An Analysis of Titles of Feature Articles in Two Selected Ghanaian Newspapers

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Bio-data

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Abstract

In the last few decades, researchers have grown much interest in titles across various genres. Most of these researches focused on titles from various academic genres such as abstracts, dissertations, conference papers and research articles (Santos, 1996, Soler, 2007, Akoto, 1999, Soler, 2007, Afful & Mwinlaaru, 2010). Surprisingly, researches on titles in media discourse in general remain relatively scarce and under-researched. In this paper, I examine, ipso facto, the syntactic structure, title length and punctuation usage in the titles of feature articles in two Ghanaian newspapers - the Daily Graphic and Ghanaian Times. The study employed a qualitative content analysis approach in analysing 160 newspaper titles from the data set. The analysis and discussion point to three key findings. Firstly, it was revealed that the dominant syntactic structure used in constructing the titles of feature articles in the both newspapers is the noun phrase. Secondly, the average title length of feature articles in the Daily Graphic was 6.4 whereas that of the Ghanaian Times was 7.4. Thirdly, the study revealed that the dominant

punctuation mark used in the construction of titles of feature articles in the Daily Graphic was the question mark while the dash was the dominant punctuation mark in the Ghanaian Times. The study has implications for pedagogy, ESP, text construction and further research.

Keywords: Feature article, syntactic structure, titles

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1.0 Introduction

The media today has become one of the most effective and widely used channels for disseminating information around the world. Generally, the media refers to institutions that deal with the packaging and dissemination of information to the public. Broadly, there are two categories of the media – the electronic media and the print media. The print media are defined as comprising newspapers and magazines that are printed for mass readership (Ghana National Media Policy, 2000). They are also defined as comprising newspapers and magazines that are printed for mass readership. Newspapers are a very important source of information. Many in Ghana today depend on newspapers for all kinds of information pertaining to Ghana and the outside world. The electronic media comprise radio and television. They involve the transmission by the air waves, cable or satellite of sound or images for simultaneous reception by a mass audience (ibid). Ghana has a vibrant press that plays a key role in political discourse, national identity and popular culture. Newspapers play an important role in disseminating information to the Ghanaian populace. A newspaper can be defined as a publication, usually in a sheet form, intended for general circulation, and published regularly at short intervals,

containing intelligence of current events and news of general interest (Picard & Brody, 1997). Currently, 136 newspapers are published in Ghana (Wikipedia, 2011). Some of these newspapers are state-owned while a majority of them are private-owned. The state-owned newspapers include the *Daily Graphic*, the *Ghanaian Times* and the *Evening News*. Notable among the private- owned newspapers are the *Daily Guide,* the *New Crusading Guide*, *The Weekly Spectator* and *The Palaver*. These newspapers are published in English, which is the official language of Ghana. A newspaper comprises various sections or sub-genres. These include editorials, world news, classifieds, and feature articles, letters to the editor and sports section. A feature article can be defined as an editorial information that does not contain the characteristics chiefly associated with news (ibid, 1997). Like the editorials, feature articles are a key part of a newspaper. Each article in a newspaper is captioned with a suitable title. A title is the calling card or headline of a piece of writing (Wibur and Semsel, 1997). Tittles of newspapers are so important that they determine whether the article or text deserves further reading or not (Bird, 1975). According to Swales and Feak (1994), a title should indicate the topic, be much informative be self explanatory to readers.

In the last few decades, researchers have grown much interest in titles of various genres. Most of these researches were focused on titles from various academic genres such as abstracts (Santos, 1996), dissertations (Akoto, 1999), conference papers (Afful and Mwinlaaru, 2010) and research articles (Soler, 2007). Surprisingly, researches on titles in media discourse in general remain relatively scarce and under-researched. The few works done were on titles of headline stories of newspapers (Kamath, 2006; Morrissey and War, 1997). It is worth pointing out that titles of articles in various newspapers are carefully constructed to arouse the interest of prospective readers. In tandem with the aforementioned scholars, the present researcher also considers the

titles of feature articles a very relevant rhetorical section of the newspaper worth researching into.

The research questions that underpin this study are as follow:

1. What syntactic structures are used in formulating titles of feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*?

2. What is the title length of feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*?

3. What is the dominant punctuation mark used in the titles of feature articles of the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times*?

In what follows, I first sketch a vignette of the extant literature in order to provide a conceptual context for the study. Next, I discuss the theoretical framework underpinning the study and the methodology adopted. This will be followed by a detailed analysis and discussion of the data, whereupon I will conclude with a summary and implications for future research.

2.0 Review of previous studies

2.1. Feature Stories in the Print Media

Feature stories are journalistic, researched, descriptive, thoughtful and reflective writing about original ideas (Picard & Brody, 1997). That is to say that feature stories are human-interest articles that focus on particular people, places and events. A feature article is an article that is about "softer" news (Aamidor, 1999). A feature article may be a profile of a person who does a lot of volunteer work in the community or a movie preview. Feature stories are also typically published in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, websites, blobs, television broadcasts and other mass media. In simple terms, feature articles are news stories about real people and events. They are written using clear, simple, accurate and concise language. Newspaper articles are

usually set off with headlines. The headline is not a summarization of the article; instead, it serves the purpose of getting the reader's attention (Aamidor, 1999). Prototypically, a feature article contains a headline, a byline and a lead paragraph. The byline usually follows the headline. This states the author's full name. In some cases, the byline can occur at the end of the article. The headline of feature articles performs two important functions. An effective headline grabs the reader's attention and persuades them to read the article (Haggan, 2003). Moreover, titles of feature articles highlight the main idea of the article. That is to say that the title or headline of a feature article should have a bearing on the main story. The introductory paragraph outlines the subject or theme of the article. It may also provoke the reader's interest by making an unusual statement, provide any necessary background information, invite the reader to take sides by making a controversial statement, establish the writer's tone or create a relationship between the writer and the reader.

According to Aamidor (1999), feature articles are classified into five main groups. These are the profile, news feature, the spot feature, the trend story and the live-in. A profile is an article about an individual. Profiles can be done on just about anyone who is interesting and newsworthy, whether it's on a local, national or international level. The idea of the profile is to give readers a behind-the-scenes look at what a person is really like. Profile articles generally provide background on the profile subject - their age, where they grew up and were educated, where they live now, whether they are they married, whether they have children, etc. Beyond such factual basics, profiles look at who and what influenced the person's lifestyle, their ideas, and their choice of vocation or profession. In simple terms, the profile, as a type of feature article aims at creating a true portrait of a very prominent figure. The news feature is a feature article that focuses on a topic of interest in the news. News features often cover the same subjects as deadline hard-news stories, but do so in greater depth and detail. News features tend to focus on

individuals more than deadline news stories, which often focus more on numbers and statistics. Trend stories take the pulse of the culture at the moment, looking at what's new, fresh and exciting in the world of art, fashion, film, music, high-technology and so on. The emphasis in trend stories is usually on light, quick, easy-to-read pieces that capture the spirit of whatever new trend is being discussed. The live-in is an in-depth, often magazine-length article that paints a picture of a particular place and the people who work or live there. The idea is to give readers a look at a place they probably wouldn't normally encounter. The live-in is really the ultimate example of the reporter immersing him or herself in the story.

