
A critical discourse analysis of selected political interviews in Nigerian news media

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Abstract: Several studies have been carried out on political discourse using different linguistic approaches of Pragmatics, Critical Discourse Analysis, Stylistics as well as implicature. However, little attention has been given to the blend of Critical Discourse Analysis and rhetoric as a means to unravel different ideological stances in political discourse. Thus, this paper investigated how ideological beliefs of individuals or groups were conveyed through linguistic expressions to manipulate those of others in political interviews of Nigerian politicians. A total of two (2) interviews conducted by Channels Television were randomly selected. The data for the study were video files downloaded from the official YouTube page of the Channel Tv station and were transcribed so as to draw out relevant extracts. van Dijk's 2006 socio cognitive aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis and rhetoric were used as its theoretical framework. Findings revealed that ideology is an individual's perception or experience of the world. It also revealed that the interviewees in the selected interviews deployed language as a strategy of domination and supremacy by exploiting lexical items and strong imperatives which allow them to impose their views on others. Commonly, it was found that they created asymmetrical power relations of privileged 'we', 'us' and less privileged 'they', 'them' through positive self-presentation of us and negative other presentation of them. It was also revealed that certain rhetorical and ideological strategies such as actor description, polarisation, burden, categorisation, comparison, consensus, populism, vagueness and appeal to emotions among others present in the selected political interviews are implicitly used to project different ideological positions of the politicians.

Keywords: Critical discourse, Ideology, Politics, Power, Political interview

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1. Introduction

People's lives are becoming increasingly shaped by textual representations which are politically, socially or economically motivated, coupled with the present explosion in information technology, there is need to create awareness on how these representations should be internalized – whose representations are they?, who gains what from them?, what social relations do they draw people into?, what are their ideological effects and what alternative representations are there? (Fairclough, 1995: 75). Political interviews, like other political discourses, often results in repressive language use which manifests in the form of manipulation, marginalization, offensive language use, propaganda, use and abuse of power, gate keeping of what gets to be represented in discourse and what should not be represented in the imposition of a dominant ideology on the less privileged ones. As already established, one of the political events during which politicians try to use discourse to establish, maintain or sustain power is during political interviews. The deployment of appropriate linguistic facilities in political interviews goes a long way in determining the acceptability of most candidates who impose their ideology on others in their quest to win the people's mandate.

The world is characterised by conflicting ideological stances. Many people are still vulnerable to the oratorical prowess of politicians and are influenced easily by ideologies presented by these political actors in their interviews, speeches, campaigns, etc. In our world today, there are various ideologies concerning globalisation, democracy, free health care, etc. For this reason, it is important for this paper to turn its searchlight on the ideologies of political parties in a burgeoning democratic society like Nigeria. The linguistic means through which these blocs engage in power

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struggle should be examined. As observed by Abdulkadir (2021: 3), most of the political discourses that have been analysed had tended towards a description and analysis of style, innovative and persuasive strategies of politicians, and manipulation of linguistic structures to champion individual interest in presidential, governorship, senatorial and chairmanship elections' campaign speeches as observed by researchers (Adedimeji, 2015; Omozuwa & Ezejideaku, 2007; Opeibi, 2004; Abdullahi-Idiagbon, 2010; Omolabi & Bossan, 2015). This paper notes there is a gap to fill in literature in that little have been done to broaden these analyses to such issues as the role of discourse in the (re)production and sustenance of power and dominance; how language is used and abused by many Nigerian politicians; the discursive strategies used by most Nigerian politicians for the maintenance of inequality in different contexts; and how language is used by political actors to project ideological beliefs of individuals and groups to manipulate others. It is the above gaps in the few discourse analyses carried out on political interviews in Nigerian news media that necessitated this study.

2. Literature review

2.1. Language and Politics

As a social process, language cannot be separated from politics. According to Ahmed (2014: 37) language, as a communicative tool, bridges gap between people. He notes that "language is a tool used for decreasing gaps between people and it overcomes distances between minds of people because language is a source of attention and attraction". He goes further to explain that with the use of language, one can exist in this world and one is connected to others. As a communicative tool however, language is a complex entity. It starts from the word and grows up to a sentence and so on. So language is free of restriction and not so simple but grows more and more, as just few words give birth to a sea of words. This language is loaded with direct and indirect meanings (literal and literary/contextual meaning). "Language is not simply a neutral medium for generating subject knowledge, but a form of social practice that acts to constitute as much as to reflect social realities" (Silverman, 2000). As mentioned earlier that language is not so, simple as one may think about it. We use it to convey our thinking. This may be simple or informal communication but language of political leaders is not a simple game of words but it conveys a deep message through some words may be simple for us but they are loaded with contextual or deep message or ideology. Ayeomoni (2005) explains that "in some contexts, politicians may resort to using figurative or metaphorical language". Most commonly, they make use of this form of language to discredit their opponents so that they can leave a lasting impression in the minds of their listeners. The use of this form of language is also a "strategy employed to arouse the feelings and collective excitement and sentiments of their followers, also sustain their support and fellowship" (Ayeomoni, 2005).

Farr (1989: 48) extensively captures the relevance of language to the field of politics thus:

Politics, as we know it, would not only be indescribable without language, it would be impossible. Emerging nations could not declare independence, leaders instruct partisans, citizens protest war, or courts sentence criminals. Neither could we criticise, plead, promise, argue, exhort, demand, negotiate, bargain, compromise, counsel, brief, debrief, advise nor consent. To imagine politics without these actions would be to imagine no recognizable politics at all.

Language is the concretisation of political actions: Political actors bring language to service in all they do. In essence, there would be no politics without language. Odebode (2018: 28) captures the relevance of language to politics: Political speeches are vital part of the communicative strategies of the party or the political candidate crafted with the aim of eliciting support, mobilizing the electorate to go to the polls and influencing their decision to vote in favour of the candidate. Political speech is more than just a theatrical performance of the moment. The ability to make a speech that connects wide range of people can be political power in itself.

