

Discursive Construction of Ideology in Print Media Political Interviews in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *This study examines the ideological orientations of discourse participants in selected print media political interviews (PMPs) in Nigeria. Twenty political interviews were purposively selected from Vanguard and The Sun newspapers published between 2014 and 2016. The newspapers were selected because of their wide readership, accessibility, and coverage of political events. Privileging van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and transitivity system of Halliday's systemic functional grammar (SFG), the study unearths four main ideological constructions to characterise the PMPs: nationalist, supremacist, sectionalist and constitutionalist. These ideologies are realised through discursive strategies such as lexicalisation, polarisation, self-glorification and negative other-presentation, with material, mental, existential and verbal processes. The study concludes that a linguistic study of political interviews enhances the understanding of political leaders' political ideologies which will ultimately help to ameliorate the problem of leadership and governance in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Ideology, print media, political interviews, Nigeria, socio-cognitive model, transitivity

INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic and political problems such as poverty, unemployment, corruption, insecurity, among others, that bedevil most African countries, especially Nigeria, have been linked to lack of ideologies by the political class (Omotola 2009, Olanrewaju 2015). Contrary to this view, this study argues that Nigerian political leaders negotiate and construct different ideologies in PMPs. These ideologies are discursively negotiated through language use, thus establishing the interconnectedness between language and ideology. In essence, language and ideology are “intricately linked to each other such that it is difficult to separate them” (Ellah, 2021, p. 77) because people’s ideologies are expressed through their language use in a given context. I operationalise language as verbal and multimodal means of communication. According to Ghevolor, Ellah & Ushie (2021, p.105) language is “a system that teaches cultural values, life styles, perception and world view, and equally as a resource which assigns social roles and identities to people in society”. This implies that language the whole essence of human existence. Following the argument of Ellah and Uwen (2020, p. 116) that, “the common orientation, shared experience and ideology shape the discourse patterns of groups to the extent that we could

establish which is academic, political, security, religious, legal or medical language”, political discourses (e.g. inaugural speeches, political interviews, campaigns, among others) are characterised by their persuasive use of language, orientation to politics and the struggle for political power in order to influence and control the resources of the society. Ellah (2022, p.9) describe political discourse as “any discourse that deals with political engagements and enterprises”. This implies that political discourse centres on politics and political activities.

The media provide a veritable platform for politicians to articulate their political views and policies. One of the ways in which political actors – elected or appointed political leaders or their representatives ventilate their views and policies is through political interviews. Political interviews are constructed encounters between a journalist and political actors. Political interviews are predominantly argumentative in nature and they aim at convincing the immediate discourse participant and the general public about any political issue (Andone 2010:34). In such interviews, the interviewer assumes the role of the masses by making the politician account for their actions and statements in terms of clarification or justification of their actions or statements (Andone 2010:35). As stated earlier, political interviews fall under the broad umbrella of political discourse.

Previous studies on political interviews have largely been investigated from the perspectives of pragmatics, rhetoric, and discourse analysis (e.g. Mullany 2002, Odebunmi 2009, Al-Rassam, 2010, Hordecki and Piontek 2014). For example, Mullany (2002) looks at gender, politeness and impoliteness in media political broadcast interviews using a data base of 20 encounters through the lens of synthetic community of practice. The study reveals that only one instance of impoliteness was found as identified by the female interviewee, Hilary Armstrong.

Odebunmi (2009) uses the revised version of the relational work theory of politeness to investigate print media political interviews in two Nigerian magazines – *Tell* and *The News*. The study indicates that participants in print media political interviews in Nigeria exploit three contextual beliefs, namely “shared knowledge of subjects, shared knowledge of political gimmicks, and shared knowledge of ideological expectations” (Odebunmi 2009:1) to achieve politeness in interaction. It concludes that “participants in the interviews put up politic, polite and impolite verbal behaviours, which are respectively indexed by confrontations and criticisms, veils, and condemnations and accusations.” In a similar study, Al-Rassam (2010) explores four television political interviews in Iraq using an eclectic approach to account for the pragmatic moves and strategies that are deployed to contend with “the conflict between being uncooperative and truthful.” The study concludes that indirectness in form of word play, circumlocution, metaphor inter alia dominates Iraqi political discourse and indeed those of other climes.

