ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Ideology and Power Relations in Political Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Governor Simon Bako Lalong's First Broadcast on The Corona Virus Pandemic

CHINELO J. EZEKULIE, PhD & VIVIAN AMAKA ANOSIKE

Department of English University of Jos lophine@gmail.com/ezekuliej@unijos.edu.ng; Department of General Studies NTA Television College, Jos anovivian@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper investigated how texts reproduce and sustain power and unequal power relations, with specific reference to how ideology and power were reflected in the first COVID-19 Speech broadcast of the executive Governor of Plateau State, Rt. Hon. Dr. Simon Bako Lalong, to the citizens of Plateau State. The study employed the tools of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to unmask the hidden ideologies and power relations embedded in the language of the speech. The objectives of the study were to identify and interpret the salient micro structures (linguistic features) of the speech and the macro structures, that is, the underlying political ideological structures in the speech and how they relate to social structures. Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of discourse practice and social conditions was adopted. A qualitative research design was employed. The data consisted of the first COVID-19 Speech made by the Governor. CDA tools viz., vocabulary, mood, modality, speech act, thematic structure as well as Fairclough's three dimensional models namely description, interpretation and explanation were used as the analytical framework. The findings showed among others that the Governor deployed language as a strategy of domination and supremacy by exploiting lexical items and textual structures which enabled him to impose his worldview on the citizens. This study therefore concluded that the COVID -19 speech of the Governor not only promoted asymmetrical power relations, but it also produced, reproduced, legitimized, and maintained social structures that sustain domination.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Power, Ideology, Political Speech, COVID-19

Introduction

The sudden outbreak of the novel Corona Virus Disease in 2019, popularly known as COVID-19, in Wuhan China and the subsequent spread across the globe aroused a lot of communication and discourse both in the print and the electronic media locally and internationally from different spheres of life such as medicine, politics, religion, etc. The avalanche of discourses basically coalesces around the preventive and curative measures that will help to contain the spread of the ambient disease. This global pandemic has not only claimed millions of lives but also has shut down for months the socio-economic, political, educational and religious activities of almost all the countries in the world. With the ravaging effect on the aforementioned activities and on the lives of people, the deadly disease became an albatross and consequently a centripetal discourse topic globally.

The new Corona virus disease appeared in Wuhan, China, at the beginning of December 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) named the disease caused by the virus COVID-19, which references the type of virus and the year it emerged. From China, a large outbreak of the disease spread to multiple places in the world including Africa. This prompted the World Health Organization to declare it a pandemic. Globally, the United States is currently the worst hit and is thus tagged the epicenter of the pandemic. According to the latest figures published by John Hopkins as of1st June, 2020, 6,181,781 cases have been detected worldwide, with 372,303 death and 2,646, 874 recoveries. However, at the same time in Nigeria there are 10,162 cases with 287 deaths (www.aljazeera.com).

COVID-19 is a global health emergency; thus, both developed and developing countries are keenly racing to slow down and eventually halt its spread. With the rapid spread of the virus from Lagos, the

Nigerian epicenter, to some states of the federation including FCT Abuja, the federal government through the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) has continued to roll out and update guidelines to be followed by all citizens towards containing the pandemic in line with global best practices. There have been a few presidential speeches in that regard. All the governors of the affected states have also been proactive in championing the advocacy at the state level. It is against this backdrop that the Governor of Plateau State His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Simon BakoLalong made this proactive maiden broadcast sensitizing the citizens of Plateau State on the novel COVID-19 arming them with the safety measures as well as the sanctions for non-adherence.

Discourse is always around us, whether we are looking at the esoteric language of science and technology, the elegant language of creative works or the incisive language of politics and the media. In all of these instances of discourse, there are certain underlying rules, and each of these is in turn contingent upon the parameters of the social context in which the discourse takes place. A dialogue between a teacher and a student is different from a political speech, in terms of ideology, power relations and word usage. Discourse is generally seen as "language in use". This possibly means that every act of communication can count as an example of discourse. Jonestone (2002) conceives of discourse as "actual instances of communication in the medium of the language" (p.2). Discourse Analysis (henceforth DA) is generally viewed as language above the sentence or clause. It is the aspect of linguistics that is concerned with how we build up meaning in larger communicative, rather than grammatical units. It studies meaning in text, paragraph and conversation rather than in single sentence. Brown and Yule in Rotimi (2016) submit that DA examines "how addressers construct linguistic messages for addressees and how addressees work on linguistic messages in order to interpret them" (p.3). Discourse Analysis is therefore the approach to language that focuses on the use of discourse in society and the role context plays in the interpretation of discourse. It examines naturally-occurring texts, such as conversations and written texts. Discourse Analysis challenges us to move from seeing language as abstract to seeing our words as having meaning in a particular historical, social and political condition. It reveals that our words are politicized, even if we are not aware of it, because they carry the power that reflects the interest of those who speak them (Mcgregor, 2003,p.2).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) on the other hand is an approach to Discourse Analysis. It is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. CDA is particularly interested in the detailed interface between structures of discourse and the structures of power (Wodak, 1989, p.7). In this process, language assumes an essential role, given than each political activity is prepared, accompanied, influenced and played by language.

