Lexical Choices and Meaning Making Process in Selected *Daily Nation* Newspaper Obituaries

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ABSTRACT: Death has been argued to be a "fear based" taboo in which different fears co-exist; fear of the loss of loved ones, fear of corruption of the body, fear of the evil spirits and fear of what comes with death. Man has traditionally avoided talking about the subject of death in explicit terms. The avoidance to speak freely about human mortality makes obituary writers to resort to a variety of lexical devices in order to compliment the departed and show respect to those left alive, satisfying in a way both the social and religious impositions traditionally associated with human mortality. The purpose of this paper is to examine the obituary as a form of advertisement whose functional language is carried out through praise, euphemistic and consolatory devices. The objective of this paper is to describe how the lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries. Halliday's (1985) theory of systemic functional linguistics was adopted in the exploration of this paper where the ideational metafunction of language were used. A descriptive study design was applied which accurately described phenomena through the narrative type, descriptions and classifications. Library research was used to purposively sample obituary texts from the *Daily Nation* newspaper to generate data for this discussion. Corpus compilation was used to capture the use of lexical items in obituaries. Data was qualitatively analyzed by examining the lexical items of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives that aid in the interpretation of obituary texts. This study revealed that ordinary words can be used in the context of the obituary text to render new meanings. The lexical items contribute to the meaning making process by depicting death as a normal occurrence in life that should be accepted and appreciated, at times a calamity or misfortune. Death is not only presented as repose, a journey or a reward to the deceased but also a loss to the family of the deceased. The lexical items are meant to comfort the bereaved and praise the deceased. This study further reveals that certain lexical items have been used as euphemisms to substitute the unpleasant and offensive concept of death.

BACKGROUND

Obituaries

Some experiences are too traumatizing, they evoke trauma and negative emotions to be discussed without linguistic precautions. One of them is undoubtedly death, a timeless taboo in which psychological, religious and social impositions co-exist, (Fernandez,2009). Further to this, man kinds failure to come to terms with death has been pervasive in different times and societies. In fact, human beings have felt reluctant to deal with the subject of death using straight forward terms. Whether owing to superstition, fear or social respect, the fact remains that when facing death, language users try to soften what they really wish to communicate. Despite this reluctance to discuss the subject of death, there are communicative situations in which one cannot evade the notions of death and dying. This is best exemplified in the obituaries. This is best exemplified in the obituaries that announce death occurrences in newspapers.

The term "obituary" is derived from a Greek word, "obitus" which means departure, a common euphemistic term for death, (Sexton, 1997). An obituary is a news article that reports the death of a person, typically with an account of the person's life and the upcoming funeral details. Marelli and Rae (2004) observe that obituaries are written documents that reflect the belief system of those who compose them and influence the thinking of those who read them. They present a special text because their content focuses

exclusively on the qualities of one human being and how that person's life at its end can be represented. This paper therefore sought to consider an obituary as a goal oriented text with a special purpose, that is, language that is doing some job in some context.

Eid (2002) argues that obituaries constitute a form of advertisement in which emotion is relayed. This makes obituaries informative on the composition of facts about death and being more intimate, especially in their use for social or religious purpose, in which feelings and emotions of the writer play a significant role. Eid (ibid) further notes that obituaries exhibit the reluctance by human beings to use explicit terms when dealing with the subject of death. This reluctance arouses feelings in the obituary readers by stressing the social status, virtues, religious standing and the general presentation of the deceased.

Fernandez (2006) posits that obituaries tend to offer more emotive and intimate account of the deceased by means of consolatory and laudatory tactics to compliment the departed and in so doing, satisfy the surviving family members. The obituary performs a perlocutionary function whereby language is viewed as a means of persuading someone to do something. It is an act performed by doing something. In this case, obituaries are oriented towards causing a favourable impression on the reader by showing the exemplary behavior of the deceased. They exhibit emotive overtones with a purpose with a purpose to praise the deceased and raise the social status enjoyed by his or her family, giving room for a wide use of consolatory and complimentary diction.

This paper therefore sought to analyze the obituary writers' avoidance to deal with the painful, traumatizing and "fear-based" taboo of death using explicit terms and instead resorting to polite forms of expression.

