THE SPEECHES OF GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES' DEBATE OF IMO STATE 2019 ELECTION: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

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Abstract
This paper discusses the debate of gubernatorial candidates in Imo State 2019 election. A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is employed in analysing the debate. The main aim is to discover the ideologies used to control the minds of the electorate towards giving the candidates a favourable support. The theoretical framework adopted is Fairclough's Three Dimensional Theory and van Dijk Socio-cognitive framework. The choice of CDA is as a result of non-unitary stance of the theory. This study therefore will examine the role of language, power relations and ideological strategies used by the candidates. Five aspirants participated in the debate. Their speeches will be selected using purposive sampling technique to shape the data analysis. The analysis reveals that some words and expressions which have linguistic features and ideological connotations are used to demonstrate will, commitment, power, domination so as to gain support for their election as the governor of the state. The researchers hope that the contribution to scholarship will create critical language awareness on both text producers and consumers. In conclusion, the study will promote unequal power relation and maintain social structures that sustain domination.
Keywords: Discourse, Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis, Political discourse, debate

Introduction
David Crystal defines discourse as a continuous "stretch of language larger than a sentence often constituting a coherent unit". He contrasts 'discourse' within linguistics to the use of the term 'text' and says:

> Discourse analysis focuses on the structure of naturally occurring spoken language, as found in such 'discourses' as conversation, interviews, commentaries and speeches. Text analysis focuses on the structure of written language, as found in such 'texts' as essays, notices, road signs and chapters. But this distinction is not clear-cut, and there have been many other uses of these labels. In particular, 'discourse' and 'text' can be used in a much broader sense to include all language units with a definable communicative function, whether spoken or written. Some scholars talk about 'spoken or written discourse', others about 'spoken or written text' (189).

Discourse is a linguistic term and as a linguistic term it literally refers to a formal talk, a piece of writing or discussion. In other words, a discourse could be in the spoken or written form. It is also sometimes regarded as language put to use, which is identical with text. Cook describes discourse as language use in communication and the search for what gives discourse coherence is discourse analysis. Cook further explains that discourse analysis examines how stretches of language, considered in their full textual, social, and psychological contexts becomes meaningful and unified for their users (1989:156). While some linguists may concentrate on determining the formal properties of language, the discourse analyst is committed to an investigation of what that language is used for.

Speaking in a layman's language discourse is what we get when language is used in communication between people. In linguistics, discourse is used to describe an extended stretch of language beyond the boundaries of the sentence. The implication is that as in a sentence, there is internal structure (subject,

verb, object, or complement), elements beyond the sentence also contain similar structures. Discourse analysis is, hence, not just an understanding of how sentences twine together but also the way they exhibit properties which reflect organisation, coherence, rhetorical force, thematic focus etc of a piece of conversation or written text.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is an important aspect of Discourse Analysis (DA). It tries to focus on relations between ways of talking and ways of thinking, and highlights "the traces of cultural and ideological meaning in spoken and written texts" (O'Halloran 2005: 1946). It aims to offer a different "mode" or "perspective" of theorizing, analysis, and application throughout the whole field. One may find a more or less critical perspective in such diverse areas as pragmatics, conversation analysis, narrative analysis, rhetoric, stylistics, sociolinguistics, ethnography, or media analysis, among others. It includes the larger socio-political and socio-cultural contexts within which discourse is rooted, as it is at this macro-level of analysis that we are able to unpack the ideological bases of discourse that have become established overtime and are treated as common sense, acceptable and natural features of discourse (Fairclough, 1995). According to van Dijk, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) 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 views language as a powerful means through which specific ideologies, identities, and culture become dominant in a society. CDA scholars believe that the choice of language interlocutors make reflects their intentions, ideology, and thought. This is an effective means for polarizing power in the society (Rahimi and Rasati, 2011).

