

**REPRESENTATION OF PUBLIC OPINIONS ON NIGERIAN
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS IN SELECTED NIGERIAN
NEWSPAPERS, 2011-2019**

BY

Oluwabusayo Folasayo ADEBIYI

MATRIC. NO.: 166956

**B.A ENGLISH LANGUAGE (AKUNGBA); M.A ENGLISH (IBADAN);
M.PHIL ENGLISH (IBADAN)**

**A Thesis in the Department of English
Submitted to the Faculty of Arts
in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of the Degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

of the

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

JULY, 2023

CERTIFICATION

I certify that this study was carried out by Oluwabusayo Folasayo ADEBIYI in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

Supervisor

A. A. Osisanwo
BA (Ed.) (Ife), MA (Ibadan), PhD (Ibadan)
Senior Lecturer
Department of English
University of Ibadan, Ibadan
Nigeria

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to God the Father, the Giver of all good things, and to my lovely children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my deepest gratitude to God Almighty, by whose guidance and providence I am attaining another feat in life. To Him alone be praise, honour and adoration for all He has done and He is yet doing in my life. Great indeed are His works, and they are marvellous in my eyes.

I appreciate the efforts of my supervisor, teacher and daddy, Dr. Ayo Osisanwo for his relentlessly ensuring that the research is well carried out. Despite his personal and official schedules, he found time to attend to my need. He is not just a lecturer-supervisor; he is a father, daddy, mentor counsellor and problem-solver. I thank him.

To all the lecturers in the Department of English, University of Ibadan, I am grateful. They have in one way or another, through their contributions and criticisms at various seminars and other avenues, imparted me with knowledge. I would like to say a big “thank you” to Prof. Toyin Jegede (H.O.D), Late Prof. M.A Alo, Prof. O.A Ogunsiji, Prof. M.A Kehinde, Prof. Emmanuel Omobowale, Prof. Remy Oriaku, Prof. Obododimma Oha, Prof. S.A Odebunmi, Prof. A.A Akinjobi, and Prof. Rotimi Taiwo; my external examiner, Drs. B.R Ojebuyi my internal examiner, A. B Sunday, A. A Adebiyi-Adelabu, Henry Abaya and Bunmi Oyebanji for their openness and willingness to assist me at different times. To I am really grateful for the individual’s contribution(s) I enjoyed from all members of staff in the Department of English toward the success of this study. Specially, I thank Mr. Gbenga Olaoye and Mrs E. Adekunle.

The unquantifiable roles of my sisters and brothers from another mother; Dr Bunmi Adegbola, Mr Dubamo Tomere, Mr Victor Oluwayemi, my caring brother, Mr Seun Akintaro, Mrs Akintola Christiana, Mr Lekan Atoloye, Mr Odunsi, Miss Tofe and Miss Seyi (Seyi potato) are highly appreciated. I thank them very much for accommodating, feeding and encouraging me. They embraced me with undiluted love. God will surely reward their labour of love and they will never be stranded in life.

I am highly indebted to my church, St Luke’s Anglican Church Idi-Agba Titun, Akure under the leadership of Ven C.O Omotayo and Can. Akinnubi. In addition to this, I thank every member of my unit, children’s department and drama unit, under the leadership of Can. Akinnubi and Mr O. Karuwe. I appreciate all the members of prayer unit for their spiritual support.

Last but by no means the least in this acknowledgement, is my family: to my amiable husband, Odunayo Babatunde Adebisi, I am grateful because he gave me strength, support and encouragement. I thank him for giving me that stability, for being patient with me and understanding the fact that I needed to be away from home. To my angels—Gloria and Gideon— I say “thank you” for understanding that mummy had to be away even at the times they needed her presence. I love them dearly. To my parents, Ven. & Mrs Bisi-Bimpe Ojo, I am grateful, for all the prayers and believing in me. Mr. Awolaye and his amiable wife deserve my appreciation; they stood by me. Also, my good friends and siblings; Drs. Sunday Adegbenro, Emmanuel Chinaguh and Matthew Alugbin, Thomas Idara, Mrs Christopher, Seyi, Mr Sola Ojo, Mr and Mrs Popoola, Mr and Mrs Bunmi Ojo, Mr and Mrs Adewale, Mr Obadare, and Mr and Mrs Olarewaju-Rodiya. May God bless them all richly.

Acknowledging all those who have contributed in one way or another throughout the period of this research is never going to be easy, as the greatest challenge posed by selective acknowledgement adopted is not in deciding whom to include, but rather in deciding whom to leave out. Therefore, in order not to be seen to leave anyone, I wish to say ‘thank you’ to everyone for every support, goodwill and encouragement throughout the course of this study. Every contribution in whatever form by everyone is highly appreciated. I am indebted to the authors whose works I consulted: they have influenced in so many ways and shaped this study. Without the backgrounds from such high-quality researches, this study may not have been worthwhile. I am grateful for all the efforts and insights.

ABSTRACT

Public opinion columns in Nigerian newspapers often provide vital information on sociopolitical issues. Previous studies on political media discourse focused on how public opinions shape pre-election political debates and speeches in Nigeria. However, little attention was paid to how linguistic choices constrain public opinions, especially on Nigerian presidential election results. This study was, therefore, designed to investigate the representation of public opinions on the Nigerian presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers, with a view to determining the public opinion types, their underlying contexts and linguistic forms.

Norman Fairclough's Dialectical-relational model to Critical Discourse Analysis, complemented by M. A. K. Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, served as the framework. The descriptive design was adopted. Public opinions published in February and April of the election years in 2011-2019 were purposively selected because of their robust contents on public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results. Purposive sampling was used to select 300 public opinions, 50 from each of the following newspapers: *The Nation* (TN), *The Guardian* (TG), *Nigerian Tribune* (NT), *Vanguard*, *Leadership* and *Punch*. The data were subjected to critical discourse analysis.

Three public opinion types, namely nationalistic, moralistic and diachronic, were identified. Nationalistic revealed strong identification with one's nation (*TN*, *Punch* and *TG*); moralistic expressed positive and negative dispositions (*TN*), *Vanguard* and *Leadership*; while diachronic presented the acceptance or rejection of the election results (*NT*, *Punch* and *TG*). These public opinion types were found in six contexts: corruption, retention of power, social and political reformation, violence and credible elections. Nationalistic perspectives were situated in the contexts of social reformation. Moralistic opinions manifested in the contexts of corruption and retention of power. Diachronic opinions were used in the context of credible election. Public opinions and context were discursively marked off by modalities: grammatical (epistemic and deontic) and lexical, which were used to unveil peoples' attitude towards the election results. Epistemic modals were demonstrated in diachronic and nationalistic perspectives, while deontic modals reflected in nationalistic and moralistic perspectives. Epistemic and deontic modals were prominent in *NT*, *Punch* and *TG*; while lexical modality within the bounds of diachronic, moralistic and nationalistic perspectives were deployed in *NT*, *Vanguard* and *Leadership*. Six processes, namely material, mental, relational, verbal, existential and behavioural were deployed. Material process projected all the opinions, while mental process was associated with emotional feelings towards the election results in moralistic and nationalistic opinions. Relational process reflected desperation in the nationalistic and moralistic perspectives. Verbal process was used to reflect moralistic views. Existential processes were used to construct violence in diachronic opinions, while behavioural processes revealed sentiment in moralistic and nationalistic perspectives. Election fairness was captured in *Punch*, *NT* and *TN*; whereas *TG*, *Vanguard* and *Leadership* featured election results as biased.

Public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results in 2011-2019, presented through context-driven discursive and linguistic representations in the selected Nigerian newspapers, capture the sociopolitical realities in the Nigerian political space.

Keywords: Presidential election, Public opinion in newspapers, Modality, Transitivity system

Word count: 475

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of contents	vii
List of tables	viii
List of figures	xix

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.3 Research questions	4
1.4 Aim and objectives	4
1.5 Scope of the study	4
1.6 Significance of the study	5
1.7 Definition of terms.....	5
1.7.1 Election	5
1.7.2 Modality.....	5
1.7.3 Transitivity.....	6
1.7.4 Politics.....	6
1.7.5 Political discourse.....	6
1.7.6 Public opinion.....	6
1.8 Chapter summary.....	6

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Chapter overview.....	7
2.1 Conceptual issues.....	7
2.1.1 Politics.....	7
2.1.1.1 politics as public affairs.....	8

2.1.1.2 Political speeches.....	9
2.1.1.3 Political manifestoes	10
2.1.1.4 Public sphere dialogue.....	10
2.1.2 Democracy and election.....	11
2.1.3 Public opinion.....	12
2.1.4 Context.....	13
2.1.5 Politics, the media and the public opinion.....	15
2.1.6 Language functions in political discourse	18
2.2 Empirical review	19
2.2.1 Media discourse.....	19
2.2.2 Studies on political discourse	23
2.2.3 Related literature on critical discourse analysis	26
2.3 Theoretical framework	32
2.3.1 Fairclough’s dialectical-relational model to critical discourse analysis.....	33
2.3.2 Halliday’s systemic functional grammar.....	34
2.3.2.1 Clause as representation: transitivity system.....	37
2.3.2.2 Process and participants	37
2.3.2.3 The system of mood	40
2.3.2.4 Modality.....	41
2.3.2.5 Modalisation.....	48
2.3.2.5.1 Value of modality	51
2.3.2.5.2 Deontic modality	54
2.3.2.5.3 Deontic necessity.....	54
2.3.2.5.4 Deontic advisability.....	54
2.3.2.5.5 Deontic possibility.....	54
2.3.2.5.6 Epistemic modality	54
2.3.2.5.7 Epistemic certainty	55

2.3.2.5.8 Epistemic probability.....	55
2.3.2.5.9 Epistemic possibility	55
2.3.2.6 Lexicalisation	56
2.4 Chapter summary.....	57

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview.....	58
3.1 Research design	58
3.2 Population of the study	58
3.3 Sampling size	59
3.4 Sampling technique	59
3.5 Nature and method of data collection.....	59
3.6 Method of data analysis	59
3.7 Chapter summary.....	62

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.0 Chapter overview.....	63
4.1 Representation of opinions types on the election result	63
4.1.1 Nationalistic perspective	63
4.1.1.1 Nationalistic perspective showing peace and unity.....	64
4.1.1.2 Nationalistic perspective that reflect obligation and social responsibility	65
4.1.1.3 Nationalistic perspective that revealed democratic system.....	70
4.1.2 Diachronic perspective	71
4.1.3 Moralistic perspective	75
4.1.3.1 Opinions that suggest election of president(s) based on past performance.....	76
4.1.3.2 Moralistic perspective revealing commendation.....	77
4.2 Contexts that necessitate public opinion	83
4.2.1 Context of corruption	83
4.2.2 Context of retention of power.....	84
4.2.3 Context of social and political reformation	85

4.2.4 Context of violence.....	86
4.2.5 Context of credible election.....	86
4.3 Linguistic resources deployed in representation of the public opinions on the presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers	87
4.3.1 Lexical modality	87
4.3.1.1 Modality adjunct expressing attitude and inadequacies in moralistic perspective.....	87
4.3.1.2 Adjunct expressing condition for good governance	89
4.3.1.3 The use of modal adverbs to express obligation and collective responsibility ..	90
4.3.1.4 The use of modal adverbs to express sportsmanship in moralistic perspective .	91
4.3.2 Noun/nominal groups expressing modality as revealed in nationalistic perspectives	93
4.3.2.1 Modality used to express responsibility and obligation	95
4.3.2.2 Modality noun expressing commendation revealed in moralistic perspective...	96
4.3.2.3 Modal noun expressing heroic victory as reflected in diachronic perspective...	98
4.3.3 The use of modal adjectives/adjectival group to express attitudes and sentiments in moralistic perspective.....	99
4.3.3.1 Modal adjectives reflecting right attitudes to voting	99
4.3.3.2 Modal adjectives that revealed peoples' plight	102
4.3.3.3 Grammatical modality	104
4.3.3.4 Deontic modality	104
4.3.3.5 Deontic modality expressing volition in nationalistic perspective.....	104
4.3.4 Opinions that represent social obligation in nationalistic perspective and the use of deontic modality 'will'	109
4.3.5 Deontic modality showing condemnation in moralistic perspective.....	110
4.3.6 Opinions that represent justices and fairness in moralistic perspective and the use of epistemic modal verbs.....	111
4.3.6.1 Epistemic modality	112
4.3.6.2 Epistemic modal that represents praise in diachronic perspective	112
4.3.6.3 Epistemic modals that reveal obligation and social responsibility in nationalistic perspective.....	112

4.3.6.4 Modals representing election in moralistic perspective as being biased.....	113
4.3.6.5 Use of deontic modality in expression of opinion that represents social obligation in moralistic perspective and the ‘should’	114
4.3.6.6 Opinion that represents expectancy in nationalistic perspective and the use of modal auxiliary verb ‘would’	116
4.3.6.7 Opinion that represents promise in moralistic perspective and the use of deontic modal verb ‘shall’	118
4.3.6.8 Opinion that represents obligation and social responsibility in moralistic perspective and the use of ‘must’	120
4.3.6.9 Opinion that represents appeal in moralistic perspective and the use of deontic modality ‘must’	122
4.3.6.10 Opinions that represent justices and fairness in moralistic perspective and the use of deontic modal verbs “must”, “would”, “will” and “should”	123
4.3.7 Analysis of Transitivity (processes and participants).....	125
4.3.7.1 Opinions showing violence and the use of verbal processes.....	125
4.3.7.2 Opinions revealing moral decadence and the use of verbal process	130
4.3.7.3 Opinions showing good morals value with the use of verbal processes in moralistic perspective.....	131
4.3.7.4 Analysis of the relational process.....	133
4.3.7.5 Relational processes that revealed obligation and social responsibilities in nationalistic perspective	137
4.3.7.6 Analysis of mental process	139
4.3.7.6.1 Mental process that reveal corruption and brutality in moralistic perspective	139
4.3.7.6.2 Mental processes revealing nationalistic perspective.....	146
4.3.8 Existential process	147
4.3.9 Behavioural processes of transitivity.....	150
4.3.10 Analysis of material process.....	151
4.3.10.1 Material process reflected social responsibility in nationalistic perspective..	151
4.3.10.2 Material process revealed the positive moral.....	152
4.3.10.3 Material process showing negative moral	153
4.3.10.4 Material process revealed in moralistic perspective; violence.....	155

4.3.10.5 Material process revealed rejection of results in diachronic perspective	155
4.3.11 Mood and modality system	158
4.3.11.1 Declarative clauses	159
4.3.11.2 Interrogative clauses	162
4.3.12 Lexicalisation in public opinion on the presidential election results	163
4.3.12.1 Lexical items representing the presidential election results as violence	163
4.3.12.2 Lexical items that suggest qualities of a good leader	164
4.3.12.3 Lexical items representing vote-buying, rigging or selection of candidate into power	166
4.4 Discussions of findings.....	169

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the study.....	171
5.2 Conclusion.....	174
5.3 Limitations of the study.....	175
5.4 Recommendations	175
5.5 Contribution to knowledge	176
5.6 Suggestion for further studies.....	176
References	177

LIST OF TABLES

Table: 2.1 Value of modality table	51
Table 4.1: Frequency representation of opinions on three perspectives of argument in the election results (OER)	82
Table 4.2: Frequency representation of percentage of transitivity processes in the public opinion	157

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Mood system	47
Figure 2.2: Value system and modality types	53
Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework	61
Figure 4.1 Schema showing the findings	168

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Public opinion is an essential factor in any democratic system of government. The citizens express their points of view in different forms through the use of language. Public discourses are social platforms where individuals converge to freely convey and discuss societal problems and through discussions manipulate political ends. It is thus, a discourse in which people express their opinions on issues of shared interests to probably reach a universal target about matters.

Politics is defined by Chilton 2004:3 as “a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it...” In most cases, Politicians, generally, depend on excellent speech making to influence the people that their policies can and should be trusted, and that the people should have faith in them. The procedure of compelling the citizens is what brings persuasive language and politics together. This is because such form language is used by politicians to influence the people’s decisions on political matters; such language is important to the trade of politicking in Nigeria. Those involved actively in the process of politics are referred to as politicians, and the discourse they engaged in during the process of politicking are referred to as political discourse (van Dijk, 2006). Persuasive language is the most significant tool that politicians use in convincing people. So, language and politics are interwoven. Language and politics convene at the brink of power Language is a potent weapon, and politics is itself concerned with the use of power (Beard, 2000; Adedimeji, 2005). Opines that people engage in politics to define their positions in society and struggle for scarce resources. People a

The sustainability of a political system is centred on political organisation. Political organisations serve as a mediator between the citizens and political parties. Political discourse serves as a tool for persuasion in politics especially, in speeches and campaigns. The media is the channel through which the public are duly informed on political issue, political mobilisation is done and the means of influencing people’s point of view. As a result of these, 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results were characterised by different points of view. The 2011 presidential election was peacefully

conducted while the reaction of people to the election results was characterised by violence, the 2015 presidential election results was regarded as the most peaceful and credible election in the political history of Nigeria, when an incumbent president was voted out of power and the 2019 presidential election was relatively peaceful.

The role of the media in the contemporary Nigerian society has expanded enormously. It has become a practicable tool through which public opinion has emanated as an important factor in both political and other social organisations. One of the primary obligations of the media is to shape public opinions. While informing the general public about news and events of the day, the media perform a momentous role in helping people form opinions about issues, facts, phenomena and processes that are of social interest (Boria *e tal.*, 2000). The media act as a connector between the government and the people, serving as an intermediary between voters and politicians.

Language plays a vital role in revealing people's feelings or attitudes towards a proposition, especially on political issue. Language and politics are interwoven in politics, language is the tool used for mobilisation and influencing people's decision on political stance. So, Nigerians used language to express their feelings about the political activities before and after the Presidential election results.

Linguistic components such as modality and transitivity help to identify the values and attitudes of individuals towards reality in the representations of the speakers' opinion on the election results. As part of the electioneering process, public opinions were expressed in Nigerian newspapers in order to evaluate the election results as being free and fair or otherwise. Modality forms the complement of transitivity, making reference to judgement, observation and attitude in people's expression, and in particular the extent to which a speaker or writer is committed to the point he or she is making. As Simpson (1993:47) puts it, "modality refers broadly to a speaker's attitude towards or opinion about the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence". Modality affords an additional step in our analysis, showing that there are not only links between form and content, but also between content and function.

Public opinions were divided into the acceptance or rejection of the election results conducted in Nigeria between (2011-2019) thereby yielding different viewpoints. These ranged from those representing the elections as compromised to those who testified to the election as being free and fair. Public opinions are the expression of people's

feelings or attitude towards the election results. The study was, therefore, designed to investigate linguistic functions in public opinion texts on the results of Nigeria's Presidential elections in 2011, 2015 and 2019 in selected national newspapers. The aim is to establish how linguistic features help to construct meaning which aids the understanding of public opinion on election results

1.2 Statement of the problem

Findings from previous studies have shown that the significance of thoughts and views of the public on national issues cannot be undermined in the development processes of any democratic state. Pethe (2018) opined that the government of a democratic nation cannot decide how to act on issues relating to the public except the opinion of the people is heard through electioneering process, the media or other means involving linguistic. This therefore points to the fact that the use of language remains a powerful tool through which the society influences the decision making process in the country. To this end, extant linguistic studies have investigated issues relating to how ideologies are construed, manipulated and influenced through opinions of the people.

Previous linguistic studies on political media discourse have however focused much attention on how public opinions shape pre-election political debates and speeches in Nigeria with little attention paid to how linguistic choices constrain public opinions, especially on Nigerian presidential election results. For instances, works of Chilton (2004), Bayram (2010) and Taiwo (2007) buttress how ideology and power are used as manipulative strategies in pre-election political debates and speeches in order to influence people's opinion. Although Taiwo (2007) incorporates to an extent the significance of language used on newspaper headlines as part of political strategy used to influence public opinion, the study gives little emphasis on the linguistic items that are deployed by politicians to constrain public opinions. Osisanwo (2011) also takes into consideration the linguistic techniques (lexical devices and visual forms) through which social actors are represented in the 2003 and 2007 elections in Nigeria. The study however undermines how public opinion types are contextually determined and necessitated through linguistic devices. This therefore premised the goal of this study which is to investigate the representation of public opinions on the Nigerian presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers, with a view to determining the public opinion types, their underlying contexts and linguistic forms. Also, this present study is carried

out in order to investigate consequential and controversial opinions were expressed by the Nigerian citizens through media outlets (Newspapers inclusive) following the declaration of results of the Nigerian presidential election (2011-2019). These opinions therefore constitute the data which this study has examined from the linguistic and discourse perspectives.

1.3 Aim and objectives

The research aims at investigating the representation of public opinions on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results in the Nigerian newspapers. The purpose of this study is to examine different opinion types that were used to express the attitudes of people towards the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results in Nigeria. The uses of different linguistic features have significant functions which they perform in the understanding of public opinions or reactions to the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results in Nigeria. The objectives are to:

- i. identify the different public opinion types on the presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers;
- ii. determine the contexts that constrain the public opinion types;
- iii. examine the various linguistic devices used in the representation of the public opinions on the presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers.

1.4 Research questions

To accomplish the study's aim and objectives, the study seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

- i. What public opinion types are identified in the selected newspapers?
- ii. What are the contexts that constrain the public opinion types?
- iii. What are the various linguistic devices used in the representation of the public opinions on the presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers?

1.5 Scope of the study

The study is a functional linguistic analysis of opinions expressed about Nigeria's presidential election results. The opinions of Nigerians on the 2011, 2015 and 2019

presidential election results were identified and examined. Some linguistic features in the discourses of Nigerians who made comments on the election results in selected Nigerian Newspapers were collected and discussed. The data were purposively collected from six newspapers which publish vital content on public opinion. The newspapers were *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, *The Nigerian Tribune*, *Vanguard*, *Leadership* and *The Punch* published between February and April 2011, 2015 and 2019. The data were subjected to critical discourse analysis.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study explores how linguistic features are used to express public opinions in political discourse in Nigeria. It addresses political discourse in a real life situation, how different forms and functions of language are used to account for implicit and explicit meaning and relevance in utterances.

This study adds to our understanding of how linguistic components such as modality help the speaker(s) to use language as the vehicle for the expression of their annotations, their thoughts, evaluations, and the bond that they set up among themselves and their listeners. By studying the linguistic representations of public opinions on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential elections in the Nigerian print media, language users will understand beyond ordinary meaning the linguistic functions in the representation of public opinions on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Presidential election results.

1.7 Definition of terms

This segment provides a working definition of some relevant terms for the study. The basic terms to be considered include: public opinion, political discourse, modality and election.

1.7.1 Election

An election is a process in which people vote to choose a person or group of people to hold political positions.

1.7.2 Modality

Modality is about a speaker's or writer's attitude towards the world. A speaker or writer can express certainty, possibility, willingness, obligation, necessity, and ability by using modal words and expressions.

1.7.3 Transitivity

The system of transitivity consists of various types of process together with the structures that realise those processes.

1.7.4 Politics

Politics simply refers to goings-on connected with government. It deals with the theory and practice of government, especially the deeds linked with legislative and executive powers, or dealing with the forming and running administrations connected with government.

1.7.5 Political discourse

Political discourse is any verbal or non-verbal interaction related to the people and the government.

1.7.6 Public opinion

Public opinion refers to people's disposition, belief or feelings on a particular issue, especially when they are members of the same social group. The opinions of people vary based on discrepancies in ideological beliefs. It is an aggregate of individual views, attitudes and beliefs about a particular issue. The opinion of people reflects the speaker's mood whether negative, neutral or positive on a particular issue that affects the populace.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter has given a general introduction to this study. This has been accomplished by giving a detailed account of the background to the study and establishing the need for the study. Issues that related to electioneering and public opinion as well as the aim and its specific objectives, clarification of terms and significance of the study are vividly discussed. In all, this section has given a focus for the general understanding of what the study intends to achieve at the end. The next chapter centers on the review of relevant literature

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Chapter overview

This chapter explores the underlying concepts of language and politics, media discourse and its importance to the study. It presents a review of related and relevant literature on media discourses, systemic functional, grammar, modality, transitivity, political discourses and public opinion. The review, also attempts to juxtapose this research with previous studies, so as to determine area(s) this study has built on and to expand the border of knowledge within the ambits of media, electioneering and political discourse (especially within the Nigerian socio-political domain).

2.1 Conceptual issues

In this segment, related concepts that are relevant to this study are examined. This aspect is considered germane as it buttresses the terms upon which this study is premised. The concepts examined are politics, democracy, election, media discourse, public opinion, political debates and speeches within the Nigerian political settings.

2.1.1 Politics

The origin of the word "politics" can be traced back to the Greek word "polis," which refers to everything related to the city-state. In modern times, this term is applied to matters pertaining to the state. Therefore, politics can be defined as the study of the state, including its objectives, institutions, the means by which they are achieved, as well as its interactions with individual members and other states. Another definition of politics is the study of government, which encompasses a group of officials responsible for creating, interpreting, and enforcing rules for the entire community (Valeri, 2010). This means that politics is the matter of politicians, civil servants and lobbyists. According to this view the vast majority of the people are not involved in politics. All the institutions that are not engaged in running the country are regarded as non-political (Heywood, 1997).

However, this definition of politics has a narrow perspective that limits it to the workings of government departments, cabinet rooms, and legislative chambers. This

view implies that politics is solely the domain of politicians, civil servants, and lobbyists, and that the majority of individuals are not involved in politics. Additionally, this perspective characterises institutions that are not directly involved in running the country as non-political.

This definition can, however, be narrowed still further. This is evident in the tendency to treat politics as an activity carried on by certain designated organisations (parties). In other words, politics is regarded as an activity connected with political parties. Thus, only politicians are considered as political; whereas, civil servants are seen as non-political. In the popular mind, politics is closely associated with the activities of political parties and politicians. This extremely narrow view of politics helps to explain why negative images have so often been attached to the world politics. Politics is often described as a negative phenomenon because only politicians are seen as decision-makers.

2.1.1.1 Politics as public affairs

Is politics limited to government and the state, or is it more broadly applicable? The term is often used in non-governmental contexts, such as when people behave politically in their interactions with their superiors or colleagues in the workplace, in the administration of a club, or in other situations where government, state, and political parties are not involved. However, many aspects of Western political thought are based on the differentiation between the public and private spheres. This distinction aligns with the separation between a primarily public realm and a private realm of life. How can we distinguish between these two spheres?

The distinction between the public and private realm aligns with the differentiation between the state and civil society. The state's institutions are classified as part of the public sector, while civil society belongs to the private sector. As a result, the public sector is seen as political, while the private sector is viewed as non-political. Politics is primarily a public activity and does not occur in the private sphere of life. When people hear the term politics, they usually imagine state institutions, political parties, law enforcement agencies, and various government departments. However, politics is not limited to a specific area; it takes place in every aspect of human existence.