Huls and Varwijk (2010) investigate “political bias in TV interviews” with a view to ascertaining alleged political bias, and “to contribute to the development of an instrument for the measurement of partiality in TV interviews of Dutch media.” The data comprise 12 interviews taken from “Pauw & Witteman” late-night talk show during the 2006 run-up to the parliamentary elections. Anchoring its analysis on “five measures of adversarial questioning that were developed by Clayman et al. (2007): initiative,

directness, assertiveness, opposition and accountability”, as well as on a sixth measure that was developed in the context of the study, “persistence”, the study reveals that journalists are more favourably disposed to the ideas and opinions of the left-wing politicians than those of the right-wing politicians in terms of coverage and question design.

Hoffman (2013) examines perceived media bias and effects across TV entertainment formats in political interviews. She observes that Americans’ confidence in news has become very low, thus, they turn to entertainment programmes, which “regularly feature interviews with public officials, potential candidates, and celebrities”. The study demonstrates that different programmes produce different perceptions of both bias and effect. These perceptions are influenced by the format, content and characters of the media.

Hordecki and Piontek (2014) utilize content analysis to analyse Polish television political interviews in order to explain the changing roles of politicians and journalists in an era of “mediatization of politics and politization of the media”. This change of roles, the paper asserts is influenced by “technology and commercial success”. It further reveals that journalists now abandon their primary role of analysis of current political issues to focus on their relationships with politicians. It also shows that journalists and politicians engage in supremacy contest during interviews, each seeking to control and make the other submissive.

Zand-Moghadam and Bikineh (2014) undertake a comparative study of the use of discourse markers in the political interviews of a select Iranian and English politicians with the aim of identifying the similarities and differences in the use of such discourse markers. The study reveals that both Iranian and English politicians use a high degree of discourse markers, especially continuation markers which are used in all the interviews in almost equal frequency to achieve their set goals. The study, however, identifies some differences in the deployment of discourse markers in the interviews conducted in English and those conducted in Persian. Interpersonal discourse markers were found to be more frequently used in English based newspapers of both English and Iranian politicians than those published in Persian. Also, Iranian politicians interviewed in the Persian language demonstrate higher deployment of additive referential makers than others who used more consequent markers in their interviews. The study concludes that the differences in the use of discourse markers and communicative styles could be attributed to “the presence of cross-cultural differences in English and Iranian contexts” (Zand-Moghadam and Bikineh 2014:57). The present study differs from other studies because it explores linguistic and discourse resources to accounts for the ideological orientation of political actors in PMPIs in Nigeria.

Theoretical orientation

This study is anchored on two theoretical perspectives: van Dijk’s socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis and transitivity system. Critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) “is a discourse analytical tool that examines language function in relation to socio-political structure of a particular

human society” (Ellah 2014:134). It accounts for the interplay among language, ideology and power relation in discourse.

There are different approaches of CDA, for example, discourse-historical approach (DHA – Wodak 2001, 2006), discourse socio-cultural approach (DRA – Fairclough 1992, 1995) socio-cognitive approach (SCA) by van Dijk (1995, 2006). In this study, SCA is adopted because of its ability to account for ideologies in context. Van Dijk’s socio-cognitive approach (SCA) emphasises the interface among discourse, cognition and society. In this tripartite theorisation, discourse refers to any communicative event such as spoken or written text, gestures and any other ‘semiotic’ or multimodal signifier. Cognition represents “both personal as well as social cognition, beliefs and goals as well as evaluations and emotions, and any other ‘mental’ or ‘memory’ structures, representations or processes involved in discourse and interaction” (van Dijk, 2001:98). Society entails “both the local, microstructures of situated face-to-face interactions, as well as the more global, societal and political structures variously defined in terms of groups, group-relations (such as dominance and inequality), movements, institutions, organizations, social processes, political systems and more abstract properties of societies and cultures (van Dijk 2001:98). Synthesising social and cognitive components of the model, van Dijk (1998:18) describes social cognition as “the system of mental representations and process of group members.” The socio-cognitive model stresses the relationship between discourse, social structures and ideology.