Language is an important pointer of the social world. Politics is one of the major dealings that permeate every human's social world. This means that to some extent language and politics are closely linked at a fundamental level. Opeibi sees the relationship as 'symbiotic'. While Beard sees language as the major vehicle for achieving the goals of politics which is to gain power, exercise power and keep power (2). The study of language and politics can be identified by scholars from two different disciplines-linguists and political scientists. These disciplines have some meeting point in as much as they focus on different issues. The meeting point in the research of language and politics and their intersection is critical discourse analysis. The critical discourse approach engages the discourse approaches to any text that could be termed political. Such texts are debates, campaigns, interviews, manifestos, rallies etc are studied under this perspective. These studies are classified generally under political discourse analysis. The debate of gubernatorial candidates in Imo State 2019 election which is the focus of this study constitutes political discourse. This study hopes to explore the linguistic features and discursive strategies used in the debate by the candidates to instantiate power and resistance of such abuse by the dominated groups.

Conceptual Review, Empirical Studies and Theoretical Framework
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has attracted many scholars since 1980s. To Fairclough, CDA is defined as:

> discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony(135).

In a similar vein, van Dijk argued that CDA is a field that is concerned with studying and analyzing written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias (132). It examines how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social, political and historical contexts.

CDA explores the use of language to represent social and ideological realities. CDA is a critical approach to the analysis of discourse aimed at unfolding critical hidden meanings embedded in

texts. Joseph (149) explains that "CDA focuses on uncovering propagandistic language in political discourse". Thus, it investigates how language is deployed to mirror the society. Nnamdi-Eruchalu observes that "CDA draws attention to power imbalance, non-democratic practices, social; inequality and other injustices with a view to promoting social justice, fairness and social equality", (114). The term "critical" in CDA means laying bare the true meaning of discourse, such that the shroud of ideologies are stripped off it.

Most studies on Nigerian political discourse have focused on speeches, a specific kind of speech-addresses by political leaders. A few scholarly studies on campaign speeches also exist. In the following paragraphs, these studies will be reviewed.

Abdullahi-Idiagbon in a critical discourse analytic study of presidential campaign speeches during the 2007 presidential election in Nigeria, investigates the ideological undertones in the campaign speeches of selected presidential candidates. In his findings, he notes the manner in which the aspirants manipulated the linguistic resources to project the messages in their discourse. The styles reveal the use of connotative expressions, topicalization, passivization, persuasion and promises, euphemism and repetition to present their ideological leanings. In a synchronic stylistic analysis of campaign speeches during the 2007 general elections, Omozuwa and Ezejidiaku (2009) identify the stylistic devices used by the candidates. They observe that campaign speeches are embellished in rhetoric and propaganda. The following also characterized their diction such as: repetition, promise, colloquialism, metaphor, word coinages, pidginized expressions, figurative expressions, exaggeration, abusive and vulgar utterances. It is also important to stress that doctoral dissertations have been written on different aspects of Nigerian political discourse. Notable among these are Oha (1994), which is a stylistic study of speeches of the two notable figures in the Nigerian Civil War, Yakubu Gowon, the then military head of state, and Emeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, the military leader who led the failed secession of the Biafra Republic. Opeibi (2004) did a study on discourse analysis of the 1994 presidential election campaigns in Nigeria. From stylistic and text-linguistic perspectives, Ayeomoni (2007) did a lexical analysis of speeches of selected Nigerian military leaders. The above mentioned studies on Nigerian political discourse have identified pertinent linguistic features in different kinds of political speeches made by Nigerian political actors. These include their peculiar rhetorical, pragmatic, discursive and stylistic features.

From the above studies, it is clear that the Nigerian political class employs different innovative linguistic means during political campaigns to canvas for, maintain, assert and resist power in discourse. Political debate is a product of careful thought which is one of its major features. In this present study, CDA is brought into action in the realm of political discourse as we examine how the verbal and visual aspects of the political debate demonstrates how politicians engage in power tussle through the mass media during the 2019 elections in Nigeria.