As stated earlier, language is a political weapon. The power of words in the realm of politics can be compared to political power itself. From the above quotation, one could discern that basically, political discourses are propaganda. Language itself is not powerful but it gains power by powerful people who by using it infuse a message to people and inculcate their ideology to others. So, one can assert that language itself is an ideological tool. This is similar to the claim of Opeibi (2009: 210) that "language is a vital process of setting the personality and the programme of the candidates to the public with the primary aim of gaining their support and mobilising them to participate in the process of securing and controlling power". Chilton (1993: 688) states that language is "the universal capacity of humans in all societies to communicate" while by politics he means "the art of governance". Thus, he views language as an instrument to interact or transact in various situations being conventionally recognised as political environments. It is generally accepted that the strategy that one group of people takes to make the other group of people do what it intends to be done is known as a linguistic strategy. It involves manipulative application of the language. Therefore, linguistic manipulation is the conscious use of language in a devious way to control the others (Fairclough, 2001: 6).

Explaining the notion of 'linguistic manipulation' further, Rudyk (2007) opines that language can be used to take control of those with whom there is a conflict of interest. It is defined as "a communicative and interactional practice, in which a manipulator exercises control over other people, usually against their will or against their best interests" (van Dijk, 2006: 360-361). In linguistic manipulation, the power inequality relationship is established through the construction of a dominant ideology for which language is the fundamental medium (Post, 2009). Language itself has no power assigned to it, but "language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term. Language provides articulated means for differences in power in social hierarchical structures" (Wodak, 2001: 11).

2.2. Political Interview

Language is an important phenomenon in the social fields which that of politics is one. Omolabi and Adedimeji (2019: 88) corroborate this claim as they explained that "language is a pivotal instrument in political dispensations and as man is a political animal, he manipulates the language at his disposal for designing his world and accomplishing his numerous social goals". In essence, language as a systemic resource for making and exchanging meaning is an integral tool for conducting interviews. They further (2019: 89) posit that interviewing is one of the purest journalistic ways of finding information. An interview, according to Lawal (2001) in Omolabi and Adedimeji (2019: 89), is "an art of meeting someone personally or through telephone conversation in order to persuade the person to say something enlightening, or amusingly relevant about people and issues". Interviews are forms of conversation between two or more people where questions are asked by the interviewer to elicit information. An interview essentially is an interaction that is intended to educate, inform, highlight or the audience on specific issues. A political interview, in particular, is one of the greatest channels through which politicians reach their audience. This is because the interview is an avenue for them to express their opinions on a particular intriguing social or national issue; create understanding or inflame prejudice in the polity; project shoddy or superior ideas to the people; canvass political support or condemn other political parties; justify their worst actions or express their highest ideals (Adedimeji, 2013). Therefore, the form language takes and the function it performs in political interviews is very crucial.

In political interviews, the political candidate is asked about his or her policy stances, and is then compelled by the interviewer to defend all those positions in the face of opposition (Baym, 2007). DeLuca and Peeples (2002) argue that televised political discourse - as seen in political interviews - does not indicate rational debate, but preferably, emphasizes image, emotion, and style. Political language is utilized quite purposely and intentionally either to praise or blame. It can be creative, constructive or destructive, may likely be because it is the weapon through which one attacks the opponents or defends oneself from the opponents, it may be used positively or negatively. It is obvious that political discourse is about being manipulative and hedgy, expressing ideological standings, providing less information regarding the truth of things.

A politician may in fact hide himself behind these skills so as not to connect himself to any kind of commitment. The news interview is not characterized by spontaneous conversation solely. In fact, it is a type of interaction largely influenced by media and political norms and institutions; the news interview is a social institution in its own right (Clayman, 2001). The sequences of questions and answers revolve around a set of predetermined roles – the roles of the interviewer and the interviewee and defined social and language conventions. Interviewer turns are rather complex in that they consist of a variety of constituents, the combinations of which allow for the questions to be asked and the interview to be managed.

In the words of Feldman (2016: 65), broadcast or televised political interviews aim to test public officials and subject-matter experts on policy affairs and questions of concern to the general public. As citizens have a right to be fully informed about political issues and the political agenda, public officials, including politicians, are consequently required to explain their actions and intentions. With this goal in mind political interviews enable the interviewers – journalists, social critics, or scholars and researchers from different fields acting on behalf of the public – to ask questions and challenge answers. Through questioning, interviewers may disagree with, argue, criticize, or otherwise confront interviewees in their attempt to unmask the truth about policies and political problems in which public officials or their groups are involved.

As such, televised political interviews are designed to produce face-to-face confrontational and challenging interactions between journalists and politicians. Feldman (2016, p. 66) explains that televised political interviews have their own distinctive features, and a defined set of rules and norms structured by the functions of the interviewer(s) and the interviewee(s). He submits that these interviews are staged performances that take place with the participation of journalist(s) and political officer(s) or expert(s) and in which the ultimate addressee is absent from the actual event. The interview is enacted for the benefit of an "overhearing audience" (Heritage, 1985) whose expectations shape what is being said and how. Both the interviewer and the interviewees (politicians or experts) will have the general viewers in mind.

The interviewer will simultaneously consider both the consumers of their talk show and colleagues in their organization; success or failure in their performance can determine their future career and their standing in the eyes of their peers and the corporation. For politicians, interview programs provide their best tool to speak “directly” to hundreds of thousands of people, an opportunity to advance their ideas and thoughts to the electorate; an occasion for enhancing positive images of themselves and their political groups; and a ground for attacking their political opponents and challengers.

Feldman (2016: 66) equally notes that the “turn-taking system” noticeably defines the conflicting functions of interviewer(s) and interviewee(s). Both parties attempt to generate discourse for the “overhearing audience” in a two-way process. Thus, according to Clayman and Heritage (2002), the interviewers are responsible for:

- a) determining the topic for discussion;
- b) monitoring the duration of the discourse;
- c) adhering to specific ritualistic patterns including introducing interviewees and concluding the interview session.
- d) pose questions and challenge interviewees to specify and explain their positions on a variety of issues. They are expected to do so while maintaining a stance of neutrality by not favoring specific politicians or political groups.

To Clayman and Heritage (2002), the interviewees’ task is to reply to these questions to best represent both themselves as individuals and their political groups or institutions. Given the advantages that the interview offers politicians to speak to a large audience and promote their own and their groups’ agenda, they may strive to exert control over the interview. Thus, they may:

- a) break the talking procedure;
- b) intentionally change the subject before or after giving a response;
- c) disregard the questions they are asked by repeating statements (irrespective of whether they have any relation to the interviewer’s questions); and,
- d) shift the agenda and topic selection, a phenomenon which is termed “agenda shifting procedures” (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1991).

Another distinctive feature of political interviews is interviewees’ vagueness, evasiveness, or equivocal communication style as they hedge from providing direct answers to questions they are asked.