Semantics

Semantics is that part of linguistics that is concerned with meaning. It is exclusively concerned with the meanings of linguistic entities such as words, phrases, grammatical forms and sentences, (Sebastian, 2002). The meanings of linguistic utterances are also a matter of semantics. Uncovering knowledge and meanings of words and sentences and revealing its nature are the central objectives of semantics. Semantics aims at analyzing what a speaker or writer intends to communicate with an utterance, thus, what a speaker or writer's choice of words is in pursuit of a certain communication intention. Semantics is the study of meanings, meanings being ideas or concepts which can be transferred from the mind of the speaker or writer to the mind of the hearer or reader by embodying them in the forms of one language or another, (Lyons, 1985).

The meaning in a language comes through the linguistic choices that a writer or speaker makes either consciously or unconsciously. Choice was powerful in this study which sought to analyze the lexical choices made by obituary writers in enhancing the reader's interpretation of death. The aspect of lexical items used in obituaries was based on the concept of choice between alternative linguistic expressions.

Problem definition

Since ancient times, man kind's failure to come to terms with death has been pervasive in different times and societies. Obituary writers have traditionally avoided talking about the subject of death using explicit terms since they regard death as a "fear-based" taboo. It is hardly surprising that obituary writers resort to a variety of linguistic devices in order to compliment the departed while remaining respectful to those left behind. The fact remains that when facing death, obituary writers try to mitigate the effect of what they really intend to communicate. The avoidance to explicitly speak about human mortality is derived from the fact that death triggers psychological and social aspects of fear, superstition and taboos, mainly of avoidance and respect to the surviving family members. The use of the lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives in obituaries is devoted at producing particular effects on readers by stressing the social status, virtues, religious standing and the general presentation of the deceased. This paper set out to examine the obituary as a form of advertisement whose functional language is carried out through different praising, laudatory, euphemistic and consolatory devices of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives which display the virtues of the deceased and the grief of the surviving family members in an effort to communicate meaning.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is a result of the application of the tenets of Hallidays (1985) systemic functional linguistics theory which is an approach to linguistics that considers language as a social semiotic system.

Michael Halliday (1985) developed the theory from the notion of system which he borrowed from Firth (1960). System became a fundamental concept in the description of grammar. Halliday (ibid) views language as a set of options where meaning is interpreted as a choice. The speaker or writer of a language is regarded as carrying out, simultaneously and successively, a number of distinct choices. As an approach to linguistic description, systemic functional grammar aims to provide a comprehensive account of how language is used in the communication context. Systemic functional linguistics states that language is a verbalized structure used to communicate meanings which arise in the context of use. It explores how people use language in different contexts to perform social functions and how the language is structured.

For Halliday (1985), the central theoretical principle then is that any communication involves choices. The choices available in any language variety are mapped using the representation tool of "system-network". Systemic functional is also functional because it considers language to have evolved under the pressure of particular functions that the language has to serve. Halliday observes that

meaning is a choice. Users select options that arise in an environment of other options and that the power of language resides in its organization as a huge network of interrelated choices.

As a social system, systemic functional grammar subject's language to two types of variation, that is variation according to the user and variation according the use. In this paper, both variation according to the use and variation according to the user were of great significance since the former produced variation in meaning that was dependent on the on-going social activity and this is reflected on the social order in the special sense of variety of social processes. The latter equally indicates the perception of the obituary writer on the on- going social activity, which is death. Halliday categorizes these variations according to the use on three functions of language, but for the sake of this paper, the ideational metafunction was applied.

The ideational metafunction of language is a means of reflecting on things. It is the presentation of the experience of a given social group about the world around them and how they perceive they perceive the world. It represents actions, processes, events, processes of consciousness and relation. Therefore, words which carry meaning in the text are nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives. This paper explores this metafunction of language to investigate how lexical items in obituary texts not only interact but also represent the reality of death.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was applied in this paper. The descriptive study aimed at describing the lexical items accurately through narrative type, classification and measuring relationships. As Terre (2007) observes, descriptive research design is used in collecting people's opinions, attitudes, habits and social issues. Purposive sampling was used to identify and select newspaper obituaries that provided key information on nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives that generated data for analysis and discussion. Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) posit that purposive sampling allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the study objectives. Data was collected using two main techniques: corpus compilation where a collection of linguistic data of written texts extracted from obituaries in the form of open set lexical items of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives were extracted and analyzed to bring out the sematic connotations therein. Document compilation was equally applied to collect data whereby obituary texts were identified and selected from the daily nation newspaper then used to generate data for analysis. Data was qualitatively analyzed from a lexico-sematic perspective and grouped according to the emerging lexical items.