Concerning the language used in feature stories, it is seen that a personal tone is usually created through the use of informal, colloquial (slang) and first person narrative. Also, relevant jargons are added to authenticate the information and opinions. Usually, rhetorical questions and emotive words are used to evoke a personal response in the reader. There is also an effective use of imagery and description to engage the reader's imagination. Again, unlike hard news coverage, feature stories cover topics in depth, by amplifying and explaining the most interesting and important elements of a situation or occurrence. Thus, a feature article is not meant to report the latest breaking news, but rather, an in-depth look at a particular subject.

2.2 Some Previous Studies on titles of articles

In this section, I review some empirical studies carried out by scholars on titles of articles in general. First, a review on studies done on titles in academic genres are presented then, those done in print media discourse will follow.

2.2.1 Titles and Discourse Analysis

According to Senda & Sinohara (2000), a title is expected to play two roles. One is to give the reader a very compact summary of the document, and the other is to attract the target reader's

interest and lead the reader to read the document. To them, it is preferable that a title plays both roles, because the reader may be disappointed with a gap between the title and the document if the title plays the former role poorly, and the reader may not read the document if the title plays the latter role poorly. Therefore, it is very important what title is attached to a document. Morrissey and War (1997) agrees with the assertion posited by Senda & Sinohara (2000) by stating that:

> The use of captions, titles, headings and subheadings is particularly necessary in news papers and magazines. They indicate the content or story within articles and still images and can signify whether we are looking at fiction, tragedy, humour or advertisement.

That is to say that a title is the first point that captures the reader's eye, the point from which he may decide whether a text is worth reading or not (Haggan, 2004). For Swales and Feak (1994), an appropriate title is assumed to have three requirements - a title should indicate the scope of work, introduce the topic of the research, and be self-explanatory. These three aspects contribute to the informativeness of a tile. A title is also supposed to be brief and as short as possible.

In the last three decades, there has been a growing interest in titles and their characteristics in different genres, for example, dissertations (Dudley-Evans, 1984), research articles (Goodman, 2000; Hagan, 2004), review papers (Soler, 2007), conference presentation abstracts (Yakhontova, 2002), and lectures (Gelbes, 2007). There seems to be an overload of research on titles in various academic genres. Such works focused on linguistic variables such as hedging, syntactic structure, lexical density, semantic encoding, punctuation usage and title length. In Jalilfar's (2010) work, he sought to find out whether structural configuration is a distinctive feature between thesis and research article titles and whether thesis titles are more informative and self explanatory than research articles. The corpus he used for the study comprised 997 research article titles from six Applied Linguistics journals and 874 MA and

PHD theses titles in Applied Linguistics from a local Iranian university. Two key findings were evident in his study. First, titles in thesis are appeared to be more informative while titles in research articles demonstrated greater variation in terms of their structure. Second, in relation to their structure, the study revealed that the dominant compound construction was the noun phrase + noun phrase structure. His work appeared to touch only on informativity of titles and syntactic structure of titles in both academic genres but his work touched less on other variables such as word length, punctuations and lexical density of titles.

Cianflone (2010) also investigated scientific titles in veterinary medicine research papers. The aim of his paper was to discuss the format of titles and to stress the added value titles have in the veterinary medicine research field. He used a small corpus of 63 veterinary medicine research papers offered to PhD students of one Italian faculty of Veterinary Medicine - University of Messina. Using a qualitative analysis, the study revealed that titles in veterinary medicine research papers conform to four different formats. These are: nominal structure, full-sentence structure, compound structure and question structure. His findings collaborated with those of Soler, (2007); Haggan, (2004); Wang and Bai, (2007). With regard to question structure, he posits that the main trait of this structure is the question mark. Moreover, "question- titles meet three communicative functions. They can, first of all, be intended to stress the fact that despite the research results brought out by the RP, the addressed topic needs further study. The second communicative goal is that question titles allow writers to put a question and to offer one answer. Lastly, the question format can serve the purpose of awakening readers' curiosity." Turning to the full sentence structure, he concludes that it allows researchers to present findings as statements of fact in one single string. Moving on to the compound titles, he defined them as those that consist of two parts – a first clause and a second clause- generally divided by a colon. The first clause sets the scene and the second clause provides specific

information on the research topic. Touching on the nominal format, he further postulated that the general form of constructing titles is the head noun followed by other structures such as the prepositional group. Here, whereas the headword sets the scene of the research papers by introducing the topic, the type of work or the results, the prepositional group adds information on the subjects of the study or on other specific issues.

A very recent study by Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010) indicates the role of individualism and creativity in the formulation of titles in conference papers. They investigated the titles in conference papers of four individual scholars in Education and Applied Linguistics. They sought to identify variations which were due to individual preferences and whether there were inter-disciplinary differences and similarities in titles of conference papers that were formulated by individual scholars. The data collected revealed that one scholar, JAB recorded the longest title length of 12.1 words while another scholar, FKA in Education had the shortest title with an average length of 6.4 words per title. Also, whereas YKE, another scholar in Education used an average title length of 10.1 words in his works, YSB, in Linguistics averagely used 7.5 words in formulating titles of his conference papers. With regard to syntactic structure of titles in conference papers, they observed that theses scholars usually prefer using noun phrases in formulating their titles. Afful and Mwinlaaru's (2010) study, tough very comprehensive and informative, appear to hardly address other equally relevant dimensions of a title such as its lexical density and informativity.

In another study that focused on titles of conference paper titles in Applied Linguistics, Acquah (2010) found out that the simple title structure dominated, thus confirming the findings in several other studies on tiles in various academic genres (Haggan, 2004; Soler, 2007; Goodman et al., 2001).

Fortanet et al. (1997) also investigated the structure and content of 200 titles research articles in four academic disciplines. These were Computer Science, Applied Linguistics, Economics and Chemistry. In terms of the length of title in Chemistry and Linguistics, they found out that titles used in research articles in Chemistry are lengthier than those from Linguistics. The study also revealed that three major punctuation marks were evident in titles of research articles found in the Economics and Business disciplines. These were the colon, semi colon and the full stop. They were usually used in multi-title units. In terms of their content, the study revealed that, most titles (especially in Chemistry, unlike those in Linguistics) conveyed the general topic and specific focus of the studies.