In 1972, sociologists Dowse and Hughes defined politics as being related to power. They argued that politics arises when power imbalances exist, indicating that any social interaction that involves a power differential is considered political. This definition implies that political relationships encompass a broad range of scenarios, ranging from parents delegating household tasks to their children, to teachers enforcing discipline in the classroom, to managers organising a workforce, and even generals directing troops into battle (Haralambos and Holborn, 1995).

According to Leftwich's (1984) argument, politics is about power - the ability to achieve a desired outcome through various means, such as threats, sanctions, or manipulation. Politics exists at every level and in every sphere of human societies, making it the defining characteristic of all human groups. It is not limited to the institutions of the state but also occurs in the private sphere of life. Hence, everyone is involved in politics to some extent, and it influences our lives regardless of our participation. Politics is at the core of all collective social activity, formal and informal, public and private, in all human groups, institutions, and societies.

Therefore, political discourse refers to any discussions or events related to the institutions of government. It involves political activities where people participate as citizens, voters, members of pressure groups, demonstrators, and organisations. These individuals and bodies have the civil right to take part in the political process, and many of them are actively involved in political discourse.

2.1.1.2 Political speeches

The notion of speech simply connotes the act of verbal communication. Political speeches therefore, connote the act of carrying out political discourses by verbal means as against the written form of communication. Most aspects of political speeches are ceremonial; they include inaugural speeches and valedictory speeches, among other functional speeches.

Studies by Adegaju (2005), Adeyanju (2008), Wang (2010), Alo (2012) etc. have examined some aspects of political speeches. Adegaju (2008) considers language and style, as he investigates the speech of Olusegun Obasanjo, the former president of Nigeria, when he declared a state of emergency in Ekiti State. Wang (2010) examines

his inaugural address of January 20, 2009. Alo (2012) does a rhetoric analysis of selected political speeches of prominent African leaders.

It is worthy of note that, speech and the written form of communication are not contracted by their features of verbal and symbolic codes alone. This is because most forms of speeches are first written before they are read out. Speeches possess some intrinsic form and quality that are worth noting. Speeches are accompanied by non-verbal gesture, facial expressions, body postures etc. and pauses and silence in the place of punctuation marks for writings. All these aid in one way or another towards the communicative process. Generally, speeches are relatively structured, unlike written forms of communication. These features set speeches apart from written forms of discourses.

2.1.1.3 Political manifestoes

This aspect of political discourse is one that involves a public declaration of the intentions, motives or views of the issues, be it an individual, group or political party or government. It is a written or verbal declaration of principles, policies and objectives, issued by a political group or candidates to make known to the public their ideologies and plans.

A notable study related to this aspect of political discourse is Alo (2008). He investigates lexical choices and values in political manifestoes in Nigeria. He identifies the vocabulary in the manifestoes of four Nigerian political parties, to include rhetorical stratagem, vague terminologies and the concept of power, as elements of the language politicians use to masquerade personal and hidden motives. This form of political discourse could be verbal, which is in form of a speech or it could be written. As such, it shares the same features as speech or written communicative discourse.

2.1.1.4 Public sphere dialogue (debates and speeches)

To a large extent, J. Habermas (1998:8), describes “public sphere” as an area in social life, where individuals come together to freely discuss and identify societal problems and through discussions influence political action. Habermas (1998:8) says it is “a discursive space in which individuals and groups congregate to discuss matters of mutual interest and where possible reach common judgment”. The public sphere can also be seen as a theatre in modern societies in which political participation are enacted

through the medium of talk and a realm of social life in which public opinion can be formed to charge and shape political happenings in a society. This genre of political discourse, which has gained prominence and received some level of study, in the western world, is fast becoming a trend in the Nigerian context. The representation of public opinion on the Nigerian presidential election results, being investigated in this study constitute as aspect of the public sphere dialogues and as such, are good examples of this form of political discourse.

2.1.2 Democracy and election

The roots of democracy can be traced back to ancient Greece, specifically with the establishment of Greek Polis in Athens. ‘Democracy’ comes from the Greek words “demos”, meaning people, and “Kratos”, meaning power. Therefore, democracy can be defined as the “power of the people” as a method of governance that relies on the will of the people. A democratic form of government is a system where the ultimate authority is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a representative system, typically through free and periodic elections. In a democratic government, citizens have the right to exercise their fundamental human rights, such as the right to vote and be elected, freedom of expression, and freedom of association. Regarding these issues of democracy, the media plays a crucial role in fostering unbiased and inclusive debates that involve a diverse group of participants in order to remain relevant.

Elections are a cornerstone of democracy and must embody qualities such as equitability, fairness, openness, and transparency. In a democratic election, citizens have the right to vote for their preferred candidate to assume power. It is important to note that free, fair, and credible elections are necessary to establish democratic, accountable, and legitimate governments that can effectively execute well-defined development programs. Essentially, credible elections confer legitimate authority upon governments to institute and execute policies, while also empowering citizens to hold governments responsible for their actions or lack thereof. As a result, credible elections are indispensable for democratic governance, political stability, and national development.

Nigeria has witnessed a more consistent conduct of elections since 1999, with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) overseeing eight (8) consecutive

general elections between 1999 and 2019. Nigeria's first attempt at parliamentary democracy at independence in 1960 was truncated by a military coup in 1966. In 1979, the country transitioned from military rule to presidential democracy, but this was again interrupted by a military coup in 1983. The third attempt at democracy in Nigeria began in 1989 but was halted in 1993 due to the annulment of the presidential election, which was intended to signal the end of the transition. The military government finally ceded power to an elected civilian government in May 1999 following intense domestic and international pressure and the death of the then-military Head of State, General Sani Abacha.

Since 1999, Nigeria has made remarkable progress towards consolidating democracy, despite some setbacks. The 2003 and 2007 elections were marked by dissatisfaction among candidates, voters and observers, leading to petitions and the nullification of some election results (INEC 2007; Ibrahim & Ibeanu, 2009; Ugochukwu 2009). However, the April 2011 general elections were regarded by observers and analysts as the most credible among the elections held since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999. This success was largely attributed to remedial measures taken by the government and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to enhance the credibility of the electoral process.

2.1.3 Public opinion

Defining public opinion is relevant to this study because reports on political issues such as election results are usually skewed towards specific views. Opinion can be described as the views of a specified population with good consideration on any matter of great significance to the populace. “Public opinion is also referred to as the universally supposed feelings by the persons or clusters of individuals concerning definite matters, policy outputs, and opinionated personalities in political affairs or governing process” That is, it connotes the entirety of private or individual judgment on political trends or policy outputs of the government, and it more often than not replicates people’s thinking or view on opinionated issues of local, state, national and global interest (Akindele et al., 2000). The opinions of individuals about contemporary issues often differ based on differences in ideological beliefs. A controversial discourse might spur conflict if not handled carefully by those involved.

However, the quantity of opinions that can be eminent will be a function of attitude and the past experiences of the individuals who constitute the public, as well as the intricacies of the issue. An uncomplicated issue of importance to a harmonised public will not breed the range of opinions created by more multifaceted issues. Hennessy (1985) believes that opinions have their origins in social relationships and that “all government rests fundamentally on opinion rather than coercion”. He adds that no government can ignore public opinion in its attempt to bring about the social change. He however adds that over time, government may significantly manipulate public opinion so that citizens become, in the long run, what the government makes of them. He observed that the mass giving or preserving publicity, occasional endorsements, and by presenting editorials that help people take informed decisions about issues. Hennessy (1985) notes that private opinion is found underneath public opinion but the expression of points of view on issues by a significant number of persons (what is being referred to a public opinion) is possible only if many individuals have preferences that they are willing to make public when necessary. Therefore, there is an interaction between public opinion and attitude. Hennessy (1985) says:

Understanding how people's attitudes and opinions change is crucial for comprehending their attitudinal process, even though it should not be directly linked to it. Analysing public opinion involves studying how shared decisions are influenced, which requires knowledge of communication methods, societal power dynamics, the role of mass media, the relationships between leaders, groups, and the masses, the responsibilities of both official and unofficial leaders, and the institutionalised channels for interacting with officials. To summarise, examining opinion formation and changes is crucial for understanding the complex processes of public opinion, which are influenced by a variety of factors. (314)

Hennessy (1985) supposes that the unrefined substance out of which public opinion builds up is initiated in the feelings of individuals, and that the nature of the attitudes within the personality and the processes which account for the attitude change are crucial to the understanding of public opinion.

2.1.4 Context

There are various linguistic approaches towards the definition of context. Widdowson (2000) views context as the relevant aspects of the circumstances of language use that

contribute to meaning. He emphasised that pragmatic meaning is achieved by matching the linguistic elements of the code with the schematic elements of the context. Cook (1999) also considered context as a form of knowledge of the world and defined it broadly as (knowledge of) factors outside the text under consideration, and sometimes as (knowledge of) other parts of the text under consideration, which he referred to as "co-text." Yule's (2000) definition of context when studying reference and inference was rather general, defining it as the physical environment in which a word is used. Despite their differing viewpoints and purposes, these definitions have a common thread: the environment (circumstances or factors by some other scholars) in which a discourse takes place is a crucial element of context. There are different types of context. They include:

a. linguistic context: the linguistic context refers to the relationship between words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs within a discourse. For instance, when we use the word "bachelor," we need the linguistic context to comprehend the intended meaning accurately. To explore the linguistic context, we can consider three aspects: deictic, co-text, and collocation. Deictic context relates to the time, space, and person expressions such as 'now', 'then', 'here', 'there', 'I', and 'you', which are crucial in establishing the deictic roles between the speaker and the listener. In any language event, the participants must have a clear understanding of their position in space and time, which directly relates to the deictic context. This helps to ensure that the speaker's utterance is communicated appropriately and understood within a particular context.

b. situational context: the context of situation pertains to the surrounding environment, time and location of the communication, as well as the relationship between those involved. Situational context is commonly explored through the use of register, which organises language within three categories: field, tenor, and mode, in order to illustrate the connection between language and context.

The field of discourse refers to the ongoing activity and can be understood as the language used by the speaker to convey their intended purpose within the situation. Tenor, on the other hand, pertains to the social relationship being enacted through the communication. This idea emphasises how linguistic choices are influenced not only by the topic at hand, but also by the type of social relationship between the participants. Lastly, mode refers to the language used in relation to the medium of transmission. This

category distinguishes between channels of communication that involve immediate contact and those that permit deferred contact between the speakers.

c. *cultural context*: cultural context refers to the cultural customs and background of the language community in which speakers participate. Since language is a social phenomenon, it is deeply intertwined with the societal structure and values. Thus, it is inevitable for language to be influenced by various factors, including social roles, social status, sex, and age. Social roles represent culturally specific functions that are institutionalised within a society and recognised by its members. Social status refers to the relative social standing of the participants, and each participant in a language event must be aware of their status in relation to others. In many situations, status also plays a crucial role in determining who should initiate the conversation. Sex and age often act as determinants of, or interact with, social status. The terms of address used by a person of one sex when speaking to an older person may differ from those employed in similar situations by people of the same sex or age.

2.1.5 Politics, the media and the public opinion

Undoubtedly, the role of the media in the contemporary society has expanded tremendously. It has become a viable tool through which public opinion has emanated as the key factor in both political and social organisation. One of the primary responsibilities of the media is to shape public opinion. While informing the general public about news and events of the day, the media plays a critical role in helping people form opinions about issues, facts, phenomena and processes that are of societal interest (Boria *et al.*, 2000). Gunther and Mughan (2000) assert that the mass media are the connective tissues of democracy. They highlight the crucial role that the media play in promoting democratic ideals. The media in a democratic country performs various functions, including but not limited to information dissemination, education, providing a platform for fair debate or public discourse on state policies, and monitoring the activities of state institutions.

The media have a crucial role in disseminating information about government activities, including their impacts in the society. By doing so, the media promote, informed public debates and enlighten citizens to exercise their franchise, especially at election periods. Additionally, the media conveys vital signals to the elected officials on different issues that are of interest to the electorate (Midguard *et al.*, 2008).

However, there are instances where the media is used to influence public opinion in favour of a particular candidate, and anyone who questions such events is sometimes labelled a "paranoid conspiracy theorist" (Boler, 2008). Despite this, the media remains a strong pillar of democracy as it educates citizens about societal happenings and helps them make informed decisions about who rules over them, holding those in power accountable to the people. While the conventional function of the media is to provide information about societal events, it also serves as a bridge between different groups, including elected officials and the electorate (Kval-Mellbye-Tranoy, 2006).

It is important to acknowledge that the media should not be controlled by the elite in society. Instead, the media should serve as a tool to strengthen democracy by promoting debate, increasing the diversity of information, and monitoring various issues that affect the people in society. Furthermore, the media acts as a connector between the government and the people, serving as an intermediary between voters and politicians. The media not only supports various points of view but also acts as a platform for the exchange of ideas, where debates and conflicts can be emphasised.

However, the media face a significant challenge in dealing with the large amount of information available to them, making it difficult to determine which information is the most important. The media is responsible for determining the relative importance of different topics, which is known as the "model of priority" in the literature (Limani, 2006).

As previously mentioned, the media undergoes a rigorous evaluation process to ensure that news is transmitted in the best form and content possible, making it easy for audience to decode the message. In order for the media to remain impartial, news topics are often determined based on their level of priority and importance, without taking sides with any party involved. Hence, the media is regarded as the "gate keeper of information" responsible for receiving, verifying, simplifying and presenting information to the public for better understanding.

In contemporary times, the media plays a crucial role in discovering and reporting on significant issues, aiming to hold the society and those in power accountable. In Nigeria, the press and democracy have a close relationship, with the press serving as a tool to encourage democratic principles that empower people to exercise their political will and power. After the executive, legislature, and judiciary arms of government, the Nigerian

press is the only organisation with a clearly stated role in the Nigerian Constitution. Chapter 2, Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria recognises the crucial role of the press in upholding democracy:

The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people.

Section 14 subsection (2) (a) of the Chapter declares that the autonomy belongs to the people of Nigeria, while the government's power to exercise authority is derived from the people. Also, people's involvement in the governmental system shall be done in line with the provision made by the constitution. These are the fundamental laws that the Nigerian press must put into consideration while discharging their duties. The Press is of great importance and an essential part of contemporary democracies with basic goals which include the provision of good governance sourced through intelligibility, reliability and sincerity.

Discourse is a form of language use, conceived as a social practice (Fairclough, 1993) imbued with invisible set as of values, beliefs and ideas in that social circumstances; these invisibilities are in a socio-cognitive manner (van Dijk 1998). Media discourse thrives on the occasion or actions of individuals, groups and institutions and how political, economic social and religious issues affect the life of the people. Fairclough (1995) posits that language analysis of media discourse becomes peculiar in mediating between the events that have happened in the text produced as a result of the events and the people who discourse is presented to.

Consequently, media language should be analysed as discourse. This is due to the fact that (critical) discourse analysis is concerned with social practices as well as texts. Kress (1990) stresses that the defined and delimited set of statement that constitute a discourse that is, media, are themselves expressive of and organised by a specific point of view. He notes that the opinions of different groups generate debates in the society; the media only participate in either justifying or criticising the debates in order to make sense out of it for the readers. Language use, therefore, can never appear by itself its always appears as the agent of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves reflect the

prevailing discursive and ideological system (Halliday 1979; Olowe, 1993; Chilwa, 2011; Osisanwo, 2011).

As noted by Fairclough (1992), discourse practices are the ways in which texts are received by the audience (readers, viewers and listeners) and how media texts are socially distributed. Media discourse as a social practice involves the interaction of the primary actors involved in this practice. Opinion columns are more than just social interactions among journalists; they also represent events and issues that shape society and have the potential to affect people's lives (Scollon, 1998 and van Dijk, 1998). Therefore, media discourse is a powerful mechanism for shaping ideas about significant and vital issues concerning the public, including government officials in society. According to Fairclough (1992), media discourse can be used as a tool for social change.

2.1.6 Language functions in political discourse

Language is a powerful tool that individuals use to express their worldview and convey their thoughts and emotions. It serves as a means of preserving the customs and traditional beliefs of a particular community. Essentially, language involves the use of vocal symbols by humans to communicate their desires and feelings. It can be utilised to facilitate communication and social interaction, as well as to process information. This underscores the significant role that language plays in representing and shaping the world we live in, as linguistic representations are closely linked to our experiences of reality.

Moreover, language functions can vary greatly depending on specific application of language which is determined by the user's intention to understand or explain the world around them. Halliday (1975) identifies three meta-functions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational function deals with the content of what is being said and enables the speaker to express their opinions about the explicit and implicit aspects of their consciousness, which can relate to the psychological, sociological, or physiological world. The interpersonal function pertains to the part of the semantic system that reveals language's function as a means for speakers to interact with one another in a speech event, such as negotiating with other contributors and establishing the contributors' disposition. The textual function incorporates the ideational and interpersonal functions into functional use, particularly in creating or constructing texts that are related logically and consistently.

Political linguistics is the field of study that examines the relationship between language and politics. Language is utilised as a tool for forming a state and is enacted in various ways to achieve political objectives. As language serves as the foundation of communication, politics is inevitably influenced by it. Political linguistics is a type of performance that enables people to communicate with each other on a large scale, leading to the formation of a state (Y. Xing, 2013). As language forms the basis of communication, politics is thus affected by language. Political linguistics is a performance.

To gain positive public opinion, politicians carefully craft their manifesto to persuade readers of their credibility (Xing, 2013). These political parties participate in a communication system between the state and the governed, which helps them wield influence and power over public opinion (S. Haryo, 2022). Therefore, political linguistics serves as a tool for persuasion in politics, particularly in speeches and campaigns. When examining political linguistics, one can focus on the impact of slogans, mass media, debates, and propaganda to shape individuals' values and identities (C. Luu, 2016).

In essence, politics and language are inseparable. There are strong relationships between political linguistics, social linguistics, and media linguistics. Political linguistics is distinct from linguistic politics or language politics, which refer to the politics of language itself. Language is attached to national, cultural and ethnic identity; hence, the way language is used and disseminated is political and can be used for political gain.

2.2 Empirical review

In this segment, previous linguistic studies on political media discourse, public opinions, election political debates and speeches in Nigeria are critically reviewed. By this, the weakness and strengths of the extant studies are foregrounded. The reviewed studies as well served as the prerequisites upon which this present study contributes to the aspects which other studies have not adequately worked on.

2.2.1 Media discourse

Some of the earliest of research into the language of media discourse (newspapers) was carried out by Crystal and Davy (1969). The research explored the language of news reporting on the axes of lexis, graphology and grammaticality of language use and

examined the unique function ascribed to punctuations. In some cases, it changes from everyday use. The research also viewed the irregularity in the alphabetical arrangement particularly used in showing differences between headlines and stories. At the grammaticality level, while it showcased the use of sentences which is applicable with the everyday use, it also observed that there are structural constructions that are not applicable. For example, the work established that reporters were used to using predicator + subject, which directs to another assertion of the work, that language use in news reporting in terms of theme displaces the SPCA structure. The work also specified in particular that the media preferred starting sentences with adverbials. However, regardless of the fact that the study introduced researchers to media discourses, it is not a study on critical discourse, neither does it make any attempt to think about the principles of any news channel, especially in relation to its language role.

Similarly, Trew's (1979) research drew attention to linguistic differences and the principle of disconformities in newspaper language. He proposed the creation of more progressive medium to separate basic principles in discourses to expand more components of the linguistic expressions that deal with newspapers and ideas to social procedure. Trew (1979) viewed various newspapers coverage of similar occurrences with a fixed focus on functional choices as motivated by Halliday's approach. One of his observations highlighted the different ways in which processes and participants are presented in British broadsheet and tabloid papers. Trew observed that the *Sun* used more active participants, while the *Morning* and *Star* had a tendency to showcase the processes without the participants.

van Dijk (1988) examined the analysis of media discourse from the part of discourse invention and intellectual capacity, which is context-reliant processing of documented and situational information. In this representation of cognitive interpretation of text, he supposes that as the reader comprehends, he triggers and acclimatizes or amends script information. His stand is that the function of scripts or related forms of awareness is imperative in how people digest information by non-attendance, and how readers create meaningful demonstration even when the text is only fragmentary. He attempted a news text analysis and created dissimilarity between 'micro' and 'macro' formation of news discourses. The micro arrangement, which relates to the general content of a text, is central to the thematic arrangement (Fairclough, 1995:132-33). van Dijk had earlier

disagreed that the understanding of discourse is importantly vital to personal model and goals, frames, script position or ideologies.

Though van Dijk's cognitive form categorises how news worth forms news coverage and how news reporters renovate texts received from other sources to make a report, his model still fails because it does not account for the interpersonal function of language. Moreover, texts are not analysed intertextually but rather linguistically (Fairclough, 1995). In this study, both the interpersonal and textual functions of language are considered important to the analysis of data, as they help showcase how media language has been used to represent public opinions.

In a research conducted by Bell (1991), the study reports an investigation of media language, examining the invention procedure of news, the role of the listeners and the structure of news stories. In the study, he presents how 'popular' and 'quality' British newspapers differed in content and ocular styles and in the use of language. He examines the deletion of determiners in appositional naming expressions in seven British newspapers which were published in 1980 and discovers that the 'quality' newspaper. The newspapers were *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* obliterate little determiners, while the 'popular' ones, *The Daily Mail*, *The Express*, *The Mirror* and *The Sun* delete determiners to a large extent (Bell 1991). His study, therefore, ascertains that the type of newspaper one reads is as determining factor in the use of specific linguistic qualities. This study does not only consider the use of determiners and modality functions, but also how different discourses and voices are selected by the media in order to achieve set ideological objectives.

Osisanwo (1991) carried out a study on the issue of bias in newspaper reporting and focuses on comparative study of news reporting. The study blends the stylistic framework posited by Crystal and Davy (1969) and Halliday (1973) to analyse four English newspapers. The study opines that "where the reporters do not intend to deliberately distort news... he should be cautious in selecting and using some language features. The comparison investigated in the study shows that there is BIAS in news reporting. This study however, does not centre on contrasting newspapers, but on how people express their opinions in the national newspapers.

Fairclough (1995) opined that the media do not logically develop or plan social events, but more often than not, replicate pre-invented ideologies. Ideology implies the

philosophies which sturdily affect the way news writers write their stories. Hoffman (2007) views ideology as the extent to which individuals comprehend the world in which they dwell and the comprehension cuts across an interaction between our psychology and the universal structures that surround them. Fairclough (1989) observes that some people adopt ideology to govern others through the convention of popular sense supposition, which people admit because the suppositions are embedded and so, are perceived as social and predictable practices. Bell (1991), endeavours to analyse news media from the perspectives of linguistic and sociolinguistics as to show case the socio-cultural analysis of the news media. He devotes no attention to the socio-cultural context of language which shows the real meaning of texts.

Melinda (2002) observed that the press is one of the dependable media for circulating ideas and information to the people in any democratic state. Akinterinwa (1999) is of the view that the press has a responsibility to monitor governance. Based on the authority the entity has to take part in an important function in supporting and building the nation. He also asserted that, the mass media should play a vital responsibility in gathering and disseminating information. They should also participate in mobilising opinions and explaining to the people their legal rights and obligations in society. However, Ayedun-Aluma (1996) says that the Nigerian press must keep an eye on political advancements with a view to leading politicians toward general development. He noted that there would be a good relationship between the people and the press when the press performs its roles effectively. These projections also depend on the level of the people's political knowledge, which may be partisan, moderate, critical or otherwise.

The media's importance in a democracy, particularly during the election period, cannot be overstated in today's world. Often, the government and the media are at odds concerning their respective rights, with these conflicts arising under the umbrella of democracy. Consequently, in democratic societies, it is commonplace for the media and the government to disagree on numerous issues. While the government typically seeks to safeguard and regulate the media, the media, on the other hand, resists such efforts in favor of transparency and openness (Berisha, 2006).

The function of the media cannot be ruled out in democratic society but to examine the significance of the media in democracy, then, it is germane to know more about the

function of media and its modus operandi. Therefore, democracy has demonstrated to be the best system of government, it has been able to represent different views and certify a wide involvement of all citizens in the act of decision making. In view of this, democracy is regarded as precondition for access to other issues in the society, and then it is the fundamental pillar and stronger tool for growth of human society. (UNDP2004).

For all systems and all societies, it has been proven that the media, most importantly, independent ones have a very sturdy impact on all systems. In most cases it is managed by the administration and the people in power, who have managed to maintain power only by using the media. These media, which are controlled by different regimes, are referred to as censored media. Notwithstanding, there are situation whereby the media has been discharging their responsibilities in a fair manner to the general public, by allowing people to react promptly to the government's decisions.

Considering the foreground issue, it is logical to conclude that, the media are used by the government in order to maintain power; therefore, they are used as a tool of power. In this case, the media have been pursued by the government and in most cases; they have been subjected to attempt the supervision by the government. In a nutshell, media in undemocratic countries not only have retarded power to control the government, but they also become institute at the service of the ruling power (Bajrami, 2005).

2.2.2 Studies on political discourse

One basic features of this form of political discourse event is that, it provides further insight into spoken and other forms of spoken discourse like interviews, debates, casual conversations and other forms of genres and texts in the media on political discourse. The aspect of spoken discourse in public sphere dialogues and as applicable in the representation of public opinion on the Nigerian presidential election results with the public being studied, circumvent the conventional practices characteristic of the other forms of spoken discourses that have featured in political discourses hitherto.

Fakoya (1998), while investigating classroom interaction in a university setting establishes that, the syntax of spoken discourse is usually less structured that that of the written. Spoken discourse usually, contains many incomplete sentences, often in simple sequence of phrases. This is because in spontaneous spoken discourse, the language user does not operate in a straight lime thought and is often obsessed with so much to

say and different words barraging one's mind and the tendency to want to produce everything at once. There are usually a lot of errors and self-corrections and non-fluency in speech in this kind of discourse

Oha (1994) conducted a stylistic investigation of the language used in war situations, with specific emphasis on the war speeches of Yakubu Gowon and Emeka Ojukwu. The author suggested that language is one of the most critical communication systems in politics (Oha, 1994:30), and he speculated that politics is a representation and can be viewed as a linguistic trend (Oha, 1994:31). Therefore, politics and language are closely interrelated, and the control of power underscores politics, which necessitates the dynamism of language for survival (Oha, 1994).