Data Analysis

This part of the paper offers a description of how the lexical choices contribute to the meaning making process in obituaries.

The power experienced by words depends on the use in which the words are put by members of the society so that a single word used differently may have varied meanings. An obituary text is one such context where the obituary writer makes use of the bias in words to ostensibly report the event of death. Obituary writers use words to effectively achieve particular objectives like expressing grief, offering consolation to the bereaved or praise and compliment the deceased. They pass judgment by referring to death as a calamity or an affliction and thus emphasize the misfortune of the diseased and the surviving family members. The *Daily Nation* newspaper usually carries obituaries that draw a different choice of lexis.

Nouns

According to Bolinger (1980), nouns are able to designate reality even though there is a considerable bias in them. Besides, bias is relative and nouns can best be classified in context. In this paper, the following categories of nouns were realized in an effort by the obituary writers to express the concept of death.

Nouns indicating misfortune

Considering the phrase ….. we announce the **demise,** in this case, *demise* is an abstract noun, an option chosen from an environment of other options such as *loss* and *sudden* death provided that the entry condition is satisfied. The abstract noun euphemistically refers to death; the notion of vibrancy of life has come to an abrupt end. As Rae & Marelli (2002) observe, the choice and use of lexical item *demise* instead of directly talking about it as ***….we announce the death of….*** Is socially acceptable in leaving a strong impression and attaining favorable conditions for attaining a communicative goal of relaying the concept of death. The use of demise serves to mitigate the negative emotions, reduces the impact shock and prepares one psychologically for the bad news. Its choice further strips it of its most offensive overtones while retaining the communicative purpose as postulated by the ideational metafunction tenet which views language as a means of reflecting on things, the presentation of the experience of a given social group about the world around them and how they conceive it. In this case, using the noun *demise* as a choice instead of *death* is meant to strip off the offensive and hurting feelings associated with the direct mention of the taboo word of death. The choice further serves to as an apology for the distasteful topic and motivated by the desire for politeness in reporting a potentially hurting event of death hence minimizing the pejorative strength of the taboo.

In the cases of *"It is with profound grief and deep sense of loss…"* and *"It is with a deep sense of loss…"* The abstract noun, *loss* denotes the action of failing to keep something or something through death, (Oxford, 2015). Similarly, it implies the state of no longer having. Life is perceived as something valuable and death. In this case, death implies the loss of a valuable person, the

deceased. Lakoff (1980) views life as a precious possession such that when a life is lost, those left alive regret and lament about the loss to express their grief. The fact that the deceased was truly cherished by the family left a live cannot be overemphasized. The noun **loss** serves to fulfill the interpersonal metafunction tenet which views meaning as a form of action to the reader by the writer in expressing viewpoints and attitudes about the world around the readers.

Nouns denoting Acceptance

The plural noun **hearts** premodified by the adjective *heavy* in the case of in the case of; *It is with heavy hearts***.** Halliday (1985) accounts for the contextual use of language in communication, that language is a verbalized structure used to communicate meanings which arise in the context of use to perform social functions. In the context of reporting a death of occurrence, the lexical item *heavy* invokes some level of reluctance in coming to terms with the death of a loved one. In this case, the choice of the comparative adjective *heavy* in its positive form seeks to communicate the extent of the misfortune brought about by the death. *Hearts* get *heavy* when we cannot comprehend and easily come to terms with the magnitude of the disastrous occurrence of death. This implies that death hurts, it saddens, it is unbelievable and difficult to accept. Ongong'a (1990) observes that death is acceptable as a fate that claims the physical life of a person. It is a reality that makes us helpless hence the appropriateness in the choice of the lexical items *heavy hearts*. Mugambi &Kirima (1982) note that there is sorrow in death because the dying person is being cut off physically from the living community. Although death is a painful experience to those left a live leading to *heavy hearts,* this reluctance to come to terms with it yields to *acceptance***.**

In the phrases, it is with deep sorrow and humble *acceptance*… and It is with humble *acceptance* of God's will…, the lexical item *acceptance* which is an abstract noun semantically implies an agreement with and approval of belief in something, the willingness to tolerate something (Oxford,2005). In the case of obituaries, the "thing" to be tolerated or approved is the death of a loved one. As per the ideational metafunction, the choice of *acceptance* makes the bereaved reflect on death and conceive it as an event that is unfortunate and unwelcome. As much as death is a traumatizing experience, it is out of humility that we come to terms with it by accepting that we have no control over its occurrence.