2.3. Ideology in politics

van Dijk (2007: 4) describes the notion of ideology as “social cognitions” peculiar to a group of people. It is a set of mental beliefs held by a group and it surfaces in the way people speak, act and position themselves in the society. It shapes the way they see themselves in relation to others. van Dijk (2007: 4) further argues that the notion of ideology is beyond a mere set of ideas: It is a system of beliefs, worldviews, false consciousness, and basis of social practices. It is created and reproduced in the social domain. From CDA perspective, Datondji and Amousou (2019) define ideology as mental representations of the world, which have implications in power relations such as those of domination and suppression. Interactions with in-group members and out-group ones are conditioned by these cognitions. In the conversational process, they are reproduced, serving to distinguish one group from the other.

For most social organisations which are involved in ideological struggle, ideological superiority inherent in the linguistic items or word choices is valued more than the meaning of the words or linguistic terms (Mumby, 2000). This way, these social institutions instil their respective social values and beliefs into the dominated group. Gaining this ideological superiority, the dominant group will justify their lead in socio-political/economic ground (Mumby, 2000). Shakoury (2018: 2) argues that “language connects with ideology via providing vocabulary for its key terms and labels, as well as through channeling ideology in discourse on the whole”. Language “has a key role in the exchange of values in social life and transforming power into right and obedience into duty. It may both create power and become an area where power can be applied” (Bayram, 2010: 27).

Ideology has been a central area of investigation in Critical Discourse Analysis. This is so because discourse has been identified by major linguistic scholars as a location of ideology. In Discourse Analysis, ideology is defined as “significations or constructions of reality which are built into various dimensions of the forms or meanings of discursive practices and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination” (Fairclough, 1992: 87). Discourse analysis demonstrates how daily texts and talks are affected by ideologies and how production and reproduction of ideologies occur within the discourse (Fairclough, 1992). Ideology within the confines of discourse is the art of justifying the access and control of a special group over resources to fulfil the requirements and wishes of the group. In this way, the group with a dominant ideology is in the ascendant, thereby “neutralizing alternative and oppositional views” (Koide, 2012: 12). The dominated groups “accept dominant ideologies as natural or commonsense” (van Dijk, 2005: 729). Therefore, according to Post (2009), ideology within the framework of discourse

is an indispensable tool for the dominant group to maintain supremacy of opinion over its counterpart(s), and to position “one group’s view of the world as being dominant over another” (Post, 2009: 21). This ideological construction in a discourse is rooted within the discourse instead of its outside (Hall, 1999, cited in Post, 2009: 21).

To van Dijk, ideology relates to use of language as a vehicle of communication because it determines which issues are elevated and which ones are subordinated. An Ideology can be defined as the basic framework for organising the social cognitions shared by members of social groups, organisations or institutions. The Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary defines Ideology as a theory, or set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party or organisation is based. van Dijk (2009: 65) submits that Ideologies are the shared, fundamental and axiomatic beliefs of specific social groups. On the theory of ideology, he opines that its discourse analytic approach is multidisciplinary, just as the scope of critical discourse analysis. Its approach is situated within a conceptual triangle that connects society, discourse and social cognition in the framework of a critical discourse analysis. This infers that ideologies are both cognitive and social. They function as the interface between the cognitive representations and processes underlying discourse and action and the societal position and interests of social groups. Thus, ideologies being the overall abstract mental systems that organize socially shared attitudes mentally represent the basic social characteristics of a group, such as their identity, tasks, goals, norms, values, position and resources (van Dijk, 1993).

In another vein, Fairclough (2003: 9) defines ideologies as ‘representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining, and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation’. Though the word ‘ideology’ is most often found in political discourse, there are many different kinds of ideology; religion, socialism, nationalism, capitalism. In all these uses, ideology is shown as the representation of relations, how the ideas should look like and what patterns should be followed. It may be appropriate to call it a guide-manual to the various aspects of social institutions. Oorhan (2007: 3-4) sees ideology as principally a political term and enumerates its different conceptions:

- a) a political belief system
- b) an action-oriented set of political ideas
- c) the ideas of the ruling class
- d) the world-view of a particular social class or social group
- e) political ideas that embody or articulate class or social interests
- f) ideas that propagate false consciousness among the exploited or oppress
- g) ideas that situate the individual within a social context and generate a sense of collective belonging
- h) an official sanctioned set of ideas used to legitimize a political system or regime
- i) an embracing political doctrine that claims a monopoly of truth
- j) an abstract an highly systematic set of political ideas.

Like Fairclough, Oorhan views ideology as a modality of power and a property of the elite of society. However, Critical Discourse Analysis attempts to unravel hidden ideologies projected in texts, by using a variety of tools.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. van Dijk’s Socio-Cognitive Approach

The Socio-Cognitive Approach to CDA was developed by Teun Van Dijk. However, Van Dijk prefers to use the term ‘Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)’ rather than Critical Discourse Analysis. Van Dijk (2009: 63) affirms this when he mentions that “I avoid the term CDA because it suggests that it is a method of discourse analysis, and not a critical perspective or attitude in the field of discourse studies (DS), using many different methods of the humanities and social sciences”.

van Dijk believes that the term ‘CDS’ is encompassing unlike the term ‘CDA’ which he holds that is limited in scope. This approach developed by van Dijk (2000) is based on understanding ideological structures and social relations of power embedded in discourse (as cited in Jahedi et al., 2014). van Dijk (2003) defines ‘social power’ in terms of control and ideologies as “the basis of the social representations of groups” (van Dijk, 2006: 131). van Dijk (2001) opines that CDS needs to account for the various forms of social cognitions that are shared by the social collectivities. Social cognitions are “socially shared representations of societal arrangements, groups and relations, as well as mental operations such as interpretation, thinking and arguing, inferencing and learning” (Van Dijk, 1993: 257). The Socio-Cognitive approach is concerned with unraveling ideologies shared by social institutions or groups, as embedded in their discourses.

In his work, *Critical Discourse Studies: A Socio-Cognitive Approach*, van Dijk aptly describes the features of his approach:

Within the broader framework of critical discourse studies my sociocognitive approach to discourse is characterized by the Discourse–Cognition–Society triangle...Whereas all approaches in CDS study the relations between discourse and society, a sociocognitive approach claims that such relations are

cognitively mediated. Discourse structures and social structures are of a different nature, and can only be related through the mental representations of language users as individuals and as social members. (Van Dijk, 2009: 64).