Political speeches provide a veritable platform where discourse can be used to assert, sustain and legitimize power. Political speeches emanate from political forums and events; thus, they are as varied as the different occasions that produce them. Of these forms of political speeches, presidential speeches, inaugural speeches and campaign speeches are prevalent. However, the type of political speech explored in this paper is rare, being focused on a global health emergency. This kind of political speech is usually occasioned by a pandemic or an epidemic. In political discourse, the ideological leanings of the text producers are often concealed in the fabric of language such that the text recipients are ignorant of them and thus may contribute to perpetuating even unwholesome ones. Thus, political speeches and other types of political discourse are all fields of ideological battles which can be subjected to Critical Discourse Analysis.

Given that the obfuscation of ideological leanings and power asymmetries in text production

through the architecture of language is of interest to critical discourse analysts, this paper employs CDA in X-raying the relationship between the discourse structures of the first COVID-19 Speech of Plateau State Governor and their underlying social meanings with a view to unmasking the covert meanings embedded in the speech. This exercise hopes to raise the consciousness of all stakeholders and particularly language scholars to the potential of discourse and texts in mediating dominant discursive practices and also to provide insights into the peculiar power and ideological structures implicit in political speeches.

Objectives of The Study

The objectives of the study are

i. to identify the experiential values of the lexical items in the speech.
ii. to identify the relational values of the grammatical features of the speech.
iii. to examine the relational values of the textual features of the speech in terms of the subject position of the producer.
iv. to ascertain how the macro-scale structures are related to the social structures.

Research Questions

1. What experiential values do lexical items in the speech have?
2. What relational values do grammatical features in the speech have?
3. What relational values do textual features have in terms of the subject position of the producer?
4. What macro-scale structures does the speech have?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Clarification

A clear understanding of the critical discourse analytic approach is germane to this study. Rotimi (2016, p.91) explicates the preoccupation of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) thus:

> Critical Discourse Analysis is an approach to Discourse Analysis that emphasizes the study of language and discourse in social situations. It draws on post structuralist discourse theory and critical linguistics to focus on how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in different linguistic contexts. CDA is founded on the idea that there is unequal access to linguistic and social resources.

The author holds that the discipline developed within several disciplines such as pragmatics, linguistics, sociolinguistics, sociology, psychology, stylistics, anthropology and ethnography in the humanities and social sciences. He submits that CDA gives insights into the way discourse reproduces (or resists) social and political inequality, power abuse or domination. CDA is concerned with the way discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge relations of power and dominance in society. Similarly, Van Dijk (1995) views Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as "the general label for a special approach to the study of texts and talk emerging from critical linguistics, critical semiotics and in general from a socio-politically conscious and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse and communication" (p.1).

Language is not used in a vacuum but rather in specific social, political, cultural and psychological contexts. Thus, CDA accounts for the complex relationship between the structure of texts and their social functions especially when they are used to create and maintain differential power relations and structures. Thus, the relationship between language, power and ideology is the focal point in CDA. This approach to language consists of an interdisciplinary set of approaches which attempt to describe, interpret and explain the acknowledged relationship (O'Halloran, cited in Simpson, 2011). The fundamental claim of CDA is that all human usage encodes ideological patterns. This implies that language is not just a transparent medium of communication about the objective world, but it is a constantly operative part of the social process

(Malkmkjaer, cited in Taiwo, 2007). By extension, anything that is encoded about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position. Thus, language can never be neutral because it bridges our personal and social worlds (Henry & Tator, 2002). CDA therefore aims to uncover the hidden ideologies that can influence a reader or hearer's view through the analysis of grammar. It studies and analyses words used in discourses to expose the source of power, abuse, dominance, inequality and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts (Van Dijk, cited in Taiwo, 2007).