Nouns indicating Emotion

The choice of the nouns indicating emotions indicate how intimate and the kind of personality the deceased was towards the bereaved. Further to this, the nouns can be analyzed in continuum with regard to the degree on intensity they exhibit in reporting death. The use of the abstract noun *sorrow* preceded by the positive form of the adjective *deep* shows a more personal and intimate use of the lexical expression in which feelings and emotions of the obituary writer play a significant role in reporting the death as in; It is with *deep sorrow…* The abstract noun, *sorrow* signifies a feeling of sadness that arises when we lose a loved one through death. It depicts death as an emotional event that hurts.

The superlative form of the adjective *deep***,** in this case, "deepest" is used predicatively in obituaries. In the extract; It is with the *deepest sorrow…,* the predicative use of the superlative adjective *deepest* before the abstract noun *sorrow* is used to show the immeasurable effects of the death that is reported. The death is incomprehensible to the bereaved. Through such lexical items, Hernando (2001) observes that obituaries constitute a hybrid genre in which emotion and publicity go hand in hand. Through these nouns, the intimate and personal feelings and emotions of the obituary writer comes to the fore.

As Ongong'a (1990) observes, death arouses many emotions, the most common being those of grief and sorrow. Death is viewed as an event that tears people away from all they love and know in this world. The tragedy of death wicked aspects of life. Death is an unbearable eventuality that is forever difficult to fathom. It causes great sadness; it hurts when a loved one passes on from our midst. This serves to fulfill the interpersonal metafunction which propounds that meaning is a form of action such that the writer or speaker does something to the reader or listener by means of language. In the use of the abstract nouns *grief* and *sorrow*, the obituary writer seeks to act on the emotions of the obituary reader. It depicts the obituary reader's attitude towards death as being a malignant event that evokes sadness in the bereaved. As Buitnick (1998) indicates, death is an emotion arousing episode that causes the loss of valuable possessions. Death is perceived as a calamity that robs us of a valuable one, causing grief and sorrow.

Verbs

Verbs are less effective to bias because their nature allows for relative transition about what they name. Verbs may be situational or depend on the writer's view of reality. However, some verbs are factual whether they refer to bad things or not, (Bolinger, 1980). In this paper, the following categories of verbs were realized from the obituary texts.

Verbs denoting Movement

The verbal groups ideally denote that the deceased has embarked on a journey to a destiny of comfort, being projected as an act of movement from one state to another, that is, transition from life to death. The use of these verbs shows death as a journey or movement in continuum.

The first step in any given journey or movement is the act of *being called* as in the passive construction in the phrase, *who was called…* In this passive construction, the doer of the action is not mentioned but in the context of death and obituary writing, the

influence of the supernatural power is significant in the process of calling. Contrastively, in; *God **called our mum….,*** the doer of the action, God is mentioned.

The second stage in the movement process is the act of ***going***. When one is ***called,*** they set off or go as in the context of; ***the going home of…*** Once the deceased is gone, it implies that they have passed on. The passing on is a transition as captured in; ***transition to eternity***. In this case, this is the transition to the afterlife, the destination being heaven. The heavens are above, so the deceased has to ascend as depicted in; ***…ascending to glory…*** When the deceased ascend, it amounts to a ***promotion to glory*** as in ***…the promotion to glory of…*** This upward movement depicted in the various lexical items presents a judeo-christian reality that heaven is above the skies, so when souls die, they go to heaven and for the bad people, they descend to hell.

These verbs have been used in obituary texts to conceptualize human mortality as a departure from the earthly world, presenting death as a journey. The ideational metafunction tenet that accounts for this propounds that people use language to make meanings and that language is used as a means of reflecting on the world or for social experiences. Through these movement-denoting verbs, death is conceived as a journey to an eternal destiny of beauty and comfort hence consoling and giving hope to the bereaved that their loved ones, now deceased are in a better place.