Anthony (2001) examined the title length, preposition and punctuation usage of 600 titles representing various computer science sub-disciplines. With regard to the title length, the study revealed that the titles range from 9 to 12 words. Also, concerning their structure, he found out that most of the titles were two-unit titles. It was also revealed that nominals were frequently used in the construction of titles in sub-disciplines of Computer Science. He also sought to find out the semantic relationships between the two-unit titles. He found out that the first part of the two-unit titles talked about the "name" or the "topic" while the second part of the titles focused on the "description" or the "scope" of the study. Regarding the use of punctuations in titles, Anthony (2001) in his multi-sub-disciplinary study, investigated the use of five punctuation marks: colons, semicolons, dash and period as they were commonly used to divide the different parts of compound or multi-unit titles. Another key finding was that a colon was present in all titles of research articles and it was used to separate the two parts of compound titles. Other studies that have suggested the dominant use of colon include Dillon (1982), Hartley (2007) and Michelson (1994). Thus, insights from the studies such as Anthony (2001) and Fortanet et al. (1997) can potentially shed light on the present study.

The study of Haggan (2004) also sought to investigate the syntactic encoding, structure and content of over 700 journal article titles in Literature, Linguistics and Education. Like, Fortanet et al. (1997), she found out that the titles in the three disciplines considered had similar syntactic structures. They were either single-unit titles (especially in Linguistics) or compound-unit titles (especially in literature). Also, while some titles were constructed using full sentences (especially in Education) or phrases (especially nominal), others (especially in Literature and Linguistics) were characterised by the coordination of heads.

Titles or headlines are also essential units of print media genres. One would not be far from right to assert that the headline is often the only thing that readers read in a newspaper, or at least, it is the first thing that everyone notices in a newspaper. It serves as a guide for the reader that helps decide whether to continue on reading the whole report or to skip onto another one. To sum it up, a good newspaper headline should be able to truthful the content of the story it introduces and persuade its readers to devote time to reading. According to Picard & Brody (1997), headlines appear in large type at the beginning of news stories and they are used to attract reader interest. For van Dijk (1988), banner headlines define the overall coherence or semantic unity of discourse, and also what information readers memorize best from a news report. He further posited that headlines summarize the news text in a minimum number of words. Headlines are part of news rhetorical devices which are organized to attract the reader (Mardh, 1980). To Schrank (2006), news headlines are the first bold lettered elements found usually at the front page of all newspapers. Headlines usually need sub-headings to narrow their meaning. Headlines also indicate the nature of the article below them. The major purpose of a newspaper headline is to quickly summarize the article and to briefly draw the attention of readers to the story or article. Typically, headlines are dominantly captured in phrases and sometimes in

sentences. Over the years, headlines have been investigated into by researchers because of the stronger impact they have on readers.

Mardh (1980) in her study on headlines offered an exhaustive study of the characteristic features of the headlines of a range of English newspapers. She identified the following linguistic features as typical of headlines in English newspapers: the omission of articles; the omission of verbs and of auxiliaries (the verb 'to be' for example); nominalisations; the frequent use of complex noun phrases in subject position (in theme position); adverbial headlines, with the omission of both verb and subject; the use of short words (for example, 'bid' instead of 'attempt'); the widespread use of puns, word play and alliteration; the importance of word order, with the most important items placed first, even, in some cases, a verb; and independent "Wh-constructions" not linked to a main clause. Mouillard and Tétu (1989) also identified some features of headlines and titles of news articles in general. To them, reporters and editors of newspapers avoid the use of spatial and temporary markers such as "tomorrow", "yesterday" and "next week." They also identified the replacement of verbs by nominals such as nouns as another key feature of newspaper headlines. Also, newspaper headlines make us of the present tense forms of verbs in order to make the headline lively and interesting to read.

Tahririan (2007) also made a comparative analysis of the syntactical and lexical features between English newspaper headlines and Persian newspaper headlines. Using a corpus of 792 English and 725 Persian newspapers, he revealed two key findings. First, he found out that news reporters use nominal, verbal and adverbial constructions in constructing headlines in both English and Persian newspapers. The dominant syntactic structures in newspaper headlines were nominals. From the data collected, it was revealed that 75.73% of the headlines in Persian and 4.67% of those in English were nominal headlines. The study showed that most nominal headlines in the English sample were premodified (48.21%), while post modification was high

in the Persian corpus (98.80%). Unmodified nominal headlines were comparatively few. They were however, more found in the English nominal headlines (21.42%) than in those of Persian (0.11%). Secondly, adjectives were the most common type of premodifying items in both English (56%) and Persian (100%) headlines. The other items which preceded the noun phrase head of the English headlines were common nouns (44%), nouns with genitives (4%) and nouns with plurals (4%).

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Prásková (2009) also examined the general grammatical features used in British newspaper headlines. Her work specifically focuses mainly on the difference between sentential and non-sentential headlines. Her data consisted of 200 newspaper headlines that were chosen randomly from six different British newspapers- *The Sun, the Daily Mirror and the Daily Mail, The Times, The Guardian and the Daily Telegraph.* She identified different forms of headlines in these newspapers. The headlines collected from the corpus were grouped into two main broad headings. These are the sentential headlines and the non-sentential headlines. Sentential headlines are those with a regular sentence structure. They include all headlines that contain a subject and a predicate or those with a finite verb phrase. The non-sentential headlines are those with an irregular sentence structure. They consist of headlines without a predicate. They are usually in form of phrases and non-finite verb phrases. Sentential headlines were the commonest type of headlines from the corpus. The occurred eighty (80) times. Her work also revealed that the most frequent clausal type was the S-V-O pattern with 31 occurrences. There were also 9 headlines that occurred as regular multiple sentence structure. Complex sentences were used more frequently, yet they are not represented significantly just with 7 occurrences. Concerning the non-sentential headlines, the data revealed that 58 headlines were identified as headlines with non-finite predicate. In these headlines, an auxiliary verb is always omitted- the subject is usually present (the verb is non-finite, and a form of the verb *be* may be added between them.

With regard to non-sentential headlines that were realized as phrases, the data revealed that 38 of these headlines were realized as noun phrases. The other types of phrases used were the adjectival phrase and prepositional phrases. They occurred twice in the corpus she used.

2.4 The Relationship between Previous Studies and the Present Study

From the literature reviewed above, it would not be anomalous to posit that numerous encyclopaedic researches on titles have been undertaken especially in academic written discourse. Most of these studies focused on expert writing on various academic genres with varying emphasis on some identifiable linguistic variables. Secondly, most of these studies have been in both cross-disciplinary (e.g. Fortanet et al., 1997) and mono-disciplinary contexts. Moreover, the majority of the studies on titles were conducted by language specialists, especially experts involved in research on academic writing. Most of the known mono- or cross-disciplinary studies on titles have not involved sub-Saharan Africa, the exceptions being Afful (2005), Acquah (2010) and Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010). The few studies conducted in Africa have however not focused on titles of feature articles. It needs to be seen how the findings of the present study conducted in Ghana (Africa) confirm or deviate from the findings already discussed in the review in relation to variables such as title length, syntactic structure and punctuation usage.