Ideology, a major conceptin the field of CDA, has been accorded different definitions. For example, Fairclough (1995) conceives of ideology as an unexamined, un-self-critical and routinized set of beliefs and value systems by a particular social group. He suggests that ideology involves the description of the world from the perspective of a certain interest. Similarly, Ogunmodede, cited in Ike-Nwafor, (2015) defines ideology as "a complex body of ideas, beliefs, values, and insights we hold as individuals and as groups that influences and directs our behavior and serves as a basis for our actions as individuals and as groups" (p.19). This definition sees ideology simply as a world-view and a positive concept rather than a negative concept. Ideology thus encompasses attitudes, beliefs, values and doctrines that shape the individual's perceptions and thoughts defining the way the person constructs and interprets reality.

The concept of power is difficult to define, given the many competing views as to where power is located, what constitutes power and how power is best analysed. However complex and abstract power is, its significant influence on our lives is incontrovertible. Politics is concerned with power, the power to make decisions, to control resources, to control other people's behavior, and often to control their values. Thomas and Wareing (2000) affirm that "power is quite an abstract concept, but has an infinitely important influence on our lives" (p.11-12). According to Fairclough (2001), power "is to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contribution of non-powerful participants" (p.38). Power is also equated with influence and control (Van Dijk, 1993, 1996). It is equally important to note that power is enacted and brokered via the arsenal of language.

Political discourse can be defined as a communicative act of participants who try to give specific meanings to facts and influence as well as persuade others. In other words, political discourse can be defined as manipulative linguistic strategy which serves concrete ideological goals. This covers formal debates, speeches, and informal talk on politics among family members (Liebes & Ribak, 1991). Political discourse can be classified according to the ideologies it tries to promote (socialist, liberal/democratic and totalitarian, among others). Discourses produced by those segments are the reflections of their ideological stances and the production of a particular (political) discourse serves the purpose of articulating, protecting/preserving, challenging/deconstructing certain interests. Therefore, van Dijk (2006) draws a specific link between ideology (worldview) and discourses; he believes that for people to acquire, express, and reproduce their ideologies largely by text or talk, a discourse analytical study of ideology is most relevant.

Empirical Review

A number of relevant studies have been conducted to examine the relationship between discursive structures and ideological structures in political speeches. Some of them include Mohammadi and Javidi (2016), Kazemian and Hashemi (2014), Ike-Nwafor (2015), and Sharrndama (2015).

Mohammadi and Javidi (2016) did a CDA of President Donald Trump's Language Use in US Presidential Campaign, 2016. The aim was to explore the interrelation of discourse structures and ideological structures of the speech. The study uses a descriptive-analytical method of research, the ten-question model of Norman Fairclough, and Van Dijk's ideological discourse analysis framework to unmask the use of power and hidden strategies

through language use. The findings showed that there were linguistic traces that depict the strategy and ideology in the text. The study concluded that the findings of the article could be applied to English Reading Comprehension and Reading Journalistic Text Classes. Kazemian and Hashemi analysed Obama's 2012 speech using Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis framework based on a Hallidayan perspective. The study showed that nominalization, parallelism, unification strategies and modalities dominated in the speech.

Similarly, Ike-Nwafor made a critical discourse analysis of selected political campaign speeches of gubernatorial candidates from South-Western Nigeria. The findings showed that the South-Western gubernatorial aspirants 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. The study concluded that the plethora of texts produced, distributed and consumed in 2007-2014 gubernatorial electioneering campaigns in South Western Nigeria not only promoted asymmetrical power relations, but they also produced, reproduced, legitimized and maintained social structures that sustain domination. Sharndama did a critical discourse analysis of President Mohammadu Buhari's Inaugural Speech. The analysis revealed the ideologies on which the new government headed by President Muhammadu Buhari intended to operate.

All the reviewed studies and many more are related to the current study in a broad sense in that they explored discourse structures used by political office holders and aspirants to garner and sustain support from the electorate with their underlying ideologies. However, the current study is unique in that while the empirical studies all centred on popular political discourse such as presidential speech, campaign speech and inaugural speech none was a pandemic speech on a novel disease – COVID-19. This academic gap underscores the relevance of this paper.