The use of the term 'triangle' by Van Dijk signifies the relatedness of discourse, cognition and society. He sees cognition as an interface between social practice and discourse. Social structures are defined by ideologies (cognitions); ideologies are the product of a social institution. These group-specific ideologies, in turn, shape the discourses or texts produced by members of such groups. The discourses produced by the group members are then used to maintain social interactions. The researcher conceptualized this in the form of a triangle “the discourse-cognition-society triangle”.

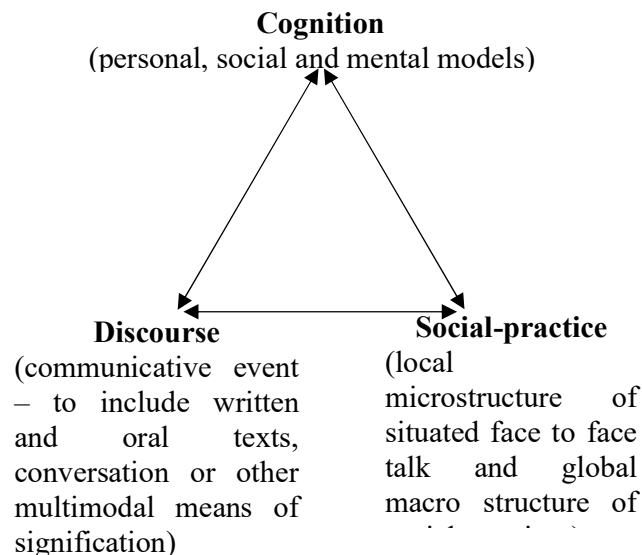


Figure. 1: The Cognition-Discourse-Society Triangle – Tri-dimensional Approach (Adapted from van Dijk's, 2009)

Furthermore, the socio-cognitive approach aims to address problems of power abuse, domination and resistance as found in discourse. It branches out into three components: cognitive, social and discourse components. While the cognitive component includes memory, mental models (personal cognition of the setting, participants, their identities, roles and relationships, actions, and events), and social cognition (socially shared knowledge, ideologies and opinions), the social component deals with intragroup and intergroup relationships vis-à-vis power struggles to control minority groups and their social cognitions (van Dijk, 2015: 66-77). The discourse component is based on the analysis of discourse structures underlain by cognitive models – ideologies for instance – and their functions in the production and reproduction of social issues (van Dijk, 2015: 66-77). van Dijk (2007: 44) highlights principles central to the analysis of ideology in discourse: (i) Emphasise positive things about Us; (ii) Emphasise negative things about Them; (iii) De-emphasise negative things about Us; and (iv) De-emphasise positive things about them. The researcher calls these principles “ideological square.” He further mentions that there are different other ways of emphasising or de-emphasising positive and negative descriptions. For instance, headlining, foregrounding, topicalisation, active structures, examples and illustrations, contrast, paragraph order, metaphors, hyperboles, irony and some other rhetorical devices can be used to **emphasise** *positive things about Us* and *negative things about Them*. *Negative things about Us* and *positive things about Them* can be **de-emphasised** with passive structures, small letter, euphemism, implicit information, backgrounding, hedging, vagueness, modality, disclaimers, synonymy/paraphrase, and low level description, among others (van Dijk, 2007, 2015a). van Dijk (2015a: 73-74) identifies the following as ideological structures of discourse:

- i. Polarisation: This concerns the representation of the agents. There is the positive representation of the in-group and negative depiction of the out-group.
- ii. Pronouns: The pronouns “We (us, our)” and “They (them, their)” are regarded as political pronouns. They are used to represent the actors and the ‘enemies.’
- iii. Emphasis of positive self-description and negative other descriptions.
- iv. Activities: What the in-group does and must do are represented.
- v. Norms and Values: What is good or bad depending on the ideologies of the group is depicted. The justification of what is right might not be generally right in the larger society.
- vi. Interests: It refers to the discursive representation of the group’s struggle or interests.

The overall analysis involves the integration of the three components. The ideological structures must be explained in terms of the cognitive components and the functions such as those of domination or resistance in the social and political space (van Dijk, 2015).

4. Research methodology

This paper is purely qualitative in nature. Two (2) interviews were randomly selected for the analysis and these interviews are anchored by one of Channels Television's foremost hosts, Seun Okinbaloye. The interviews are more of question and answer sessions between the host and his guests. The first is a 52 minutes interview titled "*PDP Leadership Inauguration: What is PDP's Agenda?*" by Seun Okinbaloye as he hosts two of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) chieftains; Hon. Tajudeen Yusuf who is a member of the House of Representative under the platform of the PDP and Mr Segun Sowunmi who is also a chieftain of the PDP. Later in this interview, Seun Okinbaloye invited a chieftain of the ruling party – All Progressive Congress (APC) - Mr. Kabir Faskari in to join in the discussion.

The second interview is a 24 minutes interview titled "*2023 Presidency: Momodu Declares Intention to Run with Chief Dele Momodu*" and it involves Chief Dele Momodu, a popular journalist and publisher who is also a one-time former presidential aspirant and he speaks on his intention and declaration for the 2023 Presidential Race on the platform of the PDP. The data for analysis are first in a video content downloaded from <https://www.youtube.com> and was posted on the website by Channels Television. These videos are watched and transcribed by the researcher and extracts are drawn from each of the video for the analysis. The analysis was structured in a way that captures a broad categorisation of the different manifestation of political talks in the videos. There is no interaction with human subjects as the data is sourced online. The researcher has taken CDA as method for this study. The nature of the paper as the interviews are analysed on the basis of Fairclough's (1995) Members Resources and Van Dijk's (2010) Socio-cognitive approach. Rhetoric has also been taken as methodology at broader spectrum for the analysis.

The researcher has taken Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as theoretical framework of this research. CDA analyses the discourses critically and reveals the social practices like dominance, hegemony, exploitation victimization of the oppressed ones. CDA is an interdisciplinary field which brings social sciences and linguistics at the same platform. Its topics of discussion are linked with ethnicity, hegemonic attitude of high towards low, gender discrimination, dominance, ideology, discursive practices and gender. The parameter of analysis is only language and it reveals how discourse manifests discursive practices in a social setup.

