
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Style Employed in the Presentation of Environmental News in *Taifa Leo* Newspaper, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

Kiswahili is the national language of Kenya and the official language alongside English. Therefore, it is expected that most Kenyans have the ability to interact in both official and non official contexts using the Kiswahili language. One of the platforms that allows people to interact and gather information about what is happening in the world is print media, for example, newspapers. The Kenyan *Taifa Leo* newspaper is published every day with the aim of providing various types of news to the public. This newspaper presents environmental information, among other news, to the audience in the Kiswahili language. The environment is a pertinent issue both nationally and internationally. This is because it affects the life of every creature on a daily basis in one way or another. So, the information people know about their environment determines how they interact with it. In providing environmental information to their audience, journalists organize it according to their types, importance and sometimes the urgency of the news. To achieve this, they employ different styles, which involve the strategic selection of both linguistic and paralinguistic features with the aim of making the reader understand the intended message precisely and easily. This argument stems from the belief that readers understand information depending on how it is presented to them. Therefore, this paper focuses on the examination and analysis of the styles applied by journalists in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper of Kenya to convey environmental news.

KEYWORDS

Styles in Reporting Environmental News, *Taifa Leo* Newspaper, Kiswahili

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1. Introduction

According to Oduor J. A. (2016), the media plays a fundamental role in providing information with the aim of creating awareness and mobilizing society on important issues. Many studies have confirmed that news in the media is the main source of information about emerging issues. Likewise, the awareness, beliefs and attitudes of members of society about legal systems (and other important issues in the world (*emphasis mine*) are largely created by the information provided by the media (Oduor, *already mentioned*). On this basis, it is important to understand the type of content in the media and perhaps the impact of this news on society. The focus of this article is to analyse and examine the style employed by journalists when reporting environmental news in *Taifa Leo* newspaper with the aim of establishing whether the selected style helps in the delivery of the intended information.

2. Styles of Reporting Environmental News

Informational texts have their own uniqueness that is seen in terms of style, structure and vocabulary selection (Van Dijk, 1998). Due to the ideologies loaded in those texts, the reader may fail to determine its effects due to the consideration of the superficial use of language and ignoring the content of the texts themselves. In that sense, there is a need to consider a critical approach

when we examine the use of language to show the relationship between the style used by the author of the text, his choice of language and the ideology being built (Van Dijk, *already mentioned*).

Journalists use a variety of styles to convey their message to their intended audience. The styles used can be examined to determine if they help the authors achieve their objectives. The study of the language aims to determine the creativity that exists in the language, and examining it in detail helps the understanding of the relevant text (Simpson, 2004).

According to Wamitila (2007), linguistic knowledge can be used to determine the stylistic features of a text (Carter & Nash, 1990). Such features can be phonological, for example, sound patterns syllables, as well as graphological features. In addition, syntactic features such as sentence structures, verbs, phrases and types of sentences used can be examined. The researcher can examine lexical features, for example, the selection of words and categories of words used in the text. In addition, the researcher can examine the semantic characteristics, rhetorical or discourse characteristics and contextual or pragmatic ones. This article focused on the linguistic approach to examine the following stylistic features in the environmental news in *Taifa Leo* newspaper:

2.1 Graphological Features

Stylistic analysis focusing on graphology examines the appearance of the text, that is, the alphabet or scripts used, as well as the arrangement of information in the columns of the text. The text can be of personality or special textual characteristics that are extracted and, in this way, making this level important in the stylistic analysis of the text itself (Wamitila, 2007; Musotsi, 2017; Musotsi, Miruka & Okal, 2021). Graphological features include the arrangement of paragraphs, arrangement of pages, space between sentences, use of pictures and drawings, use of various colors, order used in news headlines as well as arrangement of word rows, which were examined in news texts in *Taifa Leo* (TL) newspaper. The results of the study are discussed in detail in the following sections:

2.1.1 Paragraph Arrangement

An examination of the arrangement of text paragraphs regarding environmental news in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper reveals the attention paid to the construction of the texts themselves by journalists. News reports in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper are organized with care, attention and appropriate order in the printed newspaper. The *Taifa Leo* newspaper has adopted a specific program of columns with well-organized paragraphs. The newspaper has focused on information about the environment organized in special paragraphs. The first paragraph contains information that is in bold ink to emphasize the essence of the information in the text. Some statements were written in italics to emphasize certain messages given by the journalist. However, a detailed examination of the information in the paragraphs themselves identified that the information in all the examined texts was arranged in short paragraphs and based on the accuracy of the text. In this case, the reader is just given a hint of what happened instead of being explained and informed of what happened. The author directs the reader to fill in the communicative gaps in the text without explaining in detail what is being communicated. In this way, the writer can persuade, stimulate or lead the reader intellectually without the reader himself knowing.