3.0 Methodology

This section discusses the methodological procedures of the study. Specifically, it discusses the research design, data collection procedure, sampling method and method of data analysis.

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3.1 Research Design

The study was rooted in the qualitative research paradigm, specifically, in the content qualitative analytical approach. Given that the present study attempts to interpret or make sense of a human phenomenon or a social construct, this design is appropriate. It is noteworthy, however, that the qualitative research design was complemented by quantitative techniques such as frequency counts and percentages.

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3.2 Data source

The data collected for this study were from titles of feature articles published in the *Ghanaian Times* and the *Daily Graphic* newspapers from September 2011 to December 2011. The choice for these newspaper publications is hinged on recency and on the prestige that these newspapers have in the Ghanaian print media. The textual data were available at the Main Library of the University of Cape Coast. The *Daily Graphic* is a publication of the Graphic Communications Group Ltd, the leading and largest newspaper publishing and printing company in Ghana. The company, through its newspapers, aims at improving lives through information and knowledge. It seeks to achieve leadership in disseminating high quality information and other products to consumers (www.graphic.com.gh/about.html). Over the years, the company has distinguished itself as a credible organisation in quality news presentation to the extent that its flagship newspaper, the *Daily Graphic* has become synonymous to newspaper in Ghana. The *Daily Graphic* has the largest circulation and readership profile in Ghana. It covers politics, business, finance, sports development, the environment, social and international affairs. It is the company's premier newspaper published since October 2, 1950. Apart from the *Daily Graphic*, the company publishes, prints and distributes six different newspapers. All of which are market

leaders in their respective segments. These are *Graphic Sports, The Mirror, Graphic Showbiz, Junior Graphic, Graphic Advertiser* and *Graphic Nsempa*.

The Ghanaian Times is a publication of the New Times Corporation, formerly known as the Guinea Press Ltd. It was first established by Kwame Nkrumah in 1957 as the printing house of his political party – the Convention People's Party (CPP). The corporation aims at informing and educating the Ghanaian public in a manner that is worthy of responsible journalism while ensuring that government policies and programmes are effectively communicated to the Ghanaian citizen to facilitate national development. The corporation also publishes the *Weekly Spectator* and the *Sporting Times* newspapers.

Two reasons account for the choice of *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* as the data sources of the present study. The first reason stems from the fact that both newspapers have gained some prestige among Ghanaians and have quite a large audience. In Ghana, the *Daily Graphic* for instance, is synonymous to newspaper to the average Ghanaian. Thus, any form of newspaper research in Ghana may want to begin with them. Secondly, the competence and quality of news delivery by the reporters and editors of both newspapers informed the choice.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Sampling method

A total number of one hundred and sixty (160) newspapers were selected and analysed during the research. The corpus comprised eighty (80) articles each from the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*. To get the eighty titles of the newspapers, twenty (20) articles published within the four months (from September 2011 to December 2011) of both newspapers were conveniently sampled. The convenience sampling method was used in collecting data for the study. The researcher collected the 160 newspapers from the Main Library of the University of

Cape Coast. In the analysis, the researcher examined the syntactic structures used by writers in formulating the titles of their feature stories.

Method of Data Analysis

The analysis of the study was done in tandem with the research questions. To find the title length of the titles of feature stories in both newspapers, the researcher considered the number of words and syntactic constituents, both phrasal and clausal, making up the titles of the sample. The researcher used the definition of a word as comprising strings of letters preceded and/or followed by spaces or punctuation marks. In analyzing the syntactic structure of titles of feature stories in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*, the researcher took into consideration how the titles are organized and ordered. The researcher examined their constituent information units, as identifiable by the presence of specific punctuation marks. The analysis of the syntactic realization of titles comprised the classification of information units structures into phrasal and clausal. Thus, the researcher sought to find out whether the syntactic structures were organized into a single-unit title or a multi-unit title. Also, the researcher sought to find out the types of clauses or phrases that were dominantly used in formulating titles of feature articles in both newspapers. To find out the dominant punctuation mark, the researcher looked through the selected sample and noted the frequency of occurrence of each of the various punctuation marks used in the formulation of each title.

4.0 Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and discussion on titles of feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*. In this section, results of the data collected are analyzed and discussed paying attention to the three variables outlined in the research questions – syntactic structure, title length and punctuation mark.

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4.1 Syntatic Structure

Syntactic structure is the method of syntactically categorizing the constituents of sentences and scheme showing all the possible categories to which the constituents of any sentences could belong. It also refers to elements such as noun phrases, prepositional phrases, verb phrases and clausal types (Gesuato, 2009). In analyzing the syntactic structure of titles of feature stories in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*, the present researcher took into consideration how the structures are organized and syntactic encoding of the titles.

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4.1.1 Structural organization

In the data set, two structural categories of titles were evident. These are the single-unit titles and multi-unit titles. The single-unit titles comprised one information unit and the multi-unit titles comprised two or more structural units. The present researcher was able to distinguish the single-unit titles from multi-unit titles based on the following criteria: When there are punctuation marks in a title such as colons, semi-colons, dashes or bullets, such titles were classified as multi-unit titles. On the other hand, when there are no punctuation marks, the researcher classified such titles as single-unit titles (Gesuato, 2009). However, titles with commas, exclamation marks and parenthesis were considered as single-unit titles. Cited below are some examples from the data set that contained single unit titles:

1. The wicked betrayal of diplomatic cables… (*Daily Graphic*, 14/09/2011).
2. Remedy for unlawful dismissal or termination of employment (*Daily Graphic,* 24/11/2011).
3. Qathafi, the weatherman and my peanuts (*Daily Graphic,* 28/10/ 2011).
4. The changing role of the Chief Executive Officer (*Ghanaian Times*, 14/11/2011).
5. The future of the aged (*Daily Graphic*, 28/12/2011).

The single-unit titles were mostly preferred to the multi-unit titles. This could be because they are easier to construct as compared to the multi-unit titles. It was also realized from the data that the single-unit titles were mostly captioned in complex noun phrases. They were also very

concise, brief and straight to the point. The researcher believes that this is done so as to enable

the prospective readers to assimilate and capture, in a glance, what the feature story is about.

Writers therefore use single-unit titles to achieve a low information cost. Examples of the titles

that were captioned using multi-units include the following:

1. Giving impetus to democracy and development
   - The role of investigative journalism (*Daily Graphic*. 26/09/2011)
2. Single Spine Pay Policy: the Final Solution? (*Daily Graphic*.4/11/2011).
3. Ghana's crude oil
   - Beware of America (*Ghanaian Times,* 8/9/2011).
4. Resisting Cameron's moral dictatorial tantrums
   - A non-compromising choice (*Ghanaian Times,* 10/11/2011).
5. Our farmers: Growing more in the face of challenges for a change (*Daily Graphic,* 3/12/2011).