4.1. Data Presentation and Analysis

Datum One

PDP Leadership Inauguration: What is PDP's Agenda for 2023? With Tajudeen Yusuf and Segun Sowunmi

Description of Datum

This is a 52 minutes interview titled "*What is PDP's Agenda*" by Seun Okinbaloye as he hosts two of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) chieftains; Hon. Tajudeen Yusuf who is a member of the House of Representative under the platform of the PDP and Mr Segun Sowunmi who is also a chieftain of the PDP. Later in this interview, Seun Okinbaloye invited a chieftain of the ruling party – All Progressive Congress (APC) - Mr. Kabir Faskari in to join in the discussion.

Text 1

Moderator (Seun Okinbaloye): *The question is this, we are the ones moderating the conversation within the political scene and in the scheme of things, we know the role that opposition should be playing. We know our role and we know what the ruling party was doing. Before the APC came into power, we know just how the opposition was. When you lost the election in 2015, we know just how difficult it was to even get a PDP member come here. The question is, as it stands right now, from what Senator Iyeochia Ayu said today, he said: "APC there is going to be a quit notice on you". How easy would that be?*

Segun Sowunmi: *The whole essence of democracy is not chaos. Democracy must thrive on ideological differences. The conversation must be civil. You cannot expect that the only way a political party can be in opposition is to shut down the whole country, is to blackmail the country, is to run to all capitals of the world to spread lies and at the end of the day, they get the responsibility, they can't do it. Our situation is such that we have ruled this country before, therefore, we can empathise with them when they struggle. We called them out regularly with the presses and all that, what Nigerians didn't see is chaos and you know why? These people cannot handle that kind of chaos. They had only ENDSARS, they are not even able to accept that there is a need for reform. Are those the kind of people you are going to be calling people out for because of subsidy? Look, Seun, we are young now but we also have a responsibility to make sure that the right values, the right ethos, the right way of doing things percolate our country because at the end*

of the day, the political players are but a small band. The actions and inactions of those people describe us all. Right now, the APC is struggling even with the responsibility. On some occasions, we empathise with them because we know how hard that job is but most times, we pity them because they have even locked themselves in so badly that only a small handful of even their own members are allowed to participate. They have not opened up their own space even to take in quality materials from their midst, how much more even take opposition's opinion. But that doesn't matter. You ask whether we would be able to defeat them? That is not the question I think I'll answer to. The question I'm going to answer to is that: "Have the Nigerians considered their lives to be better under APC?" If their answer is yes, they know what to do. But if truly and sincerely everybody, from the smallest to the oldest, from the richest to the poorest, have suffered under this government, they have no reason to wait for anybody to spring-field them to drive them out.

Analysis of Ideological Issues in Datum One

1. Ideology of 'us' versus 'them'

In any political discourse, there are bound to be numerous groups or parties with opposing ideology and perspectives. Even in the same party, some members hold differing ideology from others. In such political discussions, there tend to be ideology of positive self-representation of 'us' and negative other representation of 'them'. This entails self-glorification and positive representation of self and degradation and negative representation of 'Others'. The extracted text above is replete with the ideology of positive self-representation of 'us' and negative other representation of 'them'. The former PDP spokesperson, Segun Sowunmi, tends to present himself and his group in positive terms and the 'Other' group (APC) in negative terms. He does this by selecting some socially shared mental model with a negative connotation in the text and the essence is to capture different ideological positions. Implicitly, Sowunmi threw some jabs at the members of the ruling party, the APC, when he said: "...You cannot expect that the only way a political party can be in opposition is to shut down the whole country, is to blackmail the country, is to run to all capitals of the world to spread lies and at the end of the day, they get the responsibility, they can't do it...". This is to paint the ruling party, the APC, as one that makes excessive noise where it is not necessary and that blackmails and maligns the then ruling party when the APC were in opposition yet when they get into the position of office, they could not perform as promised. In the self-glorification of 'Us', Sowunmi presents the PDP, his political party, as the civil and cultured party that has the interest of Nigerians at heart while in negative 'Other' representation, he paints the APC as the unrefined and uncouth.

Similarly, Sowunmi represents the 'Other' party, APC, as bad and his party 'us' – the PDP –, as good through the use of lexical items with negative connotations like: 'struggling', 'chaos', and 'suffered'. To control the minds of the viewers, to shape their mental modes, opinions and perspectives and to win them over to his side of the coin, the speaker emphasises on the disdain statements as a mind control strategy. On the other hand, such lexical items as 'empathise with them', 'called them out', 'pity' and so on presents the PDP as experienced political side with the right expertise to lead. From the outside, they observe the folly of the ruling party and cannot but empathise with and pity them as they struggle with their responsibility to lead the country.

In essence, politicians are always desperate to achieve their primary goal of winning votes. In most cases, they resort to attacking their opponents' character and ability. They often project themselves in the positive light and their opponents in the negative light.

2. Ideology as a weapon for building consensus with the populace

In the extract drawn from this interview, Sowunmi employs ideology as a weapon of building consensus with the people as an attempt to identify with the audience and to neutralise the ideological grip of the opponent. Ofshe (2003) states that the minds control is a systematic manipulation of psychological and social influence, where a group or individual systematically uses manipulative methods to persuade others to conform to the wishes of the manipulators. In this situation, Sowunmi identifies with the struggle of Nigerians and regard himself and his people as part of the populace. He did this with the use of such pronominals as 'we' and 'us'. He stated that "...we are young now but we also have a responsibility to make sure that the right values, the right ethos, the right way of doing things percolate our country because at the end of the day, the political players are but a small band. The actions and inactions of those people describe us all. From this, Sowunmi maintains that even as a member of the opposition, he has a responsibility to ensure things are in order because he together with the rest of the populace will be affected by the actions and inactions of political actors. With this, he identifies with the common man who is not a card carrying member of a political party and who would be consequently affected by what is done or is not done by the politicians and doing this will make the common man believe that he has his interest at heart.

Analysis of Discursive Devices in Datum One

In this section, relevant discursive strategies are identified in the given data. These strategies are the micro level aspects of van Dijk's approach to CDA. The micro level only provides affordances for enunciating the strategies employed by text producers to engender power, dominance, inequality, and many more.