There are many theoretical frameworks presented by CDA practitioners. For this study, the researchers will make use of two theoretical frameworks vis-à-vis, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework and van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework (all within CDA). Fairclough is the first to create a theoretical framework that provided guiding principle for future CDA research. The driving force of his framework is on the belief that language is a complex part of social life. The dialectic relation between language and social reality is realized through social events (texts), social practices (orders of discourse) and social structures (Fairclough, 2003). Fairclough's method tries to make explicit the ideological and power patterns in texts. He provided three-dimensional framework for text analysis which is widely used today in the field of CDA. The three dimensions are:
  i.   Description is the stage which is concerned with formal properties of the text.
  ii.   Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation.

iii.   Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interpretation and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and social effects. (Fairclough, 1989: 20).

Suffice it to say that description involves text analysis; interpretation involves process analysis, while explanation involves social analysis. Analysis of discourse, therefore, entails the study of the interrelatedness of texts, interaction and contexts.

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive approach focuses on the psychology of text processing. He sees cognition as an interface between social practice and discourse. He conceptualized this in the form of a triangle "the discourse-cognition-society triangle". He deals with the production and reception process of the news. Van Dijk proposes three levels of analysis, structure, production and reception and comprehension. He tries to tie these levels together and make smooth criteria for analysing the text. These relationships according to him take place in two levels of Macro structure versus Micro structure levels. Micro level comprises language, discourse, verbal interaction and so on, while macro level has to do with power relation, such as inequality and dominance(thematic/ topic structure of news stories and their overall schemata). The other major notion that van Dijk has investigated so much is the notion of ideology and analysing the discourse analysis as ideology analysis. Van Dijk says "ideologies are produced and reproduced in discourse and communications even in the non-verbal semiotic texts like pictures and so on can have an impact in this re(production)" (17). He takes ideology as the attitude a group of people hold towards certain issues.

The socio-cognitive model is based on the postulation that cognition mediates between "society" and "discourse". Both long and short term memories as well as certain mental models shape our perception and comprehension of discursive practices and also imply stereotypes and prejudices, if such mental models become rigid and over-generalized. In his socio-cognitive framework, van Dijk argues that the semantic macro structure (global meaning) and semantic micro structure (local meanings) are mentally organized by language users (van Dijk,2004). Global meanings according to him are mentally organized in the form of "topic"-titles, headlines, summaries, abstract, thematic sentences or conclusions which he termed "macro propositions". He recommends starting the analysis of large corpora by assigning list of topics to the different parts of the text in order to summarize it. (quoted in Ike-Nwafor, 2015).

Van Dijk's design is a combination of argumentation, political strategies, rhetorical devices, semantic strategies and stylistic information and consequently an accurate tool for discovering the distortion of realities in the process of discourse production. Furthermore, taking such disciplines as politics, sociology and history into consideration, van Dijk's framework (2004) has become a thorough, all purpose and worthwhile design with respect to the value attached to the concept of 'interdisciplinary' recently. Considering all of its advantages, this study selects van Dijk's framework for the purpose of analysing the materials in addition to Fairclough three dimensional theory. The choice of the above is as a result of the researcher's observation that CDA does not have a unitary theoretical framework. The researcher hopes that the contribution made to scholarship in CDA will help to create awareness on the power of words and utterances in political campaign discourse.

Methodology
The qualitative descriptive research design method is adopted for this study. The descriptive design is based on the qualitative interpretation of the data obtained from debate speeches in Imo State 2019 election. This study concentrates on Critical Discourse Analysis(CDA) with particular reference to gubernatorial debate in Imo State. Five aspirants are involved in the debate. The aspirants' speeches will be purposively selected. In the context of this study, the process of gathering relevant information and data involved library research, discussions with experts in the fields of CDA (especially political discourse) and sociolinguistics. Relevant critical writings and several publications that provided useful insights into this study were consulted. A total of five written gubernatorial debate speeches are sourced from the libraries and internet. The selected speeches vary in length and number of sentences. Each of the five speeches will be studied for identification of extracts that project ideological and power

relations in the texts. Based on the fact that these selected speeches cover up to two or three pages where they were written, the researchers use only the areas that contain the analytical tools being discussed.