Oha drew insights from pragmatics, semantics, and discourse analysis in his study and largely adopted the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), which is a multi-level approach based on the interrelatedness between language and situation (Oha, 1994:81). Although Oha's study and the current study share a commonality in the choice of the Systemic Functional Linguistics theory, they differ in approach. Oha conducted a stylistic analysis of war speeches, while this study examines the linguistic functions represented by the public through different points of view on Nigeria's 2011, 2015, and 2019 Presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers.

A study conducted by Oyeleye (1997) is another relevant work that is significant within the ambits of discourse studies. Oyeleye studied Soyinka's *Telephone Conversation* as a social discourse paying rapt attention to the properties of language with which Soyinka offered its significance. Oyeleye adopted Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic as his analytical tool. In doing the pragmatic analysis, he incorporated a multi-dimensional approach. However, Oyeleye's work was poetic analysis and that makes it different from this present study which centres on public opinions in the media discourse on 2011, 2015 and 2019 Presidential election results.

Ogunsiji (2001) is similar to this present study in certain respects. It is a linguistic stylistic study of Soyinka's works with a combination of the insights from literary and linguistic stylistics. Just like the present study, Ogunsiji used the SFL model to carry out a comprehensive analysis focused on Soyinka's phono-graphological, grammatical and lexico-semantic division and structuring of *Ake*, *Isara*, and *Ibadan*. Ogunsiji's focus was on the meaning –generating process by adopting the three meta-functions of

language. In addition, he identified collocation, field code-mixing and code-switching, naming and nicknaming, linguistic borrowing, translation and linguistic tools in Soyinka's work. However, Ogunsiji's work is different from this present study because we are neither working on Soyinka nor examining literary texts, but linguistic functions in public opinion on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Nigerian presidential election results in the Nigerian newspapers.

Furthermore, Caffarel *et al.* (2009) examined the ideology inherent in two French editorials using the Systemic Functional Theory. The study is an investigation of evaluation properties and transitivity in the editorials of divergent political discourses. It highlighted how ideology was interpreted by medium of foregrounding specific models of linguistic choices. The study investigated the relationship between texts to suggest the ideology of each paper and how the papers sought to influence the reader to espouse its viewpoint on the event of the abduction of two French reporters in Iraq and on the action that should be taken. It revealed how linguistic devices presented by language, examined through the interface of the Systemic Functional Linguistics, may make available a practicable framework for the analysis of ideology in the news media. Hasan's (1985) model of investigating semiotic system of verbal art, THEME, is used. This stage is reinterpreted as the stage where ideological meaning is produced from the impact of social and belief systems on linguistic choices. The paper comes to an end that ideology, world view and all cultural norms are involved in all linguistic processes. They are fashioned and reproduced in every social relationship in terms of authors, public and text in the context of situation. Individuals, community or class do not have a set of ideas that is, ideology, might have different opinions outstanding in specific situations but such principles split culture-wide demonstration with other segments of the society.

Okpanachi (2009) did a discourse analysis of Obasanjo's address to Nigerians on the 8th October, 2003. The rationale of the study was to examine the different linguistic approaches and the resources of language that were employed to create and classify the major participants, that is, Olusegun Obasanjo and the leaders of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC). The study adopted Halliday's SFL to explain how the linguistic make-up secretes the underlying ideology. The work aimed to show how the President brands the social actors and those that had the interest of the masses in mind. The study posited that Obasanjo used negative indexes to portray the actions and speeches of the NLC as

villains' in the eyes of the people, while revealing himself and his government as loyal and winners of the interests of the populace. In order to point out the representations of the NLC leaders, the investigation devices of synonyms, markers of reversals and occurrences of strikes is used. Other signifiers revealed the pro-markers of cohesion and appeals to partisanship were used as a means of framing himself and the masses. On the other hand, in framing the NLC, negative markers were used. The study remarks that the instance of power play between the President and the NLC was a good site for ideological investigation. The study is dissimilar from ours in terms of its choice of data. It is evident to state that this study has shown that political leaders use language to present themselves, their policies and activities as being people oriented, while those of other groups are regarded as anti-people. It also exclaims that language is an influential means in power play and relations.

Haig (2012) carried out a critical evaluation of the importance of ideology and principles on the creation, allotment and consumption of news and other forms of media discourses. This was carried out from a linguistic principle. In examining this claim, it utilised the CDA approach and SFL theory, and the transitivity system, in shaping the set objectives of a media text regarding youth crimes. The article was purposely centred on the representation of social actors in media texts. The study suggested an inventive heuristic tool for measuring the authority with which, grammatically, social actors provide and display the device's relevance with reverence to a scrupulous media text. It paid close concentration to how the influence of excerpts can be recognised and analysed from linguistic or grammatical perspectives. The study critically noted the relevance of SFG and CDA in establishing the hierarchy of power consigned to participants and their ideologies. It helped to note how power roles allotted to participants are extracted from a media text. However, it varies in the sense that it used texts from a radio news bulletin (electronic media) while this study used texts from newspapers (print media).

2.2.3 Related literature on critical discourse analysis

Koller's (2005) study reconciled two different but related approaches to media discourse critical discourse analysis and cognitive linguistics with particular interest in metaphor research. This is applied to media discourses concerning mergers and acquisitions. She notes that there exists compatibility between the two approaches but there have been

inadequate efforts to examine metaphor as a cognitive occurrence in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). This article takes up the notion of social cognition and argues that it provides a method for organising the amendment of and access to cognitive resources with metaphoric models playing a scrupulous outstanding function in the construction of ideology. It exhibits how a particular discourse centres on an ideologically assigned metaphoric model of evolution to the fact that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is interested and motivated by pressing social issues and the ways discourse serve to constitute, negotiate and subvert such issues while cognitive linguistic focuses on the human natural make-up as it impacts on language and cognition. However, cognitive linguistics had paid little attention to the socio-cultural situations of cognition or its link to discourse. Koller (2005: 201) posits that social cognitive serves as the interface between conceptual models especially metaphorical on one hand and discourse on the other. The study reveals that media discourse concerning mergers and acquisitions is very much characterised by a selectively used cluster of fighting, mating and feeding metaphors which combine into a scenario of evolutionary struggle. The study also notes that companies involved in combination and acquisition are metaphorically represented as existing organisms subjected to the usual forces of evolutionary fight. The study observes that the persuasiveness of the metaphor betrays the ideological agenda it helps to establish. It was observed that the three metaphors centre on insistent progress, the objective of which is extermination of competitors by different mediums. It concludes that being exposed to such a metaphorical based discourse will (re) produce the mental models held by discourse participants.

The study is of interest in that it shows how metaphoric can be constructed in media discourse and relating to actual situations of human evolutionary struggle. The study opens up novel arms of discourse and the uses media discourse can be put into with other approaches such as conceptual metaphor theory other than Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) which this takes into its analysis. Lagonikos (2005) studies the function of the media in determining ideologies in the reportage of the proceedings of September 11, 2001, in the United State of America. The focus of this study is on the editorials of newspapers after the events. The choice of the editorials is premised on the fact that many turned to media organisations for a full interpretation of the attack and editorials do not only account for the news event but also interpret them as a result, ideologies and opinions are mapped out either explicitly or implicitly. The editorials were drawn

from different newspapers across different continents, America, Europe (Britain) and African (South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe). The text was analysed using the Critical Discourse Analysis approach with grammatical insights from systemic functional grammar and appraisals.

The study examined the representation and assessment of social actors, events and the schematic structure of the editorials. Through the descriptive, interpretative and explanative methods of the editorials and the events, the discourse identified the interest of who is being presented and how each text position readers' attitudes and opinions. The analysis discloses that the editorials distinguished between the 'us' and 'them' dichotomy for the purpose of advancing, and reveals that the process and circumstances surrounding the manufacture of the editorials show how they are of great influence and constrained by the philosophical stand of the writer, the media organisation and the situational context. The schematic structure reveals a reliable use of three structures by which editorial opinions are evaluated. The study counsels that students should be equipped with analytical tools such as CDA, SFG and appraisal methods in order to critically analyse and discover how languages are used to promote ideologies in the editorials of newspapers. The mode to promote ideologies in the editorials of newspapers and the mode of data analysis is similar to this study and the choice of the text is from a type of media discourse. It is, however, in variance with this in the sense that it uses only editorials as its text, while this work is based on readers' comment, letters to the editors and opinion columns on presidential election results in the selected Nigerian newspapers. Nonetheless, it contributes to knowledge about the different ideologies from different media groups in selected countries about the September 11 attacks.

Taiwo (2007) examined the language, ideology and power relation in Nigerian newspapers headlines. He employs a Critical Discourse Analysis approach in determining the peculiarity of rhetorical devices underlying the ideologies in the headlines. He states that the comprehension of a text extends beyond the known and familiar fields of grammar, semantics, and morphology. He notes that the rhetorical intent, audience, and the world view about the writer and the audience are key elements that must be taken into consideration. As a result of increased attention on critical approaches to texts, language does not only reflect reality, it is a crucial tool in creating

reality. Reality, expressed through language carries the power that shows the interest of the writer or speaker and audience or reader. Illustrating from headlines derived from national tabloids, the work investigates language use in the news headlines and serves as pointers to specific ideologies and power relations. He observes their make-up usually evoke the emotions of the readers. Headlines are used as a method of evaluating and presenting the feeling, opinions and attitudes of people about important issue in the news.

Igwebuike (2008) studied the language and ideology in selected open letters to President Olusegun Obasanjo. The principles of Critical Discourse Analysis were used as an approach to unravel the ideologies in the letters. The study specifically investigates the distinctive features and style employed by the writers of the open letters to the president. It equally attempted to examine the lexical and semantic import of the choice made and how these choices convey the different beliefs. The study also explores the use of specific lexical relations and how they are used to enhance the linguistic decoding of ideals in the open letters. The study emphasises a link between linguistic choice and political ideology, the fundamental socio-political issues are important factors in the way in which language is used. The choice of words reveals that it captures the plight of the masses and they are socio-politically conscious of their environment. The significance of the study to this work is that, its data of discourse springs from the same source print media. Conversely, this study differs in that Igwebuike (2008) investigates ideology in open letters; these studies how public opinions are represented on the 2011-2019 Presidential election in Nigerian newspapers.

Cutier *et al.* (2009) performed an empirical analysis of media discourse on information technology. The authors examined articles in newspapers and other related sources. A total of 173 articles and related materials were sampled using Critical Discourse Analysis approach. To illustrate the approach using CDA, the paper analysed a Canadian technology project, the Acadia Advantages (AA). The different sections outline key ideas and values from Habermas Critical theory of communication. It employs a combined approach of CDA and content analysis technique note of the syntactic, grammatical patterns and metaphors etc. It underscores the view that a CDA approach cannot alone inform critical social analysis, this; they embrace a multiple method with critical theory of communication. The analysis reveals the use of rhetorical

strategies in repeating specific opinions. The texts were reactions to disclose implied or explicit validity claims. The irresistible use of positive adjectives and metaphors propose that in spite of the argument, the constructive aspects of the programs are resistant through the use of language with positive connotation. This work has been very insightful as it gives new areas where CDA can be utilised such as the introduction of new information technology system in the Acadia University. What is important is that these issues are still drawn on politics such as creating a divide between the powerful, the less powerful, inequality, and domination. A major challenge of the paper stems from the fact that it was unable to infer recipient responses in the course of investigating pragmatic result of communication. The import of the study on this work is its use of media discourse from a critical discourse analysis.

Faremi-Tunde (2010) looked at a Critical Discourse Analysis of a selected Newspaper editorial on the Niger Delta issues. The data was purposively selected editorials in three Nigerian's newspapers: *The Guardian*, *Punch* and *The Nigerian Tribune* with focus on editorials. He examines the power relation concerning issues related to the Niger Delta using a critical discourse analytical approach drawn from the socio-cognitive view point. The study employed a descriptive and analytical method to account for subtle meanings. Also, the discourse properties using the socio-cognitive approach were drawn on; reflects ideological positions of the selected newspapers. Based on this, the study was able to outline the different issues as it relates to the Niger-Delta discourse. The study investigates the editorials comments on one of the crucial issues in Nigerian political scene from a CDA perspective, while this work centres on representation of public opinion on the 2011-2019 Presidential election results from critical discourse analysis.

Sunday (2009) is another related study. It adopted CDA and gathers its data from *The Guardian newspaper* to examine the display of ideology by the Nigerian judiciary. It specifically investigates the Nigerian election petition tribunal ruling by the Gubernatorial Election Tribunal in Osun State, Southwest Nigeria. It looks at the function of the judiciary in regulating and deepening the nation's democracy. In contextualising its opinion, it investigates the Nigerian election petition tribunal ruling by the Gubernatorial Election Tribunal in Osun State, Southwest Nigeria. It opines that by this form of ruling, the judges hassle the superiority of the judiciary over other arms of government and they emphasise the position of the authorised specialists. It agrees

that the ideologies of the judiciary were represented through grammatical voices, modifiers and imagery. The link between the study and this present work is the choice of newspaper as the source of data collection (Guardian) and emphasis on Nigerian elections. Both adopt CDA as the theoretical framework. The current study focuses on representation of public opinions on the 2011- 2019 Nigerian Presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers.

Ayoola (2010) investigated the uses of language in presenting the conflict situation in Niger-Delta. It examines the presentation of ideological perspectives on the Niger-Delta discourse in Nigerian Newspapers. The study employed a critical discourse analytical framework. It proves that the Niger-Delta issue has become very crucial in Nigeria as it deals with issues such as oil exploration, exploitation, oil bunkering, and environmental degradation, under development, negligence, resource control and in most recent time, militancy. Consequently, there have been agitations from different quarters and this has generated public pronouncements in a manner that promotes two perspectives: the positive and the negative. The issue in the Niger-Delta is one with such a complex discourse trapped in different ideological perspectives. The choice of these papers is based on their long period of existence in Nigeria before 1999, dedicated regular columns to Niger-delta news and their high level of professionalism and objectivity: while the choice of the dailies gives the stipulated time scope when the data was gathered.

Niger-Delta discourse is one that had been in the print media before 1999 and is still being reported in various mediums. Hence, the time limit of the sampled data is one of the short comings of the study. Notwithstanding, it focuses on the ideological perspectives of the different reports given as it relates to the discourse; it draws insights from the different perspectives in the Niger-Delta discourse as represented in the print media. The study demonstrates the use of power by dominant groups, the government, by elections, the militants, by arms and weapons; civil society groups and organisation, by media usage and advocacies. It also shows the group of the dominated and the power associations that exist between the different people involved in the Niger-Delta discourse. The study is related to ours in terms of the genre of discourse analysed and the choice of the theoretical framework. It differs in the different issues discussed, while this study aims at studying public opinions on the 2011-2019 Presidential election results; Ayoola (2010) examined a Niger-Delta discourse. The study does not sample

the linguistic devices that serve as clues or guidelines to these ideologies. The data was analysed as one done in other disciplines other than language or linguistics. This draws attention to the point noted by van Dijk (1998) that critical discourse analysis is multidisciplinary in nature and each discipline using this approach must incorporate theoretical frameworks that relates to such discipline.

Osisanwo (2011) studied linguistic properties adopted in the Nigeria's 2003 and 2007 general elections. He focuses on the cover stories of two magazines in Nigeria, Tell and the News illustrate through linguistic and visual forms, the ideological quest of social actors in the 2003 and 2007 elections in Nigeria. The study employs a combined approach to Fairclough and van Dijk's models to Critical Discourse Analysis. These models are complemented with Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar. Leeuwen's representation and interaction theory on reading images served as the theoretical framework. The magazines used linguistic tools to present their ideological attachment about the elections in Nigeria as 'a dirty game' by the insincerity of politicians. Also, lexical devices such as affixation, blending, compounding etc. were used to represent the social actors depending on their actions and reactions, other linguistic items revealed in the study include such tactics as lexicalisation, intertextuality, normalisation, active and passive clauses, relational and material transitivity, paratactic and hypotactic clauses. All these were used as means of deriving the ideologies expounded by the social actors. The study concluded that through the linguistic patterns and visual strategies, ideology plays a basic role in the propagation and maintenance of implied and main ideologies.

The study is related to this because it analyses was based on linguistics analysis and used data from the print media, magazines, which differs from this study which uses data collected from opinion columns, letters to the editors, and readers' comments in the selected newspapers. The study reveals the different actions and the power play in the electoral processes in Nigeria.

2.3 Theoretical framework

Fairclough's Dialectical-relational model to Critical Discourse Analysis served as the framework for this study. The model is complemented by Hallyday's Systemic Functional Grammar. These theories are considered relevant to this study because the underlying principles of the theories cater for how people's experiences in the real world

are expressed through language (experiential function) which is predominantly realised by transitivity and voice. Also, the theories take into consideration, the context of language used as social practice (which is actually the premise of this study). The theories maintain the viewpoint of language that is grounded on how we exploit language to construe authenticity and sustain social connection.

2.3.1 Fairclough's dialectical-relational model to critical discourse analysis

The dialectical relational approach examines elements that are interconnected, rather than completely separate from one another (Fairclough, 1995). This enables linguists to analyse semiotic elements, which represent parts of various social processes, and the relationship between semiotic and non-semiotic social processes such as social relationships, power institutions, beliefs, and cultural values. Fairclough (1995) proposed three levels of social reality as the background for social structures, practices and events. According to this approach, discourses can be recontextualised in different fields or institutions, and they can be operationalised under certain conditions by being enacted as new ways of interacting, inculcated as new identities, or physically materialised. Fairclough's interest in semiotic elements of social processes, such as power, inequality, abuse, and political-economic or cultural change, is further explained by Wodak and Meyer (2009). Fairclough presented a three-stage model of CDA (describe, explain and interpret) to demonstrate how language can create, maintain and challenge power relations in society.

Fairclough (2001a) defines discourse as a social practice and a mode of action, where spoken or written utterances perform speech acts such as promising, asking, asserting, warning, and more. Additionally, he views language as an integral part of society, highlighting the dialectical relationship between language and society. Fairclough also regards discourse as a socially conditioned process that involves social conditions of production and interpretation, which relate to different levels of social organisations.

Furthermore, Fairclough (2001b) emphasises the importance of intertextual analysis in his three-dimensional analytical framework. Intertextual analysis acts as a bridge between language and social contexts, and it focuses on the borderline between text and discourse practice. Fairclough's concept of intertextuality is influenced by Kristeva's (1986) insertion of history and society into a text and Bakhtin's (1986) theory that texts are inherently intertextual. In addition, Fairclough's work concentrates on the

relationship between discourse, power, and ideology. He combines Bakhtin's view of discursive practice with Gramsci's theory of hegemony (1971) and defines hegemony as relations of domination based on consent rather than coercion. Fairclough views hegemony as domination across various domains of society, including economic, political, ideological, and more, and he emphasises the importance of ideology in achieving and maintaining relations of domination.

2.3.2 Halliday's systemic functional grammar

Systemic functional grammar (SFG) is a linguistic model of meaningful choices in communicative events. SFG explains the principles of natural language as a system of systems, describes the system in relation to instances of use. Halliday further presupposes that language is connected to the demand speakers create from it, thus viewing language as functional and situational. This entails that the functions of language, the entire meaning component and the context of the language event are brought into focus; as such, language-function determines the structure of the language.

SFG is semantic and functional in approach and operations. It does not just identify meaning in segregation of use, the complex element of specific situations is fully acknowledged as having positive influence on meaning. SFG, therefore, goes beyond the sentence, insisting on the investigations of what Halliday describes as 'authentic text' that is, actual instances of language in use. SFG is interested in the actual interaction that goes on in a discourse, using the text as the object of study. It unfolds the, text, language system and the elements of linguistic structures. Thus, this kind of functional analysis of discourse is useful as a tool in appraising political discourse.

One of the underlying principles of this language theory is that, language is a complex network of meaning systems, and that the process of language use involves conveying meaning through linguistic choices. According to Halliday (1985), a linguistic system comprises a range of available linguistic choices within a specific context. These choices afford language users multiple options for creating meaning, and are influenced by various factors such as audience, setting, and purpose of the discourse. Also, the grammar model accounts for both the paradigmatic relations of system and the syntagmatic relations of structure and sequence in interactive events, taking into consideration the choices made by language users. This study investigates the deliberate choices made by people in relation to the lexical items and structures of language texts,

in order to determine the modality choices and how they contribute to achieving language users' goals. SFG is an appropriate model for this investigation, as it provides a means of analysing the modality functions used to represent public opinion on the 2011, 2015, and 2019 Nigerian Presidential election results.

The applicability of the SFG model is based on its functional basis which proves to be insightful to our investigation of modality functions in public opinions on 2011 2015 and 2019 Nigerian Presidential election results in the national newspapers, that helps to relate the various patterns of language use at the grammatical and lexical levels that realise modality functions and relate them to the public opinions and meanings of the texts. The analysis is based on the ideational interactive encounters – interpersonal relations, through the meta-functions expressed via the grammatical theory of mood and modality.

Halliday's approach to analysing language involves an analysis of the options made in the grammar of language to read between the lines the import of a text and what purpose these choices dole out for the language user. These metafunctions are the ideational or experiential, the interpersonal and the textual metafunctions. Ideational meaning according to Halliday (1985) refers to the representation of experience: our experience of the world that gyrates around us, and also inside us, the world of our mind's eye. It is meaning in the sagacity of content, the preliminary stage of unfolding symbols and sounds to meanings. The ideational level of meaning conveys the field of discourse: that is, what speech event is all about. It aids the user of language to communicate the content of his/her expressions. This assists to establish the field of discourse. Interpersonal meaning has implication which is likened to a type of action: the speaker or writer performing an action towards the listener or reader through the use of language (Halliday, 1985). It is used to ascertain and sustain social relations, manipulates people's conduct, and gets things done. It likewise conveys the speaker's views, thoughts and judgment. It determines the users' acts, functions and the spreading of these acts and functions is evident. The interpersonal stage of meaning articulates the tenor of discourse that is, who the participants are and what their functions and affairs between each other are. Finally, the textual stage expresses the mode of discourse, which means what role the language is performing in the discourse process. It takes into report the significance of the text to the context: both the previous and subsequent text in addition to the context of situation Halliday (1958). The textual meaning gives

lucidity and consistency to a passage. It sets up the mode of discourse. These levels of meaning are apparent in all texts or discourse at the same time. Their function is distinct in its own right, it has been emphasised that in most utterance, language carries out numerous functions.

Another reason for the choice of SFG in this study is its provision to give report of the bond between language use and context. To Halliday, language has developed to gratify human desires and the technique used in organising its functionality in order to satisfy those needs (Halliday 1985). This will therefore help the discourse analyst in bringing out the overt and implied meanings and strategies used in texts, based on their peculiar context. This is because language use is a social activity, with social functions and it is construed in a linguistic system, and the patterns of language used in every social context reflect the functions that the language is performing in such contexts. SFG therefore, renders itself relevant to our study of modality function in public opinions in the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Nigerian Presidential election results in the national newspapers as these forms of opinions have their peculiar contexts, goals and orientations.

From the foregoing, it can be understood that SFG is concerned with the correlation between the linguistic outputs of language used, its social context to derive meaning and the functions it sets to achieve in an interactive event. SFG thus, enables a lexico-grammatical examination of the features of texts in this study, in order to determine how discourse strategies are realised in texts and their functions. Thus, in Halliday's view, entails that meaning emerges from a seamless interface between words and contexts, which deals with linguistic description structure, to interpret meaning, SFG thus accounts for the interpretation of meaning from linguistic forms in texts, and the socio-contextual meaning in expressing modality functions in representing public opinions on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Presidential election results in Nigeria.

This study examined the role of the ideational function, which helps to determine the field of discourse or the field that reveals the ideational metafunction. Halliday views the ideational function of the clause to imply "representation" (Halliday 1994:101). In this regard, the clause functions to divulge our knowledge of the world as language users. This is because "a ultimate property of language is that, it permits us to create an intellectual image of reality, to make meaning of our experiences of what transpire

around and inside us” (Halliday 1994:106). He added that the clause performs a crucial function, due to the fact that it represents a universal principle for modelling experience such as the principle that truth is made up of processes. This is germane in the representation of public opinions on the Nigerian presidential election results. It allowed people to understand the political events occurring within their community and how them to express their feelings within that reality.

2.3.2.1 Clause as representation: transitivity system

A most important constituent of the ideational metafunction is transitivity. Halliday’s (1985 and 1994) transitivity system offers a valuable linguistic framework for displaying the chief characteristics of a discourse. Transitivity is a system of representation in which the clause plays a crucial role. In SFG, transitivity is much more than the conventional difference between transitive and intransitive verbs; it is concerned with the type of processes involved in a clause, the participants implicated in it, and, if there are any, the attendant circumstances. The process is expressed by the verb phrase in a clause. The participants in the clause refer to the roles of units that are directly concerned in the process, the one that does, behaves or says, together with the passive one that is done to, said to, usually realised by noun phrases in the clause. The circumstances connected with the process are classically expressed by adverbial and prepositional phrases. Transitivity is thus the dealings well-known between the processes, the participants and the circumstances encoded in the clause. Transitivity is a significant semantic notion in the study of representation of reality, in that transitivity allows us to examine and represent identical occurrence and circumstances in dissimilar ways. The transitivity patterns can also point out way of thinking or world view realised by the view of the writer or speaker.

2.3.2.2 Processes and participants

The transitivity system explicates the different categories of process that are recognised in the language and structures by which they are uttered. The representation of reality is attained by means of set of processes, along with their participants and the circumstances in which they clarify. The term “process” is used in a comprehensive manner, “to cut across all occurrences...and whatever thing that can be spoken by a verb: event, may be physical or not, state, or relation”. In a clause there is only one process, which “can be classified according to whether it represents deeds,

vocalisations, thoughts or simply states of being” (Simpson, 1993:88). The process is constantly presented in the form of a verb and will comprise negative markers and auxiliaries (Ravelli, 2000). It is imperative to point out at this juncture that due to the fact that very often a clause can have more than one verb, for the sake of straightforwardness and consistency, the last verbal group is analysed as the process type, in line with Martin et al. (1997).