The example of the first illustration shows the environmental text in the 'Shina la Uhai' (Community Health) column in *Taifa Leo* newspaper. In that text, the first paragraph is written in the margin, in italics and in blue colour. This paragraph contains the key information. It says that:

1. *'Wanasayansi na watafiti wa Makavazi ya Kitaifa wakishirikiana na Taasisi ya Utafiti wa Matibabu Nchini (KEMRI) wanasema wamegundua kuwa mbegu za mturituri zimekuwa zikitumiwa na jamii za Asia hasa nchini India kupanga uzazi.'*(TL 22/2/22(uk 14-15)
('*Scientists and researchers of the National Museum in collaboration with the National Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) say they have discovered that the seeds of the mturituri have been used by Asian communities, especially in India, for family planning.*')

Graphological features aim to draw the reader's eye to the information provided (Gerhard, 1986). In the text, there is a paragraph that lists the benefits of traditional medicine for human health. The benefits are listed by paragraph to provide quick information to the reader who may not have time to read the entire text.

2.1.2 Page Layout

The results of the research show the arrangement of the column pages about the environment in a specific order in *Taifa Leo* newspaper. Each page displays information on various types of events. Precisely, Each page shows the column of news, the author of the news, the date of publication of the news and the respective page, as can be seen in the column 'Shina la Uhai', *Taifa Leo*, June 8, 2021 p. 12-13). In the *Taifa Leo* newspaper, the 'Shina la Uhai'(Community Health) column is published every Tuesday from page 12 to page 15/16. The series begins with the 'Community Health' section, which discusses human health issues and how they are affected by the environment in which he lives. This column takes a deep look at human activities that affect the environment and undermine health.

2.1.3 Space Between Sentences

Printed texts follow a special procedure of leaving spaces between words as well as from one sentence to another or one line to another. This feature makes them look neat and attractive to the reader (Hojjati & Muniandy, 2014). On the other hand, texts about environmental news in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper leave spaces between sentences in the usual order observed in texts printed in books. This view makes these texts look neater, which makes them easier to read because the article has columns and paragraphs arranged in a neat and specific order. There is the use of paragraphs with few words arranged in a space that enables the reader to read the information easily. In that example, a picture and word model are used to briefly explain how a private organization is dealing with the plastic waste crisis in Nairobi.

2.1.4 Use of Pictures and Graphics

The use of color images is considered to fulfill various communicative purposes (Gerhard, 1986). The information provided is accompanied by photographs of the events being narrated. This feature adds to the reality of the environmental news provided in *Taifa Leo* newspaper. Pages and columns that provide information on environmental events use different colors to attract the reader's eye. In addition to drawing the reader's attention to the information provided, the use of images and graphics enhances the understanding of the environmental information provided. Similarly, this situation creates reality as the reader sees for himself what is being explained

2.1.5 Use of Different Colors

The use of color images is considered in environmental news texts in *Taifa Leo* newspaper. The information provided is accompanied by coloured photographs of the events being narrated. In addition, the pages themselves have different colors that create the image intended by the author of the text. This feature increases the authenticity of the information provided in the relevant text. These texts use different colors to attract the reader's eye. Color is a variety of symbols or signs that give a certain message and meaning to the reader (Oluwakemi & Omoniyi, 2015; Adegoju, 2008). A group of colors can indicate a dangerous situation. On the other hand, the blue color indicated the presence of hope. The use of blue and red colors in the same text serves communicative purposes. The blue color used in the sub-theme shows calm and optimism in the human environment due to the invention of the color that prevents heat. The use of red color indicates the dangerous situation resulting from the increase in temperature caused by climate change. Putting these two situations in parallel aims to show the contradiction that exists when humans take care of the environment and when they destroy it through their actions.

2.1.6 Arrangement of word columns/rows

The arrangement of rows of words on a page follows a specific order. The arrangement of rows on the printed page helps to draw the reader's eye to the relevant text (Gomez-Jimenez, 2015). In the *Taifa Leo* newspaper, the headline preceding the article itself was followed by a picture and the name of the author of the article. The first letter of the first word in the first paragraph is capitalized compared to the other letters of the word. Important information in column paragraphs is emphasized by using italics, bold ink, or different colored ink.