Van Dijk (1998:44) proposes two main discursive strategies for the analysis of ideology in discourse. They are: ‘positive self-representation’ (semantic macro-strategy of in-group favouritism) and ‘negative other-representation’ (semantic macro-strategy of derogation of out-group) (cf. Rashidi and Souzandehfar 2010). Developing these strategies, he provides a four structure ideological framework, which he calls “ideological square” that can be applied in the analysis of discourse structures:

- i. emphasize positive things about Us
- ii. emphasize negative things about Them
- iii. de-emphasize positive things about Them
- iv. de-emphasize negative things about Us

These ideological discourse structures are achievable through the utilisation of the following twenty-seven (27) categories of ideological discourse analysis: Actor description, authority, burden (topos), categorization, comparison, consensus, counterfactuals, disclaimers, euphemism, evidentiality, example (illustration), generalization, hyperbole, implication, irony, lexicalization, metaphor, national self-glorification, negative other-presentation, norm expression, number game, polarization, populism, positive self-presentation, presupposition, vagueness and victimization (van Dijk 2006).

This approach, therefore, offers itself in the analysis of ideology in print media political interviews because it is context based and it enables us to analyse participants’ cognition or perception materialised in the categories of ideological discourse analysis. In particular, this approach used in this work to unpack the ideological postures or orientations of participants in political interviews in Nigerian print media.

Transitivity system is used to show how socio-political actors and entities represent their experiences in discourses. Halliday's use of transitivity transcends its use in traditional grammar where it distinguishes between verbs that take direct objects (transitive verbs) and verbs that do not take direct objects (intransitive verbs). Transitivity in the sense of SFG is concerned with the representation of meaning in a clause. In other words, transitivity patterns "are the clausal realization of contextual choices" (Egins 1994: 270). They deal with the encoding of events in a clause and the participants involved. A clause is conceptualised in the sense of transitivity to mean "the simultaneous realization of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings" (Halliday 1981: 42). It is also considered to be "the product of three simultaneous semantic processes. It is at one and the same time a representation of experience (ideational), an interactive exchange (interpersonal), and a message (textual)" (Halliday 1985: 53).

Matu and Lubbe (2007:411) assert that "transitivity is concerned with propositional meanings and functions of syntactic elements. The representations that can be attested within a transitivity model are said to signal bias, manipulation and ideology in discourse." Transitivity has three main components, namely, the process (which is realised by the verbal group), participants (human/non-human who are participating in these processes [in the noun group]), and circumstances (the when, where, and how the processes take place [in the prepositional phrase and adverbial group]). The process consists of mental, material, behavioural, verbal, relational and existential processes. In this study, transitivity system is used to examine the lexico-grammatical patterns that reveal ideational or experiential meaning in the selected data.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study comprise twenty print media political interviews that were purposively selected from two widely circulated and read print newspapers: *Vanguard* and *The Sun*. These newspapers were selected because of their wide readership and coverage of political interviews between 2014 and 2016, a year before and after the 2015 general elections, which marked a change in government at the federal level.

The study adopted the descriptive research design method in the analysis of data. Specifically, aspects of van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of critical discourse analysis and Halliday's transitivity system of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) were combined to capture the linguistic expressions projecting ideologies in the selected interviews. It is pertinent to state that some of the interviews were quite lengthy, thus, making the data representative enough for generalisation. The interviews were situated in two broad contexts: election and governance.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis reveals the negotiation and construction of four ideologies by participants in the selected data. The four ideologies found to be constructed are: the nationalist, sectionalist, supremacist and constitutionalist ideology. These ideologies are projected through van Dijk's detailed ideological

structures together with material, mental, existential and verbal processes. The ideologies are discussed in turn.

Sectionalist ideology

Sectionalism refers to excessive concern for or loyalty to a particular group or region within a larger society. It also entails group or regional allegiance over a country. In the context of this study, sectionalist ideology deals with group or regional alignments of the participants in the print media political interviews, especially with respect to ethnicity, culture, and the six geo-political zones in Nigeria. This ideology characterises interactions in PMPs basically because the Nigerian political system is an emerging one fraught with, among other challenges, ethnic and regional loyalty, especially in terms of voting, political appointments and the provision of infrastructure.

This ideology is negotiated through the discursive strategies of lexicalisation, polarisation, authority, hyperbole, self-glorification and negative other-presentation. In example 1 below, material process relating to support and the mental process relating to contemplation; and discursive strategies of lexicalisation and authority mark out the ideology.