Halliday (1985, 1994) recognises six process types (three major and three minor). The major types are the material process, (process of doing), mental process (process the feeling, thinking and perceiving), and Relational process (process of being). The minor processes that take place at the confines of the major ones are behavioural process, verbal process and existential process.

i. **Material process** involves activities or actions that people perform. Thompson (1996:79) states that this process more often than not indicates physical performances such as “running, throwing, scratching, cooking, and sitting down and so on. Halliday (1985, 1994) names the member(s) connected with the material process as the *actor* and in some instances the *goal*. In some situations, this actor is not just performing something to or for them, but is expanding this act in the direction of someone or something else. Martin et al. (1997) assert that the goal is at times referred to as the recipient if, as a member, it is the one receiving something or doing something for by actor.

ii. **Mental Process** concerns with psychological rather than physical actions. Bloor and Bloor (1995:11) opine that this process is typically “realised through the use of verbs like think, know, feel, smell, see, want, like, hate, please, repel, admire, enjoy, fear, frighten”. In this situation the member of the clause who is concerned in “conscious processing” is described as the *senser* (Martin et al. 1997:105). This participant is naturally human, because of its ability to sense but can be “human-like” when “nominal groups operating as senser which indicate non mindful bodies have to be interpreted metaphorically as ‘personified’ (Martin *et al.*, 1997:105). This implies that in some cases non-human entities, for example animals, and even non-animate entities, are given awareness qualities by exemplifying them. Mental processes (processes of feeling, thinking and perceiving) have a mandatory senser and the clause may also absorb an additional member, the *phenomenon*, which is what is being sensed (Halliday,

1985). Although, the occurrence requires not be present in the clause; it may only be there unreservedly.

iii. **Existential process** involves indicating something that exists. This process is likened to the relational process, as the copula ‘to be’ predominates in the clause but it can be distinguished from the relational process because there is only one participant (Martin *et al.*, 1997; Ravelli, 2000). The participant involved in this process is called the ‘existent as it is involved in the process of existing and Halliday (1994) says that the existent may be any kind of event or phenomenon. Bloor and Bloor (1995:125) explain that this process is realised in two ways: Firstly, it is realised with a copula verb along with the “empty ‘there’ as subject”. Secondly, this process of existing can be realised with the existent as subject, the copula verb and the addition of a circumstantial adjunct.

iv. **Relational process** involves recognising the existence of a unit (Thompson, 1996) or “that something is” (Halliday 1985, 1994). This process is understood by the copula verbs like “be”, “seem”, “become”, and ‘appear’” (Bloor and Bloor 1995:120). In relational clauses, there are two parts to the “being”: something is being said to be something relational clause types involved in this process: intensive, circumstantial and possessive. Each of these is comprehended in two different modes attributive and identifying. If the clause is attributive, “an attributive is attributed to some entity; either as a quality (intensive), as a circumstance – of time, place etc. (circumstantial) or as a possession (possessive)” (Halliday 1994:120). In this case the participants turn out to be the carrier and the attribute.

iv. **Behavioural Process** involve the vague area between the material and mental processes (Bloor and Bloor 1995). They contribute to possessions of the material and mental processes. There is typically only one participant, the ‘behavior’. In this case, the human activities of speaking and thinking are measured to be behaviours that cannot be understood as material processes because of their varied attributes (Martin et al. 1997). They are regarded as being physiological in nature for instance breathing, coughing, smiling, dreaming and staring.

An analysis based on process and participants make known the manner through which language users influence language to stand for their acuity of reality (Bloor and Bloor, 1995:107). Halliday (1985, 1994) comments that the “processes” articulated by the means language are the outcome of our notion of the world or viewpoint. He remarks

our most influential notion of actuality is that it is made up of ‘‘goings-on, of doing, events, opinions and being’’. These goings-on are arranged in the semantic structure of the language, and expressed through the grammar of the clause. The clause develops concurrently in furtherance to grammatical function conveying the reflective, empirical feature of meaning.

2.3.2.3 The system of mood

The mood system is one of the schemes of Systemic Functional Grammar (that is, the interpersonal metafunction of language). It aids our aptitude to account for the different alternatives that are accessible to the speaker in the use of language (Osisanwo, 2003). The interpersonal function of language is obvious in the arrangement of the clause through the system of mood, which describes the grammatical subject. The options in the mood system are declarative, interrogative and imperative, and the system is carried by the finite element of the verb plus one nominal, which is the grammatical subject. According to Alo (1998):

The clause, the example, may be to approve or disapprove, to express doubt, to ask questions or give answer; to greet, to instruct, to command others; to include others within the social group or to exclude others from it. These various uses or functions of the sentence correspond to grammatical categories which are called declarative (statement sentence): imperative (commands, requests) and exclamatory (exclamation). (55)

In its interpersonal function, as an interactive event, a swap between speakers, the clause in English is ordered in terms of the mood system. Hence, mood can be regarded as the link between the grammatical subject of the clause and the finite element of the verbal group, with the aide memoire of the clause called the residue.

Mood literarily suggests a condition of mind in which one’s feelings or set of sentiment has dominance. Honbry (1974) describes mood as a ‘state of mind or spirit; while Crystal (1980) views it as ‘a series of feelings which can be elucidated by mood system’. Mood is the most important aspect of interpersonal system of the clause. It enhances the prerequisite required in dialogue with the resources for providing or demanding for a product (which can be information or services), in other words, with the resources for performing dialogue function (Halliday, 1994:97).

2.3.2.4 Modality

Modality as a linguistic tool which includes a diversity of structure, including (but not limited to) modal auxiliaries, modal verbs, modal adverbs and modal adjectives. There are grammatical modality and lexical modality; grammatical modalities relate to the attitude of a speaker to reality or possibility of a proposition or utterance (Simpson, 1993). They are used to reveal the judgement of a speaker on the probability or the obligation involved in what the speaker utters. On the other hand, lexical modalities, these are words used to reflect how factual or assertive the statement is, which can be done through the deployment of adverb, adjective, and noun. Modality is typically defined as the grammaticalisation of a speaker's feelings and view. This point is further supported by Palmer (1986:14) who portrayed it as the expression of the speaker's position or view concerning 'the contents of the sentence'. Lyons (1977:542) observes it as the expression of the speaker's attitude or view concerning 'the proposition that sentence expresses'. Therefore, modality may be viewed as the grammar of overt remark (Simpson, 2004).

Modality carries out interpersonal role and states the opinions of a speaker, demonstrates his feelings and shows his assessment of a state of affairs (Fowler, 1986; 1991). He declares that the speaker uses language as a means of conveying his emotions in the communicating event, the rapport that he puts up between himself and his listener, the communication function that he incorporates, which could be informing, questioning, greeting, persuading etc. (Fowler, 1991). These are generally termed as modal auxiliaries; modal adverbs (e.g. probably, surely); evaluative adjectives and adverbs (e.g. cowardly, regrettably); verbs of knowledge forecast and assessment. Fairclough (1995b) opines that the linguistic systems of mood and modality which have relationship with clause and sentence types, and the stand of the writer about the message, are in a straight line allied with the interpersonal function of language.

According to Halliday (2000), modality encompasses four sub-systems that state probabilities (that is, certain, probable, possible), usuality (that is, always, usual, sometimes), obligation (that is, required, supposed, allowed), and inclination (that is, determined, keen, willing). There are two types of modalities: Epistemic modality and deontic modality. Epistemic modality is related to the degree of validity, probability or

certainty that a speaker connected to his propositions or observations. In deontic modality, attention is paid to the ‘degree of readiness to do or give’ (Opara, 2005).

The system of modality according to Morley (1985:64) concentrates on the scale of probability beginning from possibility to certainty. It is an imperative linguistic tool for understanding the interpersonal function and expressing social roles between the speaker/writer and the hearer/ reader, (Halliday 1994). He comments that modality elements are articulated by a diversity of syntactic forms: Verbal, adverbial, adjectival and nominal. The verbal elements are the modal auxiliaries such as may, might, can, could, will, would, ought to, must, need etc. In most cases, this can be actualised through adverbs such as maybe, certainly, definitely, probably; adjectives such as certain, possible, obvious; and nominal such as possibility, chance, likelihood etc. There are levels of certainty, probability, or obligation in modal operators respectively. They are named values, which can be grouped into high, median and low values, (Halliday, 1994:362).

Modality, according to Fairclough, explains the extent of similarity to, or dedication to, an intention spoken by a writer. Halliday (2004) perceives modality as a resource which creates space between positive and negative poles. He also narrates modality to propositions, at discrepancies that in a proposition, the conclusion of the positive and negative pole is firm and refute. The direct possibilities can be divided into two, which are; (i) degree of probability and the degree of usuality. Examples of the degree of probability are: *possibly, probably, certainly*, while example of level of usuality are: *sometimes, usually, and always*. The level of probability can be supposed to indicate either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ with various levels of possibility, while the extent of probability refers to either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ with diverse degrees of regularity emotionally involved. For instance, between the positive extremity: ‘John will go’ and ‘John will not go’ are probability such as ‘John may go’, ‘John can go’, ‘John must go’ and so on. These intermediary levels are identified as MODALITY. He identifies five types of modality as *usuality, probability, obligation, inclination* and *ability*. Usuality could mean either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ with different degrees of oftenness attached. It can be expressed (a) by a finite modal operator; (b) by a modal adjunct and; (c) by a modal adjunct of probability and usuality.

Probability is another intermediate possibility between the positive and negative poles. It is equivalent to either 'yes' or 'no' or 'maybe no' with varying degrees of likelihood attached. Probability too can be expressed (a) by a finite modal operator; (b) by a modal adjunct and; (c) by both combined. Halliday says that an immediate possibility between positive and negative poles is represented by various degrees of inclination in an offer. These are: 'willing to/ anxious to/determined to' and they are expressed (a) by a finite modal operator or (b) by an expansion of the operator. *Ability* has the potential form *can*, that is, 'have the ability to' and goes with 'know how to'. It is an intermediary between *has done*, *has to do* and *trying hard to do*. Its negative form is *avoid doing*, *fail in doing*.

Disjunct is also established within the context of modality, which carries out interpersonal functions (Fowler1986). It states comments of a speaker, illustrates his attitude and divulges his assessment of a situation (Fowler 1991). Fowler (1986) recognises firm linguistic means of stating modality and they comprise modal and sentence adverbs (such as 'probability' and 'surely') and evaluative adverbs (such as 'fortunately' and 'regrettably'). There are two categories of adjuncts: style disjunct and attitudinal disjunct. Style disjunct conveys the speaker's comment on the form of what he says, 'defining in some way under what circumstance he is speaking while attitudinal disjunct remarks on the communication' (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1982: 242). Halliday concludes that it is these scales of probability and usuality to which modality belong (Halliday 2004):

Modality in a statement is an indication of the speaker's viewpoint, such as "that will be John." On the other hand, in a question, modality is a request for the listener's viewpoint, as in "will that be John?" or "Is that John, do you think?" Even a high-value modal, such as certainty, is less conclusive than a polar form, for example, "that's certainly John" is less certain than "that's John". (147)

Nunn (2007) states that, news writers use modality to articulate their level of loyalty to the reliability of the information or confirmation that other people utter which they merely report. She argues that modality can be one means of indicating a writer's ideological point of view.

According to Halliday (1994) and Eggins (2004), modality can be divided into two types: modalisation and modulation. Modality should distinguish between propositions

and proposals, with propositions referring to the meaning of positive and negative poles in asserting and denying and being accounted for by modalisation. In contrast, proposals relate to the meaning of positive and negative poles in prescribing and proscribing and are accounted for by modulation.

Palmer (2001) makes a further distinction between propositional modality and event modality. Propositional modality relates to the speaker's attitude towards the truth-value or factual status of the proposition and encompasses evidential and epistemic modality. Evidential modality points to the evidence for the factual status of the proposition, while epistemic modality indicates the speaker's opinion on its accurate position. Event modality, on the other hand, relates to whether or not the event referred to in the utterance can or must be realised and includes dynamic modality and deontic modality. Dynamic modality involves ability and volition, while deontic modality relates to permission and obligation and stems from an external source.

Huddleston and Pullum et al. (2002) also distinguish between three types of modality: epistemic, deontic, and dynamic. Dynamic modality encompasses ability, volition, and non-deontic root modality. This study adopts the classification of modality presented by Palmer (2001) and Huddleston and Pullum et al. (2002). According to Halliday (1970), epistemic modality is a type of modality that expresses the level of confidence or evidence that a speaker has for the proposition they are expressing. It conveys a speaker's assessment of probability and predictability and their personal appraisal of their degree of certainty, belief, and doubt. Epistemic modality is external to the content of the proposition because it conveys the speaker's feelings and attitude towards their own speech role as a "declarer."

On the other hand, deontic modality is used to influence a situation and convey what is required, permitted, or prohibited. This modality is subjective as it expresses the speaker's desires and intentions, obliging, permitting, or forbidding the proposition according to some normative background such as law, morality, or convention. It is concerned with power, formality, and can be used to offer warnings, requests, advice, suggestions, and permission.

Dynamic modality, on the other hand, is concerned with ability and disposition and is expressed through the use of modal verbs such as "can" and "will." It is subject-oriented

and based on the ability or volition of the subject of the sentence, rather than the opinion (epistemic) or attitude (deontic) of the speaker or addressee.

Modality is a fundamental feature of the interpersonal function of language, and it goes beyond merely conveying factual information. Modality allows writers to express the level of conviction with which they formulate a statement, to manipulate others in different ways, to assert authority or signal surrendering to somebody else's authority, to give consent or solicit for authorisation, and to make people execute duties or stop them from doing things. As such, modality covers all the semantic groups underlying these diverse uses of language.

Systemic Functional Linguistics employs the mood system, which falls under the interpersonal metafunction of language, as the focus of this study. This system helps in explaining the various alternatives available to speakers in their use of language (Osisanwo, 2003). The mood system is apparent in the clause's structure and describes the grammatical subject through three mood choices: declarative, interrogative, and imperative. This system is carried by the finite element of the verb plus one nominal, which acts as the grammatical subject. Alo (1998) states that the clause in English, in its interpersonal function, is organised in terms of the mood system, which is the connection between the grammatical subject and the finite element of the verbal group, with the remainder of the clause referred to as the residue.

Modality is comprised of four sub-systems: probability, usuality, obligation, and inclination, which are used to express the speaker's degree of validity, probability, or certainty, or their willingness, readiness, and inclination (Halliday, 2000:359; Opara, 2005). Epistemic modality is concerned with the degree of validity, probability, or certainty, while deontic modality is focused on the degree of willingness and inclination to do or give (Opara, 2005).

The system of modality handles the scale of probability from possibility to certainty, and it is a vital linguistic device for actualising the interpersonal function and expressing social roles between the speaker or writer and the hearer or reader (Halliday, 1994). Modal elements can be expressed through various syntactic forms, including verbal, adverbial, adjectival, and nominal, such as modal auxiliaries, adverbs, adjectives, and nouns. Modal operators have varying degrees of certainty, probability, or obligation,

which can be grouped into high, median, and low values (Halliday, 1994:362). The mood system is diagrammatically represented below:

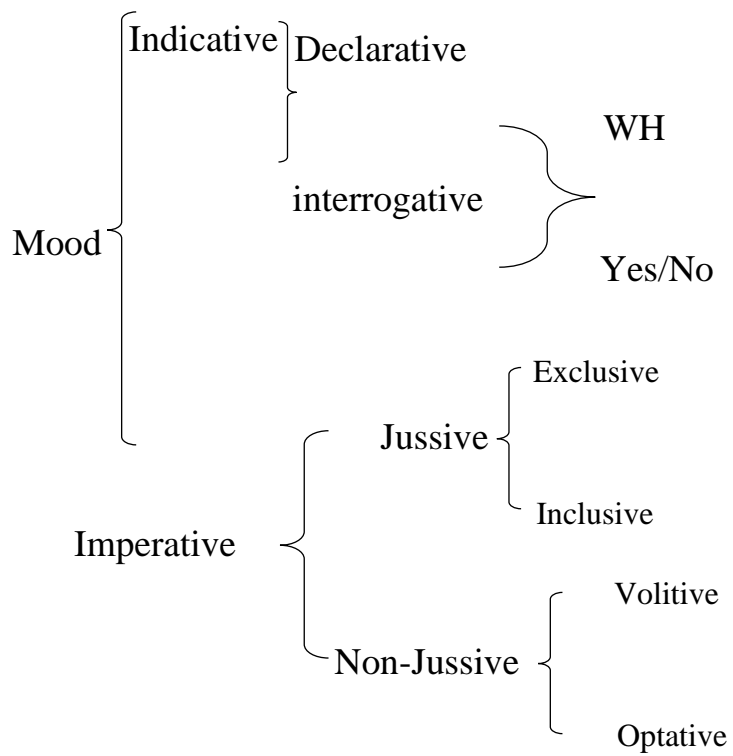


Figure 2.1: Mood system

Source: Halliday, M.A.K. 1994. An introduction to functional grammar, London: Edward Arnold

2.3.2.5 Modalisation

Halliday (1994:8 9) examines that modalisation is concerned with meaning ranging between positive and negative poles, between asserting and denying: positive “it is so”, negative “it isn’t so” Modalisation is the speaker’s opinion to situation or information goods, which is employed in passing across message or interaction. Modalisation is paired into probability and usuality.

i. Probability: the likelihood of a sentence being true is indicated by its probability. Thompson (1996:57) explains that probability reflects how probable it is for the sentence to be true, ranging from "yes" to "no," such as "possibly yes" or "maybe no," with varying degrees of possibility attached to it. The probability scale has some fundamental points, including possible, probable, and certain. This scale confirms that possible is lower than certain, implying that certain is more credible than probable and possible. There are three ways to express probability: through finite modal operators, modal adjuncts, or a combination of both finite modal operators and modal adjuncts.

ii. Usuality: this is a subtype of modalisation that lies between the "yes" and "no" poles and is associated with the frequency of a process. A question that can be used to explore usuality is: how often does the process occur? Therefore, in terms of usuality, the sentence can sometimes be answered with "yes" or "no." Halliday (1994:89) suggests that the degree of usuality can be represented by a scale ranging from "sometimes," "usually," to "always." "Sometimes" has the lowest degree, "usually" has a higher degree than "sometimes," and "always" has the highest degree. Usuality can be expressed in three ways: through finite modal operators, modal adjuncts, or a combination of both finite modal operators and modal adjuncts.

iii. Modulation: Halliday (1994:89) discusses the meaning of suggestions within the framework of prescribing and proscribing behaviors. Two types of transitional options are identified based on their speech function: orders and offers. In commands, intermediate aims reflect the level of obligation; while in offers, they indicate the degree of inclination. To summarise, Halliday distinguishes between the two poles of constructive and unconstructive behaviors and explores how transitional options can

serve as linguistic markers for conveying different levels of obligation and inclination in suggestions.

iv. Obligation: this subtype reflects the level of commitment expected from the recipient of a command, which can be categorised into three degrees: 'approved to', 'anxious to', and 'determined to'. The degree of obligation increases as we move up the scale, with 'approved to' being the lowest and 'determined to' being the highest. 'Anxious to' falls in between the two extremes, and has a higher value than 'approved to', but a lower value than 'determined to'. Thompson (1996) also notes that when giving orders for goods or services, three levels of obligation are involved: permissible, advisable, and obligatory. Obligation at the highest level can be expressed using a finite modal operator, or through a predicator extension, which typically involves a passive verb or an adjective. In summary, Thompson highlights the various degrees of commitment and obligation involved in issuing commands, and explores the linguistic tools used to convey these nuances.

v. Inclination: this is the subtype of modulation, which deals with the degree of willingness of a speaker to do something. Inclination also lies between positive and negative poles. Halliday (1994:89) suggests that in an offer, the modality used symbolises the degree of inclination arraying from 'willing to', 'anxious to' and 'determined to'. The scale means that 'willing to' is the lowest level of inclination 'anxious to' bears the sense of stronger inclination and "determined to" carries the strongest sense of inclination.

According to Thompson (1996:57), modality refers to the degree of willingness or inclination demonstrated by the speaker, and can be expressed through the use of terms such as 'ability', 'willingness', and 'determination'. When someone has the 'ability' to do something, it implies the lowest level of inclination, whereas 'willingness' indicates a stronger inclination. The strongest level of inclination is expressed using the term 'determination'. In summary, Thompson discusses how the use of specific terms can convey different degrees of willingness and inclination, ranging from the lowest level of ability to the highest level of determination.

2.3.2.5.1 Value of modality

The value of modality can be categorised into different degrees. According to Halliday (1994:358) and Eggins (2004:173) recommend that modality is organised according to the importance or extent that is set on the ethical verdict into three levels: high, median and low as illustrated in table 2.1 below:

Table: 2.1: Value of modality table

Value	Probability	Usuality	Obligation	Inclination
High	Certain	Always	Require	Determined
Median	Probable	Usually	Supposed	Keen
Low	Possible	Sometimes	Allowed	Willing

Source: Halliday M.A.K 1994. *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold

In reference to the table 2.1, the degree of value of modality can be classified into three:

- a. High: The act closet to “yes” poles (positive polar) and most likely to happen.
- b. Median: The action happens between high and low level on in the median of the polarity.
- c. Low: The action is closet to “no” poles (negative pole) and most possible not to happen.

Halliday (1994:357) presents an illustration of the value system and types of modality as adopted below:

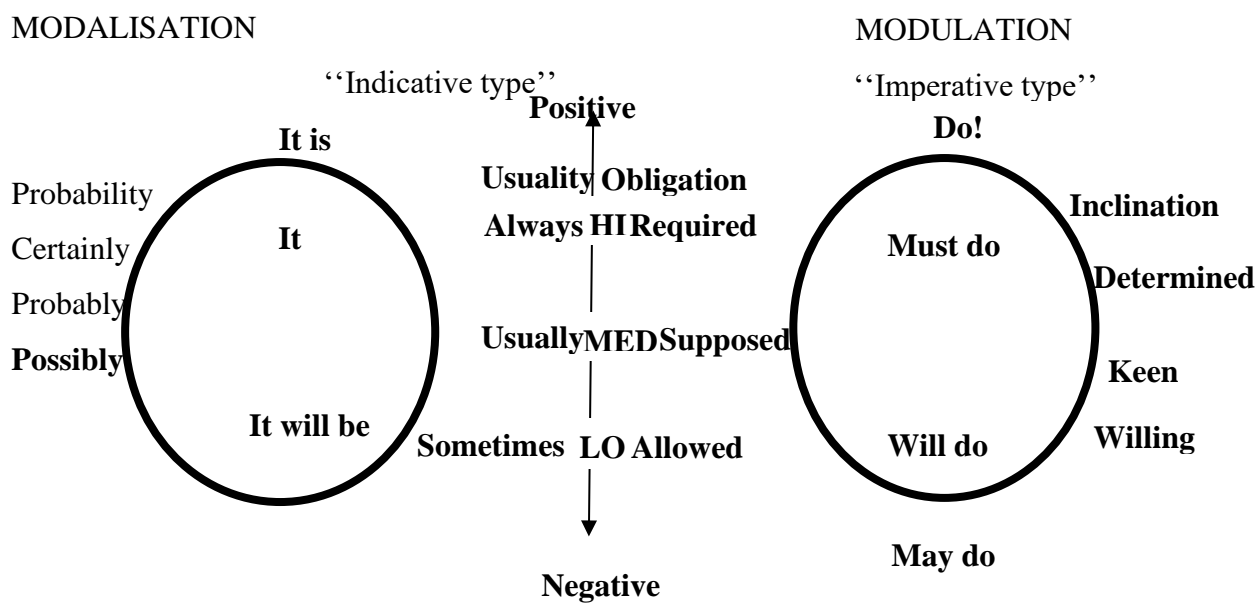


Figure 2.2: Value system and modality types

Source: Halliday, M.A.K. 1994. *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold

2.3.2.5.2 Deontic modality

The term "deontic" has its roots in the Greek word "deont-deon," which means "obligation." Deontic modality is used to indicate that the speaker's intention implies a command, obligation, recommendation, or permission based on some normative framework such as law, morality, or convention. Deontic modality is related to the meaning of a suggestion in terms of its constructive and destructive poles, which can be either recommending or prohibiting. This type of modality indicates the speaker's degree of requirement, desire, or commitment to the proposition. Modal verbs such as can, must, have to, ought to, and could have done are primarily used in deontic modality. Deontic modality can be further categorised into deontic necessity and deontic possibility. This modal system is linked to responsibility and is concerned with the writer's attitudes towards commitment. Deontic modality is associated with the significance of a proposal, which can be positive or negative. The meanings of deontic modality are classified based on the degree of obligation, and they can be grouped into three categories: necessity, advisability, and possibility (permission).

2.3.2.5.3 Deontic necessity

Deontic necessity expresses the maximum degree of obligation of a command and it can be articulated in various linguistic properties such as: modals, clause with adjectives, clause with past participle and clause with noun.

2.3.2.5.4 Deontic advisability

Deontic advisability suggests the average level of obligation of an order and the linguistic properties which may state such meanings as modal, clause with adjective,

2.3.2.5.5 Deontic possibility

Deontic possibility conveys the least degree of obligation of an order so that it implies the sense of permission. It can be stated in several linguistic properties such as: modal auxiliary, clause with adjectives and clause with past participle.

2.3.2.5.6 Epistemic modality

The term "epistemic" is derived from the Greek word "episteme," meaning "knowledge." Epistemic modality is therefore related to a speaker's knowledge of a

given proposition. The degree of certainty about the truth of a proposition can be assessed on a number of different levels: certain, probable, and possible. Epistemic modality involves the use of language to convey the speaker's level of confidence in their understanding of a given concept. This type of modality is used to observe and evaluate a situation and to communicate doubts and conjecture, or the speaker's mode of knowing. Specifically, epistemic modality is the linguistic expression of an evaluation of the likelihood that a particular hypothetical situation or aspect of it will

occur, has occurred, or is occurring in a plausible world, which is the interpretive framework for this assessment. Epistemic modality refers to the determination of possibility or probability, that something is or is not the case. This paper focuses on Halliday's categorisation of writers' attitudes towards the level of certainty surrounding the 2011-2019 Nigerian Presidential election. These attitudes are classified as certainty, probability, or possibility.

2.3.2.5.7 Epistemic certainty

Epistemic certainty implies the highest degree of confidence based on the speaker's knowledge on the proposition. Epistemic modality can be articulated by different linguistic properties such as modal operators, modal adjunct, lexical verbs, lexico-modal auxiliaries, clause with past participle, clause noun, conditional clause and blending of modals and adjectives.

2.3.2.5.8 Epistemic probability

Epistemic probability shows the median degree of assurance depending on the speaker's knowledge on the proposition. Linguistic properties, which can convey epistemic probability, are: modal operators, modal adjunct, lexical verbs, clause with adjectives, clause with noun, conditional clause and combination of modal and adjunct.

2.3.2.5.9 Epistemic possibility

Epistemic possibility unveils the minimum degree of confidence based on the speaker's knowledge on the proposition. It can be expressed by different linguistic properties such as: modal operators, modal adjunct, lexical verbs, clause with

adjectives, clause with past participle, clause with noun, conditional clause and arrangement of modal and adjunct.