The multi-unit tiles were typically two-unit or double-decker headlines. That is to say that they

had two parts. The first part of the title sets the scene while the second part provides specific

information or narrows the information given in the first part of the title. As can be seen from

the examples given, the two-unit titles were usually lengthier and detailed than the single-unit

titles. Like the single-unit titles, the two-unit titles were also captured in phrases.

Table 4.1 Frequency Distribution of Title Units in the *Daily Graphic*

Month	Single-Unit Title	Multi-Unit Title	Total Units
SEPTEMBER	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	20
OCTOBER	17 (85%)	3 (15%)	20
NOVEMBER	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	20
DECEMBER	19 (95%)	1 (5%)	20
TOTAL	61 (76.2%)	19 (23.8%)	80

AVERAGE WORD PER UNIT = 6.4

Table 4.2 Frequency Distribution of Title Units in the *Ghanaian Times*

Month	Single-Unit Title	Multi-Unit Title	Total Unit
SEPTEMBER	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	20
OCTOBER	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	20
NOVEMBER	11 (55%)	9 (45%)	20
DECEMBER	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	20
TOTAL	47 (58.8%)	33 (41.3%)	80

AVERAGE TITLE PER UNIT = 7.4

The tables above shows the frequency distribution of title-units of the 80 feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*. The most basic title units obtained from the corpus were single-unit and multi-unit titles. From the table, it is seen that there is a high preference for single-unit titles to multi-unit titles in both the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*. However, regarding their frequency, single-unit titles in *Daily Graphic* were used more frequently than those in the *Ghanaian Times*. Single-unit titles occurred 61 and 47 times representing 76.2% and 58.8% in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* respectively. The high preference of single-unit titles or monostructured titles by students and writers may be that it is the most familiar pattern to them, it could also be the least taxing form of formulating a title (Afful, 2005). As their names suggests, two-unit titles were organized into two main parts. It is seen that the first part of the multi-unit titles (especially in the *Daily Graphic*), foregrounds the main information in the second part of the title. The following sentences illustrate this assertion:

1. Giving impetus to democracy and development
   - The role of investigative journalism (multi-unit title, *Daily Graphic*, 26/09/2011).
2. Ghana's crude oil
   - Beware of America (multi-unit title, *Ghanaian Times*.8/9/2011).

In the two-unit titles above, it is seen that in example 1, the writer emphasizes the role that investigative journalism plays in giving impetus to democracy and development. The –ing non finite clause, "Giving impetus to democracy and development" keeps the reader in suspense as

he awaits what is to complement the –ing clause. Thus, "the role of investigative journalism" narrows the –ing clause or makes the sentence or title complete and more meaningful. Similarly, in example 2, "Beware of America" complements the noun phrase, "Ghana's crude oil." Usually, the background information is preceded by a dash, bullet or ellipsis. This is done to set out the main thrust of the title and so as to catch the attention of readers (Haggan, 2004).

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The following are the procedures taken by the researcher in order to arrive at the frequencies presented in the tables. To get the frequency of single-title units in the corpus, the researcher calculated the total number of all the single-unit titles that occurred within the four months of both newspapers. The sum of the single-unit titles was then divided by the sample size of each newspaper and the results were divided by 100%. The total number of single unit titles in the *Daily Graphic* was 61, representing 76.2% while that for the *Ghanaian Times* was 47, representing 58.8%. Similarly, to get the frequency of the two-unit titles, the total number of the two-unit titles was divided by the sample size and the results were multiplied by 100%. To get the average word per title, the total number of words in each article was divided by the total number of title units in each newspaper.

The total number of words used in the 80 titles from the *Daily Graphic* was 514 while that in the *Ghanaian Times* was 591. Hence, the average word per title in the *Daily Graphic* was 6.4 while it was 7.4 in the *Ghanaian Times*.

4.1.2 Syntactic encoding

The term, "syntactic encoding" refers to the order in which title units are organized, arranged or ordered (Gesuato, 2009). It also looks at the basic sentence types and the phrasal categories of the elements that make-up the title. From the corpus used in the present study, it was realized that the syntactic structures of titles of feature articles were realized as noun phrases, verb

phrases, -ing clauses, -en clauses, full sentences and question titles. This collaborates the findings of Cianflone (2010) who found out that titles in scientific Veterinary Medicine research papers conform to four different formats. These are: nominal structure, full-sentence structure, compound structure and question structure. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the frequency distribution of the title unit categories of feature articles:

Table 4.3 Frequency Distribution of Title-unit Categories in the *Daily Graphic.*

Variables	Frequency
NOUN PHRASES (NP)	33
VERB PHRASES (VP)	-
-ING CLAUSES	12
-ED CLAUSES	-
FULL SENTENCES (FS)	16
QUESTION TITLES	19

Table 4.4. Frequency Distribution of Title-unit Categories in the *Ghanaian Times.*

Variables	Frequency of distribution
NOUN PHRASES (NP)	39
VERB PHRASES (VP)	5
-ING CLAUSES	5
-ED CLAUSES	1
FULL SENTENCES (FS)	15
QUESTION TITLES	8

4.1.2.1 Noun phrases

As illustrated in the tables above, it is seen that noun phrases are dominantly used in the formulation of titles of feature articles in both newspapers. This collaborated with the findings of Fortanet et al (1998) and Wang & Bai (2007). Fortanet et al (1998) found out that the most common syntactic structure of titles of research articles in Computer Science, Applied

Linguistics, Business and Economics was noun phrase and they usually follow the pattern: 'premodifier + head + postmodifier'. Wang & Bai's (2007) study also revealed that most (98%) of the structures of medical research articles were realised as nominal groups and about 75% of the titles were characterised by the presence of single heads and accompanied by post-modifying prepositional phrases. This finding also concurs with that of Soler (2002) and Yakhontova (2002). Soler (2002) in her study identified four main structural constructions of journal review papers. These are nominal group, compound, full-sentence and question titles. Her study revealed that the most common construction was the nominal group, consisting of nominal or verbal heads, possibly with pre- and/or post-modifiers. Again, the findings concurs with those of Mardh (1980), Mouillard and Tétu (1989) and Tahririan (2007) .

A total of seventy-two (72) noun phrases (33 from the *Daily Graphic* and 39 from the *Ghanaian Times*) were recorded from the corpus used in this study. Most of the noun phrases were complex noun phrases. The dominance of NPs in titles, according to Afful and Mwinlaaru (2010) may be due to its distinctive features of embedding, labeling and function. The titles realized as NPs in both newspapers had three forms. First, some of the titles realized as NPs in both newspapers were coordinated structures. The examples given below illustrate this assertion:

1. Cell phones and our health (*Ghanaian Times*, 9/09/2011).

2. A gentleman or a scholar? (*Ghanaian Times*, 10/09/2011).

3. The Qatar that I saw

   - And the unforgettable hot air (*Ghanaian Times*, 30/9/2011).