Methodology

A qualitative research design was employed. The data for this study was the first broadcast speech on COVID-19 Pandemic by the Governor of Plateau State, His Excellency, Rt. Honourable Simon Bako Lalong. The speech was purposively chosen from a number of speeches made by the governor on COVID-19 between March and May 2020. The choice of the first speech was predicated on the a priori assumption that – being the first – the speech is more comprehensive and emotive. Relevant excerpts from the speech were purposively selected and subjected to critical discourse analysis using CDA tools viz., vocabulary, mood, modality, speech act, thematic structure as well as Fairclough's three dimensional models namely description, interpretation and explanation. For text analysis on the level of description, four out of Fairclough's ten-question model for analyzing texts to reveal the covert meaning were adopted. The speech is composed of forty-paragraphs. These paragraphs are numbered for easy cross-reference in the analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Description: Text Analysis

1. The experiential values oflexical items in the speech

The Governor's choice of words such as *challenge, pandemic, threat, global, fight, deadly*, *disease, ventilators, tackle, quarantine, surveillance, outbreak ,closure, enforcement, isolation, lock down,* etc. shows his resolve to convince the citizens of Plateau that the outbreak of Corona Virus disease in Nigeria is neither a scam nor a fallacy as viewed by some Nigerians. The Governor tactfully begins the speech with a group of lexical items, 'My dear citizens of Plateau State' which shows solidarity with his people rather than deploying words that may alienate them. The repetition of this endearing assertion in paragraphs 23, 28, and 33 explicitly shows that the citizens are important to him, but implicitly projects the authority he has as a leader to inform the residents of the state about the deadly disease as well as the preventive and curative

measures the state government in collaboration with the Federal government and the NCDC has mapped out.

2. The relational values of grammatical features of the speech

Relational values give insight into the social relationships between discourse producers and consumers enacted through the former's discourse. Clues as to the relationship between his Excellency and his 'dear citizens of Plateau State'' are gleaned from the way he represents the citizens, their beliefs, experiences and conducts in his discourse. Such clues are readily provided by the use of pronouns.

Pronouns

Personal pronouns constitute a formidable tool for constructing identities in political discourse. Their various forms are often skillfully manipulated to achieve discourse goals other than the traditional function of substitution to avoid monotonous repetition of nouns performed by pronouns. The discourse goals may transcend grammatical boundaries to pursue self-emphasis, self-responsibility and unity of purpose, among others. Thus, personal pronouns additionally are exploited to subtly encode some ideological leanings and beliefs in texts. In a political speech, personal pronouns are often used as a form of address, either to refer to an audience, the speaker, or his political party. Trimiea (2010) cited in Al-Fakai (2014) is of the view that the pronouns political speakers use to refer to themselves or their audience can be a significant part of the message. They can be used to foreground or to obscure responsibility and agency. What the political speakers say is usually carefully crafted because one of the main goals of giving a political speech is to enhance the credibility of the politician in question.

The personal pronouns *we, I, me, you, us* and even the possessive form of *we*, *'our,'* are pervasively used in the speech more than others. 'I' and its objective case 'me' are used to express personal feelings, personal responsibility or self-reference. 'We' is used to create shared sense of responsibility and group cohesion. It means that the speaker and the audience belong to the same group, and have the same mission/objectives. It also shows solidarity. For example:

Excerpt 1: *My dear citizens of Plateau State, it has become necessary to address you on the global health challenge that <u>we</u> are facing today which is the Corona Virus pandemic otherwise known as COVID-19* (para.1)

This type of 'we' in the above paragraph is relationally significant because it represents both the speaker and the listeners. Thus, it has the communicative function of inclusiveness which means that the pandemic is a challenge to both the residents of Plateau State and the Governor. The inclusive use of 'we' is also present in paragraphs 24, 30, 33 and 36 line 1. However, there is another use of 'we' in paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 12, 21, 25, 22 and 36 line 3 which refers to the Governor and his Executive Council only. According to Karapetjana (2011), politicians employ the first person plural pronoun *we* if they wish to share the responsibility and create involvement with the audience. This inclusiveness enables them to convey a decision that is controversial and lend it a sense of collectivity.

Similarly, 'our' – the possessive form of 'we' –used in paragraphs 3, 6, and 26 stands for the Governor and the Executive while the one in paragraphs 34 and 39 stand not only for His Excellency and his executive but also for the entire residents of Plateau. Examples:

Excerpt 2: *<u>Our</u> administration has remained proactive in responding to the pandemic and also liaising closely with the Federal government and relevant stake holders to tackle the disease* (para. 3).