2.3.2.6 Lexicalisation

The term “lexicalisation” is described by Fowler (1991:69) as “the provision of an idea or concept with term or name” For instance, the clause may be used to endorse or criticise, to express uncertainty, to ask questions or provide answer; to salute, to give an instruction, or to command others; to take in others inside the social cluster or to leave out others from it. These different uses or roles of the sentence match up with the grammatical groupings which are called declarative (statement sentence): imperative (commands, requests) and exclamatory (exclamation). Lexis is a level of linguistic coding in text creation at which facts can be represented (or misrepresented) with the greatest degree of freedom. Lexicalisation focuses on the use of balanced words, certain ideas or ideologically- laden terms. The collection of word- meanings through lexicalisation is one of the major scopes of news discourse shaped by ideologies. Where a typically lofty degree of wording, frequently involving clusters of related conditions that are close to synonyms, occurs it (over wording or over lexicalisation) often points out a key idea or particular preoccupation that produces specific sense that the producer of texts wishes to express (Fairclough, 1989; Fowler, 1991).

van Dijk opines that, “merely interpreting all inferences of the words that are employed in a precise discourse and context frequently gives an enormous variety of ideological meaning”. It is possible for the user of language and producer of text producers to choose different lexical items in (media) discourse, preserves the ideas, beliefs and value current in the reader’s or audience’ awareness as well as helping them get transmitted from one group or generation to another. Lexical items are hereby used to maintain ideology, which Simpson (1973) explains as a contentious and exclusive issue, which can be observed as a blend of cultural assumptions, political beliefs and institutional practices. Teo (2000) disputes that analysts have to take a vital appraisal of the fundamental ideological viewpoint of reports and news articles in order to accurately comprehend lexical choices. In other words, an opinion writer’s choice in managing and translating information gathered could reflect the choice of words as being important in providing readers with cues for interpreting events. The way in which participants in events are perceived and the message conveyed by the text can be defined as discourse. The choice of lexical items used in a text creates specific ideological representations of

skills or actions. These representations are based on the social, political, institutional and ideological context of the writer, and by selecting specific words over others, the writer takes an ideological position (Pan, 2002). Fairclough (1989), as cited by Dunmire (2005), notes that the characteristics of a textual product are shaped by the context in which they are produced and have an impact on the context as well. These effects and traces are visible in the lexical composition of a text, particularly through the use of overlexicalisation and relexicalisation. Overlexicalisation refers to the excessive use of certain lexical items and their synonyms within a specific context, which indicates a focus on a particular dimension of reality that may be a site of ideological struggle. Relexicalisation, on the other hand, involves the revision of the lexical composition of a specific context as a means of resolving an ideological struggle in a particular way (Kress, 1995).

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter has been able to discuss extensively on the concepts and issues relating to politics, public opinion, media discourse and language use. It also makes a review of extant related works; highlighting their strengths, weaknesses and how this present study benefits from them. The next chapter thus examines the method deploy in gathering data for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the methods adopted in carrying out this study. It focuses on the sources of texts, and methods of gathering the texts and how data were extracted from the texts and used in this study. This section also considers how selection was made from the corpus of texts to arrive at those chosen for use in this study. It also examines the sampling size and technique for the analysis. There is then the presentation of data in quantitative and a qualitative basis.

3.1 Research design

This work employed the descriptive design. The design was found effective in providing a systematic description of opinion types, underlying context, and linguistic representation of public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers. To achieve this, a combination of Norman Fairclough's dialectical relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis complimented by M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar was adopted to examine the representation of public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers.

3.2 Population of the study

The population of the study was made up of three hundred public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results in six nationally- circulated newspapers. The newspapers include Nigerian *Tribune*, *Punch*, *The Nation*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, and *Leadership*. Public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results were published between February and April of 2011-2019 of election periods in Nigeria. The choice of selecting the newspapers was made to have a precise points of view on the presidential election results in Nigeria. The choice was also made in order to draw objective conclusion.

3.3 Sampling size

To achieve the aim of the study which is to investigate the representation of public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers from six newspapers, a total of three hundred opinions were drawn, fifty opinions were sampled from each of the nationally – circulated newspapers.

3.4 Sampling technique

The stratified random sampling was adopted. Three hundred public opinions were analysed from Nigerian newspapers, fifty opinions from each of the selected Nigerian newspapers that is, *The Nation*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *Punch*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, and *Leadership*. As a result of diverse in the representation of opinions on the Nigerian presidential election results, stratified sampling technique is used. Also, due to evenly selection of fifty opinions from each of the newspapers, systematic random sampling was adopted.

3.5 Nature and method of data collection

The data for this work are newspapers print media on public opinions on Nigerian presidential election n results. The choice of opinions as against the other genres of newspapers writing arose from the fact that they are supposed to be accurate representation of varied points of view from the public to the editors in order to reflect people’s feelings or emotions towards the presidential election results. The choice of the print media was made due to convenience. Public opinions on Nigerian presidential election were extracted and grouped according to the objectives of the study in readiness for subsequent analysis.

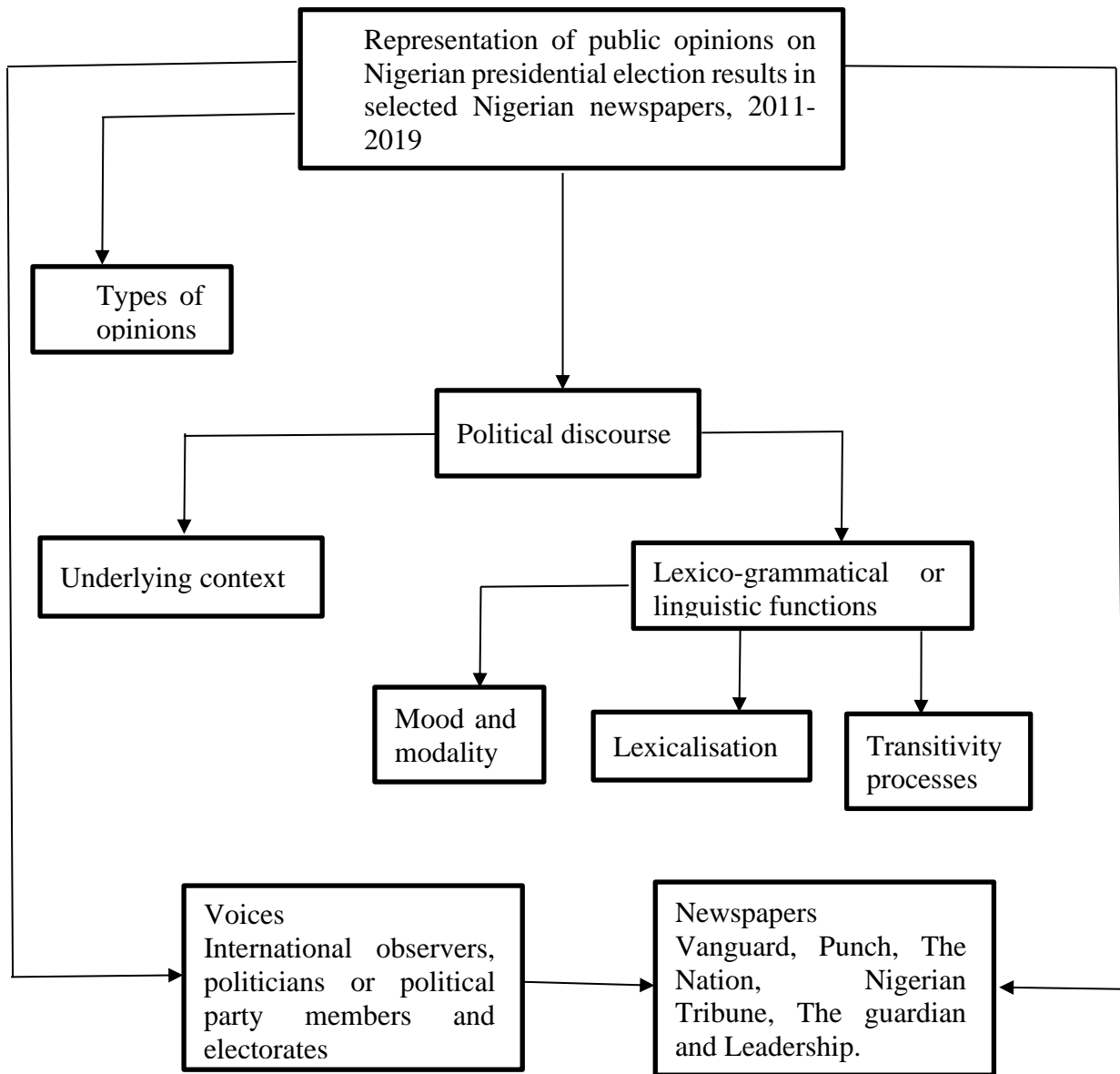
3.6 Method of data analysis

The analysis was done in three segments addressing the objectives of the study. The two categories examined the public opinion types and their underlying context. These were done using Norman Fairclough’s dialectical relational approach to Critical Discourse Analysis involving the deployment of discourse strategies in the representation of public opinions on the presidential election results. Also, quantitative method of analysis is adopted to present the frequency of the opinion types realised in the data.

The third segment involved the deployment of different linguistic properties in analysing the varied points of view on the election results using Halliday's Systemic Function Grammar. The analyses involved the critical examination of how people express their feelings or attitudes towards the election results through different modal verbs and transitivity processes. The item "excerpt" was emboldened in all the quotations.

The items analysed were grouped under appropriate sub-headings to reflect emotional feelings of the public towards the 2011- 2019 presidential election results. When an expression was being quoted in the analysis, it was enclosed in the double quotation mark. The units of analyses encapsulated between lexical items through paragraphs, to capture different opinions associated with Nigerian presidential election results.

Figure 3.1: Conceptual framework.



Source: Researcher (2021:61)

The conceptual framework reflected the opinion types, the underlying context and linguistic functions of the political discourse on the 2011- 2019 presidential election results. In line with the conceptual framework above, the mood and modality foregrounded the speakers' emotional feelings or attitudes towards the proposition. The transitivity aspect explained how peoples' opinions on the election result are identified and expressed in order to reveal the feelings of the speakers on the election results in Nigeria.

3.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has examined data collection procedure, sampling and the method of analysis for the analysis of representation of public opinions on Nigerian presidential election in the selected Nigerian newspapers. The analysis of data on public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.0 Chapter overview

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of data based on theoretical and analytical framework discussed in chapter three. The public opinions about the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results, which constitute our data, are analysed based on linguistic function and context of discourse . The study considered the different opinion perspectives identified in the text. After which, the study investigated different forms and functions of linguistic modalities identified in the texts.

4.1 Representation of opinions types on the election result

The election results in Nigeria have been represented in different ways by different opinion writers from the feature articles sampled from selected newspapers. The opinions are classified into the acceptance or otherwise of the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Nigeria's Presidential election, yielding eight different viewpoints. These range from presenting the election results as bias, free and fair election, God's will for Nigerians, opinions that represent deserved victory for Buhari, opinions on peace and unity ground, opinions that represent Jonathan's sportsmanship and historic victory. These are discussed under three broad types namely: nationalistic, moralistic and diachronic.

4.1.1 Nationalistic perspective

Nationalism points at the common interests of a group of people that share a similar language, hail from the same historical background, and share mutual knowledge of their immediate environment. This group of people shares a similar ideological belief and they are guided by fundamental principles, which can be termed as constitutional law that is compiled in a book for reference purposes. The set goal of these people is to work harmoniously in order to boost the economic strength and moral standard of their community and bring sanctity into the system. Nationalism is centered on loyalty and commitment to the nation-state which must over-rule individualism or group interests. Nationalism is said to seek after maintenance and development of national identity based on common interests like: cultural background, mutual language shared,

geographical location, religious affiliation, political goals or a belief in common pedigree. In a nutshell, nationalism aims at promoting the nation's traditional belief and custom, encourage a sense of belonging to the idea of patriotism. The opinions on national ground are discussed below:

4.1.1.1 Nationalistic perspective showing peace and unity

After the 2015 President-elect, Muhammed Buhari, had received the certificate of return, he assured President Jonathan never to be frightened, despite their different views on governance. He should put aside the rancor of the election; the President-elect extended a hand of friendship and conciliation to President Jonathan and his team. The President-elect clearly stated that he harbors no ill will against anyone.

Excerpt 1:

All Nigerians have no choice but to **hope** that only **justice** and **equity can** bring lasting **harmony, peace** and **progress** in the country.

(The Guardian, April, 5, 2011)

Excerpt 2:

Now, that all Nigerians and the world have known the enemies of **peace** and **progress...**

(Vanguard, April 10, 2011)

Excerpt 3:

...what **can** be called **national consensus** in the relevance of a national presidency and that is what one **would** be admonishing Goodluck Jonathan...

(The Nation, April 12, 2011)

Excerpt 4:

...it **would** be for the sake of our **common good** that we **support** him...

(Nigerian Tribune, April 3, 2011)

Excerpt 5:

...a constitutionally sanctioned process that **would** allow **us** to **live together** in **peace...**

(The Nation, April 3, 2019)

In the excerpt 1, the writer used the verb ‘hope’ with dynamic modality ‘can’ to stimulate the readers’ sense of expectation, that only justice and equity among the citizens has the ability of sustaining peace and tranquility in the country. In excerpt 2, the writer was of the view that, the opposition parties that aimed at disrupting the peace and unity of the community, should be brought to book. The deontic modality ‘should’ is used to depict weak form of obligation while the epistemic modality ‘must’ is used in order to reflect the background knowledge of the speaker on the possible measure(s) to take in order to maintain peace and unity in the country. In excerpt 3, the writer used the dynamic modality ‘can’, to show that Nigerians have the ability to argue blatantly that they have attained reasonable height of decision making in the country, which has enhanced peace and unity in the country. On this note, the writer used epistemic modality ‘would’ to reflect probability of what Nigerians would like the president-elect to act upon. The modal verb used by the writer in excerpts 4 and 5 is dynamic modality, which is used to depict volition. The writer implored the citizens to willingly support the newly-elected president. The writer used the objective modality that is, the impersonal ‘it’ in a clause to express his personal opinion. Also, the writer used PDP’s ‘contraption’ against ‘a constitutionally sanctioned process’. This can be interpreted as the mechanism that the People’s Democratic Party adopted during their administration, which is not favourable to the masses, but a system that will enhance peaceful co-existence among the different ethnic groups in the country.

4.1.1.2 Nationalistic perspective that reflect obligation and social responsibility

Excerpt 6:

If all **Nigerians can** contribute to come out en masse... at the **national** level, a new **Nigeria** will definitely emerge.

(Punch, April 11, 2011)

Excerpt 7:

This **will** be a good starting point in our quest for a **genuine national**...

(Vanguard, April 9, 2011)

The speaker used both dynamic modality, ‘can’ (ability) and ‘will’ (volition) which show ability of the people to determine who occupies the presidential seat in the country and the modal verb ‘will’ to reflect volition. In excerpt 7, the speaker used dynamic form of modality ‘will’ which functions as volition that is, the conscious effort of the

citizens to achieve a national rebirth in our electoral system. In the later segment of the sentence ‘will’ is used to depict the ability of Nigerians to practice a full democracy, which is from internal source.

Excerpt 8:

We **must** forget **our old battles and past grievance and learn to forge ahead**. I assure...

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 8, the two opposition parties – APC and PDP– have fought severely to attain the post; especially, Buhari and Jonathan have been on the energy-sapping politics for an elongated period of time. Buhari was of the opinion, that for Nigerians to enjoy peace and tranquillity, they must learn to live above the past. The speaker used strong modal auxiliary verb ‘must’ to indicate how compulsory it is for Nigerians to forget about the past in order to maintain peace and harmony in the country. He also used lexical modality ‘assure’ and deontic modality ‘will’ to suggest certainty of good governance. There are some lexical items such as ‘battles’ and ‘grievance’ that supported the existence of political acrimony between the two major parties in the past. While the lexical item ‘forget’ is used to depict urgent need for reconciliation and unity among them.

Excerpt 9:

...**shown** that politics **should** not divide us as a **nation** and as a people, that it **should** be...

(The Guardian, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 10:

I **commend** all **Nigerians** for the great sacrifice they made during the election. Their **peaceful**...

(The Punch, April 2, 2015)

In the above excerpts, the wife of late Chief Obafemi Awololwo was of the opinion that politics should be a unifying factor in any nation rather than causing chaos or political discrimination among the politicians. The speaker used an adverb ‘instructively’ to reflect the attitude of the incumbent president about the election. It is not a game of do or die, but a game of luck. People should be allowed to demonstrate their right and when this is done, the incumbent president should not use his vantage position to manipulate the election results. Nigerians were glad when the election results were announced because

they felt that their franchise as citizens had been fully exercised during the last concluded election. The lexical verb ‘commend’ is used to express the speaker’s point of view on the election process. The election was the first in the political history that an incumbent president would have handed over power to an opponent peacefully. With the declarative mood of the speaker in “you are the true winner,” one can conclude that the speaker was being assertive in his/her utterance. It has revealed great confidence that the speaker has in Nigerians during the electioneering process.

Excerpt 11:

...shall work for those who voted for me...under **one name** as **one nation**:
we are all Nigerians.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 11 above, the speaker used ‘shall’; a deontic modality, which is a weak obligation repeatedly to unravel his level of commitment. According to the speaker, there cannot be any record of unity where there is no mutual love, care and concern about the well-being of the people. The speaker deployed the first person pronoun to express his intention and readiness to serve the people. He sees his success as a call to serve and not to be served. He promised never to discriminate among the people and not to be bias or be in favour of his political members. It is obvious that when there is inequality in discharging his duties among the governed definitely, there will be grudges held against one another and it can lead a state of anarchy. Also, the Ex-president Goodluck Jonathan used the anaphoric pronoun in order to unveil the bond that exit among the three ethnic groups in the country. Irrespective of multiplicity, ethnicity and religious affiliation that divided the country, all the tribes and religious groups are tied together under one name, which is Nigeria. He emphasised on the fact that, we are all Nigerians, we are one and we are under one name as one nation therefore, there should be evidence of unity among the people living in the country.

Also, the international observers made their opinion known on how imperative it was for Nigerians to see the just concluded election as a unifying factor that will enhance stable economic progression, political stability and effective administration in the country. The United State President expressed his opinions in the following excerpts:

Excerpt 12:

I urge President-elect... **respect** their **calls.**

(*Punch*, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 13:

Nigerians came together...**peacefully**.

(*The Nation*, April 1, 2015)

The international observers encouraged the President and the President-elect to do more in their efforts at building a virile nation. The speaker implied that Nigeria has political problems. He has equally reviewed, assessed and evaluated the political systems. The above utterances are to let the hearers prepare their minds for the introduction and acceptance of democratic system of government that would guarantee stability in the country. Considering the context of the utterance, the speaker believes that the introduction of democratic system of government is imperative so that the country could achieve its goal politically and economically. The out-going President made his opinion known about election's results in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 14:

Jonathan said although some people have **expressed mixed feelings...**

(*The Nation*, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 14, the out-going president was able to convince Nigerians that the blood of Nigerians does not worth the electoral process. President Jonathan used strong obligatory modality 'should' to enlighten Nigerians to reject the election result in a manner that will not disrupt the peoples' desire for democracy in the country. He made Nigerians to realise that, anyone that displays rowdy behaviour does it at his/her own detriment. Therefore, it is mandatory to go through what is written in the constitution and electoral rule.

Excerpt 15: Nigerians needed to promote unity

(*The Guardian*, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 16: Abubakar, urged the President's supporters...

The Nation, April 2, 2015

The United State Secretary of State, John Kerry, had noted that elections in Nigeria had always been attributed to violence and disorderliness in the country, but, the last concluded election went on smoothly. The speaker was of the opinion that Nigerians must totally reject

violence during the conduct of election in the country. He emphasised the need to promote unity in the country. Also, General Abdusalami Abubakar, former Chief of General Staff (CGS) admonished the President's supporters not to disrupt the decorum or standard that the out-going President has set-up rather, they (in-coming government) should build on the foundation which, will foster stable government and unify the country.

Excerpt 17: ...that **will** consciously work for the **purity** of the **nation's electoral...**

(Vanguard, March 12, 2019)

Excerpt 18: ...a **nation's worth** is not determined by its size or the resources it **could...**

(The Nation, March 16, 2019)

Excerpt 19: ...Nigeria's **democratic progress** decades back... INEC **would** imply that the **nation** is still unready to tell itself the truth. Political actor **must...**

(Nigerian Tribune, March 14, 2019)

In excerpt 17, the dynamic modality is used to depict volition with the used of modal verb 'will', the speaker used objective impersonal pronoun 'it' to refer to the system of government. The adverb 'consciously' is used to show adverb of manner. In excerpt 18, 'could' is the past form of 'can' which is an example of dynamic modality that reflected ability. The speaker is of the opinion that a nation's value is not established by its size or possessions rather it is determined by the choices the people make during the election period. While excerpt 19, based on the speaker's assessment of the election, 'would' is a deontic modal verb that is used to convey the hypothetical situation of the election. Also, the strong deontic modality 'must' is used to express obligation on the part of Nigeria's political actors to play politics alongside with sincerity. Based on this fact, Searle (1983:166) speaks of 'directive' which he defines as 'where we try to get at to express weak form of obligation.

Excerpt 20: Unless political leaders are **able to** demonstrate that kind of selflessness by putting **national interest** above parochial interests, so long **shall our nation**

(Vanguard, March 9, 2019)

In excerpt 20, the speaker used ‘able to’ to portray deontic modality which is strong form to give directive that implies the speaker’s level of conformity of our leaders to live above their selfish interest at heart, which is expressed by the above utterance. While ‘shall’ is used as a weak form of modality or commissive modality that connotes threat of looming destruction on the country just as the case of Noah if necessary, measures to curb bad leadership is not put in place.

Excerpt 21:

...you just **have to** look at events in many nations of the world...

(The Nation, March 11, 2019)

Excerpt 22:

...Jonathan **must** be... has held **our nation** back...

(The Guardian, March 13, 2019)

Considering the excerpts above, the deontic modalities such as ‘must’ and ‘have to’ are used to point out obligations on both the leader and the led to appreciate successful electoral process in the country. The strong deontic ‘must’ is used when referring to the factor which has withheld the economic growth and development of this nation. ‘Must’ in this context is used as a command. Declerk (1991:378) avers that while “should” expresses weak obligation, it also points at some doubt as to whether the situation referred to will happen.

4.1.1.3 Nationalistic perspective that revealed democratic system

Excerpt 23:

Why **must** jobless youths...

(The Nation, March 15, 2019)

Excerpt 24:

...the **nation must** be allowed...

(Nigerian Tribune March 9, 2019)

Excerpt 25:

...Nigeria **should** realise...

(*Vanguard*, March 11, 2019)

Excerpt 26:

...president **will** announce on his inauguration day that no policeman **should** collect money...

(*Punch*, March 15, 2019)

The above excerpts show the use of deontic, in excerpt 23, 'must' is used to reflect the writer's displeasure on how the politicians engaged the service of the unemployed youth in the country, in order to disrupt the peace and unity of the nation. The writer used the interrogative statement to express his disapproval of this bad influence on the Nigerian youths. The writer also used strong deontic 'must' in excerpt 24, to reveal necessity. 'Should' is also deployed in excerpt 25, which is weak form of obligation on Northerners who are working against the leadership of Goodluck Jonathan to bring back to their consciousness that Nigeria is a heterogeneous country, therefore, people decide through their votes who will rule over the affairs of the state. While excerpt 26, revealed the use of deontic, which implies volition, with the use of 'will', weak form of obligation with the use of 'should' and strong form of obligation with the use of 'have to'. The writer is of the opinion that if the policemen are mandated to discharge their duties without any act of bribery and corruption, the country will enjoy peace, security of lives and properties. Also, law enforcement agent should compel anybody that acts contrary to pay fines to the treasury.

4.1.2 Diachronic perspective

Diachronic point of view in Nigeria's political system is of good significance to this study. It provides vital information about the past political administration; it is systematically written as sequential account of political events in Nigeria. Considering the past events in the political trend in Nigeria, history helps us to have deep knowledge of how politics was operated in the past, which presents insight into the mistakes made by past administrations, provides better understanding of the present occurrences and lays down a guiding principle for the future.

The excerpts below reveal diachronic events, which manifested in the political system in Nigeria.

Excerpt 27:

If the administration **will** not...

(Vanguard, April, 3, 2019)

Excerpt 28:

...Buhari **should** stop weeping...

(The Nation, April 27, 2011)

Excerpt 29:

It is **particularly** worrisome...election that **can go down in history** as...

(Punch, April 15, 2011)

The above excerpts show the use of epistemic, dynamic and deontic modality. Epistemic is used here to make statement of fact. The epistemic ‘will’ in the first excerpt is used to indicate the possible havoc that will precipitate the administration if necessary steps to rectify the menace are not taken. ‘Should’ is used in the excerpt to reveal weak form of obligation, which is instructive. In the given context, ‘cannot’ (the negative equivalence of ‘can’) is used to indicate Buhari’s past administration as undemocratic. One can conclude that he is a ‘demo-military man’ (a man with partial democratic nature, but, with a complete sense of military ideologies). Also, the writer used the modal adverb ‘particularly’ to reveal a writer’s disappointment about the election violence that took place in some parts of the country. ‘Should’ is used as weak obligation to reflect what is supposed to be the attitude of Nigerians, but reverse was the case.

Excerpt 30:

All negotiators of violence **must** recall that all through **history**, those who came before them suffer the same fate

The Guardian, April 20, 2011.

Excerpt 31:

This is not to say that **history** can’t identify him as another virus in our national political software if he acts otherwise.

The Guardian, April 10, 2011.

In the above excerpt, the deontic modality “must “ is used in excerpt 30, to indicate strong form of grammatical modality in order to reveal the possible negative effect that

accompanied the action of people in the country, especially, when they are being used as instrument of violence. The speaker obliged the citizens to have good historical reflection on the antecedent of people who engaged themselves in violence and the punishment they were inflicted with. Those that were used to perpetrate evil in the society were used and dumped after engaging them in the evil acts.

Furthermore, it should be reiterated here that many Nigerians considered the 2015 presidential election as historic victory as seen in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 32:

History will remember him for his political maturity.

(Punch, April 1, 2015)

In most cases, people at the corridor of power usually find it difficult to hand over power despite the fact that they are no longer qualified to occupy the office. Contrary to this, President Goodluck Jonathan had promised that he would vacate the office if he was voted out in the election. In the political history of Nigeria, he was the first incumbent President since 1999 to hand over to the opposition party. The strong form of auxiliary modality ‘will’ is used as an obligation on the peoples’ part to make reference to his political maturity and heroic exit from the office.

Excerpt 33:

The APC also **confirmed** the **Historical** call.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Goodluck Jonathan’s disposition gladdened the hearts of Nigerians, because he was able to maintain peace and orderliness in the country. If he had refused to allow the opposition party to emerge as the winner, innocent blood would have been shed. That singular action made give credence to his administration. The lexical verb ‘confirmed’ is used to indicate that the opposition party also attested to the incumbent President’s maturity.

