of writers are signaled by their choices of words, phrases, figurative language,

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imagery, references to the audience, and type of grammar. Depending on his attitude and feelings, an author can colour his ideas with different emotions. Descriptive words (characteristically adjectives) such as sarcastic, critical, insulting, humorous, surprised, joyful, and so on are used to label the particular emotions with which authors' ideas are coloured. In fact, the possibilities of tones are almost endless (Kolin, 2013; Flemming, 2012; Kane, 2000). The setting of an author's tone can therefore be related to the lexical cohesion of the text produced.

From its nature, newspaper editorial has also been understood as a distinct genre, and it has been variously studied. Newspaper editorial is a conventional way of writing, a socially ratified format of using language in the media discourse. In other words, it is a way of social interaction discoursally (Ansary & Babaii, 2005, 2009; Bhatia, 2013; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Fairclough, 1995, 2003; Swales, 1990). Editorials are written by editors of newspapers to convey the opinions of the media house on topical public issues. They are sometimes written to digest some issues raised in the news, or to simply comment on other varieties of subjects that are of interest to the media house, and also the readership (Hua, 2008; Ekeanyanwu, 2009; Sinclair, 1995). The focus of this study is to explore lexical cohesion and tone in Nigerian English newspaper editorials. The study sought to examine the relation between lexical cohesion and the tones of writers in these editorials.

1.2 Problem Statement

Newspaper editorials are written to encode the views, opinions, analyses, and verdicts of newspapers on variety of events and issues. Consequently, the most salient feature of this genre is how the editorialists utilize linguistic resources to construct persuasion (Bhatia, 2004; Conboy, 2010; Bhatia, 2013). Owing to this persuasive nature of the editorials and the transferability of genre knowledge, some researchers believe that the editorials could be utilized to facilitate writing other argumentative genres such as the school argumentative essay (see So, 2005; Flowerdew, 2015). Moreover, while some studies focusing on editorials investigate the discourse properties that contribute to the achievement of this inherent persuasion, others explore what aims the persuasion is used to ultimately achieve.

In an endeavor to investigate the discourse properties that contribute to the construction of persuasion in newspaper editorials, Ansary and Babaii (2005), for instance, investigated the distinctive rhetorical patterns of English newspaper editorials. The study revealed four *Obligatory* rhetorical elements – (*Headline (H), Addressing an Issue (AI), Argumentation (A), and Articulating a Position (AP)*) and three *Optional* rhetorical elements of structure (providing *Background Information (BI), Initiating an Argument (IA), and Closure of Argument (CA)*) – running in all editorials. In a similar study, Ansary and Babaii (2009) cross-examined editorials of English newspapers produced in different socio-cultural environments –Iran, Pakistan, and the USA. The study concluded that English newspaper editorials, written by people of different socio-cultural contexts, generally exhibit no significant differences with regards to their rhetorical elements of structure.

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Moreover, Maddalena and Belmonte (2011) researched comparatively the level of writer-reader interaction in American English and Peninsular Spanish newspaper editorials. The study analyzed the rhetorical relations that hold between sentences as nuclei and satellites. Based on the proportions of these rhetorical devices, the study observed that the American English newspaper editorials are more writer-responsible compared to the Peninsular Spanish ones. Similarly, Khabbazi-Oskouei (2013) studied how editorialists interactionally employ interpersonal metadiscourse (IM) resources in order to create bonds between themselves and the readers. The study identified and categorized the IM devices typical of editorials as: uncertainty markers, certainty markers, attitudinal markers, and engagement markers. Likewise, Kuhi and Mojood (2014) were also concerned with metadiscourse resources in newspaper editorials. But Kuhi and Mojood's was a cross-linguistic analysis of English and Persian newspaper editorials in an endeavor to examine the effect of genre conventions and cultural factors on the use and distribution of metadiscourse resources in the construction of persuasion. The study reported that genre conventions and constraints resulted in similar choices and distribution of metadiscourse resources in the construction of persuasion in English and Persian newspapers editorials.