Excerpt 3: *Working together with God Almighty <u>our</u> side, we can overcome this challenge and face the future with greater prospect. As people of faith, let us therefore intensify our prayers to God and not succumb to fear.* (para. 39)

The use of 'Our' in text 2 is a representation of only the Governor and his Executive while the one in text 3 is for the Governor, his Executive Council and the people of Plateau. This observation affirms Bramley's (2001) claim that through the different

uses of personal pronouns politicians can create multiple identities which could be those of 'selves' as individuals as well as 'selves' as members of collectives, including politicians' own political party. The tactful deployment of the synonymous lexical items namely *government, council* and *state executive* justifies the assertion that the use of 'we' and its possessive form 'our' has two discourse values. In paragraphs 3 and 6, the governor's use of the possessive pronoun 'our' and personal pronoun 'we' implicitly emphasizes the good deeds of the governor and his in-group as regards their level of preparedness in a bid to fight the deadly Corona Virus disease in the state. The use of *we* enables the speaker to include others in the utterance, thereby constructing inclusive and clear identity, as well as making others responsible for potential issues (Bramley, 2001). Examples:

Excerpt 4: We *also activated our Public Health Emergency Operation Centre to enhance our monitoring capacity and ability to receive up-to-date information from all the 17 Local Government Areas.* (para.6)

Excerpt 5: *Our administration has remained proactive in responding to the pandemic and also liaising closely with the Federal government and relevant stake holders to tackle the disease.* (paragraph 3)

The above paragraphs are replete with the ideology of positive self-representation of the Governor and his Executive Council. He presents themselves as people who are proactive, hardworking and fit in handling COVID- 19 challenges. As observed by Irimiea (2010), politicians mostly do not deliver speeches as individuals but rather as representatives of political parties, governments, states or nations.

The use of the pronouns 'I' and 'me' in paragraphs 4, 7, 14,21, 23, 24, 27, 34,and 38 presents the power and control the governor has over the residents. An example will suffice:

Excerpt 6: *With more cases recorded in Nigeria and based on advice of experts, I directed the closure of all schools from pre-primary to tertiary level in the state from Saturday 21st March 2020.* (para.7)

As seen in Excerpt 6, he equally uses the first person singular to express personal feelings, personal responsibilities and to make self-reference. It is important to note that it is only the head of a social group be it political, educational, social or religious that exercises this kind of power in decision making.

The pronoun 'You' is used mainly by leaders as an indefinite pronoun to refer to people generally as well as present their beliefs and ideas as general thereby making it hard for them to question or doubt what is said. *You* is used to specify the participant role of hearer or addressee. This is clearly different from the referential third person pronouns 'they, he, she, it' and their objective counterparts (Halliday&Hasan, 1976).The use of impersonal 'you' is relationally important because speakers use it to claim solidarity with the audience, making the use ideological. Example:

Excerpt 7: *You will recall that when we received information about some Chinese nationals who arrived Wase Local Government Area after the outbreak of the disease in the country,* I *immediately directed the Commissioner of Health to deploy experts to investigate.* (para.4)

From the above excerpt, the use of 'You" covertly depicts His Excellency's presupposition that the citizens are aware of the information since it had been broadcast on the state television station (Plateau Radio Television Corporation).Thus, the assertion is predicated against the backdrop of what the speaker assumes to be common knowledge between him and the hearer. *'You',* having been used in the generic sense, includes everyone in the audience. In this case, the governor presents *'self'* as normal or typical. According to Luberge and Sankoft (1980), when *you* is used in a generic sense which implicates everyone in the action, the effect is to give more weight to the argument. The speaker in using 'You will recall…' appeals to the background knowledge of the audience as citizens of the state who ought to be aware of the happenings in the state. The use also subtly suggests that the administration is transparent and does not keep the citizens in the dark.

3. The relational values of textual features of the speech in terms of the subject position of the producer

The interpersonal macro-function which is concerned with the establishment of social relations between the speaker and the listener is paramount. We shall concentrate here on analysing the subject position the Governor strives to structure for himself which assigns him the father figure. He assumes the role of a leader determined to enforce discipline on his subjects. Analysing the mood and modality as well as his stance as supplied by the text will help us understand the values of textual features. Examples:

Excerpt 8: *However, we have noted with dismay the flagrant disregard and disrespect to this directive by some individuals and groups including religious institutions that did not only flout the order, but also dissuaded their followers from abiding by it.* (para 12)

Excerpt 9: *Afterwards, we organized a critical enlightenment session with key stakeholders such as religious, traditional and community leaders, civil society, non-governmental organizations as well as health experts which was chaired by his Excellency, Prof. Sonny Tyoden, Deputy Governor of Plateau State.* (para. 8)

In the above excerpts, the governor gives information to his people whom he assigns the role of listeners. The declarative, active mood is predominant in the excerpt. In this mood, the subject position of the speaker is that of the giver of information, while the addressee's position is that of the receiver of the information. This presents an unequal power structure where the giver of the information is in a position of authority to condemn the flouting of orders and is in a position to re-strategize and impose sanctions.