Excerpt 34:

I **congratulate** Nigerians for this **historic** election...

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015)

The lexical verbs ‘congratulate’ is used to express a heart of gratitude to Nigerians. The last concluded Presidential election had been said to be free and fair by most Nigerians. The election process was regarded as being free and fair because people’s vote has voted out the incumbent President out of office.

Excerpt 35:

This **could** as well be the purpose... **history will** never forget him.

(Nigerian Tribune, April, 2, 2015)

The incumbent President was regarded as God sent because his failure to concede defeat could have resulted in bloodshed in the country. He was able to design this purpose and walk in the direction. The auxiliary modal verbs ‘could’ is employed to reflect a weak form which does not actually reflect a certainty of the assumption and ‘will’ is used as a strong auxiliary verb to depict an obligation on the Nigerian citizenry never to forget the role played by the President.

Excerpt 36:

... Mr President **will** go down in **history** as a leader...

(Punch, April 2, 2015)

In a democratic system of government, criticism is a yardstick for good governance. In spite of these criticisms both constructive and destructive forms, he was able to perform excellently well. The modal auxiliary ‘will’ is used to depict strong use of certainty that the President would leave the office without a hitch of disgrace or disappointment.

Excerpt 37:

...their votes are such a huge deal given our **history**; I **believe** this is the beginning of greater thing...

(Vanguard, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 38:

March 28, 2015, **will** eternally ring true as the day they voted out an incumbent President the first time in the **Nigerian history**.

(The Guardian, April 2, 2015)

The lexical modality 'believe' is used to expound high level of trust people have in the in-coming President. In excerpt 38, the epistemic modality 'will' is used to make reference to the 2015 Presidential election that would forever be in memorial.

Excerpt 39:

...Jonathan's **historic concession** has **ensured** that he **will** have power in a blaze of glory.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 40:

...election **will go down history**...

(The Punch, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 41:

Yes! **History will** not forget those who **should** be agents of change.

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015)

The modal auxiliary is used to express assurance. The incumbent President had made up his mind on the election. He never saw it as a do or die affair; in case he lost, he would not hesitate to go back to Otuoke his home town. The speaker made reference to the Ex-President's proposition and in the speaker's opinion, he was showed gratitude to the predecessor based on his credible moral standard. In the above excerpts, Nigerians saw the election as a historic one, because the president displayed high level of maturity, by calling the newly elected president, to congratulate him on his success. The above excerpts indicate affirmative statements that attested to the good leadership quality of the Ex-President. The Ex-President was celebrated at the same pace with the in-coming President.

4.1.3 Moralistic perspective

The opinions expressed about the 2015 election portray President Goodluck Jonathan as a man of high moral standard, decent and of good sense of judgment. He was given the good attribute as a man who has the fear of God and values human beings. Politics in Nigeria has been characterised by corrupt leaders and power drunk. Despite the fact that he was at the vantage position to rig the election results, and create a tensed environment for the citizens, he did not allow external forces to control his high moral.

The Ex-President was able to judge between good and bad, his action and attitude to the election results portrayed him as a good leader that is worthy of emulation.

Morality is highly important in electing a leader; he/she must be able to handle critical issues of life properly, without any iota of being biased or sentimental in his/her discharge of duties. Some of the opinions on moral ground supported the fact that President Goodluck Jonathan exhibited a high degree of political maturity by handing over the post peacefully without any form of chaos in the country. The public opinion on morality ground includes the following:

4.1.3.1 Opinions that suggest election of president(s) based on past performance.

Excerpt 42:

Nominated leaders **must** show provable indication of recital to persuade the public that of the necessity for them to come out in large records on the election days to vote.

(The Nation, April 5, 2011)

Excerpt 43:

As we praise ourselves, we **must** also congratulate late president, Umar Musa Yar'Adua, for placing the foundation for a free, fair and credible election.

(The Guardian, April 10, 2011)

Excerpt 44:

The presentation we have seen from the PDP government in the last twelve years is not the type that **could** motivate people's sureness in democracy.

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2011)

The writer used strong form of deontic modality 'must' to oblige the presidential aspirants the need for them to maintain good moral standard which would enable the people to vote for them on the ground of high moral standard. In the above context, the writer equally obliged the people to give a posthumous medal of honour to be accorded to the late president Umar Musa Yar'dua for setting the pace for good electoral process in the country. The people that are saddled with political responsibilities must show evidence of good works being performed by them, while they are in the office. This will convince the people to see reasons for them to come out in mass and cast their vote for them.

Excerpt 45:

Jonathan is **acknowledged** for humility but he **will** need more than that to succeed as president

(*The Nation*, April 19, 2011)

Excerpt 46:

He has **proved** his sincerity

(*Punch*, April 15, 2011)

Excerpt 47:

We hereby **commend** the improvement recorded by INEC...

(*Vanguard*, April 12, 2011)

The excerpts above show satisfaction in the administrative prowess of President Goodluck Jonathan. The dynamic modality 'will' is used to reflect the objective opinion of the speaker towards his proposition. The use of modal lexical verbs 'acknowledged', 'proved' 'commend' and 'enjoined' are noticeable here. This usage represents both the objective and subjective opinion of writers as regards good governance and electioneering process in Nigeria.

4.1.3.2 Moralistic perspective revealing commendation.

Excerpt 48:

...he remains **a hero** for his **magnanimity** in **defeat** and the **uncommon grace** and **nobility** exhibited by him...

(*Punch*, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 49:

...Jonathan **should** be **commended** for rising up to the occasion as a statesman by **congratulating** General Muhammadu Buhari...

(*The Nation*, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 49, the modal auxiliary 'should' is used to reflect weak obligation, that Nigerians should appreciate the good moral standard exhibited by the Ex-President with the use of lexical modal verb 'commended' this is used to reflect possibility. Nigerians are expected to show appreciation towards the good disposition of the Ex-President after the declaration of the election. The obligation is not binding but a matter of choice.

Excerpt 50:

...Who **can** tell whom exactly... Buhari **will** never agree, hence **will**...

(*Guardian*, April 1, 2015)

The modal auxiliary 'can' is used in excerpt 50 to pose rhetorical question to the masses about the temperament of the two politicians. The epistemic modal verb is deployed by the speaker to express probability on the aspirants' part. The speaker went further to argue out his point of view that the Sultan had confidence in Jonathan with the use of lexical modal verb 'knows' to buttress his opinion that he has no problem if he loses the election, he would accept his fate. But, in the case of Buhari he used (will + never) to negate the level of Buhari's tolerance if he should lose the election. He was ready to shed innocent blood to mount power. The speaker concluded by using deontic modal auxiliary verb 'will' a strong form to express the havoc that Buhari's defeat would have cost Nigerians.

Excerpt 51:

...political rivals **will** help to deepen democracy...

(*The Nation*, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 52:

Both men **should** hug (again)...

(*Nigerian Tribune*, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 53:

We **thank** God Almighty for this day and I **praise** President Goodluck Jonathan for **his magnanimity**. I **can assure** him that the nation **will**...

(*The Guardian* April 1, 2015)

The positive reaction of Goodluck Jonathan triggered most Nigerians to appreciate his attitude towards the election results. The two parties actually celebrated each other and brought back the real motive of a good democratic system into the country. The modal auxiliary 'will' is used to indicate strong form that affirms that good foundation for democracy has been laid in Nigeria. In expressing the public opinion, the speaker employed the modal auxiliary 'should' to praise the people for their positive disposition to the election result. He enjoined Nigerians not to view the election period as a time to raise alarm or fight one another in the country, rather, it should reunite everyone involved in the country's political system. Also, lexical auxiliary 'thank' is used to appreciate God who is known as the giver of peace, while 'praise' is another lexical

verb that is used to express gratitude to the incumbent President for his magnanimity. The modal auxiliary ‘can’ and lexical ‘assure’ are used while expressing the public opinion to indicate possibility and certainty. The modal auxiliary ‘will’ is used as a strong form to indicate obligation on the party of the citizenry to always remember the goodwill of the Ex-President towards the country.

Excerpt 54:

...Alao has *also* **commended** Jonathan for what he **described** as a state manly decision to concede victory to Buhari and for **congratulating** the APC candidate.

(The Guardian, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 55:

He **saluted** Jonathan for creating an enabling environment...

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

In the opinion of the speaker above, he was able to use lexical modal verbs such as; ‘commended’ and ‘described’ as a means of rating the high moral value of the Ex-President, who conceded defeat even when he has the privilege of protesting or disrupting the election process by seeking redress. The speaker went ahead to use lexical verb ‘saluted’ to hail the good mind of the Ex-President to create an environment that is conducive for Nigerians to operate politically. As a matter of fact, if the aftermath of the election results had gone beyond control the poor masses would have suffered the consequences.

Excerpt 56:

...amity that **would** create a good...

(The Guardian, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 57:

...Jonathan’s decision had **saved** the country...**could possibly** greet a hard-line decision to do otherwise.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

From the above excerpt, the modal auxiliary ‘would’ which demonstrated possibility is employed to describe President Goodluck Jonathan as a man of peace, who created an enabling environment for the incoming President. He willingly handed-over power to

the opposition party. In excerpt 57, the positive attitude displayed by President Jonathan prevented acrimony and disability that might have erupted in the country. The lexical modal ‘saved’ and modal auxiliary ‘would’ are used to express the speaker’s opinion about the good nature of the out-going President to defeat in the 2015 Presidential election results. Jonathan’s disposition has prevented violence that could have emerged. The speaker used epistemic modality to express possibility.

Another important figure in the electoral process that exhibited good serenity during the collation of the election was Attahiru Jega the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Chairman. Professor Jega who made Nigerians proud by the way he carried the election process and ended peacefully and survived the tensed atmosphere. The below excerpts are used to support the moral standard of the INEC chairman.

Excerpt 58:

INEC chairman **would** have bungled the election ...Jega **saved** us from that crisis.

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 59:

...it **would** be a criminal offence not to acknowledge the efforts of Prof. Attahiru Jega...

(The Guardian, April 7, 2015)

Excerpt 60:

...we have to **thank** for not subverting the will of the people...Posterity **will** surely remember Jega for good.

(The Guardian, April 7, 2015)

In excerpt 58, the modal auxiliary verb ‘would’ is a medial-strong form, which is used to commend the effort of Jega in conducting a free and fair Presidential election in the country. Some PDP members made effort to disrupt the electoral process, yet he never allowed Orubebe’s negative attitude to debar him from observing good serenity in the country.

In excerpt 59, Jega’s ability to control the situation was highly commendable all through the electoral process he did not appear bothered by the situation around him. When it seemed unpalatable on no occasion did he look disheveled, even when he was verbally assaulted in public by Godday Orubebe all through the collation of election results in Abuja. The speaker employed epistemic modality ‘would’ to depict the gravity of his

offence if he failed to acknowledge the effort of Prof. Attahiru Jega to attain a free, fair and credible election in the country.

In excerpt 60, the lexical modality 'thank' is used to appreciate the noble character of the INEC chairman despite the fact that pressure was too much on him, yet, he did not misbehave. He was able to absorb the pressure and control his emotion in order for peace to reign in the country. The speaker concluded that future generation would remember his outstanding character, of course, it is a general belief that 'one good turn deserves another' the unborn generation will be told of his good behavioural qualities. The use of 'will' above indicates political will and obligation on the part of Nigerians. The modal 'will' as it is used here with the adverb 'surely' shows certainty or assurance of what is capable of happening in the future.

Table 4.1: Frequency representation of opinions on three perspectives of argument in the election results (OER)

Opinion types	Frequency	Percentage
Nationalistic perspectives	26	43.0%
Moralistic perspectives	19	32.0%
Historical perspectives	15	25.0%
Total	60	100%

Source: Researcher (2022:84)

4.2 Contexts that necessitate public opinion

This segment examines the various contexts that informed the public opinions on Nigerian presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers.

4.2.1 Context of corruption

Corruption is an anti- social attitude presenting unsuitable pleasure opposing to lawful and ethical prejudices the authorities' capacity to protect the well-being of all citizens. Corruption is any deceitful or duplicitous behaviour where someone uses their position of power to profit themselves at the expense of others. It includes using public power for personal gain.

Excerpt 61:

A good leader is the one that is confident, decisive and purposive;
Jonathan must be prepared...

(The Guardian, March 13, 2019)

Excerpt 62:

It is time for us to vote for the best leader and say good bye to inept and corrupt leaders.

(The Nation, March 12, 2019)

In excerpts 61 and 62 the speaker revealed his/her feelings about the qualities of a good leaders. Based on this background knowledge pertaining to the political system in the country, the speaker expressed his opinion by stating the characteristics of a good leaders, which include ability to make firm decision, boldness and being resolute. The fundamental problem of Nigeria since her over sixty-three years of independence is corruption. The commonly shared perspective as to how to eradicate corruption in the country is to have a leader who is firm, courageous unyielding to advise that could devastate the economic growth of the country. No matter the degree of their intention, the moment their cabinet is surrounded by people with corrupt mind at the helm of government, they will deter the president from performing efficiently. In order to have corruption free system, these bad eggs must be completely eradicated from the system. From the view of the speaker in excerpt 62, the citizens must have fore-knowledge of people they vote into power; they must be people of character and integrity. Maladroit leaders should be flushed out of the system.

4.2.2 Context of retention of power

The idea of power cannot be smashed in political viewpoint. The conduct of human affairs society necessitates ruling party to assume the position of leadership. Power is the ability or capacity to direct or influence the behaviour of others or the course of events. In politics, it is a political process that offers people power over their own lives. In any political setting, political leaders usually love to be in possession of power in order to control peoples' affairs in the society. It involves possession of control, authority and influence over others. In lieu of that, most political leaders wish to retain power.

Excerpt 63:

Whatever might be Buhari's shortcomings in the last three and half years, Atiku cannot be the solution...

(The Nation, March 13, 2019)

Despite the fact that Atiku has deputised President Olusegun Obasanjo for eight consecutive years, he still went ahead to contest for the post of president. In every election, whether at the grassroots, state or national level, the antecedent of the contestant would be considered in order to be sure if he/ she is capable of occupying the position. However, failure to measure up with the people's anticipated standard after the evaluation has been done, will lead to rejection of such candidate. From the speaker's point of view, it is obvious that the incumbent president also has his shortcomings. Yet, he does not consider Atiku as a capable hand to handle the challenges confronting the political system in the country. The speaker's repeated the use of negative modal verb twice "cannot", which is an indication that Atiku does not possess the ability to lead the country while he used the modal auxiliary verb "might" to foreground "capability" to portray the shortcomings Buhari. From the context of the speaker's opinion, it is obvious that he/she has greater confidence in Buhari's administration than entrusting the nation in the hand of Atiku. Therefore, in 2019 presidential election result, the speaker believes that retention of the presidential seat by Buhari is better than giving it to Atiku.

4.2.3 Context of social and political reformation

Political and social reformation implies correction of wrong, corrupt and unsatisfactory sociopolitical state of the country. This reformation would make government more accountable in the implementation of their political and social responsibilities.

Excerpt 64:

The persistence of ethnic jingoism, religious bigotry, and the emergence of dishonest leaders are some of the issues plaguing our nation...

(Vanguard, March 13, 2019)

Excerpt 65:

A change from a government that had divided the country along ethnic, religious and regional lines to a government that will unite, unify and bond all Nigeria.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 66:

Gen. Buhari will make Nigeria work again, rekindle hope and bring succour to the long-suffering masses

(Guardian, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 64, the speaker opines that Nigerians should desist from persistency in "ethnic jingoism, religious bigotry and emergence of dishonest leaders". It is a known fact that Nigeria is a multi- ethnic country, having different tribes with different cultures and religions. The diversity in religions with different belief systems and varied perspectives can lead to tribal war or religious crisis, if not properly managed by sensitive leaders. More often than not, Nigerians vote for political leaders because of their identity not on the basis of integrity or outstanding moral standard. It is imperative for our leaders to be alive to people's plight and selflessly serve the people rather than pursuing after their selfish goals. In excerpts 65 and 66, the speaker emphasised on "unity" and bringing "succour to the long suffering masses." He as well chooses "change", which is synonymous to an improvement on the previous political system in the country. The speaker opines that the former administration has divided the country along ethnic, religious and regional lines but the elected president in 2015 would unify the country and reform the nation.

4.2.4 Context of violence

Violence is a behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill someone or something. It can be regarded as strength of emotion or of a destructive natural force.

Excerpt 67:

Violence and threats of violence permeated the land and everyone associated with Nigeria worried that the country would be engulfed in the post-election flames.

(The Nation, April 12, 2015)

Excerpt 68:

It is particularly worrisome that the violence occurred at a time Nigerians should be congratulating themselves for successfully holding a presidential election that can go down in history as an orderly and peaceful one.

(Punch, April 13, 2011)

Excerpt 69:

All agents of violence must remember that all through history, those who came before them suffered the same fate.

(The Guardian April 20, 2011)

Violence is a behaviour which involves physical force with an intention to hurt, damage or kill someone or something. From the above excerpt, the speaker used the noun “worrisome” to showcase the thought of most Nigerians toward the presidential election results. Though the 2011 keenly contested election was declared free and fair by both the local and international observers, violence erupted, unfortunately, in the northern part of the country, especially from the people who felt disappointed that their presidential candidate did not emerge as the winner. In excerpt 69, the speaker reminded the initiators of the violence that there were repercussions for the uncivil act.

4.2.5 Context of credible election

This is the conduct of an election in a free and fair atmosphere; citizens are privileged to freely exercise their franchise. It is characterised by inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and competitiveness. Citizens must be able to campaign, exercise their franchise freely without unlawful interference, bullying or viciousness.

Excerpt 70:

We hereby commend the improvement recorded by INEC...

(Vanguard, April 12, 2011)

Excerpt 71:

The 2015 presidential election will go down history as the most keenly contested election.

(Punch, April 3, 2015)

The credibility of the 2015 presidential election results was achieved based on the improvement on the electoral process in Nigeria. In the Nigeria's history, that was the first time that an incumbent president would be voted out of power through a free and fair election. The election facilitated a conducive environment for the citizens to exercise their franchise, not only that, the votes of Nigerians counted. In the Nigerian history, the 2015 presidential election was keenly conducted and the results were not manipulated to some extent. The integrity of Jega was highly commendable. He created an enabling environment for the smooth running of a credible election.

4.3 Linguistic resources deployed in representation of the public opinions on the presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers

Certain linguistic recourses were deployed in the selected newspapers to give a linguistic portrayal of people's opinion on the presidential election results. They are therefore examined below:

4.3.1 Lexical modality

Modality occurs at the lexical and grammatical levels. At the lexical level, various word classes/(groups, verbs/verbal groups, adjective/adjectival group and adverb/adverbial group) are used to represent the feelings or attitude of people towards the election results in the country. Modality in English can be realised in different linguistic units.

4.3.1.1 Modality adjunct expressing attitude and inadequacies in moralistic perspective

Modality may also be expressed by adjuncts. Adverbs generally are used to modify a verb, an adjective or another adverb. In the discourse of the public on the presidential election results, adverbs show or unveil the attitudes of the people. It is important to

point out that, electorate, elect, constants and the Nigerian media use adverbs to express their opinion, emotions, feelings and show the dispositions towards the election results in Nigeria. The attitudes of the various actors could be positive, negative or ambivalent, which are expressed using modal adverbs as explicated in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 72:

Atiku is **hardly** a new product on offer...

(The Nation March 3, 2019)

Excerpt 73:

It is therefore **hardly** surprising that Buhari proved himself to be the authentic leader...

(The Punch, March 4, 2019)

Excerpt 74:

The 2019 presidential election was **generally** acknowledged to be peaceful and transparent.

(Leadership, March 5, 2019)

In the above excerpt, the use of the modal adverb **hardly** foregrounds the fact that the PDP presidential candidate has little or nothing to offer the country. He was only desperate to become the president of Nigeria, which has been his ambition since 1993. The speaker shows negative attitude towards his presidential ambition. Considering the phrase “a leather of baggage” connotes a lot of psychological factors that would interfere with his ability to function effectively. He has no political landmark or reputation that could speak for him. In excerpt 73, both APC and PDP presidential candidates are from North based on this, it was assumed to be a battle ground in determining who would win the Northern part of Nigeria. The modal adverb “hardly” is used to underpin the fact that his vote was based on integrity or power of incumbency. The modal adverb “generally” as used in excerpt 74 showed that the speaker’s positive opinion on the 2019 presidential election results. The speaker has used modal adverb “generally” tactically explained that in all states and local government areas the presidential election went on peacefully without electoral fraud. The attitude unveils his political affiliation to the party. The use of modal adverb “generally” revealed over generalisation of event or situation.

Excerpt 75:

One had thought Atiku would **gracefully** accept defeat...

(Leadership, March 5, 2019)

Excerpt 75 begins with an indefinite pronoun “one” followed by the modal adverb “gracefully”, which suggests what was supposed to be Atiku’s disposition at the declaration of Buhari as the winner of the election. This could have revealed his sportsmanship and magnanimity in defeat. Instead of displaying positive attitude, he opted for court injunction without considering the effects of such acts on his political ambition. The modal adverb “hardly” is used to negate Atiku’s level of political maturity and emotional stability. The attitude displayed by him, has stigmatised his political career to an extent.

Excerpt 76:

It “**actually**” should not amaze any keen observer of political development in Nigeria.

(Leadership, March 5, 2019)

The modal adverb used by the speaker reveals the political trend in Nigeria. Nigerian political system has been tagged with “do or die” syndrome. Anybody who wishes to become the president must be ready to take the political seat forcefully. Following the political chronology, it was Goodluck Jonathan that magnanimously accepted defeat and peacefully handed over power to the president-elect. The election conducted in 2015 was relatively peaceful, due to the fact that the incumbent president (Goodluck Jonathan) declared openly that the “blood of Nigerian does not worth his political ambition’ Otherwise, the political party members would have hijacked the election and made it bloody. Therefore, the attitude exhibited by the presidential candidate is not surprising to anyone who has been monitoring our political system in Nigeria.

4.3.1.2 Adjunct expressing condition for good governance

Excerpt 77: ...if **properly** put to work by men with conscience and character.

(Nigerian Tribune, March 9, 2019)

Excerpt 78: ... they cannot be **perpetually** predictable as a failed nation state...

(Leadership, March 11, 2019)

The April 2007 general election would have provided the needed springboard for the country to improve on her democracy, create a formidable environment to settle numerous internal and external disputes and add more feathers to its credentials as a leading arbitrator. The declared winner, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, assumed the presidency on 29 May with less legitimacy than any previously elected president and so with less capacity to moderate and resolve its violent domestic conflicts. He must act urgently to heal wounds, redress electoral injustice and punish the most grievous voting frauds, including those by officials of agencies directly involved in administering the elections. To salvage his government's legitimacy, he needs to pursue policies of inclusiveness and restraint in relation to the opposition, accept the decisions of the tribunals (including the Supreme Court if need be) reviewing the petitions of defeated candidates, and embark on a vigorous electoral reform program.

The election, in the view of Nigerians and the many international observers alike, were the most poorly organised and massively rigged in the country's history. In a bitterly contentious environment, outgoing President Olusegun Obasanjo and his People's Democratic Party (PDP) acted with unbridled desperation to ensure sweeping, winner-take all victories, not only in the presidency and Federal legislature, but also in state governorships and assemblies characterised as a "do or die" battle by Obasanjo, the campaigns and election also witnessed extensive violence, including over 200 people killed. Widespread electoral malpractice and the staggering scale of falsified results were possible because of serious shortcomings within the regulatory agencies; most notably, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) vigorously manipulated by the presidency, INEC virtually abdicated its responsibility as impartial umpire.

4.3.1.3 The use of modal adverbs to express obligation and collective responsibility

Excerpt 79:

Well maybe the "ebora" of egba has a point here on the need to **relentlessly** interrogate president Buhari...

(Leadership March 10, 2019)

Excerpt 80:

Ethnicity began to shape the turn of events **immediately**

the country attained political liberty.

(The Nation, March 4, 2019)

In excerpt 79, the ex-president, Olusegun Obasanjo is referred to as Ebor of Egba land. He was the first person who ruled the nation as a military (1977 - 1979) and civilian (1979 and 2007). Indisputably, Obasanjo controlled the non-operational Supreme Military Council (SMC) who handed over power to an elected civilian president. On the account of a successful transfer of power from the military to civilians in 1979, he became a great statesman and a citizen of the world. Till date, many world leaders still shower praises on him for exemplary leadership.

When he bounced back a president, 20 years after, he had laid a good groundwork, especially in his first term and stabilised the polity. He has been described as a total Nigerian, a detribalised leader with a national outlook. Historians claimed that he was not ethnic jingoist, but a president of all Nigerians. Going by Obasanjo's wealth of experience, one could submit that, he had right to query Goodluck Jonathan's administration, especially when the performance was not directly proportional to people's expectation. Obasanjo succeeded in reminding him of the need to leave a good legacy for others to emulate. The modal adverb "relentlessly" is used to foreground persistency in the interrogation between the ex-president, (who had successfully ruled the country for eight years with an intension of increasing his tenure in office to twelve years that is, the third term agenda) and the newly elected president Mohammed Buhari.

4.3.1.4 The use of modal adverbs to express sportsmanship in moralistic perspective

Excerpt 81:

...and ethnicity began to shape the turn of events **immediately** the country attained political liberty.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 82:

Buhari was **equally** instrumental to the peaceful transition...

(The Guardian, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 83:

Jonathan and General Buhari are **magnanimously** rising above...

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

Nigeria's constitution guarantees freedom of religion. However, ethnic tensions and perceived economic inequalities between the north and south, which coincidentally divides Muslims and Christians, exacerbate religious tensions. The country's ethnically diverse population also contributes to these tensions. Both Christians and Muslims fear political and demographic domination by the other, leading to ongoing challenges for the Nigerian government in balancing regional and religious interests. Various organisations work to promote interreligious harmony, but their effectiveness is difficult to assess, and leadership records are mixed.

In excerpt 81, the modal adverb **immediately** is used to foreground the state of Nigeria after the independence from the hands of the colonial masters. One could have expected the three ethnic groups to maintain high level of peaceful co-existence among one another. Sadly, religious sentiment and tribalism has eaten deep into the system, to the extent that, the Islamic extremists believe that killing of people would facilitate special reward from Allah. This revealed high level of inhumanity to man.

In excerpt 82, the speaker used both adjectival modal and adverbial modal in the sentence. The deployment of the modal adjective “victorious” shows that the newly elected president played a significant role at ensuring that there was a peaceful transition of power. The adverbial “equally instrumental” suggests that the president elect is a lover of peace, he has right attitude towards the out-going president. He has reacted mutually with a comfortable feeling that is usually exhibited by a military officer; it is a feeling of loyalty shared by members of a group of people.