Example 1

Background: In this interview, the President of Aka Ikenga, the Igbo intelligencia group alleges that President Muhammadu Buhari has discriminated against the Igbo in his few months in office.

The Sun interviewer: The South-East didn't support Muhammadu Buhari, what do you think are the chances of the Igbo under his regime in terms of appointments?

Interviewee: The constitution actually takes care of any fear of any group. The South-East and the South-South didn't vote for President Buhari.... The same constitution talks of Federal Character. Section 13 and 14 of the 1999 Constitution, takes care of all these things.... Therefore, it is wrong for him to discriminate against any section of Nigeria on the bases of voting...

(The Sun, August 1, 2015:42)

In the excerpt above, ethnic and regional loyalty appears to be stronger than national interest. With the use of the material process relating to support (e.g. "didn't support...", "didn't vote for..."), the discourse participants linguistically construct sectionalist ideology, with particular reference to political support and appointments based on geo-political zones. The interviewer orients to sectionalism which was reflected in the voting pattern of the 2015 Presidential election in which the two main contenders: Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari from the southern and northern parts of Nigeria, respectively, got more support from their respective political zones. This is expressed in the material process clause "The South-East didn't support Muhammadu Buhari" to imply that the South-East, and

indeed the Igbo people did not endorse Muhammadu Buhari, thus, displaying their sectionalism. He therefore, alludes that the South-Eastern zone would not benefit from the Buhari administration, especially in terms of appointments. He does so through the utilisation of lexicalization as he strategically singles out “the South-East” as the region that “didn’t support Muhammadu Buhari” which indexes voting based on sectionalism. Through the same material process relating to regional support, the interviewee agrees that “the South-East and South-South didn’t vote for President Buhari”

The interviewer also deploys the mental process relating to contemplation to foreground the psychological consciousness of the discourse participant on what he thinks about the prospects of the Igbo with respect to political appointments vis-a-vis the fact that they did not support President Buhari during the election. This mental process relating to contemplation is projected in the interrogative “what do you think are the chances of the Igbo under his regime in terms of appointments?” With the mental process which is realised by the cognitive verb, “think” the interviewer intends to reveal the psychological engagement of the interviewee, that is, the Senser, “you” about the Phenomenon, “the chances of the Igbo”. This process helps to underscore sectionalist ideology because the interviewee is made to think only about the chances of a particular group of people, that is, the Igbo.

The discourse strategies that are used to realise this sectionalist ideology in the above example are lexicalisation and authority. The lexical choices of “South-East” and “Igbo” to show political support and the chances of political appointments connote sectionalist ideology. To further pursue his sectionalist agenda, the interviewee cites authority, that is, Sections 13 and 14 of the 1999 Constitution that recognize Federal Character principle. The constitution is referred to as an authority that guarantees the interests of the different sections of the country. Example 2 below further illustrates the use of material and verbal processes, and the strategic use of lexicalization, polarization, evidentiality, glorification, negative other-presentation and hyperbole to underpin sectionalist ideology in PMPs in Nigeria.

Example 2

Background: A leader from the South-Eastern part of Nigeria talks about the alleged marginalization of the region, especially with regards to the appointments that have been made by President Muhammadu Buhari.

The Sun interviewer: The President said the economy was badly managed by the last administration. The person whose name is repeatedly mentioned is Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala. What is your view on this?

Interviewee: I see it as a case of Edo State Governor, Comrade Adams Oshiomole, on vendetta mission, in which there is no substance.... He is just trying to raise enough dust so that President Buhari would try to destroy this our brilliant first class lady. I'm just reminding him that whatever that goes around comes around, and by this time next year, he would no longer be the governor, and would be looking towards the centre. The witch-hunting of Ngozi reminds me of the former Chief of Army Staff, General Ihejirika. As soon as he finished serving his tenure, they went after him. They want to extend this witch-hunting to Mrs. Allison Madueke. Demonizing Ngozi or demonizing the South-East sounds funny, and the same thing has moved into appointments. With all the appointments that have been made, none for South-East. With about 16 appointments, 14 went to the North; about two to South-West. When we complained, what were we told that it was purely on merit [sic]? I'm happy that they are talking about merit. The same people talking of merit were the same people, who made it impossible for our children to go to school. When it comes to admission in schools, they would say it is not based on

merit but quota system. When something good is going to come to Igbo land, we are told that it is purely on merit, and if on merit believe you me, Igbos will come first. It is mind bugling that in the list of highly educated officers from the rank of Brigadier and above, that there is no Igbo officer worthy enough to be a service chief....