The lexical choices of transition, ascending and promotion are closely linked to the norms of politeness and style. Their use in obituaries is meant to mitigate the effects and perception of death, consequently providing relief in the face of death, exemplifying the observations of Brown, cited in Rawson (1985) that people die, they are carried to rest, they fall asleep… anything but the plain fact of death. This is meant to substitute the notion of death, consequently serving to console the bereaved family and give them hope that the bereaved family and give them hope that their deceased kin is in a better place, free from earthly pain, struggles and suffering.

Verbs indicating comfort

According to Mugambi & Kirima (1982), in many African communities, death is believed to be a temporary departure and not a complete end. There is a belief in ancestors and that their spirits are always with us, emphasizing the notion of life after death. The person who has died is believed to have moved to join the company of those who have gone before them, which ideally offers comfort and rest. In this regard therefore, verbs as lexical items have been chosen and used in obituary texts to conceptualize death as a desirable condition, a peaceful repose after earthly existence, an event that is less threatening and normal.

In the phrases; ***celebrating*** the life of…., the family of Mbithi ***celebrates…,*** the choice of the verbs; ***celebrating*** in the present continuous tense and ***celebrates*** in the present tense are meant to exemplify death as a joyous or pleasant and rewarding experience worth deriving pleasure from as it brings a feeling of happiness and comfort to the living. The ideational metafunction tenet is exemplified in the use of these verbs. The verbs; ***celebrates*** and ***celebrating*** present a reflection of the experiences of the bereaved and how they perceive the world of death. The celebrations by the bereaved family is meant to show the joy and happiness brought with the reflection of the life lived by a loved one, now the deceased. Upon their death, the lives they led are worth a celebration. This is further exemplified in eulogy booklets during funeral services. In them, people share the images of a person's life, the good times but never the photos of the morgue and graveyard. This therefore shows we celebrate life and not death. The choice of these verbs presents positive overtones to ameliorate the pain of losing a loved one.

The obituary writers also resort to choices of verbs that shift the lexical level to cope with the taboo of death by means of technical words where death is substituted by verbs as ***rest*** and ***resting*** as in; We announce ***the resting…,*** and She will be ***laid to rest…*** The choice of these verbs conceptualizes death as a desirable or normal event, one that is temporary, less threatening and normal as the deceased is said to be relaxing and in a state of repose hence mitigating the negative impacts and perceptions associated with losing a loved one. Halliday (1985) viewed language as a system with a set of options and that meaning is interpreted as a choice. By choosing the verbs ***rest*** and ***resting,*** the obituary writer has in this case made distinct choices, instead of explicitly mentioning death, they choose on using alternative potions. In the event of denoting death as a rest or resting, the obituary writer seeks to communicate that the deceased is in a better state, free from life bondages, struggles and suffering. This serves the basic function of consoling the bereaved. Zhang (2008) argues that death is the most terrible event in human beings since it means the end of existence and as a consequence, it is the forbidden taboo in almost every culture. The mention of the word arouses trauma, fear and phobia that frighten people. Deaths reported in obituaries therefore assume a variety of "descent" and better sounding verbs such as ***rest*** and ***resting*** to refer to death occurrences making them more pleasant and avoid the bitter reality of death by giving it a better face. Further to this, as Button (1960) notes, obituary writers have tried to be modest, pitiful and pleasant in the reporting of death hence consoling the bereaved.

Adverbs

According to Quick and Greenbaum (1979), adverbs perform semantic functions in their context of use. They express place, manner, direction, time and degree. Generally speaking, the choice of adverbials in reporting a death occurrence pre-empts the fact that time, place and manner are important components in obituary texts, affirming the importance of when, where and how death occurred.

In, Robert was a loving, generous adventurous and lived his life *fully*; there is the choice of the adverb *fully*. *Fully* is synonymous with completely or entirely, (Oxford,2015). This adverbial choice emphasizes the kind of life that was led by the deceased by considering upgrading the desirable features of the referent, the deceased. The adverb presents a true display of the admirable personal qualities of the deceased. The ideational metafunction tenet views language as a means of reflecting on things. Language is used to present a people's experience and how they conceive the world around them. By using the adverbial *fully*, the obituary writers in this case present a conscious process in their perception of the life that the deceased lived. Within the parameters of the ideational metafunction, it is meant to help the bereaved family, those left a live, to reflect on the life of the deceased who exemplified personal qualities worth emulation, in this case not only consoling but also praising and magnifying the biological act of dying, something which supposes the fulfillment of happiness.