The stylistic features of graphology in the environmental information text in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper are intended to fulfill certain communicative goals. The page is arranged in a special order that divides the columns, paragraphs and sentences in a specific order that is intended to catch the eye and attention of the reader quickly. There is the use of pictures, diagrams and illustrations that help the reader to find information easily and quickly. The selection of colors used and even their arrangement in the text fulfills the communicative goals of the article writer.

2.2. Orthographic Features

Orthographic features include punctuation, the use of lowercase and uppercase letters, spelling, and script selection (Gerhard, 1986). In the next section, some of the orthographic features identified in the examined texts are discussed, and examples are given

2.2.1 Punctuation

Punctuation affects the delivery of the message to the reader (Chukwu, 2010). Therefore, it is an important resource in the writing of news texts in *Taifa Leo* newspaper. Punctuation on this basis can be used as a strategy to deconstruct the text and stimulate another perspective of the reader. Deconstruction is a philosophical and academic perspective to inquire, investigate and show the existence of contradictions and complexity in seemingly normal situations (Wamitila, 2007). Punctuation marks such as commas, colons, exclamation marks, and question marks are important tools that can be employed to show the writer's feelings (Wamitila, 2007). In the next section, the researcher gives examples of various punctuation marks used in environmental texts in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper and provides information about the communicative reasons for using the concerned punctuation marks:

2. Covid-19: UN yarai Mataifa kuanza kufungua shule zao.(T.L 29/7/21 uk 6
Covid-19: UN urges countries to start opening their schools
3. "Jiandaeni kwa kiangazi na njaa," Shirika laonya.(T.L. 5/8/21 uk. 5)

"Prepare for drought and famine," Agency warns

The use of a colon in example 2 indicates that this preposition has been used to shorten an otherwise long sentence. In addition, the word 'Covid' separated from the statement that deletes through the colon is emphasized because it has an important message. The use of quotation marks in example 3 indicates the actual words spoken by the National Weather Service. The author of the text, by quoting what was said by the organization, has succeeded in giving the said statement the authority to inform the public of the intended message resulting from the research results. The statement with a strong message is quoted directly as it was said by the forecasting organization so that the audience does not ignore it as a message given by a private journalist.

Therefore, the use of punctuation marks such as commas, colons, exclamations, and question marks are important tools that show the author's feelings about the article. In addition, those punctuation marks are used in a special way to achieve certain communicative objectives.

2.2.2 Use of Lowercase and Uppercase Letters

The use of upper and lower case letters affects the message conveyed to the reader. Capital letters can indicate the emphasis of a particular message. This means that the use of upper and lower case letters in journalism conveys a certain message to the reader (Chukwu, 2010). The following examples collected from environmental texts in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper show the various uses of lowercase and uppercase letters to fulfill various communicative purposes:

- 4 FAO yaonya kuhusu uvamizi wa nzige (Shirika lae leza kuwa sasa wadudu hawa wanaendelea kutaga mayai ambayo yataanguliwa kuunda jeshi la nzige mpakani.) (T.L 7/12/21 uk 5)
 FAO warns about the invasion of locusts (The organization explains that now the insects continue to lay eggs that will hatch to form an army of locusts at the border.)
- 5 Urusi inatumia silaha za kemikali kuua raia-UN (T.L. 13/3/22 uk. 5)
 Russia uses chemical weapons to kill civilians-UN

The examples given above show that the use of capital letters in environmental texts in the newspaper *Taifa Leo* was intended to fulfill various communicative goals. In examples 4 and 5, journalists use the English acronyms 'FAO' and UN, respectively. If the journalists were to use the Kiswahili language, they would have to translate the acronyms into: 'World Food and Agriculture Organization' and 'United Nations'. Considering Kiswahili, they would have to write them perfectly so that the readers can get the message without difficulty. Capitalized words show emphasis because those words carry the important message conveyed in the headline.

2.2.3 Spelling and Grammar

Spelling errors were found in the texts of some of the texts examined in this article. Spelling and grammatical errors hinder the understanding of the message intended by the author of the text (Conboy, 2010). Authors are advised to edit their own work carefully to avoid errors of this type that distort the message being conveyed. The following example collected from environmental texts in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper shows the spelling mistake noted in those texts:

- 6 Waathiriwa wa kiangazi wasaidiwe kabla (Λ) maafa.(T.L. 6/8/21 uk. 8) (ya)
 Draught victims should be helped before (Λ) disaster befalls. (a)

Example 6 identifies a grammatical error where there is a word left out by the author of the article. We have used the symbol (Λ) in the sentence of example 6 to indicate the place where the omitted word should be. However, this error does not affect the communication in any way, as the reader gets the full message intended by the author of the article.