(*The Sun*, August 1, 2015:42)

Example 2 above explicitly underscores sectionalist ideology in PMPIs through the preponderance of material and verbal processes. With the material process relating to persecution (e.g. “destroy”, “went

after him”, “demonizing”) the interviewee foregrounds the victimisation of the Igbo of South-Eastern Nigeria, thereby, revealing his sectionalist ideology as somebody who is more concerned about the welfare of his Igbo people. Also highlighted is the actual expression of sectionalist ideology: “With all the appointments that have been made, none for South-East.” Although, the identity of the actor is not given, the material process verb “have been made” shows the concrete action that has been taken against the South-Eastern Region. The statement, therefore, realises sectionalist ideology because the interviewee expresses his group interest rather than seeing all other appointees as Nigerians.

With the verbal process, “The President said the economy was badly managed by the last administration”, the interviewer expresses the President’s belief through attribution, so as to remain neutral about the matter. However, the interviewee through the same verbal process in “When we complained, what were we told that it was purely on merit” takes a subjective position on the matter through ascription and therefore, expresses his sectionalist ideology in respect of the perceived marginalisation of his people. The verbal process is also seen in the clause, “I’m happy that they are talking about merit” where the pronominal, “they” is activated as the sayer, while “talking” is the verbal process. This verbal action is realised in the text differently as, “say”, “told” to index the excuses made by those who persecute the South-East.

The discursive strategies that have been utilised in the example to foreground sectionalist ideology as earlier hinted are lexicalisation, polarisation, evidentiality, glorification, negative other-presentation and hyperbole. Through lexicalisation, the interviewer alleges that the name of “Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala” is “repeatedly mentioned” in the purported badly managed economy by the past administration. His reference to Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is not only informed by the fact that she was the Finance and Co-coordinating Minister of Economy, but because he cognitively knows that she is from the South-East. He attempts to be hyperbolic in the use of “repeatedly mentioned” to imply that Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala is at the centre of the alleged poor management of the Nigerian economy.

Responding to the allegation against Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the interviewee deploys polarised terms to present Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala in glorified terms as “our brilliant first class lady”. The choice of the possessive pronoun, “our” within the context implies that Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala belongs to the South-East. To further use glorification terms about his people, the interviewee says “...if on merit believe you me, Igbos would come first.” He presents the accusers of Mrs. Okonjo-Iweala and other Igbo indigenes negatively through negative descriptions such as “witch-hunting”, “demonizing”. He deploys evidentiality to prove that the South-East has been marginalised and discriminated against by the Buhari administration in the expression, “With about 16 appointments, 14 went to the North; about two to the South-West.” The interviewee also gives concrete example of how no Igbo officer was found “worthy enough to be a service chief”. This situation arouses empathy from people that the zone has been marginalised. Ultimately, the overall result of the interviewee’s deployment of all these strategies is the expression of a sectionalist ideology.

Nationalist ideology

Nationalism is a political ideology that is “based on the premise that the individual’s loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interest” (www. Britannica.com). The concept of nationalism is one that demands that national interest be considered before individual ambitions and interests. Nationalist ideology in this study represents the fostering of patriotic feeling toward, or socio-economic and political interests of the nation as a whole rather than loyalty and allegiance to a group or region by the participants of the selected print media political interviews. This ideology is realised through the linguistic elements that indicate non-alignment, inclusiveness and collectivity. The specific linguistic indices of nationalist ideology in PMPIs are material, verbal and mental processes together with lexicalisation, evidentiality and positive self-presentation discursive strategies. This is instantiated below:

Example 3

Background: The Chairman of Akwa Ibom Lawyers Forum in Lagos speaks on his group’s intention to support President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for a second term in office.

Vanguard interviewer: Can you tell us what your forum stands for and why you are supporting Jonathan for 2015 Presidential election?