The adverb “magnanimously”, as used by the speaker in excerpt 83, foregrounds the attitudes of both the ex-president and the newly elected president towards the election results. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan was a magnanimous leader as he willingly relinquished power because of the overall interest of the country. He could have used a veto power as the incumbent president to disrupt the election and made it bloody, but he chose to do otherwise in order to curb the excesses of people like Orubebe, who had planned to cause problem. He is a leader that can be trusted, he strategically maintains peaceful election process and allowed qualified citizens to exercise their franchise in the country.

4.3.2 Noun/nominal groups expressing modality as revealed in nationalistic perspectives

Some nouns or nominal groups have the ability to express the feeling or emotion of a speaker to a certain proposition. Modal nouns/nominal groups, through skillful implementation, have the ability to showcase a writer's expectations and opinions. In the excerpt below, for example, though the news reporters tried the voice of the presidential opponent, it would be noted that there is an agitation for free and fair election in the country. This can be observed in the choice of modal nouns. It equally revealed the attitudes and the stance of the speaker. Instances of modal nouns expressing attitude are exemplified below:

Excerpt 84:

...I would have called **the victor** within seconds of my being aware of his victory to offer not just my **congratulation**, by my services to help unite **Nigeria** by being **a bridge** between **the North and the South**...

(Leadership, April 2, 2019)

In excerpt 84, the contestant from PDP, the main opposition party, was hell-bent on his argument that he had not lost the election in a free and fair electoral process. In his claim, he was of the opinion that there were deliberate malpractices in many states, which marred the election outcome. Also, there were evidences of disruption of voting in strangleholds of the People's Democratic Party in Lagos, Akwa-Ibom, River and various other states, with the authorities doing little or nothing and in some cases aiding these ill-fated circumstances.

The modal nominal entities highlighted reflect the attitude of the writer towards the preposition. Modal nominal entities such as "the victor", "congratulations", "a bridge between the North and the South". During the 2015 Presidential election in Nigeria, president Goodluck Jonathan put a call across to his opponent long before the INEC declared him (Muhammadu Buhari) as the winner. The speaker has tactically used the nominal noun "the victor" to depict one who defeats an enemy in a battle. The below excerpts are examples of modal nominals:

Excerpt 85:

The PDP also said it would petition **the United Nations** and other global democratic institutions on the role of **the military**...

(Leadership, March 8, 2019)

Excerpt 86: He promises that **the PDP** will shock... **the APC, INEC and the military** collaborated to rig **the election for president Buhari...**

(The Nation, March 3, 2019)

In the excerpt 85 above, topicalising the groups in the modal nominal entities in the excerpt foregrounds not only the importance placed on the group but also reveals the attitudes of the writer. The PDP political party is the most prominent opposition party in Nigeria. This political party had ruled the country for uninterrupted sixteen (1999 - 2015) good years before APC candidate emerged as the winner in 2015. These two political parties have been struggling with each other in order to retain their candidates on the corridor of power. In every political race, it is certain that one party would eventually emerge as the winner. The PDP candidate and its members have refused blatantly to accept defeat. The party members had jointly presented their grievance to the general public and have successfully alleged the United Nations and other global democratic institutions on the role played by the military and the killings of Nigerians during the presidential election.

The tone of the speaker is that of annoyance towards the attitude of the observers from the United States. The party expected positive reaction(s) from other global democratic institutions, especially on the reportage of killing the innocent masses during electoral process. In excerpt 86, topicalising the groups in the modal nominal entities in the excerpt foregrounds not only the importance placed on the groups but also reveals the attitudes of the writer or speaker. The two political parties are the most prominent parties in Nigeria since the inception of democracy system of government in the country. The former vice – president emerged from Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) as the opponent of the incumbent president, who is from All Progressive Congress (APC). The former vice-president had accused the INEC of rigging the 2019 elections for the ruling party in five states that is, Katsina, Kano, Yobe, Kaduna and Bornu. Also, the speaker equally accused the military of intimidating people in some states and preventing them from voting for the candidate of their choice.

4.3.2.1 Modality used to express responsibility and obligation

Except 87:

Now that **President Buhari** has received a fresh mandate... the party **should** put...

(Nigerian Tribune, March 3, 2019)

In any democratic system of government, there must be decentralisation of power. The three arms of government (the legislature, executives and judiciary) must be duly recognised and there should be division of power; each must be able to checkmate one another. In most cases, preferential treatment is given to the legislative arm of government

The president is obliged to maintain peaceful co-existence among the three arms of government. From the above except, the modal nominal entities highlighted reflect the attitude of the writer towards the proposition. Modal nominal entities like **president Buhari, the house, the legislature, and the issue of leadership**. The writer had successfully reminded the president- elect that he has been saddled with greater responsibilities. The speaker deployed the noun “house” to portray the political party members, specifically; it is associated with the ruling party (APC). Despite the fact that they occupy major position in the political helm of government, none of them should cross his or her boundary, but work consensually in order to attain greatness and ensure smooth running of the administration.

Excerpt 88:

President Buhari has a historic opportunity to change **the people’s perception** of him in **the South east**.

(Leadership, March 5, 2019)

The nominal group to change **the people’s perception** reveals the negative impression the president-elect has created in the mind of the people from that part of the country. The inadequacies of the president is reflected in the alleged perception that he dislikes people from that region and they are being treated in the Biafra civil war’s mindset while still considers it as an insignificant part of Nigeria’s foundational ethnic entities. The president must acknowledge the place of Ndigbo in the economic life of

Nigeria. They have been agitating to be at the helm of power, most especially the oil and gas sector, customs and even banking, which are the major pillars of the economic life of the country. The speaker opined that, the president must appreciate the importance of Nigeria's ethnicity; he must promote inclusiveness and manage our diversity.

4.3.2.2 Modality noun expressing commendation revealed in moralistic perspective

Excerpt 89:

...**sincerity** and **commitment** to respect the independence of the **INEC** and other **institutions**

(The Nation, March 10, 2015)

Excerpt 90:

...has singularly provided **the bulwark...Nigeria** having provided the missing, credible, patriotic and courageous **leadership** that **Nigerians** have in dire need of.

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 91:

We hereby **commend** the **improvement** recorded by INEC within **the week...**

The leadership quality of Jega was noticed by Nigerians. He strategically handled the electoral process, and it ended peacefully, despite the tensed atmosphere in the country, prior to the conduct of the election. His method was systematic, he was able to introduce the permanent voter's card PVC and card reader, although, this was despised by some Nigerians, who wanted things to be done in the old manner and style. The 2015 presidential election results were a time that the political history of Nigeria was re-written. He insisted that the card reader must be used during the election "for how long would this democracy be nascent without maturity?" Another noticeable strategy deployed by the INEC chairman was deliberate postponement of the election. The presidential election was initially slated for February 14, 2015, later shifted to March 29, 2015. These six weeks delay gave Jega the privilege to make more efficient the PVC distribution process and test-run the card reader. Jega was able to maneuver his way and escape all forms of allegations because of his principled character and

sincerity. An INEC chairman without self-esteem would have manipulated the election results and plunged the nation into a big chaos.

Excerpt 92:

President Goodluck Jonathan also deserves our **commendations...**

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 93:

President Goodluck Jonathan is acknowledged for **humility**, but he will need more than that to succeed as **president** of the **Federal Republic of Nigeria**.

(The Nation, April 10, 2011)

Excerpt 94:

The Jonathan administration and **the Jega** led **INEC** must be commended for restoring **the integrity of the ballot...**

(The Punch, April 11, 2011)

The 2011 presidential election was characterised as being violent therefore, president Jonathan foresaw what could possibly happen during and after the election in 2015, this prompted him to make this statement “my ambition does not worth the blood of any Nigerian”. This has become a recitation for many Nigerians and quote in his honour. Also, he has displayed a high level of maturity and humility by being the first to congratulate his opponent, this attitude of his, nullified the ferocious political norms of do or die syndrome in Nigeria. During the campaign, Jonathan’s body language betrayed the people’s expectation, especially, the trouble makers, He was a portrayal of peace and tranquility and not bloodshed. He said, if he lost, he would return to Otuoke, his hometown some of his political party members felt disappointed in him, they never expected him to utter such statement, to them, it meant acceptance of defeat. His uncommon patriotism was revealed when he called and congratulated Buhari before the announcement of the final result by the INEC chairman, Attahiru Jega. Despite the drama displayed by elder Godsay Orubebe, former Niger Delta minister, thinking it would trigger fight or disruption of the election’s results. Immediately the ex-president noticed that president Buhari was leading with over two million votes, he put a call across to him; Jonathan’s patriotism doused the tension across the country. By this act, President Jonathan did what no president has ever done in the history of Nigeria. Jonathan’s positive disposition to the

election results made him lost the election, yet he conceded defeat and openly mandated the people to shun violence and embrace peace and unity.

4.3.2.3 Modal noun expressing heroic victory as reflected in diachronic perspective

Excerpt 95:

Professor Attahiru Jega is becoming an **instant international hero**.

(The Guardian, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 96:

...**the fine gentleman** whose calm mien and character. I fell in love with and whom we have to thank for not subverting the will of **the people** inspite of **the pressures**...

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 97:

Tinubu may not be a **saint**... he is definitely a **hero**.

(The Guardian, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 98:

...**president, Dr Goodluck Jonathan**, he remains **the hero** for his **magnanimity** in defeat...

(Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015)

In excerpts 95 & 96, Professor Attahiru Jega was regarded as the “international hero” and “fine gentleman” because he was able to comport himself during the collation of the election results. It was obvious that Godday Orubebe really tampered with his emotion but he never allowed his negative reaction to the election results to control his emotion. The speaker deployed noun groups to showcase the international recognition, which he had received after putting strategising the biometric registration and the use of card reader during the election in order to curb the acts of rigging the election results.

In excerpt 97, Tinubu is generally viewed as a man who knows the technicalities and nitty-gritty of the politics. He understands the foundation and the brain behind politics in Nigeria. Despite the fact that he was not a flawless man, he was able to lead the party to victory. In the political history of Nigeria, 2015 election gave room for a strong opposition party who unseat the incumbent president peacefully and through a free and fair election. The speaker in the above except expressed his feelings by using the negative modal

auxiliary verb “may not” to reveal negation and possibility of Tinubu to unveil his characteristics. Other modal nouns used by the speaker include: a saint, onions, politics, the great victory and a hero.

In excerpts 97 & 98 above, revealed the attitude of the speaker towards the excellent performance of the Ex-President. He was named as ‘a leader’, ‘a hero’, ‘Mr President’, ‘Dr Goodluck Jonathan’ and other nominal groups such as ‘magnanimity in defeat’, ‘the uncommon’, ‘an election’ and ‘a democratic process’. With all the paraphernalia of the office, President Goodluck Jonathan promised to conduct an election, which would be free from rancor, He allowed people’s will to be respected. He was a highly dependable man, who held on to his words. He has not subjugated people’s will for his personal ambition. President Goodluck Jonathan would be remembered for his selfless sacrifices by maintaining peace and political stability before, during and after the election. Outright, he was opposed to shedding innocent blood of the citizen of the country during electoral process.

4.3.3 The use of modal adjectives/adjectival group to express attitudes and sentiments in moralistic perspective

Modal adjectives are used to express public opinion on the presidential election results to explicate attitudes, feelings, emotions and sentiments. Modal adjectives describe events, situations and happenings. They are deployed in the discourse of the public opinion on the presidential election results in order to evaluate their potentials and administrative prowess. The excerpts below exemplify the tactical deployment of modal adjectives in the public opinion on the presidential election results.

4.3.3.1 Modal adjectives reflecting right attitudes to voting

Excerpt 99:

...to **inept** and **corrupt** leaders.

(The Punch April 11, 2011)

Excerpt 100:

...every **election** day to vote for the **best** candidates in their units’ ...

(Leadership, April 12, 2011)

Excerpt 101:

the country might not be able to boast uninterrupted electricity and water supply, **competitive** and **qualitative** education, update

(The Punch April 10, 2011)

The speaker was particular about the positive changes, which ought to have taken place in the country, this involve the joint effort of individuals to attain the positive changes. The eligible voters should be allowed to vote for the candidate of their choice. The speaker was eager to witness a situation whereby the citizens would be freely allowed to exercise their franchise as stipulated in the Nigeria constitution, which is the only weapon that could facilitate changes in our political system. In excerpt 100, the speaker deployed the modal adjectives “best” that is, superlative form to showcase the quality of leaders needed to rule over the citizens. If citizens should cast their votes for the leaders with high reputation and good leadership qualities, then, the country would enjoy smooth administration and political stability in the country. The speaker successfully used both the positive and negative form of the adjective to reflect the two types of leaders obtainable in the country. The word “best” is foregrounded as a positive pointer to a good system of government while “inept” and “corrupt” are used to reflect negative quality of a leader.

The speaker in the same excerpt used the word “candidate” to represent an individual who contests in an election. The basic criterion for contesting in any election should be on personal character and integrity. The contestant should exhibit a positive disposition to the plight of the masses. Emphasis was not laid on the political party rather; it was laid on the individual character. The opinion of the speaker differs from the general idea, especially during the manifestoes, when priority is placed on the political party. There should be screening and evaluation of each candidate from the grassroot to the national level. When these measures are put in place, then, Nigerians can anticipate for a new Nigeria. The modal adjectives “best” and “new” are used to reflect the type of candidate expected to contest in an election and the aftermath of choosing the “best” candidate to rule the country, which would eventually facilitate the emergence of a “new Nigeria”

In excerpt 101, the speaker used the first person plural pronoun “we” to depict involvement of all the citizens including the speaker himself. The speaker made reference to the ability

of qualified citizens to be actively involved in politics, failure to change our recycling system of government will be tantamount to doing things in the usual manner and style while expecting different results. There should be political, economic and social innovation, which would transform the system positively. Otherwise, the democratic system of government would remain non-functional. The speaker used modal adjectives to deploy the type of infrastructural facilities that the citizens are entitled to enjoy in any democratic system of government, which include; “uninterrupted electricity”, and “water supply”, “competitive” and “qualitative education”, “functional democracy” and “good governance”. A democracy is said to be functional when citizens are allowed to cast their vote without fear of being molested or even killed in the process. When they are given the opportunity to vote and their votes counted, without being rigged by the powerful political party members.

Excerpt 102:

A country where the new president will announce on his inauguration day that no policeman should collect money again...

(Vanguard, March 8, 2019)

Excerpt 103:

A country where there will be **good** roads networks...

(The Nation, March 9. 2019)

Excerpt 104:

A country where our **huge fertile** land will be productive...

(The Nation, March 9, 2019)

The speaker opined that there should be good road network and continuous maintenance of these roads would put an end to the killings of citizens. Reasonable percentage of Nigerian has been sent to their early grave as a result of poor road network. As a matter of fact, good roads are part of the rights that the citizens of any country practicing democratic system of government must enjoy. The government must be forced to construct and maintain the roads. The speaker used the adjective “good” to show the quality of roads to be constructed. The materials must be of high quality that would last longer and the potholes must be filled up on a regular basis. The choice of the adjective good connotes the possibility that bad roads exist in the country. Apart from the fact that bad roads

network has led to the untimely death of Nigerians; it has equally demoted the economic growth of the country. The speaker reflected the possible implication of bad roads for the country's economy in excerpt 104. The poor farmers would not be able to convey their farm produce to the main city so as to sell their goods to the final consumers. The produce would be sold to few people who could afford to risk their lives by plying the bad roads to the interior villages to buy from them and sell to their final consumers at exorbitant amount, therefore, leading to hyper-inflation in the country. In general, government has failed to develop the agricultural sector; lesser attention has been paid to this sector, which has led the nation to financial backwardness and stunted economic growth

4.3.3.2 Modal adjectives that revealed peoples' plight

Excerpt 105:

Many Nigerians could not afford a **single descent** meal in a day, while the rulers live in mansion.

(The Nation April 1, 2019)

Excerpt 106:

Many in the villages lived in hut without **running** water and without electricity, while those who controlled our **oil** money could fly abroad and get treatment...

Excerpt 107:

oil producing nation should be global capital of **extreme** poverty.

(The Nation, March 3, 2019)

Excerpt 108:

other mundane aspects of human existence have disappeared into the pocket of **perennial political termites** in the corridors of power.

(The Punch, April 11, 2011)

The speaker deployed "many" as a quantifier to reveal the large number of Nigerians that are suffering in the country. Average Nigerian could not afford a substantial meal per day. The leadership of the country is self-centered and conscious of their personal interest. Most times, they behave as if they don't have the interest of the poor masses at heart by closing their eyes completely to the basic needs of the poor masses. The irony is that during their manifestoes, the politicians would canvass and promise to be the best ever produced leader but, the moment they receive the staff of office; every of their promises becomes

null and vague. The poor innocent citizens would remain in the state of illusion for four or eight years. The speaker adopted the word “ruler” to portray negative characteristics of the politicians. Ordinarily, the speaker ought to use the word “leader” if actually they are doing the leading. A good leader would lead based on excellence performance or past achievement. Unfortunately, our system is making use of rulers to paddle the canoe of our dear country; they give instructions and compel the citizens to obey while they would flout the laws. They live in their comfort zones and inflict pains on the poor masses that voted them into power. The speaker used a “single decent” to qualify the word meal to portray the rate or level of poverty in the country.

In excerpt 96, the needed social amenities were not provided for the people. Nigeria is a country flowing with milk and honey, but the “power that be” have bastardised our national cake. The money retrieved from the oil sector should be used for the provision of social amenities that would benefit the entire populace. The demonstrative pronoun “those” is used to refer to our leaders and the extent of the control they exhibit over the oil money. The speaker deployed adjectives like: “oil money”, “medical checkup”, and “good hospitals” to foreground the source of money that should have been used for the provision of infrastructural facilities for the people.

From the above excerpt, the speaker expressed his/her plight about the state of the country deploying the adjectival modality such as “crying shame”, “largest oil producing nation”, “extreme poverty” It is a moment of sober reflection for any concerned Nigerian to witness the deteriorating state of the country. The country’s retrogression in many of its sectors has been drastic. The situation in the country is alarming and calls for shedding of tears. The superlative adjectives “largest” is used to reflect the huge financial benefit obtainable from the oil. In 1979, Nigeria witnessed oil boom but presently, Nigeria is witnessing oil lull.

In excerpt 108, from the speaker’s point of view, “monies” is pluralised to foreground the large amount of money realised from the crude oil, which ought to have been utilised judiciously. Most of our hospitals lack modern equipment needed to save lives, insufficient man power and bad road network. The money generated from crude oil has been used to cater for their personal selfish interest. The speaker used the adjective “perennial political termites” to qualify the politicians and the use of “termites” to represent the nature of our political members, how corruption has eaten deep into the fabric of our economic and social development.

4.3.3.1 Grammatical modality

Grammatical modality shows the speakers' feelings and view to the proposition that sentence expresses. It reflects the opinions of the speaker, demonstrates his/her feelings and shows his assessment of a state of affairs.

4.3.3.2 Deontic modality

Deontic modality is a kind of modality which has to do with what is essential or feasible in the midst of diverse rules such as the norms of morality, the ideologies of practical judiciousness or the laws of the country. Deontic modality can be categorised on the basis of the degree of obligation. Therefore, they may be distinguished into: necessity, advisability and possibility. Words frequently thought to convey deontic modalities include the auxiliary verbs "must", "will", "shall", "have to", "may", "would" and "should". This is a modal system that is related to duty and concerns itself with the writer's attitude towards an obligation. It is a system that is extremely connected to the tactics of social interaction, especially with strategies of persuasion and politeness. This may be in relation to the speaker's ability to examine the future events whether necessary, possible, volition desirable and obligation. Deontic modality is exemplified in the representation of public opinion on the 2011-2019 presidential election in the Nigerian newspapers.

4.3.3.3 Deontic modality expressing volition in nationalistic perspective

Volition implies the power to choose or decide to do something without being forced to do it.

Excerpt 109:

Gen. Buhari's victory **will** make Nigerians work again...

(The Punch, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 110:

Our party **will** not discriminate against any Nigerians...

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 111:

Boko Haram **will** soon know the strength of our collective will and commitment.

(*The Punch*, April, 2, 2015)

In political discourses, most politicians give assurance to the masses to perform beyond their expectations by providing them with their basic needs and making life bearable for the poor masses. Modality is mostly employed by the politicians to reveal their strong- will or intention to cooperate with the people in the country and stoop so low in order to satisfy them. Some modal items are used to foreground this. These public opinions are particularly found in the *Punch Newspaper* and *The Nation*. The excerpts above reveal this.

In the excerpts 109 and 110 above, deontic modality is used to indicate the strong will of both the President elect and his supporters, that his regime will put an end to the long-sufferings of the poor masses. In excerpt 3, collective pronoun “our” is used to indicate collective responsibility on the part of political members. Despite the multi-ethnic differences and religious heterogeneity of Nigeria, the president assured Nigerians that there would not be discrimination against any group (ethnic or religious) in the country. In excerpt 111, the deontic modality ‘will’ is an indication that the president-elect was ready to put an end to the Boko Haram in the country. He gives assurance to Nigerians that everybody is going to work harmoniously in order to fight against this group. This intimidation from *Boko Haram* has almost deteriorated Nigerians’ situation, the terror of Boko Haram terrorists made life very hard for Nigerians particularly those living in the North eastern part of the country through senseless attacks. Based on this factor, the elected President emphasised the need for joint effort in fighting the *Boko Haram* sect.

Excerpt 112:

...Nigeria **will** no doubt get a true and selfless leadership.

(*The Nation*, April, 1 2015)

Excerpt 113:

Nigeria **will** no doubt get a true and selfless leadership.

(*The Nation*, April, 1 2015)

Also, in excerpt 112, Oshiomhole in his own opinion, emphasised the fact that they will get a true and selfless leadership. The use of ‘will’ shows a high degree of confidence

in the President-elect that he will perform more than his predecessors by serving the people selflessly. While Asiwaju Bola Tinubu made pronouncements that gives certainty to the promises made by the President - elect, that, he would lead the people by laying down good precept. The use of the modal element ‘will’ in excerpt 113 above shows strong obligation on the part of the President to perform up to the expectation of Nigerians. He gave credence to the President-elect as somebody that is competent to lead the country to her promised land.

Excerpt 114:

Change has finally come to the country because APC government **will faithfully** serve Nigerians.

(The Nation, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 115:

...no amount of distributed largesse **will** change their minds.

(Vanguard, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 116:

Buhari **will** redeem his promises to Nigerians

(Nigerian Tribunes, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 115, the speaker is being objective in his opinion with the use of deontic modal verbs ‘will’ which is employed to counter negative attitude of Nigerians in deciding whom would paddle the boat for four years in the country. Nigerians are fond of engaging in the business of ‘seeing and buying’ policy instead of exercising their fundamental human rights. Politicians that have failed in discharging their social responsibilities to the poor masses during the first tenure in office would still campaign for second term. In this case, Nigerians voted for their conscience without giving room for deceit from any aspirant(s). The strong modal verb ‘will’ is used to indicate the collective realisation of ‘politicking’ being practised in the country. In excerpt 116, the modal auxiliary ‘will’ is binding. It is compulsory for the in-coming President to fulfil all the promises he made to the citizenry during his campaigns.

Excerpt 117:

The state will be there for them naturally...

(The Nigerian Tribune, March 14, 2019)

Excerpt 118:

That is to say that poll violence and (s)election will go on leave now, to resurface when we are set for the ballot in four years.

(Leadership March 17, 2019)

Excerpt 119: Why won't you thrash spiritual injunction and then begin to seek first the political kingdom so that all other things shall be added to you.

(Vanguard, March 2019)

In excerpt 117, the speaker is of the view that most of the politicians get involved in the acts of money laundry deliberately in order to entice the poor masses during election. The money is used most of the time, to purchase the sophisticated weapons at exuberant rate, which are usually distributed to thugs and hoodlums during election period in order to threatening people or even kill any stubborn opposition member(s). This has exacerbated the political situation in the country. The speaker used “(s)election” in excerpt 118, to denote the type of election process obtainable in the country. Peoples’ votes are not reckoned with, the idea of “political fatherism” and the involvement of cabals in the Nigeria’s political system has basterdised the democratic process in the country. The use of political power, fame and monetary strength to climb the ladder of power has paralysed the voting right of the people. These people engage in stealing of ballot boxes and engagement of thugs in order to disrupt the election process. In excerpt 119, the speaker implored the political leaders, especially, the president to imbibe the spiritual injunction or instruction that admonished the people to seek first the kingdom of heaven while other things shall be added unto them. In the same vein, the people have been advised, to seek after political kingdom; politics should be seen as a game in which a party is bound to lose and the other must win.

Excerpt 120:

The life of Nigerians should be made to be of high value...

(Punch, Feb. 26, 2019)

Excerpt 121:

The government should make this clear...

(The Nation, Feb.27, 2019)

Excerpt 122:

Citizens should be made to understand and imbibe it...

(Leadership Feb. 26, 2019)

In excerpt 120, the speaker opines that the lives of Nigerians should be given maximum protection. The medial form of obligation is deployed by the speaker to reflect the assumed responsibility that the government should willingly carry out in order to protect peoples' lives and properties without being compelled or reminded to do so. From excerpt 120 and 121, the speakers emphasised on the assumed responsibility of both the president and the security agent. These duties are meant to be voluntarily executed. Despite the fact that the president promised to protect peoples' lives and properties, after the declaration of president Buhari as the winner of 2015 presidential election results, not quite long, that the issue of Boko Haram, Bandits, Gunmen, and Kidnappers became rampant in the country. Citizens could no longer sleep with their two eyes closed. The speaker is of the view that, security of lives and properties should be the primary assignment of the president. The speakers in excerpts 121 and 122 have tactically deployed the use of medial form of modal auxiliary verb "should" to indirectly persuade and remind the president of his civic responsibility as the number one citizen of the country. In excerpt 122, the speaker is of the opinion that all the citizens in the country share equal right(s) therefore, the issue of inhumanity to man should be totally eradicated among the citizens. During the election, citizens are obliged to show respect to one another and also, respect the rule of law in the country.

Excerpt 123:

The prince of Daura must use this term to ensure that positive legacy projects everywhere in the country.

(The Nation March 1, 2019)

Excerpt 124:

He must place greater value on the lives of Nigerians...