As highlighted earlier, other researchers whose attentions the newspaper editorials receive concern themselves with the ultimate aims the persuasion is enacted to accomplish. Onyebadi (2005), for instance, was concerned with how Nigerian private media utilize the editorials for *agenda setting*. The study specifically evaluated *This Day* newspaper's editorials 2004. The study found that although they sometimes focus on foreign issues, the media house's editorials mostly deal with governmental and political subjects, to which they were mostly critical and condemnatory. Similarly, Hua (2008) was concerned with representations of bilateral issues between Malaysia and Singapore in their major newspapers' editorials 1973-2005. The findings of this study revealed how the editors always technically favored their respective countries in matters relating to bilateral issues. Nevertheless, Le (2009) investigated how the editorials of *Le Monde* newspapers (a most popular newspaper in Paris, France) are being used as tools for active participation in the public sphere from 1999 to 2005. The study discovered that the editorials of *Le Monde* participated fully in public spheres with its values and positions in national, European, and international issues.

From the foregoing discussion, it would be understood that while the newspaper editorialists utilize variety of linguistic resources for the construction of persuasion, the literature still suggests that previous studies have not explored the contribution of lexical cohesion, which has also been discovered as a persuasive device (see Gil, 1995; Morley, 2006; Klebanov, Diermeir, and Beigman, 2008; Prados and Penuelas, 2012). In addition, while writer's tone 'plays key role' (Flemming, 2011:626) in persuasive writing by encouraging readers' agreement of the propositions expressed in the text, the literature still shows that past studies on newspapers editorials have not explored its contribution. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to explore how lexical cohesion and tone support the construction of persuasion in Nigerian English newspapers editorials. The study is an endeavor to fill these gaps in

literature, so that the current knowledge on how linguistic resources support the construction of persuasion in newspaper editorials is extended.

1.3   Objectives of the Study

The first objective of the study is to identify the types of lexical cohesion used in the editorials. This objective was pursued so that the study could unravel how newspaper editorialists utilize related lexical items to construct persuasion. Ultimately, the study would contribute to the exploration of linguistic resources that support the construction of persuasion in newspaper editorials.

Secondly, the next objective of the study is to examine how lexical cohesion is utilized in building coherence in the editorial writing. This objective was pursued so that the study could unravel how lexical cohesion enables the newspaper editorialists to encode ideas in attempts to persuade the readership. Additionally, the study would add to the body of literature on the relation between cohesion and the coherence of discourse.

Finally, the third and last objective of the study is to examine how lexical cohesion devices could determine the writers' tones in the editorials. This objective was pursued so that the study could discover the relation between the surface elements of cohesion and the interpersonal attitudes of the writers in attempts to persuade the audience.

1.4   Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the types of lexical cohesion used in the editorials?
2. How is lexical cohesion utilized in building coherence in the editorials?
3. How do lexical cohesion devices contribute to the writers' tones in the editorials?

1.5   Significance of the Study

The significance of lexical cohesion analyses in textual interactions cannot be over-emphasized. This is because, by their nature, lexical cohesion analyses are concerned with properties of language above the sentence level. They draw attention to features that bind texts together and contribute to their communicative potentials. In the first place, it is imperative to understand that cohesion varies from genre to genre (Lewin, Fine & Young, 2001; Hoey, 2005; Gonzalez, 2013) and also from register to register (Hoey, 1991; Tanskanen, 2006). In any case, cohesion is essential in text construction because it contributes to the attainment of different purposes for which

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texts are produced. The newspaper editorials are persuasive genres, and it is propitious to unravel how lexical cohesion is utilized to achieve this persuasion.

On the other hand, this study is also concerned with tone, which is an inevitable in texts and a significant property in persuasive writings. Observed carefully, tone signals the purpose of the text producer. Whether as writers or speakers, readers or listeners, texts producers and receivers are always helped greatly by the tone stretched across the texts. For instance, if a writer is able to skillfully set desired tone in his writing, this goes a long way in conveying his message so vividly. Likewise, if a reader is able to identify the tone of a writer, this goes a long way in making him arrive at an accurate interpretation of the text (Flemming, 2012; Kane, 2000). These facts about tone imply that it helps us in both reading and writing. In the context of newspaper editorial writing and reading, a study of this nature could be welcome because it sensitizes the editorialists and readers on how writer's tone plays tremendous roles in supporting the persuasion.

On the other hand, findings of the study could also be useful to learners in writing argumentative school genres as previous researchers on this genre suggested (see So, 2005).