In analysing this study, the works of Fairclough and van Dijk are basis of its analytical framework. The analysis focuses on micro and macro level of analysis which are two levels that are obtained in the unpacking of ideologically biased discourse. The micro level is concerned with the analysis of lexical choices in the speeches while the macro level focuses on the communicative situation and the function(s) the speeches are meant to perform. The mental model representation unravels the role of ideologies within the society which may allow for polarization, influence and manipulation. In explaining and interpreting the data of this work, both the meanings produced through formal linguistic elements and those produced using the background knowledge are considered balancing. This framework proceeds from identification of lexical choices to specific social situations to which they correspond and highlight their functions simultaneously.

Data Analysis
In analysing the data the basic principles of CDA by Fairclough's three-dimensional framework and van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework are applied to analyze selected utterances with a view to providing workable and more in-depth interpretation of the utterances. What this means is that each of the utterances has been presented to answer the research questions presented in this study.
1. What are the ideologies used in the debate speeches
2. In what ways were ideologies used as a tool for mind control in the debate.

Ideology of Isolation/Personality Profiling: The ideology of isolation / personality profiling is evident in the debate speeches studied in this work. This quality is peculiar in this era of exposure and awareness, masses believing that personality is the key and not political affiliation. Five extracts were gotten from the debate from five aspirants. The first aspirant is governorship aspirant for Young Progressives Party(YPP), Linus Okolie. He stated thus: "I have been committed to building leadership capacity for Nigeria and Africa. I am a leadership coach and one of the major things I have been known for years as human capital development..." the above statement enables him to seek for the support of the electorates proving that he is capable of governing the state. The governorship aspirant of Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the person of Sir Okey Ezeh is not left out of this ideology. He portrayed himself as a suitable candidate for the governorship position by telling us his qualification and capability as stated in the quotes below:

> *I am a graduate of Mass Communication and i have my MBA. I have put in 27 years cognate working experience in the world leading multinational financial services group. I am an investment banker by profession. I have created an establishment in employment. My mission is to bring public governance in Imo State.*

He believes that his achievements in life make him a more qualified candidate for the post more than his follow contestant that is why he fronts his personality to the masses. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) aspirant, Hon Emeka Ihedioha sees his personality as a top notch among others. His speech states:

> *I am a first degree graduate from University of Lagos, reasonable educated. I have been in public life since 1992. I have been serving the Federal Government of our country in many capacities. A trained food technologist. I was elected member of House of Representative in 2003. In 2007 I was elected Chief whip of the House of Representatives. I have been involved in various development processes of our nation. I will restore the dignity of Imo man.*

Ihedioha full of himself as a "reasonably educated" believes he is the best candidate for the governorship position of Imo State. His Worship Ahizechukwu Okorojiaku is not left out. He employed the ideology of Isolation/Personality Profiling in his speech "*I attended Federal Government College Uyo... I was a magistrate in Imo state Judiciary. I only resign that appointment on 20th January last year to contest and win the governorship of Imo state. I believe that law must be used to adverse the socio economic and political aspiration of man...*" the above statements show that Okorojiaku believes in himself and states categorically that he resigns to contest and win the governorship of Imo state. The last aspirant in

the debate in the person of Rev Bar Ikenna Emmanuel of Change Advocate Party (CAP) shows his best in his statements; "*I studied Lab Science with specialty in area of Virology and Parastology under the Federal University of Technology Owerri. I studied law... I did my postgraduate diploma... I have been in the area of leadership development and have made an outstanding contributions in our state. I am a senior Pastor. I have the pedigree of character*". The statements portray ideology of self profiling believing that his education and stand in society will pave way towards convincing his audience.

The use of language as an instrument of social interaction is clearly conveyed. The personality projection arises as a result of experience, exposure and awareness rather than on political parties. This is an epoch when political party one belongs does not count rather the person's personality and achievement. This premise gives rise to personality racketing in the debate.