Interviewee: To begin with, Akwa Ibom Lawyers Forum in Lagos is a group made up of lawyers from different parts of Akwa Ibom State. As professionals, we understand what the constitution as well as the law of the land says about election process. Our ultimate goal is to work together to support the unity of Nigeria and national development. Our decision to support the President was reached by the forum after an exhaustive deliberation on Jonathan’s effort to move the country forward despite the challenges. We also look at his commitments to ensure the unity of Nigeria by ensuring that the nation remains one united entity notwithstanding the diversity of ethnic groups... we should look at his developmental programmes for the country and give him a chance to consolidate on major projects. His approval of the CONFAB’s report for full implementation is a great achievement of Jonathan, which would remain indelible in the history of Nigeria. Today, it is on record that Jonathan is the first Nigerian President who summoned the courage to convene the National Conference, what other administrations could not do. He successfully privatised the power sector and handed over the assets of Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN) to private sectors....

(*Sunday Vanguard*, March 22, 2015:10)

The interviewee's response to the question on why his group supports the re-election of President Jonathan is couched in the expression of nationalistic view. His group's decision to support the President is premised on their belief in the unity and development of the country, and not on any other sentiments such as ethnic, party or pecuniary gains. This nationalist ideology is expressed through the linguistic resources of material, mental and verbal processes which are foregrounded by lexicalisation, evidentiality and positive self-presentation. Through the material process relating to support "Our ultimate goal is to work together to support the unity of Nigeria and national development", the interviewee explicitly expresses his nationalist ideology since the basic interest of his group is "to support the unity of Nigeria and national development", and not any parochial interest. The material process in the clause "... Jonathan's effort to move the country forward despite the challenges", which provides reason for their decision to support him (Jonathan) is also used to construct the interviewee's nationalist ideology since he is working in the interest of the entire nation. The material process verb in the clause is "move" which indicates concrete action; and the actor of the process is "Jonathan" who is a conscious being that undertakes the action of making the country to progress.

There are many instances of mental process in the excerpt, but of particular relevance to the realisation of nationalist ideology in the interaction is the mental process relating to awareness in the clause, "As professionals, we understand what the constitution as well as the law of the land says about election process", which cognitively shows that the group's decision to support Jonathan is based on their epistemic knowledge of the law and governance which is gained through their professional training as lawyers. As lawyers who are generally referred to in Nigeria as "learned" people, their views about the nation are expected to be nationalistic. Other mental processes are marked in the text by the perceptual verb "look" which is repeated twice to point to Jonathan's commitment to national development, thus forming the basis for the interviewee's support as a means of asserting his nationalist ideology. With the verbal process in the expression "Can you tell us what your forum stands for and why you are supporting Jonathan for 2015 Presidential election?", the interviewer requests to know the philosophy of the interviewee's group and why they endorse Jonathan for re-election.

Through the strategy of lexicalisation, the interviewee chooses words such as "support", "unity of Nigeria", "national development", "one united entity", "developmental programmes" and so on to index his nationalist ideology. The strategy of evidentiality is used by the interviewee to refer to President Jonathan's political will to convene a National Conference and approval of the full implementation of the conference report. He uses positive self-presentation to describe President Jonathan by referring to his "courage" and successful privatization of the power sector, but describes the previous administrations before him negatively as not being able to convene a National Conference.

Ultimately, the interviewee portrays President Jonathan, his group (the Akwa Ibom Lawyers Forum in Lagos) and himself as nationalists whose interest is centred on the development and cohesive existence of Nigeria.

Supremacist ideology

Supremacism refers to the belief that a particular person or group of people is superior to others. A supremacist is therefore, a person “who believes that a particular type or group of people should lead or have control over other types or groups of people because they believe they are better” (www. dictionary. Cambridge.org). Participants in our sampled data express their supremacist ideology in their attempt to show that they are better than their political opponents; or that their political party and candidates are superior to others, especially in the context of election. The linguistic resources that are used to achieve this ideology are material, mental and verbal processes with positive self-presentation and self-glorification strategies. This is instantiated in the following example:

Example 5

Background: In this interview, a loyalist of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) speaks on why he is the most qualified aspirant for the governorship of Benue State.