4. Faith-based organizations and the use of ICT (*Ghanaian Times,* 17/10/2011).

5. Roads, funerals and political campaigns (*Daily Graphic*, 22/10/2011).

6. Qathafi, the weatherman and my peanuts (*Daily Graphic,* 28/10/2011).

7. Prayer camps and credibility issues (Daily Graphic, 18/12/2011).

Most of the coordinated structures were coordinated syndetically by the pure coordinator, "and". A few of them were coordinated with "or". The coordinated NPs occurred more in the *Ghanaian Times* than in the *Daily Graphic*. Secondly, some of the title NPs had the form: (premodifiers) + head word + post modifier. Examples of such constructions are outlined below:

8. The wicked betrayal of diplomatic cables (premodifiers: "the wicked" + head: "betrayal" + postmodifier: "of diplomatic cables". *Daily Graphic*, 7/09/2011).

9. Our friend, the mortuary man (premodifier: "Our" + Head: "friend" + appositive post modifier: 'the mortuary man". *Daily Graphic.* 15/09/2011).

10. Police in the news (Head: "police"+ post modifier: "in the news". *Daily Graphic*, 8/11/2011).

11. Friends from afar (Head: "friends" +post modifier: "from afar". *Daily Graphic*, 24/10/2011)

12. Another hoax after eleven-eleven-eleven (premodifier: "another" Head: "hoax" + post modifier: "after eleven-eleven-eleven". *Daily Graphic*, 8/12/2011).

13. Tricks of memory (Head: "tricks" + post modifier: "of memory". *Ghanaian Times*, 28/11/2011).

14. The changing role of the Chief Executive Officer (premodifier: "the changing" + Head: "role" + post modifier: "of the Chief Executive Officer". *Ghanaian Times*, 14/11/2011).

As illustrated in the examples above, most of these complex noun phrases were postmodified or embedded by prepositional phrases headed by "of", "in" "from" and "after".

Such constructions were more prevalent in the *Daily Graphic* than in the *Ghanaian Times*. Thirdly, some of the titles realized as noun phrases contained the head noun only. Examples include:

15. Blackmail (*Daily Graphic,* 18/10/2011).

16. Mother tongue (*Daily Graphic,* 16/12/2011).

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This category of noun phrases was sparingly used. Next to be discussed is –ing clauses since they occur next to the NP titles in terms of frequency.

4.1.2.2 -ing clauses

A total of seventeen (17) titles of feature articles from the sample were captioned with –ing clauses. There were twelve (12) –ing clauses in the *Daily Graphic* whereas there were five (5) –ing clauses found in the *Ghanaian Times*. Examples of titles captioned in –ing clauses in both newspapers include the following:

1. Protecting Ghanaian industries (*Ghanaian Times*, 26/11/2011).

2. Eliminating girl child labor through education (*Ghanaian Times,* 5/10/2011)

3. Borrowing a Daily newspaper (*Daily Graphic*, 24/09/2011).

4. Counting the chicks before they are hatched (*Daily Graphic*, 15/11/2011).

The examples given above illustrate the use of -ing clause titles from the sample selected for the study. It is seen that the –ing clauses are mostly seen in single-unit titles of both newspapers. This implies that –ing clauses rarely occur in two-unit or multi-unit titles. However, in multi-unit titles, -ing clauses can also combine with other syntactic structures in the formulation of the feature article headline. The following examples attest to this assertion:

5. Promoting gender equality
   - Time to involve boys and men (-ing clause + to-infinitive non-finite clause with subject, "time". *Ghanaian Times,* 6/09/2011).
6. Preventing administering errors
   - The observations of a pharmacist (-ing clause +complex NP. *Ghanaian Times,* 3/10/2011).
7. Giving impetus to democracy and development
   - The role of investigative journalism (-ing clause + complex NP. *Daily Graphic*, 26/09/2011).

From the corpus, it appeared that the –ing clauses used were used to show progressive events or current events that needed much attention to paid to by the general populace.

4.1.2.3 -ed clauses

Titles realised as –ed clauses recorded the least frequency of occurrence from the sample. As evident in Table 4.3 and Table 4.4, there was only one title that was captioned with an –ed clause:

1. Saved by a company (*Daily Graphic*, 16/11/2011).

The table suggests that –ed clause titles are evident in *Daily Graphic*. As typical of –ed constructions, the –ed title was in the passive voice. I believe that what accounts for the low frequency of occurrence of –ed clause titles is due to the fact that writers prefer the use of active sentences to passives in order to make the meaning of their sentences easier and more clear to be understood.

4.1.2.3 Question titles

Question titles, as used in this paper, refer to titles that tend to elicit responses from the readers. They are usually rhetorical questions and they carry the denotative sense of interrogating the reader. From the sample, twenty-seven (27) question titles were evident. The following lists provide some representative examples of question titles:

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1. What do the banks think they are doing? (*Ghanaian Times,* 27/09/2011).

2. What toilets do our children use? (*Ghanaian Times*, 14/09/2011).

3. Congratulations Samia Nkrumah!

   - Can you meet the challenges and expectations? (*Ghanaian Times,* 28/10/2011).

4. Should Sodom and Gomorrah be demolished? (*Daily Graphic,* 30/9/2011).

5. Have you made your last will? (*Daily Graphic,* 2/11/2011).

It is seen in the examples above that the main trait of the question title is the question mark. Cianflone (2010) posits that a writer may use question titles to point out to his audience that the topic of discussion needs further study. Also, question titles can serve the purpose of awakening readers' curiosity.

4.1.2.4 Full sentence titles

Titles realized as full sentences were common to both newspapers. A total of thirty-one (31) full sentence titles were found from the sample. *The Daily Graphic* recorded sixteen (16) full sentence titles whereas the *Ghanaian Times* recorded a total of fifteen (15) full sentence titles. The full sentence titles occurred in both the single-unit and two-unit titles. To avoid double counting, the full sentence titles were neither counted as part of the single-unit titles nor the two-unit titles. The sentential headlines consisted all headlines that have a regular sentence structure. This implies that they are those headlines with a subject and a finite verb phrase which is characterized as a phrase "in which the first or only word is a verb, the rest of the verb phrase (if any) consisting of non-finite verbs (Quirk, 1991). As far as sentence structure is concerned, there are two main types of sentence - simple and multiple sentences (Crystal, 2003). The titles identified as full sentences from the corpus comprised both simple and multiple sentences. Examples of the simple sentences include the following:

1. Overreliance on aid leads to dependency (*Daily Graphic,* 14/11/2011).
2. The Lord has been good to me today (*Ghanaian Times,* 24/09/2011).
3. Time changes (*Daily Graphic*, 29/9/2011).
4. Parliament must pass the freedom of Information bill now (*Daily Graphic,* 12/10/2011).