- 1. Actor Description:** This entails how actors are represented either positively or negatively. The PDP Chieftain, Segun Sowunmi paints the chieftains and members of the ruling party, the APC, as uncivil and unrefined. They are accused of desperately spreading lies and blackmailing innocent Nigerians to vote for them while they were playing the opposition. He did not stop at that as he attempt to malign the ruling party as an incompetent party. He believes that after using lies and blackmail, the APC could not handle the responsibility as they are unfit for the task. This is an attempt to paint the APC negatively and convince Nigerians that the APC cannot handle the mantle of leadership. Sowunmi also attempts to mitigate the negative description of his own party, the PDP, while emphasising that of the *Other*, the APC. He provides an excellent vantage point for his *in-group* by presenting his party as the more experienced and capable party to lead Nigeria while the APC is seen to be inexperienced, clumsy and clueless.
- 2. Appeal to Emotions:** This is an argumentative move commonly used to incite the audience to action by reminding them of their sufferings. It allows the speaker to control the minds and action of the addressees. In this interview, Sowunmi attempts to implicitly appeal to the emotion of some APC members who are possibly aggrieved. In doing this, he observed that the party is not carrying everyone along and not every member of the party is even allowed to participate and contribute in the ruling of the nation as opinions of some members are not even welcomed not to mention that of the opposition. He does this to incite the possibly aggrieved members of the ruling party by reminding them of their suffering and what they are going through in the hands of some actors in the same party with them. Also, he appeals to the emotion of the members of the ruling party at large as he reminds them of their struggle and difficulty they are having in controlling the affairs of the nation as the ruling party.
To appeal to the emotions of the audience, Sowunmi questioned Nigerians on whether their lives have changed for the better under the APC led government. With the use of the conditional 'if', he asserts that Nigerians need no one to force them out to show their discontentment with the sufferings they are going through under the APC government.
- 3. Consensus:** Sowunmi employs consensus to foster and build solidarity and agreement. For van Dijk (2005), in political context, consensus is a cross-party or national device to defend a country against external threats. This discursive device is used by the PDP chieftain to build national consciousness and develop consensus with all Nigerians by establishing a sense of responsibility towards the development of the nation. This is consensus because Sowunmi displays unity and solidarity of the country and expresses mutual support with every other Nigerians of different political group or ideology to entrench the right values, ethos and the right way of doing things. This, furthermore, indicates PDP's positive representation that they are ready to take Nigeria to the Promised Land.
- 4. Example/Illustration:** Example/illustration is used by Sowunmi to back up his opinion or make his beliefs more conceivable. Sowunmi exemplified his claim by mentioning the EndSars event. He banked on the shared background knowledge that exists between himself and his audience that the EndSars is a decentralised social movement and series of mass protests against police brutality in many states in Nigeria. Sowunmi brings out this example to back up his claim that the APC led government is incompetent and clueless.
- 5. Hyperbole:** Hyperbole is a form of exaggeration and it is used by Sowunmi in the excerpt of this interview. The interviewee employs hyperbolic language to intentionally lay stress on how the APC party used propaganda during the 2015 election. As a semantic rhetorical device for the enhancement of meaning, Sowunmi used hyperbole to talk about how the APC changed people's minds during the 2015 electioneering campaign.
- 6. Populism:** This refers to the political ideas and activities that are intended to represent ordinary people's needs and wishes by the people in power. Sowunmi attests PDP's consciousness to the needs of the people. He seeks to know if the lives of Nigerians are better now under the APC led administration.

Datum Two: 2023 Presidency: Momodu Declares Intention to Run with Chief Dele Momodu

Description of Datum

This is a 23 minutes interview moderated by Channels TV journalist, Seun Okinbaloye, and it features Chief Dele Momodu. The interview was posted on the YouTube Channel of the television station on 13th January, 2022. Dele Momodu comes on air to talk about his 2023 ambition and his plans for the country having declared under the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Analysis of ideological issues in Datum Two

1. Ideology as a weapon for building a dichotomy between ‘us’ versus ‘them’

In this interview, the interviewee, Dele Momodu, severally attempts to play the politics of ‘us’ versus ‘them’ where he presents his personality in positive frame and others in negative frame. He does this by mitigating the wrongs or negatives of himself and that of members of his in-group and by capitalising on the positives of himself and his in-group. Conversely, he mitigates the positives of ‘others’ while emphasising on their negatives. Consider the following text for such instances.

Text 2

Everyone is worried about Nigeria. Where Buhari has left Nigeria. Don’t forget that some of us supported Buhari in the past. There were great expectations. But we lost paradise. So, the Chairman is very worried, like anyone of us in the PDP, that we must chase them away, and the only way you can chase them away is if you have a good candidate...I believe I am the best candidate by the grace of God...You don’t just wake up and say you want to be President of a country. I’ve prepared for it for over 30 years, yes (Dele Momodu).

In the text above, Dele Momodu paints a negative picture of the current President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari. This is owing to the fact that Buhari and Momodu are members of different political parties and an aspirant under the major opposition party, he has to present the ruling party in bad light so as to demarket them and make them loss in the coming election. He expressly calls Buhari a failed President and believes that Buhari and his party must be chased away. He owned up to supporting Buhari in the past and admits that Buhari failed his expectations. This is premised on the shared knowledge that Dele Momodu was previously a member of Buhari’s party and now that he belongs to the major opposition party, he takes up the job of the opposition which is to deface the ruling party. In calling Buhari a failure, he admits that Nigeria lost a paradise. This is rested on the shared knowledge that Buhari, in 2015’s General Election, defeated Goodluck Jonathan who at the time was the incumbent President under the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) which is now the party Dele Momodu is aspiring to run under and it is agreeable that Nigeria today has degenerated further from what it used to be in the past given the current socio-political reality in the country. In this regard, he submitted that Nigeria of the past is a paradise when compared to what obtains today. This submission, as noted above, is because Momodu is now in an opposition party and as an opposition aspirant, he has to aggravate the negatives of *others* in the ruling party and has to portray *them* differently from *us* by describing them in a bad light so as to get to manipulate people’s consciousness. He uses the pronominal ‘*them*’ in referring to Buhari and his political party and ‘*we*’ in referring to himself and his party. This further creates a dichotomy between the in-group and the out-group.

In presenting an image of self, Momodu portrays himself as the best candidate for the job and has prepared for it for over 30 years and for this reasons, he believes his party would give him the opportunity to represent them at the poss. Politicians often express a certain level of exuberance and confidence in portraying themselves and they attempt to launder their image and personality by showcasing the confidence to win. This is to induce the electorates to believe in their prowess and assure them of their confidence so as to gain their votes.

Similarly, in portraying a positive image of self and negative image of others, Momodu says:

Text 3

It’s not my first time, the first time, I didn’t realise that the structures needed are beyond fringe political parties. So, the lesson I took away in 2011 was that you cannot win national elections from local political parties. So, that’s why I’m in PDP (Dele Momodu).