Sun interviewer: Why did you join the 2015 governorship race in Benue State?

Interviewee: I am in the race because I am competently qualified and I strongly believe that I am one of the most qualified persons to contest the governorship position. I am from Guma Local Government Area and I am coming in with a depth of pedigree that will measure and even surpass that of other contestants. So, I am competently qualified to contest. I am in the race because I believe that there is need to usher in a leadership in Benue State that will consolidate on the gains of the present leadership and then take the state beyond the level where it is now. I believe I am poised to do that. I have the experience and I am coming in with wide knowledge and exposure that [is] necessary to get the job done. I said I am the most qualified because I have many years of working experience in other countries, particularly the USA. I have the educational background, the committee experience and exposure. I come from a political background and I have seen all these things and believe that with the network of people I have come to know globally, I would be able to tap from their experience and expertise to be able to deliver Benue State by adding value in such a way that the state will be reckoned with in the committee of states.

(The Sun, April 28, 2014:34)

The material process relating to competition is used in the above example to demonstrate that election is a contest of supremacy. The exploration of this material process is initiated by the interviewer in the

clause, “Why did you join the 2015 governorship race in Benue State?” In this clause, the material process is signaled by the verb “join” and the goal is represented by the nominal element, “governorship race” to indicate competition. The interviewer’s interrogation that projects the utilisation of material process yields another material process relating to competition from the interviewee in the clause “I am coming in with a depth of pedigree” that underscores the interviewee’s supremacist ideology. The material process verb, “coming” which signifies readiness for the contest is repeated twice in the text. The interviewee also explores the mental process relating to conviction to indicate his supremacist ideology. For example, in the clause “I strongly believe that I am one of the most qualified persons to contest the governorship position”, the senser “I”, (that is, the interviewee) encodes his supremacist ideology with the cognitive verb “believe” which is modified by the adverb “strongly” to express his psychological consciousness of being better than all other contestants. The cognitive verb “believe” that marks the interviewee’s conviction that he is the best man for the governorship position is repeated four times in the text to emphasise the interviewee’s supremacist ideology.

Through the verbal process as expressed in the clause “I said I am the most qualified”, the interviewee, represented by the sayer, “I” verbalises the verbiage, “the most qualified” to ascribe superiority to himself, hence, asserting his supremacist ideology.

In fact, the whole of the interviewee’s response portrays his supremacist ideology. He presents himself as the best candidate for the governorship position of Benue State. This positive self-presentation is lexicalised through superlative adverbials such as “competently qualified”, “most qualified”. These superlative terms are deliberately deployed to index his supremacist ideology. He sees himself as the most competent person to “take the state beyond the level where it is now.” He further resorts to self-glorification in talking about his experience, exposure, educational and political background. This is illustrated in the following expressions: “I am coming in with a depth of pedigree that will measure and even surpass that of other contestants”, “I have the experience and I am coming in with wide knowledge and exposure”, “I have many years of working experience in other countries, particularly the USA. I have the educational background.... I come from a political background and I have seen all these things and believe that with the network of people I have come to know globally, I would be able to tap from their experience and expertise to be able to deliver Benue State...” In using this self-glorification strategy, the interviewee strives to establish his supremacist ideology.

The interviewee, still touting his supremacist ideology sees himself as the messiah that will “deliver Benue State”, which implies that the state has been in bondage. The ultimate pragmatic goal of expressing this supremacist ideology in the context of election is to win the support of the electorate.

Constitutionalist ideology

Constitutionalism is the belief that a group of people or country should be governed based on the constitution. It “is a political philosophy based on the idea that government authority is derived from the people and should be limited by a constitution that clearly expresses what the government can and can’t do” (study.com). It is the legal limitation of government’s power and authority. Constitutionalist

ideology in PMPIs relates to participants' belief in the supremacy of the constitution, that is, participants advocacy for strict adherence to provisions of the constitution and the rule of law. The linguistic elements that are used to assert this ideology are the material, the mental and the verbal processes together with lexicalisation, positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation strategies. This type of ideology is expressed in the following example:

Example 8

Background: One time Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and member of Akwa-Ibom State Elders Forum talks on the good performance of Governor Udom Emmanuel of Akwa-Ibom State, and President Buhari's alleged breach of the constitution.