The adverb of manner; peacefully as used in ***…who passed away peacefully…*** seeks to reflect on the idealized concept of "good death", that the death was welcome by the deceased and that no one should complain or lament about it. The adverbial is a choice made in an effort to console the bereaved that the deceased is in a better place, state of repose rather the earthly life full of pain and suffering. As Lakoff *etal* (1980) posit, such an adverb as *peacefully* serves to portray death as a desirable event under the influence of religious beliefs, hence offering consolation. It also serves to fulfill the interpersonal metafunction tenet in which meaning is an action, that a writer does something to the reader by means of language. In this case of the peacefully, language is used to change the perception about death and console the bereaved to accept that as much as death is a loss, a mysterious experience, it is a worthy and welcome repose.

Adjectives

This paper depicts the adjective class as a lexical entity used in the communication and informative process of the obituary text.

Adjectives denoting Emotion

Allan and Brudge (1991) observe that death is a loss that evokes a malignant fate, an event that human beings cannot control, leaving them powerless in the fate of the unavoidable event. The choice of the adjective *fallen* to modify the noun *soldier* in the phrase; ***All are welcome to honour these great fallen soldier…*** The adjective fallen shows the death of a loved one. Giving it a general linguistic interpretation, which staying alive is a battle or competition while dying is the loss of war, thus, succumbing to death. It signifies defeat and also the unlikely state or condition of having been wounded by the opponent that the soldier was at war with. The choice of the adjective fallen intensifies the misfortune or affliction that comes with the painful experience that comes with the pain of the death of a loved one. Hallidays (1985) theory upon which this paper is grounded lays emphasis on a system being a set of fundamental concepts in the description of grammar, where meaning is interpreted as a choice. By the obituary writer opting for the adjective fallen to euphemistically denote death, they have made a choice and used it in the context of communication. This euphemism mitigates the negative effects of death.

The adjectival; *tragic* and *brutal* in the phrases; ***…brutal*** murder… and ***through a tragic road accident…*** show the manner in which the reported deaths occurred, that the deaths were untimely, unexpected and coming with a lot of pain. The ideational metafunction postulates that language is a means of reflecting on things. The actions of being *tragic* and *brutal* indicate the cruel nature of the hand of death. They are meant to show death as a calamity, an affliction that results to the ultimate end of the valuable person or possession.

Evaluative Adjectives

Fernandez (2007) observes that obituaries use words that perform a perlocutionary function, thus, they are oriented towards causing a favourable impression on the reader by showing the social status and the exemplary behavior of the deceased, usually reported by overtones. Certain adjectives used in obituaries are perceived as those which give an opinion or judgement about the deceased with regard to the kind of lives the deceased led in relation to those left alive. The use of the adjectival dedicated in the phrase: **…. a *dedicated teacher*…** implies a personality who was hard working, committed, selfless and one who had passion and love for his job as a teacher for the sake of the success of others. In the phrase; …after **80 *glorious*** years…, the adjective *glorious* signifies a period of life lived, full of success, one that brought fame, glory and joy to those who interacted with the deceased on her earthly stay. That the deceased touched many lived through her actions, positive and worthwhile contributions towards humanity. This can be subjectively interpreted as by the obituary reader that the deceased was a mother figure.

An icon is a worthy person, one who is considered holy and a symbol of magnificence, great fame and beauty, (Oxford, 2015). A role model to the bereaved family and the society at large because of her unmatched success and achievements. In the phrase; *an icon…*, the reference to the deceased as *an icon* seeks to exemplify the earthly attributes of the deceased. This adjective attempts to praise and compliment the deceased. This fulfills the ideational metafunction of using language as a means of reflecting on things, that is, the kind of life led by the now deceased which is worth emulation.

CONCLUSION

Obituaries advertise the passing of friends, acquaintances and loved ones. They recount the life of ordinary people and those of power They offer a glimpse into the shape and cultural interpretation of death. Through the choice and use of various lexical items such as nouns denoting comfort, nouns depicting death as a calamity, verbs depicting death as a form of comfort and a form of movement, adverbs of manner, reason and time or be it the adjectival denoting emotion, evaluation of the character of the deceased while a live, consolatory adjectives or those denoting endearment, the obituary writer aimed at presenting death as a misfortune or an affliction to both the deceased and the bereaved. They were also meant to console, encourage and give hope to the bereaved family to bear the sudden loss in the context of a death occurrence.

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