Therefore, this study is significant because the findings could:

   i.   sensitize newspaper editorial writers on how lexical cohesion supports the construction of persuasion in the editorials
  ii.   sensitize newspaper editorial readers on how lexical cohesion supports the construction/perception of persuasion in the editorials
 iii.   sensitize newspaper editorial writers on how tone plays vital role in the construction of persuasion in the editorials
 iv.   sensitize newspaper editorial readers on how tone supports the construction/ perception of persuasion in the editorials
  v.   benefit learners in writing school argumentative genres
 vi.   add to the existing body of literature on patterns of lexical cohesion in texts

1.6   Scope of the Study

This study is concerned only with lexical cohesion and tone in constructing persuasion in Nigerian daily English newspaper editorials. It was not concerned with other properties of texts such as *thematic progression, transitivity, metadiscourse, or grammatical cohesion*. It was also not concerned with other types of newspapers such as those on sports, entertainment, or weekly/monthly issues. In addition, the research was also only concerned with editorials and not other newspaper genres such as advertisements, news reports, headlines, or letters to the editors.

Moreover, the study only explored how lexical cohesion devices are utilized to achieve coherence, and also how these devices are related to the writers' tones that ultimately support the persuasion in Nigerian newspaper editorials. Therefore, no attempt was made to assess or pass any judgements on the quality of the editorials based on the findings, but simply to report how the text-forming resources operate in the editorials to facilitate persuasion.

Furthermore, the data of the study (the editorials) extracted electronically from the websites of the four Nigerian newspapers: *Leadership, the Nation, the Guardian,* and *Vanguard*. The study chose editorials written on social issues only, because earlier studies have reported that editorials on social issues are among the most frequent in the Nigerian newspapers (Ekeanyanwu, 2009), and the data is drawn for a period of 6 months –May to October, 2015.

1.7   Theoretical Framework of the Study

While working under the notion of SFL and attempting to account for the properties of texts that transcend grammatical rules, Halliday and Hasan (1976) initiated the phenomenon of cohesion in texts. Cohesion in texts is the use of some resources of language to tie parts of texts so that each text moves as a semantic entity (Halliday and Hasan 1976; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Taiwo, 2010; Martin, 2001). To Halliday and Hasan, the cohesive resources are of two types: *Grammatical* and *Lexical.* Grammatical ties include: *reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction;* while lexical ties are of two broad classes: *reiteration* and *collocation.* Numerous linguistic researchers have employed the Halliday and Hasan (1976) ideas in their studies.

However, drawing on the theory of cohesion, different text analysts have succeeded in developing different but related frameworks for cohesion analysis (see, for example, Martin, 1992; Taboada, 2004; Tanskanen, 2006; Gonzalez, 2010; Gonzalez, 2011; Eggins, 2004). This study adapts Eggins' (2004) framework of lexical cohesion analysis. In this framework, as in Halliday and Hasan (1976), the lexical cohesion is achieved by the use of items of the *open-class* –nouns, adjectives, adverbs, and (main) verbs. These are the items encoding lexical content in discourse. It is comparatively simpler and less cumbersome than many other lexical cohesion frameworks (see, for example, Tanskanen, 2006; McCarthy, 1988; Hoey, 1991).

As a semantic property of texts, lexical cohesion is concerned with meaning relations between lexical items on the surface of texts. Unlike in grammatical cohesion, lexical relations are not necessarily based on identity of referents. Items belonging to related semantic fields may enter into a cohesive relation even if they refer to different entities (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014; Taboada, 2004; Hoey, 1991). Lexical cohesion is also found to be the most dominant type of cohesion in texts (especially non-narrative). That is why discourse analysts such as Hoey (1991) argue that to study lexical cohesion in texts is to study the greater part of cohesion of the texts. While grammatical cohesive items can enter into cohesive relation with limited

items, a lexical item can relate with multiple items. Therefore, lexical cohesion involves multiple relations between lexical items (Flowerdew, 2013; Tanskanen, 2006).

Eggins' (2004) lexical cohesion model, like that of Halliday and Hasan (1976) which has *reiteration* and *collocation*, also has two broad categories: *Taxonomic Lexical Relations* and *Expectancy Lexical Relations*. Taxonomic relations are where lexical items are related as *class/sub-class* or *part/whole*. They are expressed by both *nominal groups* and *verbal groups*. Taxonomically related items are classed into two: *classification* and *composition*. Classification relates *superordinates* and their *members*, or *hyponyms*. Four relations are identified here:

    i.   *Co-hyponymy:* where lexical items in text are all (or both) *subordinate* members of a given *superordinate* e.g. mango, banana, orange (all *fruits*)

    ii.   *Class/sub-class*: when lexical items used in the text are related through *sub-classification* e.g. car/jaguar, dog/ greyhound, furniture/chair

    iii.   *Contrast*: this is what in some models is referred to as *Antonymy*. It is a relation of opposition, when lexical items in text encode a contrast relationship e.g. new/old, strong/weak

    iv.   *Similarity*: where lexical items in text encode similar meanings. It is further classed into two sub-types:

        a.   *Synonymy:* when lexical items express similar meanings e.g. correct/ right, happy/ glad

        b.   *Repetition:* where lexical items are repeated in texts e.g. life/life, report/report