As seen in the examples above, the simple sentence titles were usually statements. In Quirk's (1991) words, "statements are primarily used to convey information". It means that their primary purpose is to inform (readers) about something. The statements had a declarative structure and thereby, writers use them to declare or make something known (Crystal, 2006). What accounts for the choice of simple sentences in captioning titles could be due to the fact that simple sentences can be very effective for grabbing a reader's attention or for summing up an argument as they are simply understandable (Praskova, 2009). Moreover, writers use full sentence titles so as to help them present topics as statements of fact in one single string (Cianflone, 2010).

Multiple sentences were complex in nature. They contained two or more clauses linked by subordinators. From the data set, it was realised that the multiple sentences occurred dominantly in the two-unit titles. What accounts for the choice of full-sentence titles or headlines could be due to the fact that, writers may want the readers to grasp the full import of their feature story. This stems from the fact that feature articles tend to expand a particular subject so as to make reading more interesting and lively (Aamidor, 1999). This may also be due to the fact that they may want to remove any form of ambiguities and vagueness from their titles as it is common with titles captioned in phrases.

4.2 Title Length

In tandem with Gesuato (2009), non-hyphenated compounds, capitalised abbreviations and numerical sequences were considered to be single word entries. The table below shows the average title length and the number of words for both the shortest and longest title in the present study.

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Table 4.5 Title length as evident in the data

Type of newspaper	Number of titles	Number of words	Average title length	Number of words for shortest title	Number of words for longest title
Daily Graphic	80	514	6.4	1	16
Ghanaian Times	80	591	7.4	3	15

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Table 4.5 shows the average words per title in *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* are 6.4 and

7.4 respectively. This implies that on the average, titles of feature articles in the *Ghanaian Times*

are about a word longer than those from the *Daily Graphic*. This finding differs from that of

Gesuato (2009) who found out that the average title length of books, dissertations, proceeding

papers and journals is 9.2, 12.9, 10.8, 9.9 and10.7 respectively. Also, both newspapers employ

both long and short titles. The examples below confirm this assertion:

1. Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon to the Rescue of Africa in the fight against breast cancer (15 words. *Ghanaian Times,* 18/10/2011).
2. The Master Brewer (3 words. *Ghanaian Times,* 8/12/2011).
3. Protecting Ghanaian industries (3 words. *Ghanaian Times,* 26/11/2011).
4. An open letter to President Mills
   - Please save the national Service Scheme (12 words. *Ghanaian Times,* 12/10/2011).
5. Two Kofis, one Elizabeth (4 words. *Ghanaian Times,* 21/10/2011)
6. Blackmail (1 word. *Daily Graphic,* 18/10/2011).
7. Mother tongue (1 word. *Daily Graphic,* 16/12/2011).
8. The reign of the bandit – the Wikileaks debate
   - And the phantom's blood feast on the highways (16 words. *Daily Graphic,* 22/9/2011).
9. I confess … (2 words. *Daily Graphic,* 10/09/2011).

The examples above show that the packaging of information is very essential in the construction

of titles. Thus, the longer a title, the less attractive it becomes and less easy it is to be

understood. Many scholars subscribe to the view that a title or headline of any article should be

brief, short, catchy and memorable so as to attract the attention of readers (Haggan, 2004; Swales and Feak, 1994; Afful, 2005). Anthony (2001) is however of the view that writers use longer titles in capturing their ideas because of their desire to make sure that the title expresses its content more clearly and accurately. Thus, writers desire to make their title more informative as possible. One reason that could account for the variation in the findings is the differences in the discipline and genre. As earlier stated, the present study focuses on a specific genre –feature articles in the domain of print media discourse whereas the afore-mentioned scholars focused on research article, journals and review articles in the domain of academic discourse. This therefore might have resulted in the differences in the expected findings.

4.3 Punctuation Usage

This section presents the data analysis on punctuation usage from the data set. First, tables on the punctuation use in both newspapers and the statistics on individual punctuation marks from the corpus are presented in order to find out the dominant punctuation mark. This is then followed by the discussion of the data.

Table 4.6: Punctuation usage in data set

Variables	Daily Graphic	Ghanaian Times
Total number of punctuation	49	56
Types of punctuation	9	7

As can be seen from Table 4.6, the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper used more punctuation marks in constructing titles of their feature articles. However, there is a marginal difference in the type of punctuation marks identified. The types of punctuation marks identified in the *Daily Graphic* were two more than those found in the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper. Table 4.7 provides a more detailed picture of how various punctuation marks were used in the two data sets.

Table 4.7: Seperate punctuation marks in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times*.

Frequent marks	Daily Graphic	Ghanaian Times	Total
Dash	2 (4.1%)	27 (48.2%)	29
Question mark	20 (40.8%)	12 (21.4%)	42
Hyphen	2 (4.1%)	5 (8.9%)	7
Full stop	6 (12.2%)	-	6
Ellipsis	4 (8.2%)	4 (7.14%)	8
Quotation mark	1 (2.0%)	3 (5.4%)	4
Exclamation mark	-	2 (5.4%)	2
Colon	3 (4.1%)	3 (5.4%)	6
Apostrophe	8 (16.3%)	-	8

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Table 4.7 indicates some similarities and differences in punctuation usage in the two data sets. Whereas in the headlines of feature articles from the *Ghanaian Times*, the dash had the highest frequency, in the *Daily Graphic,* the question mark had the highest frequency. The least frequently used in punctuation marks in the *Daily Graphic* were the question mark and the hyphen whereas the least frequently used punctuation marks used in the *Ghanaian Times* were the question mark and the exclamation mark. Exclamation marks were not used in the *Daily Graphic* newspaper at all while the full stop, comma and apostrophe were barely used in the titles from the *Ghanaian Times.* The following examples illustrate the use of dashes in the titles of feature articles:

1. Hypocrisy
   - Insults for insults must stop (*Daily Graphic*, 1/09/2011).
2. The ministry of Information
   - Relevant yesterday, today and tomorrow (*Ghanaian Times,* 2/09/2011).
3. I see a land
   - A Ghanaian's vision for national development (*Ghanaian Times*, 30/11/2011).

As can be seen from the examples above, it is evident that the titles that employ the use of dashes occur in two-unit titles. They were also more evident in the *Ghanaian Times* than the

Daily Graphic. Also, the ideas in the first part of the title run into the ideas in the second part of the title. The next punctuation marks worth discussing are the question marks and ellipses. The examples below demonstrate the use of question marks in the headlines of feature articles from the corpus:

4. We lead in cocoa production, so what? (*Daily Graphic*, 19/9/2011).
5. Are we really God-fearing? (*Daily Graphic,* 10/12/2011).
6. What is Pope Benedict playing at? (*Ghanaian Times,* 8/10/2011).

Interestingly, most of the question marks occurred in single-unit titles. According to Anthony (2001), the consideration of question marks is necessary because it indicates the frequency of question titles. The researcher believes that writers use question marks in their titles so as to demonstrate their enthusiasm for arousing the interests of potential readers, and engaging them in them in the reasoning process. According to Hyland (2002), question in titles do not simply signal the topic of an article, rather, they also promote the articles to the reader and present the writer as someone with an insider's understanding of what constitutes a real issue, and one assumes a plausible response to it. Again, it is seen from Table 4.7 that ellipsis occurred four times each in both newspapers. Ellipses also occurred only in two-unit titles.