2.2.4 Choice of Fonts

The type of font used to do a text determines how the text appears to a reader. Some texts use special types of script italics, some use ink-intensive scripts, and some use regular scripts. The general effect of the use of art in documents such as inked documents, using italics or combining fonts is that it emphasizes certain parts of the text with a special message that the author aims for the reader to get by drawing his attention (Gerhard, 1986). The following example collected from environmental texts examined from the *Taifa Leo* newspaper shows the various choices of font identified in those texts:

- 7 *Hofu ya ongezeko la saratani ya mapafu nchini.* (T.L. 20/8/21 uk. 15)
 Fear of an increase in lung cancer in the country.

In example 7, there is a special selection of fonts used to write the headline shown in italics. In the original text, the headline is written based on a type of script known as 'Lucida Calligraphy', which is italic and concentrated in ink. The passage in parentheses in example 7 is written in 'Times New Roman' font in bold red ink. This color saturation, along with the selection of a different type of font, aims to distinguish the article, which hints at the important information loaded in the title of the article. This deliberate pattern of using different font types, colors and italics aims to distinguish different parts of the text that emphasize a particular message in the article. The selection also aims to simplify communication by enabling the reader to see it quickly on the relevant page.

2.3 Lexical Features

Lexical features are rhetorical ones used in discourse texts. Some of the lexical characteristics that can be examined in environmental news in *Taifa Leo* newspaper are the selection of vocabulary, the use of figures of speech and repetition (Wamitila, 2007). In the concluding section, the lexical characteristics investigated in this study are discussed in detail, and examples are given:

2.3.1 Choice of Vocabulary

Any choice of vocabulary can be formal or informal. The social context in which communication takes place determines whether we use formal or informal speech. The speaker selects the words to use in communication depending on the formality or informality of the context in which he is required to communicate. The appropriateness or inappropriateness of the words used by the speaker in communication depends on the stylistic characteristics of those words. This is to say that each word has a functional style that the word represents or manages. This is the basic reason for journalists to select vocabulary carefully when writing their texts. The sphere of communication is a certain condition that affects the entire conversation process in a specific context. In the texts examined in this study, the selection of vocabulary highlighted the scientific register that focuses on environmental issues and their effects on the life and health of humans, animals and plants. Those communication contexts are formal. This means that the journalists' texts used the official language. However, there are stories about the outbreak of Corona and the invasion of locusts that used the language of jokes, sarcasm, mockery and satire to denounce the inaction, irresponsibility and corruption of the actors. The following example collected from environmental texts in *Taifa Leo* newspaper shows the use of official language used in those texts:

- 8 Mabadiliko ya tabianchi yanyima watoto virutubisho tosha (...udadisi wa Kenya Market Trust, Shirika lisilo la kiserikali linalohusika na masuala ya mabadiliko ya mifumo ya ustawi wa masoko, unaonyesha kuwa viwango vya halijoto katika Kaunti ya Kajiado vitaongezeka kati ya 100°C na 310°C kufikia 2030.)(T.L. 24/8/21 uk. 12
Climate change is depriving children of sufficient nutrients (...inquiry by the Kenya Market Trust, a non-governmental organization responsible for changes in market welfare systems, shows that the temperature levels in Kajiado County will increase between 100C and 310C by 2030.)

Example 8 demonstrates the state of mixing language in scientific texts related to the environment. The state of mixing languages indicates the lack of appropriate terminology in the Kiswahili language that refers to the concept in question. By combining languages, the author of the article simplifies communication that would have caused confusion if he had dared to translate, adapt or translate the terms themselves. Basically, the relevant environmental text led the writer who composed it to focus on a certain registry, for example, health, forests, diseases, pollution, environmental care and so on. This means that the vocabulary he used met the message intended to be delivered by the journalist. One of the characteristics that is evident in the scientific registry is the use of data derived from scientific research conducted to provide evidence of the claims made. In addition, the texts mix languages and use academic vocabulary related to the profession being referred to.