However, the second major type of taxonomic relation is *composition*. It is the *part/whole* relationship between lexical items in texts. Two possibilities are identified here:

    i.   *Meronymy:* a relation of part to whole (or vice versa) between lexical items e.g. body/hand, tree/branch

    ii.   *Co-*meronymy: where lexical items relate by being parts of a common whole e.g. hand/eye, branches/leaves

In this model, *expectancy relations* are the second category of lexical cohesion, besides *taxonomic relations*. This category is close to Halliday and Hasan's (1976) *collocation*. The relations focus on how lexical items relate based on *expectancy* of *co-occurrence* or *going together*. These relations may operate, for example:

    i.   between an action and the characteristic (or expected) doer of the action e.g. tailor/sew, researcher/discover, doctor/diagnose

    ii.   between an action/process and the characteristic sufferer affected by the action e.g. play/guitar, paint/house, write/letter

iii.   in accordance with the predictability tendency between an event/process and its typical location of occurrence e.g. learn/school, read/library

iv.   between compound nouns and individual lexical items forming their parts e.g. heart/disease, child/birth

In this model, as in some other models (for example, Martin, 1992; Tanskanen, 2006), lexical items performing cohesive functions can be *simple* or *complex*. A cohesive unit is simple when it is realized by a single word, but it is complex when it comprises two or more words. This is because two or more words are sometimes used to express one *lexical content*. When this happens, the whole group of words is treated as a single unit for the purposes of lexical cohesion analysis (Eggins, 2004). Therefore, single-word and multi-word groups –*nominal, verbal, adverbial,* and *adjectival* – are all potential candidates for cohesive relations. A cohesive unit (lexical item playing cohesive role in text) can also enter into cohesive relations with two or more items of different chains (identity or similarity). This results in *chain interaction* that leads to *cohesive harmony* (Hasan, 1984a), though different texts types require different degrees of cohesive harmony (Taboada, 2004).

Table 1.1: Eggins' (2004) Lexical Cohesion Categories

1.   TAXONOMIC LEXICAL RELATIONS

1. Classification

a. Co-hyponymy

b. Class/sub-class

c. Contrast

d. Similarity
     i.   Synonymy
     ii. Repetition

2. Composition

a. Meronymy

b. Co-meronymy
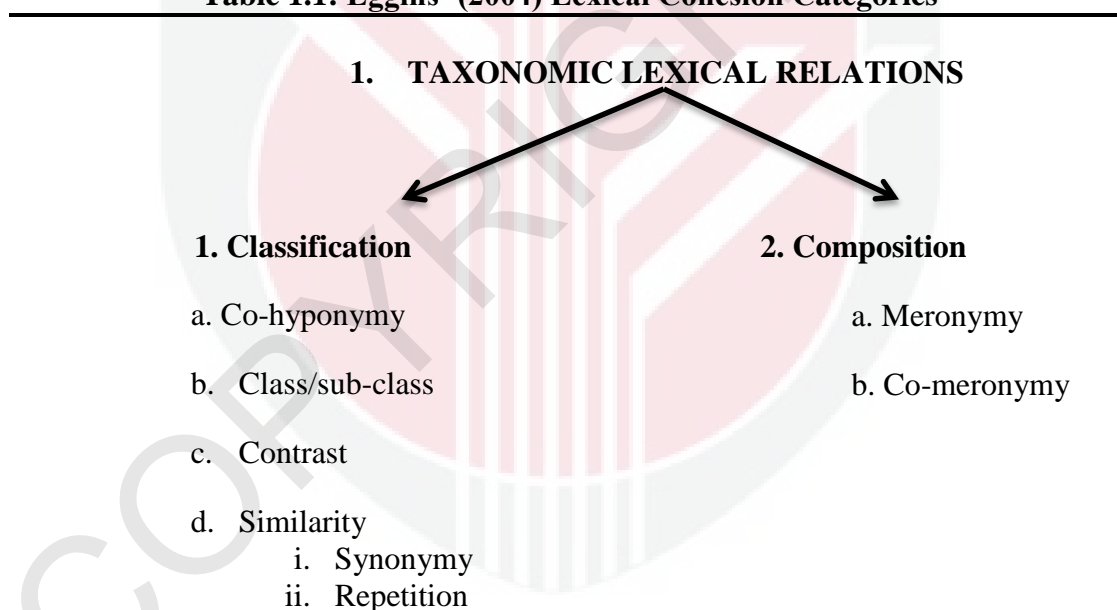
2.   EXPECTANCY RELATIONS