It is also interesting to point out from the corpus that writers of feature articles use bullets in capturing their titles. This was dominantly used in two-title units. *Bulleted titles* were dominantly used in the *Daily Graphic* as seen in the examples below:

7. Kakum National Park
    - A rejuvenating experience in the Central Region (*Daily Graphic,* 4/9/2011).
8. Tema Oil Refinery
    - The road to recovery (*Daily Graphic,* 23/9/2011)
9. "I need a miracle"
    - Love for money or risk taking? (*Daily Graphic,* 20/9/2011).
10. Traffic congestion and indiscipline on our roads
    - Don't point to commercial drivers only (*Daily Graphic,* 6/10/2011).

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Unlike Hartley (2005) who found out that colons were dominantly used in the titles of research articles, this study proved the otherwise. In their studies, Anthony (2001) and Fortanet at al (1997) found the occurrence of the colon in Literature dissertation titles and chemistry dissertation titles to be 12% and 13% respectively. Writers scarcely use colons in constructing titles of their feature stories as evinced from the Table 4.7. Colonic titles appeared only three times each in the data set and this number is insignificant.

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5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Principally, the study sought to find the variations and similarities in the construction of titles of feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* newspapers. Specifically, the research attempted to test three variables that are used in the construction of titles in general. These linguistic variables are the dominant syntactic structure used in feature articles, the average title length of feature articles and the dominant punctuation marks used in the headlines of feature articles in the two corpora or sets of data.

The findings of the study are presented in relation to the research questions outlined in the first chapter. Concerning the first research question which looks at the syntactic structure, the research revealed that writers use both phrases and sentences to caption the titles of their feature articles. Some of the syntactic structures used in the construction of titles of feature articles are noun phrases, -ing clauses, -ed clauses and question titles. The research also revealed that the dominant syntactic structure used in the titles of feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghanaian Times* is the noun phrase. From the 160 titles of feature articles collected for the study, noun phrases occurred 72 times. It was also realized that the noun phrases used in constructing the headlines were more dominant in the *Ghanaian Times* (39 times) than in the *Daily Graphic*. The finding corroborated those of Mardh (1980), Mouillard & Tétu (1989) and

Tahririan (2007) who found out that nominalizations are the common syntactic structures used in the construction of banner headlines. This finding also corroborates those of Soler (2002), Yakhontova (2002), Wang & Bai's (2007) and Soler (2002). Their works proved that noun phrases are preferred in the formulation of titles of various academic genres such as dissertations, conference papers and research or journal articles. Most of the noun phrases from the corpus were also postmodified by prepositional phrases.

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Again, the research revealed that titles of feature articles in both newspapers were organised into single units more than multi-unit titles. Single-unit titles stood as the most frequently used and they recorded 76.2% and 58.8% in the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* respectively as opposed to the two-unit titles that recorded 28.8% and 41.3% in both newspapers. The researcher believes that the preference of single-unit titles to multi-unit titles could be due to the fact that writers would want their readers to find less difficulty in understanding the content of the feature article.

As regards the second research question about the average title length, the study revealed that though both newspapers employed long and short titles, there were variations in the average title length of feature articles. The average title length of feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* was 6.4 whereas that in the *Ghanaian Times* was 7.4. This finding differs from that of Gesuato (2009) who found out that the average title length of books, dissertations, proceeding papers and journals is 9.2, 12.9, 10.8 and 9.9 respectively. The researcher believes that what accounts for the variation in title length is due to the difference in the genres used as data sources. Finally, as regards the dominant punctuation mark in both data sets, the study revealed that the dominant punctuation mark used in the construction of titles of feature articles in the *Daily Graphic* was the question mark (40.8%) while the dash (48.2%) was the dominant punctuation mark in the

Ghanaian Times. Though rarely used, exclamation marks were exclusive to titles from the *Ghanaian Times* newspaper while in the full stop, comma and apostrophe were barely used in the titles from the *Ghanaian Times.* The finding departs from that of Hartley (2005) who found out that the colon was dominantly used in the titles of research articles, this study proved otherwise. Surprisingly, the study revealed that apart from the mainstream punctuation marks used in the used titles of feature articles, writers used bullets in captioning their titles.

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The above-mentioned findings of the present research have at least three salient implications. They are presented below:

First, the study has implications for pedagogy in journalistic writing in general and in the teaching of title construction of feature articles in particular. By emphasizing the linguistic choices and variables that writers make use of in formulating headlines for, the present study serves as a form of eye-opener and thus, illuminates the understanding of writers regarding the way they caption this seemingly peripheral but important rhetorical unit of the feature article - the titles..

Second, the findings of the study can be said to be contributing to the scholarship on print media discourse. In other words, the study contributes significantly to studies on headlines or titles by adding to the extant literature. It is worth pointing out that the study's outstanding contribution is realized most especially in Africa and specifically Ghana, where researches on headlines of various media genres have been least mentioned. Thus, in this study, the body of knowledge in media discourse is broadened. Against, the backdrop that the present study is situated within the Ghanaian context, it can be said also that the study provides the impetus for further research.

Finally, the findings of the present study lend support to the discipline-specific stance of various scholars (eg. Hyland, 2000; Haggan, 2004; Afful & Mwinlaaru, 2010) in various studies in academic discourse. The findings of the study confirm the fact that the field-dependent culture influences the choice of linguistic variables in various genres. Such earlier scholars argued that the discipline-specific contexts influence the choice of both macro and micro aspects of writing.

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The need for further research is heightened by the fact that there is sparse literature on titles and headlines of media genres in Africa, in general, and Ghana, in particular, to review. A number of other studies can, therefore, be conducted as a sequel to this study. These may be considered for further research: First, the present study was largely limited to a print media genre – feature article. It would be useful, therefore, to replicate the work to cover other news sub-genres such as the editorials, classifieds or the titles of obituaries in newspapers. An inter-disciplinary study of titles or headlines in fields such as Science, Business, Mathematics and Sociology would also be revealing. This will help ascertain whether or not titles or headlines are conditioned by different house styles and/or are discipline-specific. Secondly, the present research examined only syntactic structure, title length and punctuation usage of titles of a small sample of feature articles. This was because the study was largely limited by time and finance. It would be useful to investigate other linguistic variables such as preposition usage, lexical density, hedging and lexical choices. Finally, the present study used textual data from the *Daily Graphic* and *Ghanaian Times* and made analysis based on the textual data. It would be revealing if such a study on titles of feature articles could adopt the socio-literate approach championed by Johns (1997) to incorporate other research instruments such as interviews to find out why writers make certain linguistic choices in captioning their feature stories.

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