Excerpt 10: *In view of the crowds associated with markets, government is directing all markets to close effective 25th March, 2020. Only traders selling food items, pharmaceuticals and cooking gas are to remain open. In addition, all street hawking and begging are prohibited. The weekly Sunday markets at Ahmadu Bello Way, Bukuru and environs are hereby banned.* (para.17)

Excerpt 11: *Motor parks are to capture and keep data including contacts of all inbound and outbound passengers as well as adhere strictly to social distancing and mass gathering, prohibition order as well as hygiene regulations.* (para.19)

Excerpt 12: ….*Let me make it categorically clear that such actions will no longer be tolerated.* (para.14)

In Excerpt 10-12, there is a glaring manifestation of speech Act theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) which says that language is used to perform actions, that is doing things with words. The utterances in Excerpt 10 and 11 according to Searle are directive acts in which speakers make attempts to compel hearers to do something. This means that the governor tactfully uses directive acts to compel the hearers to take certain actions. Similarly, the last example is a commissive act whereby speakers commit themselves to doing something. Here the Governor warns some of his subjects who defaulted through non-compliance to previous directives given by the state as regards the closure of schools, suspension of anniversaries and cultural festivals to desist from such or face the law. This shows the power he wields over his subjects. It is important to note that the imperative mood is used to express authority and describe the status and/or power relations of the participant involved in the discourse. Usually a person who gives commands to other people has a strong capacity of being obeyed by them. Thus, the Excellency controls the social exchange and expects some form of actions from the citizens who are the controlled.

Modality deals with the discourse producer's authority as embedded in the text. Modal verbs are used to convey the addresser's attitudes and judgments (Wang, 2010). The speech under study shows a deployment of both "relational modality of obligation" and "expressive modality" of possibility, intention, permission (Fairclough, 1989). Relational modality is employed by speakers when their aim is to give non-negotiable commands. The use of *Must, should, should have*, as well as outright commands as found in the use of synecdoche in paragraph 2 by the Governor admonishing every citizen of Plateau to contribute positively towards the containment of the virus is used to assert authority over the audience: "…all

hands must be on deck to fight it and ensure that people are protected from the virus."The use of 'Must' to convey obligation, for instance, occurs in paragraphs 2, 30 and 33. In paragraph 2, the Governor carefully mitigates the force of the command by employing the synecdoche quoted above which differs totally from the customary, everyday command for the purpose of assigning a special meaning. The deployment of figurative expressions serves the purpose of projecting their ideology and asymmetrical power relations forcefully and emotively with a view to getting attention, emphasizing special meaning and ultimately eliciting support and persuading the hearers. To further assert his own personal authority aimed at assigning more obligatory roles to his subjects, he also uses more authority (power) elements in paragraphs 30 and 33. In order not to sound autocratic, he mitigates the relational modals with expressive modals 'will 'and 'shall' in paragraphs 19, 21,31,35, and 36. 'Will' and 'Shall' are used in the aforementioned paragraphs to show the Governor's intention as regards his future plans and actions to be carried out should the disease spread to Plateau State.

Excerpt 13: Dear citizens of Plateau State, you may have been following the impact of the Corona Virus disease on the global economy. Nigeria is not isolated and has already been heavily impacted because of the crashing oil prices on the international market (para.28).

Excerpt 14: Working together and with God Almighty on our side, we can overcome this challenge and face the future with greater prospect. (para.39)

'May' and 'Can' are used respectively in paragraphs 28 and 39 to show the possibility that the citizens of Plateau State have been following the impact of Corona Virus disease on the global economy and their ability to overcome the challenge if they all work together with God on their side. These modals lack the force of *must, should* and *should have*. The Governors ways from authoritative wordings to minimizers as found in his use of expressive modality. This shows inconsistencies from position of power to the use of discretion.