Vanguard interviewer: What is your view on alleged skewed appointments so far made by President Muhammadu Buhari?

Interviewee: Well, we know that is directly in breach of the constitution. The President maybe, heard what I said recently in an interview that he has been operating as a Sole Administrator and there is no provision in the Constitution of this country for the business of governance to be conducted in that manner. Again; even in the attempt to people his administration, what we have had is a clear breach of the Constitution. The very foundations of this country are very clear. The foundations demand recognition of the differences that have ensured the emergence of a country and it is unacceptable where you fail to recognize the federal character of our make up as a country. This is not only condemnable but poses real danger for the future of this country.

Vanguard interviewer: Breach of the constitution

Interviewee: So, in a nutshell, President Buhari is operating in breach of the constitution, he is in breach of the Nigeria Constitution by the way and manner he is approaching governance and that is an impeachable offense.

(*Vanguard*, September 8, 2015:34)

The linguistic mechanism of material process has been used in the clause, "he has been operating as a Sole Administrator" to pragmatically condemn the President's mode of administration that has no recourse to the provision of the constitution, which has no room for a Sole Administrator. This is explicitly expressed in another material process "President Buhari is operating in breach of the constitution... and that is an impeachable offense". The projection of the President's non-adherence to the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution, and the prescription of impeachment as the appropriate

penalty for such act help to foreground the interviewee as a person who believes in the supremacy of the constitution, thereby, asserting his constitutionalist ideology.

With the mental process of knowledge in the clause “Well, we know that is directly in breach of the constitution”, the interviewee shows his knowledge and understanding of the constitution. Equipped with the appropriate knowledge of the constitution, the interviewee constructs his constitutionalist ideology by asserting that the President’s action is in violation of the constitution. This implies that he wants the President to act according to the constitution, and nothing else, because the constitution is supreme and binding on all irrespective of their socio-political positions. With the verbal process “I said recently in an interview that he has been operating as a Sole Administrator and there is no provision in the Constitution of this country for the business of governance to be conducted in that manner”, the interviewee, through the sayer “I” attributes the condemnation of the President’s non-adherence to the provisions of the constitution to himself.

The interviewer strategically constructs his constitutionalist ideology by exploring lexical choices such as “skewed appointment” allegedly made by the President to indicate the President’s breach of the constitution. This implies that the appointment is inappropriate and has contravened the Nigerian constitution with respect to Federal Government appointments that recognises the Federal Character Principle. The interviewee explicitly constructs his constitutionalist ideology through lexicalisation by using lexical items such as “breach”, “constitution”, “impeachable”, and “federal character” to point to constitutional matters. He condemns the President’s action as “directly in breach of the constitution” and asserts his belief that the country should be run according to the constitution, as he says “there is no provision in the Constitution of this country for the business of governance to be conducted in that manner”. He uses the inclusive pronominal “we” as a positive self-presentation of people like him who adhere to constitutional provisions, but uses negative other-presentation to describe President Buhari as “a Sole Administrator” whose offences are “impeachable”. He goes further to say that the President’s action “is not only condemnable but poses real danger for the future of this country”. This paints a very bleak future for Nigeria if the President continues to govern without strict adherence to the constitution of the country.

This view presents the interviewee as someone who believes so much in the constitution as the only thing that guarantees good governance; and anything to the contrary becomes inimical to the people and the nation.

CONCLUSION

This paper has successfully demonstrated that Nigerian political leaders negotiate and construct different ideologies in PMPs. The investigation has shown that participants in PMPs in the selected data construct seven ideologies, namely, nationalist, sectionalist, supremacist and constitutionalist ideology. These ideologies are found to be realised linguistically through material, mental and verbal processes of transitivity system, which are foregrounded by lexicalisation, evidentiality, negative other-presentation,

positive self-representation, hyperbole, empathy, self-glorification, polarisation, rhetorical questions, empathy and metaphor. The ideologies discussed in the study have socio- pragmatic implications to the growth and development of Nigeria. The study therefore, recommends that the positive ideologies such as nationalist and constitutionalist ideologies should be encouraged and implemented for the overall good of the country, and indeed the world. Finally, the study also recommends that further research should be conducted on other forms of political discourses such as radio and television interviews to examine the participants' ideological orientations.

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