2.3.2 Use of Figures of Speech

Figures of speech can be spoken of as a figurative language that is an important tool in the construction and strengthening of feelings. Figurative language embellishes what is spoken and makes it have a great creative and artistic appeal. In addition, figurative language is used for the purpose of confirmation, that is, to make what is referred to have a certain consistency and, in this way, a large calculation. Journalists used figures of speech in the composition of environmental texts. Some examples of the use of figures of speech in *Taifa Leo* newspaper in the environment include:

2.3.3 Use of Idioms

An idiom is a metaphorical expression where something is understood in an indirect way. Idioms are based on metaphorical comparisons (Wamitila, 2007). For example, 'pata jiko' (marry) is an expression made up of the verb 'pata' and the noun 'jiko'. The combination of the verb and the noun changes the meaning of the created statement and makes it figurative. Idioms are based on metaphorical comparisons. For example, conspiring, setting up a meeting and cutting off the soul. The following example of the use of idioms in environmental texts in *Taifa Leo* newspaper was collected in this study:

- 9 Covid-19: Kaunti za Pwani **zakaa chonjo** (T.L. 5/8/21 uk. 4)
Covid-19: Coastal counties **remain alert**

Example 9 shows the use of the expression 'kaa chonjo', which means 'to be careful or to be alert'. The meaning presented is that the Coastal Counties are careful to prevent the spread of the Corona disease. The use of expressions and idioms in environmental texts in Taifa Leo newspaper was intended to embellish the language and make it attractive to the reader.

2.3.4 Use of Metaphor

A metaphor is a figure of speech of comparison that does not use the comparatives 'like', 'same as', and 'example of'. The basis of metaphor is the transfer of meaning (Wamitila, 2007). For example, when we say that 'youth is smoke', there is a transfer of meaning; that is, 'youth' is given the attribute of 'smoke'.

Metaphor is best understood by considering its main concepts, which are comparative and basis. A comparator is what is used as a basis for comparison (smoke). The comparative is that which is compared (youth). The basis is the very characteristic of the comparison; for example, in the metaphor 'youth is smoke,' the basis is the state of 'transience' or 'existence for a short time.' See the following example taken from *Taifa Leo* newspaper:

- 10 FAO yaonya kuhusu **uvamizi wa nzige**. (...Shirika hilo laeleza kuwa sasa wadudu hao wanaendelea kutaga mayai ambayo yataanguliwa na kuunda **jeshi la nzige** mpakani.(T.L. 7/12/21 uk. 14)
FAO warns about **locust invasion**. (...The organization explains that now the insects continue to lay eggs that will hatch and create an **army of locusts** at the border.

Example 10 uses a metaphor to compare 'nzige' (locusts) to 'jeshi' (an army) attacking the enemy. The concept of 'jeshi' (army) is used to create an image of many fighters who are also armed with tools to kill or destroy. This situation indicates the effects of the invasion of these destructive insects. The use of metaphors in environmental texts was intended to create an image of what was narrated in the minds of the readers and, at the same time, make the narrative language more attractive to them.

3. Conclusion

The results of this study have shown that journalists in *Taifa Leo* newspaper intentionally selected specific styles to report different types of environmental news. The choice of a particular style was informed by the author's motive in any article they wrote. However, there are cases whereby the choice of a particular style in reporting environmental issues was determined by the register of the environmental information in question. It is crucial to note that the styles employed in conveying environmental news in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper were linguistically inclined. Basically, newspaper reporters in *Taifa Leo* newspaper employed different methods of conveying environmental news with the aim of making their work accurate, persuasive and stimulative to the readers, appear neat and attractive, easier to read, look real, have authority, show the writer's feelings among other motives. Therefore, it can be concluded that environmental news, as presented to the public in the *Taifa Leo* newspaper, comprehensively paints the real and actual picture of the status of the environment both nationally and internationally. With this information, the audience has the right tools to shape the environment they would wish to live in.

It is important to note that the data used in this study was collected through analysis of written texts in *Taifa Leo* newspapers. There were cases whereby the researcher felt that a face-to-face conversation with the environmental news authors would have yielded a better or different understanding of environmental information presented in *Taifa Leo*. This feeling stems from the fact that face-to-face conversation provides room for the researcher to seek clarity of facts where needed.

This study focused on analyzing the style of reporting environmental news in *Taifa Leo* newspaper, which presents news to readers in Kiswahili. It is proposed that another study be done by analyzing environmental texts from the English version of the *Taifa Leo*, that is the Daily Nation newspaper. The findings of the new study can be used to determine whether the readers of the two newspapers get the same or different information. This information will be useful to newspaper reporters and, consequently, their audience.

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