Ideology as a weapon of negotiation: The use of ideology as a weapon of negotiation between the candidates who are in search of political offices and the electorate were projected in two extracts from the governorship aspirants.

> *If elected I will create a governance system that works which means our governance system will really really provide good governance in all ramification. It is important that the executive will work very greatly with the legislative. How will that happen? The legislative is suppose to be a very independent system. My job as a governor is to execute, to implement whatever policies. I will not interfere in any of their processes.(Linus Okorie, YPP aspirant)*

The speaker on the extract above highlighted that interference in other arms of the government leads to bad governance. He promised to abide by the policies of the legislative. The next aspirant is not left out in convincing the electorate concerning the good governance as seen in this extract *"restructuring is not just about geopolitical concerns but I think we need to review our very constitution. It is not enough to say there are three arms of government but only one arm controlling others financially...we will run a fair system that we respect all the laws and values"(Sir Okey Ezeh, SDP aspirant).* The power of negotiation was powerfully employed in the two extracts.

Ideology of self-glorification

> *I pride with my pedigree. I pride with my records. I pride with my antecedent. My predecessor has been deep in service. When I become governor of Imo, I will do what we have not done and will do what we need to do. (Hon Emeka Ihedioha, PDP aspirant)*

The speaker is not just deploying the ideology of personality profiling, but is using it as a tool to influence the people and to control their mind into believing in him. "I pride with my pedigree". "I pride with my records". These expressions are used to influence the electorates into approving his candidature. The speaker sees himself as the rightful man in battle. Thus the expression: "my predecessor has been deep in service" … I will do what we have not done". These expressions are brought out to the masses to appeal to their minds and consciences in seeing the speaker as the "messiah".

Power as Mind Control: Under this heading positive ideology of self, which run through the extracts with the declarative item "I" were explored. This expression depicts the speaker as a messiah, "I will restore the dignity of Imo man". He wants the masses to see him as a messiah whose interest to make things work aright in Imo State. "I have the pedigree of character". He wants to be seen as an honest person that does not deceive. The ideologies of personality profiling and self-glorification were also deployed to control the mind of the people. The aspirants did not just deploy the ideology of personality profiling, but used it as a tool to influence the people and to control their mind into believing in them. The analysis so far shows political speeches that are so expertly constructed to dominate and of course get the electorate to cast their votes in support of the speakers. Whether the promises are fulfilled eventually is quite a different thing. The politicians usually make such haughty promises to gain the support of the people and this is the main purpose of the speeches. Two extracts were used under this.

Extract A
If elected I will create a governance system that works which means our governance system will really really provide good governance in all ramification.

Extract B
I was elected Chief whip of the House of Representatives. I have been involved in various development processes of our nation. I will restore the dignity of Imo man.

Discussion of Findings
The findings produced from the debate captured discourse structures that have implications of power and unequal power relations in terms of power as strategies of domination and mind control and also ideology based on the context of use.

This study entails political debate speeches that encode power and dominance with ideological undertone. The researchers have demonstrated that discourse has structure, meaning and action. In Fairclough's opinion, discourse reflects an action. Secondly, there is a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structures, in which social structures determine and create social process. Efforts have also been made to give a comprehensive account of the structure, hidden meaning and communicative actions and effects of the pieces of discourse used as election debate texts produced during the period. Additionally, ideology as noted in the study can be used as a tool of personality projection, self- promotion or what van Dijk calls self- glorification strategy. The purpose is basically to win the support of the populace. So, they try to promote themselves beyond measure in order to achieve the much desired self-glorification.

Conclusion
This study has carried out a critical discourse analysis of speeches of gubernatorial candidates' debate of Imo State 2019 election. It has discovered that linguistic items are used by aspirants and politicians at large to gain votes from the electorates. The use of these items are employed to indicate commitment, obligation, mind control, negotiation and conviction. In conclusion, the gubernatorial candidates in Imo State 2019 election made use of their debate speeches as tool for establishing, maintaining and sustaining power and unequal power relations in the elections.

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