Holding between lexical items that *go together* based on any of the following four major conditions:

a. between an action and the characteristic (or expected) doer of the action; examples include: *doctor/diagnose, research/discover, police/arrest*

b. between an action/process and the characteristic sufferer affected by the action; examples include: *play/guitar, read/book, cook/soup*

c. between an event/process and its typical location of occurrence; example include: *learn/school, read/library, cook/kitchen*

d. between compound nouns and the individual lexical items forming their parts; examples include: *heart/disease, child/birth*

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On the other hand, this study also examines the writer's tone, because it is a significant property that facilitates persuasion in texts (Flemming, 2011; Flemming, 2012). The writer's tone has been described as the writer's attitude and feelings towards the topic and towards the audience (see 1.8.3). It is identified by examining the writer's linguistic choices such as words, phrases, idioms, and details. Kane (2000:85) further confirmed this notion when he suggested that the writer's tone can be identified by specifically focusing one's assessment on lexical items the writer uses.

Moreover, the writer's tone is always dictated by the writer's purpose, such that writers with informative purposes exhibit neutral tones, and those with persuasive purposes employ subjective tones which are colored with different emotions (Flemming, 2011; Kolin, 2013). In her discussion of writers' tones in persuasive writing, Flemming (2011) argues that writers' tones serve as rhetorical tools that amplify the writers' arguments. She posits that writers utilize tones to achieve persuasion. The scholar identifies the categories of tones typical of persuasive writing. These include, for example, *disapproving, worried, angry, and sympathetic.* (For the complete list of tones, see Appendix 2).

Therefore, based on the persuasive nature of the data being investigated – newspaper editorials – in the present study, the framework applied for the analysis of writers' tones is drawn from the succinct ideas of both Flemming (2011) and Kane (2000). From Flemming (2011) the framework adapts the categories of writers' tones typical of persuasive texts as identified by the scholar, while from Kane the framework adopts the notion that the assessment of writers' tones is specifically anchored in lexical items. In other words, Flemming's (2011) categories of writers' tone are manifested in specific lexical choices. As the focus of the present study is on lexical cohesion devices, Eggins' (2004) lexical cohesion framework (see table 1.1) is also incorporated. This multi-pronged approach to the construction of the framework on tone is deemed necessary as to date, there is no existing framework on tone and in incorporating ideas on tone from Flemming (2011), and Kane (2000) and lexical cohesion from Eggin's (2004), the framework (see section 3.5.3 for details) adopted for the study will be more comprehensive and holistic.

In supporting coherence in the editorials, the lexical cohesion devices are also examined to assess their contribution to the editorialists' tones that facilitate the persuasive effect conveyed. This notion can be illustrated in figure 1.1 below:

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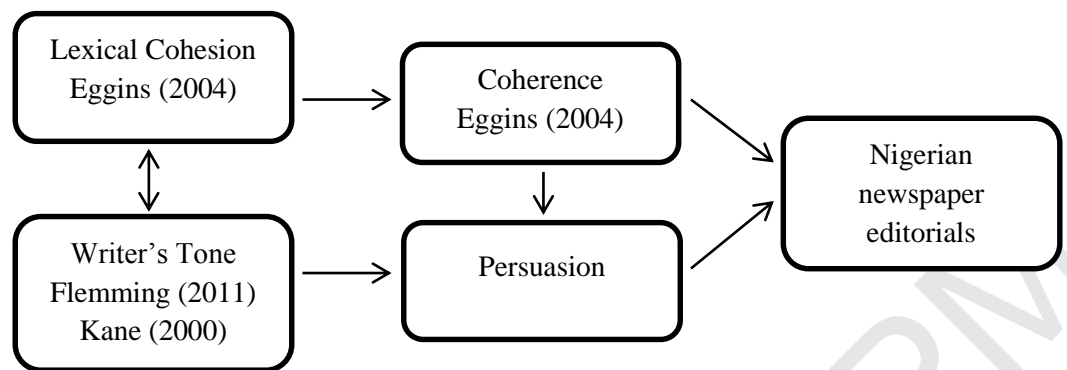
Figure 1.1: Lexical cohesion interacts with coherence and tones to support persuasion in Nigerian newspaper editorials in texts