This time, he is not attempting to deface the ruling party, rather, he is attacking the other parties which are hoping to be a third force and challenge the two major parties – the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) and the major opposition, People’s Democratic Party (PDP) – at the polls. This is because Momodu’s political ‘enemies’ are not just those in the APC but also those in other parties who will come out to challenge him if he eventually wins his party’s ticket. He uses the adjective ‘*fringe*’ in describing the structure of these other parties and equally calls the “*local political parties*”. This is premised on the shared knowledge that Momodu in 2010 was previously a member of and an aspirant for the position of President under the Labour Party (LP) before resigning to join the National Conscience Party (NCP) where he contested and lost the election in 2011.

In another instance, Momodu attempts to create a dichotomy between ‘*us*’ and ‘*them*’ by portraying self as a distinct politician from others whom he called ‘*career politicians*’

Ideology as a weapon for leveraging on Nigeria's ethnic plurality for political gains

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society and Nigerian politicians have been severally alleged of playing divisive political games through the use of the country's ethnic-reality. Nigerian politicians bank on the consciousness of fear and suspicion of domination and subjugation from different ethnic groups to grow political tension. They identify with the mainstream ethnic politics for political relevance. The politicians are well aware of the fact that it is a political norm for each of the ethnic groups to protect its common interest. This is what Momodu leverages on in the text below:

Text 4

And today, the mood in the nation is that power should come to the South and I'm well positioned. I'm from the South-South, Edo state. I am also from the South-West, Osun State and I have extensive links in the South-East and across Nigeria... (Dele Momodu).

In the above, Momodu leverages on the fact that there is ethnic chauvinism in the country and people from the South are clamouring for a Southern Presidency given the shared background that the people of the South-East region in particular, are yet to become a President in the Nigeria's 23 years of democracy despite their political might as one of the three major ethnic groups in the country. Albeit the fact that Momodu is not from this particular region, he insists he remains the best fit and is well positioned for the role because his father is from the South-South, his mother is from the South-West and he has extensive links in the South-East. He believes with this personal record, he can protect the interest of all the three Southern geopolitical zones in the country and if the PDP fields him as the candidate, he will win the Presidency for them owing to this record. This is a divisive game and in his attempt to present himself as the best aspirant for the ticket and devalue others, he creates an ethnic divide and assume that if given the ticket, the people of the South will all rally round him and give him their support because he assumes they can trust him to protect their interest as he has tentacles across the entire region. This leads to the next ideological issue.

2. Ideology as a weapon for identifying with a certain demography for political gain

Similar to the above, politicians attempts to identify with a certain demography so as to gain their support. They leverage on the plight of this group so as to convince the affected persons that they care about them and care about their interests and needs. This is done in the texts highlighted below.

Text 4

There's no business man today, the top 4, 5 richest people in Africa, I would have done business with them between 20 – 30 years. I know their needs, I understand their frustrations. If you tell me about Dangote today, I can tell you that despite the big brand, they still suffer in our country. The big people still suffer. The rich also cry. He has invited me to his operations in Euthopia, his operations in Tanzania, his operations in Zambia. There are not many politicians who understand the meaning of business.

Text 5

I have been doing business in entertainment. Today, our young men and women are taking over the world but some of us provided our platforms. Since 2007, Ovation has been doing Ovation Red Carol and that's how we were promoting young talents. So, if you talk about Wizkid today, we've spent millions and millions to promote his music in the last 14 to 15 years, twice in Nigeria, once in Ghana. If you talk of Davido, twice in Nigeria. If you talk of Burna Boy, twice in Nigeria, once in Ghana. If you talk of Tiwa Savage....so, you see, I know the needs of Nigerians.

Text 6

Hope 23 because we lost that hope. We must bring it back. The reason everybody is agitating, everybody is fighting, everybody is quarrelling. People are being killed, being kidnapped. People are just totally frustrated. If you see the messages I've received in the last few days, it's unbelievable. And now hope finally. Some people, even including people who are agitating to break away, they said if we have someone like you. One man, an Igbo man called me from New Zealand, okay, I don't want to mention names, he said if we have people like you, then there's hope for Nigeria. You must give people hope. That's the first thing. Without that platform, that foundation, we are wasting our time.

3. Ideology as a weapon for leveraging on the political clout of others

Politicians often leverage on the political clout of other politicians who have great trajectory and left behind a great legacy. The actors are usually political actors of the past such as the country's founding fathers, successful politicians who relatively performed well, politicians in other countries and so on. They do this so as to leverage on the political

clout of the person to build their own. In this interview, Momodu majorly exploits his association and closeness with the late Moshood Kashimawo Abiola who was an astute politician and a political hero in the history of Nigerian democracy. He also does this on the character of Donald Trump who was the former President of the United States of America. He likened himself and his personality to these political actors because he believes he has something similar with them and the same trajectory as them. The two are business men turned politicians just like him and in the case of Donald Trump, he is a showbiz person which is also Momodu's line of business. He attempts to use Abiola's political structure, network and the wide support and acceptance he received from the people in 1993 when he ran for President to build his own political frame and present himself to the people in similar frame as Abiola. He did this in the following extracted texts from the interview.

Text 7

Chief Moshood Abiola...wasn't just my role model, he publicly called me his adopted son and he treated me like one. 1992, my wedding December 19, my wife was handed over to Chief Abiola in Ijebu Igbo and after he asked where are we taking our wife, I said Ijebu Ode, he drove with us. Your father cannot do more than that. He was my father and I studied him like a book. I said it elsewhere that I can do a PhD Thesis on Abiola (Dele Momodu).

Text 8

Trust me, I have everything I need. The content, presidential election is about content. Before Donald Trump came to contest, what did he have? Content! He was a showbiz man.

Analysis of Discursive Devices in Datum Two

Actor description: in this interview, Dele Momodu variously attempts to malign the President, Muhammadu Buhari, and his part, the ruling All Progressive Congress (APC) as political actors in his description of them in the discourse. Conversely, he presents himself and his candidature in positive frame. He describes Buhari and the APC as a man and as a party respectively who/which has left Nigeria in a sorry and deplorable state. He describes the President as a nepotistic person who shies away from the wrongs of people from his camp, a person who does not care about the plight of the people and one who does not bother to carry Nigerians along. On the other hand, he represents himself as the best candidate for the job and as a visionary politician. He sees the interview as an avenue to sell himself so he purposively spends the bigger part of the time in describing himself by talking about his personal achievements. He likens himself and his candidature to the late M.K.O. Abiola who made a name for himself in the history of Nigerian democracy. He sees himself as one who is different from other politicians whom he refers to as career politicians. He equally describes Nigerians, both the rich and the poor, as people who are suffering from a government's ineptitude.