4. Themacro-scale structures of the text

Thematic structure refers to the organization of the message in a clause. A special status is given to one part of the clause that is called the *theme* and the other part is called the *rheme.* According to Halliday (1985), the theme is the element which serves as the starting point for the message, it is also what the clause is all about. The rheme on the other hand is defined as the part of the clause in which the theme is developed (Eggin in Rotimi, 2016). A speaker may choose to identify and place a piece of information that is more important to him than others in a position which ordinarily that piece of information would not occupy. The whole essence of the organization is to present elements in their priority to the speaker/writer. Thus, in this study, there is a preponderance of unmarked theme where the topic of the clause is the starting point with the exception of the following paragraphs: 7, 15, 16, 17, 22, 24,26, 28, 35, and 39 with marked themes where the governor tactfully and intentionally placed the comments of the clause that are supposed to appear ideally at the rheme position at the starting point. This is ideological as it shows the idea or opinion that is of utmost importance to the speaker. For Example:

Excerpt 15: *With more cases recorded in Nigeria and based on the advice of experts, I directed the closure of all schools from pre-primary to tertiary institution level in the state from Saturday 21st March2020.* (para.7)

Excerpt 16: *Arising from an Emergency Meeting of the State Council, further measures have been taken with effect from Wednesday 25th March 2020.All public servants in Plateau State from grade levels 12 and below are to work from home for the next 30 days.* (para.15)

From the above paragraphs the governor mitigates his power by presenting first the reason that necessitated his action. This suggests that the governor is not autocratic; he listens to his in-group and other important stakeholders in decision making.

Interpretation (Processing Analysis)

Fairclough (1989) identifies situational context and inter-textual context as central to interpretation.

Situational context determines which discourse type is appropriate to draw from in situations of language use. We shall conduct this level of analysis by answering the following questions which relate to the four main dimensions of the situation:

What's going on? This is subdivided into activity, topic and purpose. It is the activity type of behaviour regulation through speech delivery. The topic is COVID-19 Speech, and the purpose of the speech is to enable His Excellency to create awareness to the citizens of Plateau about the deadly disease and to sensitize them on the preventive measures his administration in collaboration with the Federal Government and Nigeria Centre for Disease Control has mapped out to contain the spread of the virus.

Who's involved? It specifies subject positions. In this study, we have a speaker and addressees' roles. There is no alternation of roles between them because speech delivery is a single term genre. Another relevant aspect of the participants in this speech is that the speaker is a Governor whose target is to control and convince the minds of his subjects on the outbreak of Corona Virus in Nigeria while the addressees are the citizens of Plateau State both educated and uneducated who have divergent opinions and beliefs about the disease.

In what relations? Here, we look at subject position, more dynamically, in terms of the relationships of power, and social distance set up and enacted in the situation. The Governor is the head of a state and consequently he is primarily a personality with power and authority.

What is the role of language? Language is used instrumentally to regulate the conducts of the citizens of Plateau State. The Governor convinces his subjects in a speech that there is an outbreak of a pandemic disease in Nigeria and the need to follow the stipulated safety measures to ensure the containment of the disease.

Explanation (Social Analysis)

Our assumption here is that any discourse is shaped by institutional and societal power relations enacted and sustained by the workings of ideologies. In this democratic dispensation in Nigeria, every state has a democratically elected civilian governor who is saddled with the responsibility of controlling, directing, protecting and providing basic amenities to the citizens of the state. The Governor who is serving his second tenure under the political platform of All Progressives Congress (APC) is a legal practitioner who supposedly knows what it means not to infringe on people's rights. His speech displays tactful choice of linguistic items through which he tries to suppress the power relations that flow from him to his subjects by claiming solidarity along all with them. The power/solidarity mix in the discourse enables the Governor to claim solidarity with his people while asserting his authority mildly by assuring them that '*Working together and with God on our side, we can overcome this challenge and face the future with greater prospect. As people of faith, let us therefore intensify our prayers to God and not succumb to fear.* Ideology is implicated in this use of discourse to change the conduct of a people from unacceptable and retrogressive ones to acceptable and progressive ones.

At the societal level, he sets off different social identities for himself and his citizens based on the long term power relations within which he operates. As a Lawyer whose social relations with his residents know no status boundary, he stealthily directs his people to take the safety and precautionary measures seriously as a lackadaisical attitude and non-compliance to directives will jeopardize the lives of other peace loving people of Plateau. The effect of the discourse on the citizens is to control their minds to accept that there is a pandemic outbreak of Corona Virus in Nigeria and to sensitize them on the preventive and curative measures that have been mapped out by the State government in conjunction with the Federal Government and the NCDC to contain the deadly disease for the betterment of all and sundry in the state.