1.8 Definitions of Terms

1.8.1 Lexical Cohesion

Lexical cohesion is the type of cohesion created in discourse by the choice of lexical items. It is the cohesive effect achieved by selecting lexical items that are quite related in some ways to others that have previously been used in the same text (Halliday, 1994; Bloor and Bloor, 2004). The current study focused on the interaction between lexical cohesion, coherence and writers' tones in supporting persuasion in Nigerian newspaper editorials.

1.8.2 Coherence

While lexical cohesion refers to the lexical resources on the surface of texts that signal relations between the different parts of texts and make sentences/utterances *hang together* as united wholes (Martin, 2001; Halliday and Hasan, 1976), coherence refers to the ways in which the ideas expressed in texts hang together so that the texts become unified semantic units. The phenomenon of coherence in texts goes beyond the surface connectedness of cohesive devices, but that of the ideas encoded in turns, sentences, and paragraphs of texts. This study investigates how lexical cohesion builds coherence to facilitate the perception/construction of persuasion in Nigerian newspaper editorials.

1.8.3 Tone

In this study, tone is defined as the writer's attitude towards the topic and towards his audience (Kolin, 2009). The attitude, emotion, and feelings of the writer is encoded by the writer's choice of words, style, and details (Flemming, 2012). It has also been explained as the web of feelings stretched across the text, the feelings from

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which the readers' sense of the persona emerges. The current study focuses on the contribution of tone, through lexical cohesion, in supporting persuasion in Nigerian newspaper editorials.

1.8.4   The Editorial

The editorial is a distinct genre within the newspaper. It is variously termed as 'leading article', 'opinion', 'comment', and 'we say' (Reah, 2002). The column is always written by the newspaper editors and under anonymity. It is meant to represent the newspaper institution's voice (Hua, 2008). These pages are often 'radically different' compared to the other sections of the paper; because while the other pages are meant to report news accurately and dispassionately, the editorial page is written purposely to encode the views, opinions, and stands of the newspaper institution on various events and topical issues (Bhatia, 2013; Bhatia, 2004; Hua, 2008; Conboy, 2010). In the Nigerian context too, newspaper editorials are being utilized as persuasive tools (see Uche, 2005; Ekeanyanwu, 2009). The present study explores how the Nigerian newspaper editorialists' tones contribute to the accomplishment of this persuasion.

1.8.5   Cohesive Ties

A cohesive tie refers to an instance of cohesion where a pair of items such as *children/family* is cohesively related (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). It is a relation between two elements in text which enter into a cohesive relation (Flowerdew, 2013). The relation between the two members of a tie ultimately contributes to meaning continuity in texts, because the link between members of each pair is essentially semantic (Bloor and Bloor, 2004). Therefore, achieving lexical cohesive tie means two lexical items stand in a cohesive relation like *synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy* and so forth (Hasan, 1985/1989).

1.8.6   Cohesive Chains

While cohesive tie refers to the cohesive relation between two items, cohesive chains refer to the instances of cohesion where more than two items are related in networks. The metaphor of chain is technically employed here to depict the multiple cohesive relations between different elements in texts (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). In any cohesive chain, the members are related to each other in certain ways. The chains in texts can be either fairly long or short, and texts typically display combinations of long chains, short chains, and simple ties without chaining (Hoey, 2005). The current study investigates how lexical chains operate in building coherence to support persuasion in Nigerian newspaper editorials.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Malah, Zubairu, Helen Tan, and Sabariah Md Rashid. "Evaluating Lexical Cohesion in Nigerian Newspaper Genres: Focus on the Editorials." International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature 6.1 (2016): 240-256. **Published.**

Malah, Zubairu. "Signals from the Surface of Texts: How Lexical Cohesion Reflects Writers' Tones in Nigerian Newspaper Editorials." International Journal Language and Linguistics 3 (2016). **Accepted.**

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