Authority: as authorities, he leverages on the legacy of the late Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola who was an entrepreneur and a politician of note in the Nigerian political scenery. Momodu banks on Abiola's political clout, the respect Abiola's name garners and the personal relationship they both shared while Abiola was alive and this portrays Abiola as an authority. This is as a result of the fact that Abiola is a generally recognised leader whose personality could lend credence to the candidacy of the one who assumes the role of his adopted son and political protégé.

Disclaimers: instead of outrightly rejecting or denying allegations, Momodu puts up disclaimers by using apparent concession. This is what obtains when the interviewer puts it to him that he once supported the APC and President Buhari whom today he is criticising. He agreed to supporting the APC in the past but immediately went on to capitalising on the faults of the APC and justify his support for them by saying "we all make mistakes". This is an attempt to save his own face. He also used disclaimer when the interviewer asks when he officially becomes a member of his party. After conceding that his membership reads one year, he immediately went on to talk about how some notable members of his party have defected from the PDP in the past to APC and also defected back to the PDP. This is to justify his situation and save his face.

Evidentiality: to provide evidence or proof to support his claim that his popularity on different social media platforms gives him the confidence to run for the Office of the President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, he quoted certain figures representing his followers' band and standing for his popularity level on these platforms.

Examples/illustrations: in this interview, he makes use of different examples and illustrations to back up his claims or assertions. To assert himself as the best fit for the role, he draws out illustrations of how he comes from diverse roots in different parts of the southern region and how he has extensive links across. He equally illustrates how he has links and network with top business owners in Africa such as Dangote, how he variously supported the youths in the entertainment industry, how close he was to the late Abiola, how people believe in his candidature,

how long he has been in politics, and so on. These illustrations are variously drawn to give concrete examples in for of vignettes or short stories to make his claims plausible.

Generalisation: he makes use of generalisation when he asserts that if elected, his government will bring every Nigerian In diaspora back to Nigeria. He generalises by asserting that every Nigerian who left Nigeria left because they are not comfortable with the Nigeria of today.

Hyperbole: he uses this semantic rhetorical device to enhance meaning. In doing so, he exaggerates the tendencies of himself as a President and notes that there's no way he will be President and notes that there's no way he will be President and the South-East will not be a Silicon Valley. He also asserts emphatically that there is no brand bigger than brand Dele Momodu. He equally exaggerates when he observes that everybody in Nigeria is agitating, fighting and quarrelling because the word 'everybody' covers the entire Nigerian population. Similarly, he asserts that Nigerians lost a paradise when they elected Muhammadu Buhari. *Paradise* is used to qualify the condition of Nigerians before the election of President Buhari. All these are exaggerative tendencies expressed by Dele Momodu and they are done to project a positive image of self and negative image of others.

Findings

The paper revealed that the politicians majorly use their ideological stances to build a dichotomy between *us* versus *them* and to project members of in-groups in good frame while defacing members of out-group. This is due to the fact that this ideology is found to be recurrent in the data as all the politicians uses ideological positions to isolate *us* from *them*. According to the results at the macro-level of analysis, it was observed that Nigerian politicians are inclined to the view that highlighting the negative representation of *other(s)* would be an extreme contributory factor in the inculcation of their ideological positions in the mind of the audience.

Similar to the above, other ideological positions projected by the Nigerian politicians in the five selected interviews are ideology as a weapon for building consensus with the populace and identifying with a certain demography; ideology as a weapon for persuasion and incitement; ideology as a weapon for leveraging on Nigeria's ethnic plurality for political gains; ideology as a weapon for leveraging on the political clout of others; ideology as a weapon for entrenching and foregrounding party loyalty at the core of political affairs; ideology as a weapon for advocating for national consciousness and development; and ideology as a weapon for advocating for fairness, equity and justice. It was found that politicians tend to use their ideological positions in building consensus with the people and trying to project a populism consciousness by identifying with certain demography of people and projecting, explicating and arguing that the right and powers of ordinary citizens are exploited by a privileged elite and they portray themselves as people who are in the righteous position to support the struggle of the people to overcome this. To these politicians, the said elite exploiting the masses are those in other political parties and with different political affiliation and ideology as them. This ideology is aimed at achieving the overall attempt to separate *us* from *them* by projecting *us* differently from *them*. As mentioned above, it was also found that the politicians in the selected interviews uses their ideological stances for communal persuasion and incitement. In datum one, the political actors, Honourable Tajudeen Yusuf and Mr Segun Sowunmi, employ the ideology as a weapon of persuasion to win favour with their audience and ensure the rejection of the ruling All Progressive Congress. This is justifiable with the numerous persuasive assertions in the interview text where the two interviewees implicitly suggest that the present administration is powerless and incapable of dealing with the country's affairs even after so power must be taken away from them and should be given back to their own party which is believed to be competent for the task of leadership.

As part of the ideological implications, it was found that politicians in Nigeria, through their interviews, leverage on Nigeria's ethnic plurality for their political gains. This is what obtains in datum two where Dele Momodu plays the ethnic card by identifying with the major tribes in the Southern part of Nigeria. Similarly, it was found that they leverage on the political clout of others. This is equally observed in datum two where Dele Momodu attempts to use the popularity and acceptability of the late Abiola to his own advantage. It was found that politicians often attempt to use their ideological positions to advocate for what is right. They use this to build the consciousness in the mind of the audience.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that Political interviews are situated in political contexts in the society. They are ideological because they reflect a particular point of view. In other words, politicians use language to express political views, opinions, assumptions and beliefs. From the paper, it was observed that each datum brought out the different ideologies projected in the selected interviews and their implications for the overall communicative intention of the interviews. Similarly, they employ certain strategies in projecting some of these ideologies. Members of the interviewee's out-group are overtly and covertly presented in negative light. The *others* are ideationally portrayed as being bad, self-centred and incompetent. On the contrary, the interviewee's in-group is commonly represented in positive light. The

interviewees portray themselves and members of their in-groups as the people who have the ability to positively affect Nigerians and govern them appropriately. The analysis concluded on the fact that ideology is an individual's perception or experience of the world.

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