Conclusion

Outright control of people's conducts is often

perceived as an infringement on their freedom and is often resisted. Discourse, through the ideological workings of language, is a safe and effective means to control people's behavioural pattern without their knowledge. This takes the form of commonsense that certain basic sociolinguistic conventions are obtainable in society and must be obeyed. Most lexical items, grammatical features and discourse structures are ideological and have been institutionalized to serve the power elements in society, to the detriment of the less powerful, and CDA targets such covert use of language with a view to exposing them. The speech we analyzed shows that the Governor makes a conscious selection of these features to reshape the mindsets of the citizens of Plateau State without the use of force or outright autocratic language. Language, therefore, is a means of regulating the behavioural patterns of people. The study concludes that the COVID -19 speech of the Governor not only promoted asymmetrical power relations, but it also produced, reproduced, legitimized, and maintained social structures that sustain domination.

References

Al-Faki, M. (2013). Political speeches of some African leaders from linguistic perspective (1981-2013). *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 4*(3),180-198.

Al Jazeera and News Agency, May 6, 2020. www.aljazeera.com

Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bayram, F. (2010). Ideology and political discourse: A critical discourse analysis of Erdogann's political speech. *ARCELS*, 7, 23-40.

Bramley, N. R. (2001). *Pronouns of politics: The use of pronouns in the construction of self and other in political interviews.* Doctoral Thesis, Australian National University.

Fairclough, N.(1989). *Language and power*. Essex, England: Longman Group Limited.

---. (1992). Introduction. In Fairclough, N. (Ed.), *Discourse and social change* (pp.510-516). Cambridge: Polity Press.

---. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis*: *The critical study of language*. New York: Longman.

---. (2001). *Language and power.* England: Pearson Education.

McGregor, S. (2003). Critical discourse analysis: A primer. *Kappa Omicron Nu Forum*, 15 (1), 2-10.

Halliday, M. K.& Hasan, R. O. (1976).*Cohesion in English.* London: Longman.

Henry, F.& Tator, C. (2002). *Discourses of domination: Racial bias in the Canadian English Press*. University of Toronto.

Ike-Nwafor, N. (2015). *Critical discourse analysis of selected campaign speeches*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Irimea, S. (2010). A rhetorical and comparative study of the victory speeches of Barack Obama and Mircea Geona. *Jolie* 3.Babes Bolyai University.

Jonestone, B. (2002). *Discourse analysis*. New Jersey: Blackwell Publishers.

Karapetjana, I. (2011). Pronominal choice in political interviews. *Baltic Journal of English Language, Literature and Culture,* 1(1), 36-45.

Kazemian, B.,& Hashemi, S.(2014). Critical discourse analysis of Barack Obama's 2012 speeches: Views from systemic functionnal linguistics and rhetoric. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4 (6), 1178-1187.

Laberge, S.,& Sankoff, G. (1980). Anything you can do. In Sankoff, G. (Ed.), New York: Academic Press.

Liebes, T.,& Ribak, R.(1991). A mother's battle against TV news: a case study of political socialization. *Discourse and society*, 202-222.

Mohammadi, M. & Javidi, J.(2017). A critical discourse analysis of Donald Trump's language use in US presidential campaign, 2016. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature*, 6 (5), 1-10

O'Halloran, K. (2011). Critical discourse analysis. In Simpson James (Ed.), *The Routledge handbook of applied linguistics* (pp.445-456). London: Routledge.

Searle, J. (1969). *Speech acts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sharndama, E. (2015). Political discourse: A critical discourse analysis of President Muhamadu Buhari's inaugural speech. *European Journal of English language and Linguistic Research,* 3(3),12-24.

Taiwo, R. (2007). Language, ideology and power relations in Nigerian newspaper headlines. *Nebula*, 4 (1), 1-29.

---. (2016). Discourse in use. National Open University

and National Teachers' Institute Discourse analysis manual.

---. (2016) Critical discourse analysis. National Open University and National Teachers Institute Discourse analysis manual.

Thomas, L. & Wareing, S.(2000). What is language and what does it do. In Thomas Linda & Wareing Shan (Eds.), *Language, society and power: An introduction* (pp.1-16). London: Routledge.

Van Dijk,T. (1993).Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse and Society,* 4 (2), 249-283.

---. (1995). Aims of critical discourse analysis. *Japanese discourse, 1,*17-27.

---. (2006). Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies, 11*(2), 115-140.

Wang, J. (2010). A critical discourse analysis of Barack Obama's Speeches. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research,*1(3), 254 – 261.

Wodak, R. (1989). Language, power and ideology. Amsterdam: Benjamin Publishing Company.