(The Guardian March 2, 2019)

In excerpt 123, the speaker refers to the president as the prince of Daura, the village or home town of the president in Katsina State. The use of strong modal auxiliary verb "must" tactically points to the fact that the President is responsible to all the states in the country. In excerpt 124, the speaker is of the opinion that the lives of the citizens are of great importance. The modal auxiliary verb "must" is used to reflect necessity in term of protection of lives. The view of the speaker is a clear pointer to the fact that anything that the value is not known, abuse is imminent. The speaker strategically reminds the president of his assumed responsibility, which ought to be implemented out of volition. Since it appears that the role is neglected by our leader. Therefore, the

speaker has indirectly called the attention of the president to the constitutional function of the three arms of government, especially the judiciary arm of government.

4.3.4 Opinions that represent social obligation in nationalistic perspective and the use of deontic modality ‘will’

Excerpt 125:

A change from a government...that **will** unite, unify and bond all Nigeria.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 126:

...a government that **will** revive the economy...

(The Punch, April 1, 2015)

The repetition of the word ‘change’ in the above excerpts, denote that the incoming President from All Progressives Congress has innovative ideas that would boost the country’s economy and bring oneness to the nation. Each geo-political zone has its own peculiarity; Boko Haram insurgency is menacing people’s lives in the North, militancy is widespread in the South- south, while kidnappers are raging in the South-west. The modality ‘will’ is used in the above texts as an obligation on the part of the in-coming President to face the huge task ahead of him with good courage and to ensure that Nigerians love one another and tolerate themselves irrespective of their background. The in-coming President is also obliged to provide employment for the youths because a jobless hand is an instrument for the devil. It is of great necessity for the in-coming President to empower the masses in order to create a good ambiance in the country. The speaker uses strong deontic modality to ascertain the competency of the incoming president to unite the country. Also, excerpts 125 and 126 emphasise the “change” mantra of the party (APC). The “change” made reference to is a positive pointer to economic development, political stability and security of lives and property. The speaker adopts strong deontic modality to criticise the outgoing president.

Excerpt 127:

They said Buhari’s leadership **will** engender the process...

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 128:

I **will** continue to do my best...

(The Nation April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 129:

Gen Buhari **will** make Nigeria work again...

(The Guardian, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 130:

That is one legacy I **will** like to see endure.

(The Guardian, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 127, a report is given to unveil the opinion of the people on the leadership of the president-elect. The deontic modality “will” is used as a strong form of modality that reflects possibility of futuristic event. From the above opinion, the speaker believes that the administration of Buhari would provide solution to all the economic needs of the people. The speaker has the strong opinion in the competence of the in-coming administration that it would reform the country, stabilise the economy that was assumed to have being bastardised by the previous administration. The speaker is being assertive in his appraisal of the in-coming President he believes that the out-going President has divided the country based on individual’s ethnic groups.

The speaker uses strong deontic modality to establish the competence of the in-coming President in uniting the country. From excerpts (128-129), the speaker viewed the in-coming President as being competent to handle the needs of the people in the country. The President is portrayed by the speaker as being devoted and having good charisma that would elicit the people in the country to work resourcefully. Also, in excerpt 130, the deontic modality ‘will’ is used to depict necessity. The ultimate achievement of the President-elect must be given a maximum protection.

4.3.5 Deontic modality showing condemnation in moralistic perspective

Condemnation is an expression of very strong disapproval of someone’s action or something. Especially something that is morally wrong. Different auxiliary modalities are used to express people’s disapproval of the outgoing government.

Excerpt 131:

They (South- West) have made up their minds no amount of distributed largesse **will** change their minds.

(*Punch*, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 132:

...a government that **will** unite, unify and bond all Nigerians.

(*The Nation*, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 133:

...a government that **will** revive the economy, create employment and empower the masses.

(*The Nation*, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 134:

...a government that **will** stop the mindless looting of our common patrimony.

(*The Guardian*, April 2, 2015)

In excerpts 132-134, the modality ‘will’ is used by Afenifere’s Deputy Leader, Senator Ayo Fasanmi, to condemn the act of buying people’s votes. Those from South West had a strong determination for the party they wished to vote for, not minding the materials and money distributed to them. He proceeded to condemn the act of mismanaging the national resources by the outgoing government and emphasised much on the project that the incoming government will embark upon. The economic situation of the country was at the verge of total failure; the speaker believes that the newly elected president would revive the country’s economy, create employment opportunities for the masses and provide empowerment programs.

The speaker is of the opinion that Nigerians craved for a government that will discontinue the act of pillaging our universal heritage. The collapsing economy will be rejuvenated by the incoming President, whom the APC members regarded as the ‘Messiah’ of this generation. In the Nigeria’s political history, 2015 was the first time that all tribes in the country jointly voted out the incumbent president and voted in the candidate of their choice based on this fact, the President-elect was celebrated throughout the country.

4.3.6 Opinions that represent justices and fairness in moralistic perspective and the use of epistemic modal verbs

There are diverse public opinions that portray justice, fairness and equity through the deployment of modal verbs as explicated in the sub-headings below:

4.3.6.1 Epistemic modality

Epistemic modality is related to the disposition of a speaker to a particular proposition. It deals with the knowledge of a speaker towards a proposition. Epistemic modality is used by a speaker to express judgment on the truthfulness of a proposition. Epistemic are unveiled in the excerpts below.

4.3.6.2 Epistemic modal that represents praise in diachronic perspective

Praise: These are words that are said or written to appreciate someone or something. It can be used when the action displayed by someone is pleasant. The excerpts below reflect this:

Excerpt 135:

History **will** remember him for political maturity.

(Punch, April 1, 2015)

In Nigeria's political history, there has not been any political leader that was willing to hand over power to his opponent. Despite the fact that Obasanjo was at the corridor of power for uninterrupted good eight years, he still went ahead to propose third term agenda, which was not supported by Nigerians. Goodluck Jonathan was exceptional in this regard. This attitude is what the speaker in excerpt 135 above regards as display of high level of "political maturity". He sees it as a legacy that all politicians should imbibe.

4.3.6.3 Epistemic modals that reveal obligation and social responsibility in nationalistic perspective

Excerpt 136:

...Atiku **cannot** be the solution. I **cannot** imagine...

(The Nation, March 3, 2019)

When president Buhari was elected as the president in 2015, he promised the citizen that he would fight corruption, nepotism, insecurity of lives and properties and improvement on our economy, but for almost four years in the office, there is no

tangible improvement on the economic and political standard of the country. The speaker displayed “might” in order to reflect possibility. It is possible for the president to have disappointed the citizen by not fulfilling all the promises he made for the citizens. Notwithstanding, the speaker used the negation of “can” that is, “cannot” to counter the ambition of Atiku to rule the country. The speaker cannot vouch for the competency of Atiku in being an articulate president and handling the affairs of the nation.

Excerpt 137:

They all **should** be supported by the state...their families **will** be stopped from chasing medical care abroad or in non-governmental facilities here in Nigeria. The state **will** be responsible for all the primary needs of their families during...

(The Nation, March 19, 2019)

4.3.6.4 Modals representing election in moralistic perspective as being biased

Excerpt 138:

You are partial we **will** not take it from you.

We **will** not allow it...

Punch, April 2, 2015)

In excerpts 137, the speaker deployed the medial modal auxiliary “should” to reflect the responsibility of the leaders; the provision of basic amenities for the people while strong modal form “will” is used to foreground the benefit that both the leaders and the led would gain from it. 138 captures the worrisome display by Orubebe and his negative disposition to the election results. To some of them, the image of the minister may bring to their consciousness questions like; why is he desperate to win the election for his political party? Could it be because of his ‘love’ for his political father or tribal man? Or because of some hidden agenda, especially whether there are things to be covered up in Aso Rock Villa from other Nigerians? The strong modal verb with the negation form ‘will not’ is used to reflect the outright rejection of the election results by Orubebe. Also, there is a deliberate use of the pronoun “we”, which is traditionally associated with inclusiveness (Halliday, 1994; Thompson, 2004) and Orubebe anaphorically uses it in the speech to embody himself, possibly the incumbent president and the political members. This inclusiveness is emphasised through his reference to “The PDP”, which entails the incumbent president, and the speaker himself (Orubebe).

Excerpt 139:

We **will** not continue with you. That is our stand we **will** not continue...

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

The deontic modals used in the text by the speaker reveals his negative disposition towards the election results, the moment Orubebe noticed that APC was leading in the election result, he became unnecessarily furious and started displaying political immaturity at the collation centre. His intention was to cause a total disruption in the collation centre; his 'drama' created negative impression on the minds of the viewers. The modal 'will' used by the speaker signaled optimism and rejection of the election results 'will' indicates some objection to the progress of the election results. He used weak form of deontic modal 'shall', but 'will' was predominantly used by the speaker in the text

Excerpt 140:

PDP **will** deliberate on the outcome of the election if...

(The Guardian, April 1, 2015)

Considering the excerpt above, the members of the PDP felt that the INEC chairman Jega, had manipulated the election results but none of the political members could revolt against the INEC declaration since they did not have the support of the incumbent President, who was in the best position to take the election results to Tribunal for thorough investigation. The deontic modality verb was used to indicate an obligation on the part of the PDP members to take up an investigation on the election results. Despite the fact that most Nigerians appreciated the good conduct of the election, the opposition party felt bad and concluded that the APC aspirant won the election because Attahiru Jega was bias. The deontic modality 'will' is used by the speaker to depict the decision of the PDP members to table their grievance to the appropriate quarters.

4.3.6.5 Use of deontic modality in expression of opinion that represents social obligation in moralistic perspective and the 'should'

Excerpt 141:

Those who are celebrating and those who are sorrowing
should give peace a chance.

(Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015)

In political contest, a group will emerge as the winner while the other party loses. The President-elect had lost the election for three consecutive times before he won the election on his fourth attempt. Winning in 2015, he pleaded with those that were celebrating to do so with all modesty and those who are sorrowing should not allow their present political situation to control them, rather, they should manage the situation peacefully. The victorious party must not over celebrate because it does not take long before the political music changes, everything must be done in modesty.

The deontic modality is used in the above excerpt to express caution. Despite the fact that the incumbent President was defeated, he accepted it in good fate and was able to curb few Nigerians who might have planned to revolt against the President-elect. The deontic auxiliary ‘should’ is used as a weak form to portray caution on the part of Nigerians, who were excited about the election results never to disrupt the peace of their immediate environment in the process of celebrating their party.

Excerpt 142:

General Buhari **should** ensure that he leaves Nigerians far more united...

(Punch, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 143:

He **should** justify his victory...

(Guardian, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 144:

General Buhari **should** lead by example.

(The Nation, April 3, 2015)

In excerpt 142, ‘should’ which reflects a weak obligation is used in relation to the responsibility of the President-elect, but the strong deontic is used when reference is made to the promises the President-elect made during his campaign. ‘Must’ in this context, is used as a command. The obligation of ‘should’ is not as binding as that of ‘must’. It may be unfulfilled. However, ‘should’ is used in the discourses to point out the obligation of individuals in the country.

In excerpt 143 above, the speaker used the deontic modality to emphasise the need for the in-coming President to unite the Nation. He should see it as an obligation to build

the oneness in the country. The country was on the verge of division when the election was conducted. There have been increased discrimination among the citizens; no Nigerian seemed to trust people from other parts of the country. Boko Haram insurgency was eating deep into the fabric of the nation in the North, militants were perpetrating evil in the South-South and cases of kidnapers were imminent in the South-West of the country. Nigerians in the midst of these atrocities called the attention of the in-coming President to unite the nation. In excerpt 144, the deontic modality ‘should’ is used as an obligation on the part of the in-coming President to lead the nation by example considering the fact that nobody is above the law, both the ruler and the ruled are under the control of the law.

Excerpt 145:

The victory of Buhari **should** be seen as victory for Nigerians’ democracy.

(Guardian, April 2, 2015)

Some of those celebrating the victory commended result of the election. The deontic modal verb ‘should’ is used to portray an obligation on the part of Nigerians to see the election as a victory for Nigerians’ democracy.

4.3.6.6 Opinion that represents expectancy in nationalistic perspective and the use of modal auxiliary verb ‘would’

Hope can be said to mean a feeling of wanting something to happen or true and believing that it is possible or likely.

Excerpt 146:

Nigerians **would** expect to see the change.

(Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 147: ...the kind of change that **would** be ushered leading to social and developmental **rebirth would** be one that had never been seen in the country in the last 16 years.

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015)

The statements in excerpts 146 and 147 above were made by Senate Majority Leader, Victor Ndoma-Egba who pointed the awareness of the President-elect to the promises made by him and his political team during the electoral campaign. The mandate given to him was “change” from economic retrogression, unemployment, political instability and lack of social amenities to a government that would; sustain the economic development; put total end to evil perpetrators and corrupt people; encourage the growth of democracy in the country; provide the people with their basic needs, that is, good roads, health care services, create jobs and encourage foreign investors to establish industries in Nigeria; and build functional schools with competent teachers coupled with adequate materials that would enhance learning. Inasmuch, as these immediate needs of people are not in place, change would be the answer. The modal auxiliary verb ‘would’ employed in the excerpts above is used to portray optimism that the in-coming administration has the potency of performing better than the previous administrations.

Excerpt 148:

...General Buhari **would** live up to the yearnings and aspirations of Nigerians.

(Punch, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 149:

Buhari’s government **would** bring about the much-needed security

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 150:

The victory **would** detach the nation’s economy from its current bond to dollars.

(The Nation, April 1, 2015)

In the above excerpts (148-150), the use of modal ‘would’ indicates (political) commitment. The use of ‘would’ in excerpt 148 reveals that Nigerians are anxious to have a government that is ready to provide the basic needs of the people for them. The APC leader (Asiwaju Bola Tinubu) added that the President- elect, who hailed from his party APC would introduce common sense reform which foregrounded diligent, loyalty and socio-political reformation coupled with economic stability in the country. In excerpt 150, the President-elect would place more value on naira. From the speaker’s point of view, Nigeria has been a country that depends too much on foreign products, whereas naira has a lesser value in the stock market, which has been affecting the

economic strength of the nation. The speaker believes that the in-coming President would encourage Nigerians to start producing goods in the country, which will expand the economic growth of the country and detach it from its bond to dollars.

4.3.6.7 Opinion that represents promise in moralistic perspective and the use of deontic modal verb ‘shall’

Promise is a statement that you will definitely do or provide something.

Excerpt 151:

... You **shall** be able to voice your opinion without fear of reprisal or victimisation.’ I **shall** work for those who voted for me as well as those who did not vote at all.

(The Guardian, April 7, 2015)

Excerpt 152:

...none **shall** be so above the law that they are not...

(Punch, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 153:

You **shall** be able to go to bed knowing that you are safe.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

From the above, the speaker reminded the President-elect the promises he made to Nigerians during his manifestos. The deontic modal auxiliary is used as a weak-obligation that the rule of law would seek to the protection of the fundamental human rights of the people in the society irrespective of the social class in the society. In excerpt 151, the president-elect promised that the ideas or beliefs of Nigerians irrespective of their social class/status will be listened to without fear of being harmed or punished for expressing their view. The incoming administration will not treat the people unfairly for making their views known about the political system organisation.

The President-elect was of the opinion that everybody’s ideas would be welcomed in his government. In excerpt 152, the President-elect promised Nigerians that he is ready to work for them; he described his victory as an opportunity for him to govern the country including the opposition party and those who chose not to vote at all. Also, in excerpt 153, the President-elect gave out his words that the protection of the people will never be allowed to be jeopardised by any group (Boko Haram) no matter how powerful they may be.

Excerpt 154:

None **shall** be so above the law...

(Punch, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 155:

...**shall** faithfully serve you.

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 156:

Everyone **shall** be seen as equal

(The Guardian, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 157:

I **shall** treat every one of you as my own.

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 158:

There **shall** no longer be a ruling party again.

(Punch, April 3, 2015)

In excerpt 154, the President promised that the rule of law would have its place in the country and the fundamental human rights of the citizens would be respected. The President-elect promised that none shall be above the law, when someone is above the law, such an individual can do or undo without being reprimanded by the court of law. Also, none shall be below the law that their fundamental human right would not be freely exercised. There will be equality before the law whether a citizen belongs to a high, middle or low class. The President-elect expressly promised that his administration would serve the country.

In excerpts (155-156), the in-coming President made use of the adverb ‘faithfully’ which implies that the in-coming administration promised to remain loyal in discharging his duties or responsibilities to the masses. The President-elect went further to generalise the fact that he would not only faithfully serve the country, but, that his team and everybody involved in his administration will remain loyal to the governed. Their call is to serve and not to be served; he promised that his administration will not be a ruling party, that is, a party that officially gives instruction on how things must be done or what is allowed rather, it will be an administration that would allow full practice of democracy in the country.

The excerpts (157-158) indicate a weak form of obligation. The President introduced deontic ‘shall’ to assure Nigerians that they will exercise their fundamental human rights. He promised never to discriminate against any party. In Nigeria, peace and security of lives is no more obtainable, people do things out of fear but to allay this fear, the President gave his words that there will be safety. He used weak deontic modal auxiliary verb to express his opinion concerning the in-coming administration.

4.3.6.8 Opinion that represents obligation and social responsibility in moralistic perspective and the use of ‘must’

Responsibility is a duty to be in charge of someone or something, so that you can make decisions and can be blamed if something bad happens. Due to the position the president holds in the country, he has some duties to perform.

Excerpt 159:

All hands **must** be on deck...

(The Nation, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 160:

Nigerians **must** embrace attitudinal reform...

(The Nation, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 161:

He **must** also keep the promises he made...

(The Punch, April 3, 2015)

The deontic modality used in the above excerpts denotes obligation and social responsibility of the people in the country and that of the President. The discursive issues in excerpt 159, charged Nigerians to give their total support to the incoming president. Another social responsibility of Nigerians is for them to embrace attitudinal reform. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic community, therefore, in order to maintain peace and unity in the country, Nigerians must be positive in their disposition towards one another irrespective of their various religious and ethnic backgrounds.

In excerpt 160, Adelaja employed ‘must’ as a strong modal verb to compel Nigerians to display positive attitude in their relationship with one another. There should not be ethnical discrimination among them, while in excerpt 161, Ogunlewe opines that the

President-elect should arise to all the promises he made during his campaigns. He sees leadership as a clarion call to responsibility, therefore, he uses deontic modality ‘must’ to pinpoint strong obligation on the part of president elect to perform his duties. The modal ‘must’ in the above excerpt expresses obligation, compulsion and assurance of confidence in the political system.

Excerpt 162:

Overall interest **must** be our priority...

(The Punch, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 163:

...security of lives and property **must** be enthroned.

(The Nation, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 164:

I **must** congratulate the outgoing president...

(Nigerian Tribune, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 165:

Nigerians **must** forgive Buhari’s past...

(The Punch, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 166:

Buhari **must** be fair to all.

(The Nation, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 167:

Systematic reform **must** be stepped up...

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 168:

All hands **must** be on deck to support...

(The Nation, April 1, 2015)

Excerpt 169:

Citizens **must** be made to understand...

(The Punch, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 162, the President–elect employed the modal verb ‘must’ to reflect an obligation on his part to render necessary service to the populace. Meanwhile, it should

be noted that in the opinion of most Nigerians, he focused his attention on the fact that there must not be any form of discrimination in his government. Also, the President-elect is also advised to keep all the promises he made during his campaigns because Nigerians are expectant; they want a government that will move the country forward.

In excerpts 163 and 164, Nigerians call the attention of the President-elect to protect lives, maintain peace and order and ensure the security of lives and properties; bearing it in mind that in his manifesto, he promised to restore an enabling environment for people residing in the country. The President-elect has the obligation to protect the people. The results of the election have shown both ethnic loyalty and the religion beliefs of the people in the country.

In excerpt 165, Nigerians are compelled to forgive Buhari all his past misdeeds, 'must' is used to depict a moral obligation on the part of Nigerians never to allow the past events to overrule the present. The Nobel laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka, in his opinion, posited that Nigerians must show a Nelson Mandela-like ability to forgive the past of the President-elect, General Muhamadu Buhari as an iron-fisted military ruler. From Wole Soyinka's opinion, he pleaded with Nigerians to live above the past occurrence. From his opinion, none of the party members is an angel, (APC and PDP) both are filled with corrupt minds.

In excerpts 167 and 168, the speaker obliged the President-elect to carry out a planned procedure that would cut across all sectors without any form of favouritism of one sector against the other. The national cake must be evenly distributed in order for him to justify to a good degree his fairness to the citizens. While in excerpt 169, the speaker described the situation in the country as a call for urgent intervention on the part of the in-coming administration to enlighten the masses in order to avoid discrimination among the various ethnic groups. The deontic modality 'must' is used to express the social obligation on both the President and Nigerians to allow peace to reign in the country.

4.3.6.9 Opinion that represents appeal in moralistic perspective and the use of deontic modality 'must'

Appeal is an urgent request for something to happen. The linguistic modality used in the following excerpts is ultimately used in order to persuade the citizens to forgive Buhari of his past misdeeds.

Excerpt 170:
Nigerians **must** forgive Buhari's
(*The Nation*, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 171:
We **must** forget our old battle
(*The Nation*, April 2, 2015)

When he was the (military) head of state between the period of 1983 and 1985, Gen Muhammadu Buhari failed to respect the monarchs of Nigeria's major ethnic groups. Therefore, Wole Soyinka appealed to Nigerians to forgive Buhari of his atrocities. Also, in excerpt 171, Gen Buhari urges Nigerians to forget about his past failures, while seeking for their optimum cooperation in order to have a smooth government. The modal 'must' in the above excerpts express obligation and compulsion on the part of Nigerians to forgive and forget about the past.

4.3.6.10 Opinions that represent justices and fairness in moralistic perspective and the use of deontic modal verbs “must”, “would”, “will” and “should”

Excerpt 172:
...individual members in particular then whatever post we hold, we **must** be subjected to the rule of law.
(*Leadership*, March 2, 2019)

Excerpt 173:
...Meanwhile they **would** have started calling their principal as Mr President.
(*The Guardian*, February 27, 2019)

Excerpt 174:
God **probably** wants to bless some of them too.
(*The Nation*, March 2, 2019)

The speaker using the grammatical modality “must” expresses strong obligation on the part of the incoming-president to make positive impact during his tenure in office. The speaker is of the opinion that infringement of fundamental human rights should be abolished in the country. Irrespective of people's status, caliber and political stands, everybody must be subjected to the rule of law. No citizen should be placed above the law. In excerpt 173, the speaker refers to the supporters of PDP candidates and reflecting their deposition through the deployment of the modal “would” to the presidential candidate. In the excerpt, the speaker revealed the deceitful nature of the party members.

Despite the fact that the possibility of their presidential candidate to become the next president in the country is very slim, yet, they continue to address him as “Mr President” with the use of grammatical modality “would”, pragmatically implies that the followers wanted him to feel like the first class citizen of the country while they exploit him indirectly. In excerpt 174, the speaker deliberately includes the presence of supreme authority (God) to reflect possibility of the purpose of the people’s action. This modality is expressed by adjunct “probably” to unveil the ordained principle of superior being, over the people’s lives.

Excerpt 175:

The truth being that good governance **will** elude Nigeria...

(Vanguard, March 3, 2019)

Excerpt 176:

They have forever adorned themselves... the people **must** learn to defend their choice.

(The Nigerian Tribune, April 19, 2011)

In excerpt 175, the speaker is optimistic about the fact that Nigeria’s system of government remains poor for as long as the politicians fail to realise the strength of the people. The deployment of “will” is a pointer to strong modal verb showing prediction about the bad governance that Nigerians will continue to experience if they fail to acknowledge the political strength of the people. The speaker uses “can” to deploy “possibility”. The president can be voted out of the office and it is possible for the citizens to impeach him, in case of any misconducts. In excerpt 176, Nigerian politicians are mandated to stop the shedding of innocent blood during the election. The speaker displayed negative feeling towards the political ideology that has been incorporated into the political system. Nigerians have the right to vote for the candidates of their choice. The act of stealing ballot boxes and vote buying should be completely eradicated in the country. The use of strong auxiliary modal verb “must” is used to depict strong obligation on both the politicians and Nigerians, especially qualified voters should be given the leverage to perform their civic responsibility while politicians should project towards allowing people’s vote count in the election. That is, the election results must not be rigged.

4.3.7 Analysis of Transitivity (processes and participants)

Transitivity is used for investigating the quality of the ideational metafunction. It presents the basic for recognising the experiential import as articulated in texts.

Some of the verbal process in our data that explains what has been said about the presidential election results. Also, the verbal process helps in identifying who has said what and what has been said about the presidential election results.

4.3.7.1 Opinions showing violence and the use of verbal processes

This is the process of saying to reveal peoples' opinion to the political violence that was erupted in the country after the declaration of the (2011-2019) presidential election results. It typically encompasses three participants: the sayer, the receiver, and the verbiage. The sayer, the participants responsible for the verbal process, is usually but not essentially conscious. The Receiver is the participant to whom the saying is directed. The speakers have adopted different verbal processes to unveil their feelings towards the election results.

Excerpt 177:

I	have always said	this... the violence in the North is creating more awareness to many Nigerians
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

(*The Nation*, April 20, 2011)

Excerpt 178:

I	Suggest	Corp members from the South should serve in the South or their states.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

(*Punch*, April 20, 2011)

Excerpt 179:

These disturbances	you	Said	are more than mere political protests
--------------------	-----	------	---------------------------------------

Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage (quoted)
-------	--------------------	-------------------

(The Nation, April 19, 2011)

The speaker deploys verbalisation process to express his opinion on the post-election violence that emerged in the North. The post-election violence claimed about eight hundred lives; many Nigerians were displaced as a result of the insurrection. Many Nigerians are more susceptible of the risk of residing in the North. One could possibly conclude that the persistence occurrence of riot in the North has created phobia in the hearts of many Nigerians, especially those living in the other parts of the country find it so difficult to live in the Northern part of the country. In excerpt 178, ‘suggest’ is used to represent what is said by the first-person pronoun to bring to the fore that corps members should serve their fatherland in their respective states. The speaker opines that the corps members should be given the leverage of serving in their individual state instead of posting them out of their own states to serve. It was on record that many of Nigerian youths, who were serving in the North lost their lives in the post-election violence, which took place in 2011. This has almost annulled the purpose of the National Youth Service Corps that is, to encourage national development, integration and promotion of national unity.

Excerpt 180:

I	Suggest	Corp members from the South should serve in the South or their states.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

(The Nation, April 20, 2011)

Excerpt 181:

I	Call	on all ACN governors to be tolerant
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

(Nigerian Tribune, April 18, 2011)

In excerpt 180, it is claimed that the post-election violence was a mere protest. Unfortunately, the aftermath of the election protest resulted in the killing of innocent Nigerians and displacement of people living in the North. This is indicated that it was beyond being ordinary protest; rather, it was a deliberate act. The speaker uses second person singular plural to express the opinion of the speaker on political protest in the country. The speaker, in excerpt 181, uses the verbal process “call” to point the attention of ACN governors to the need for them to embrace peace and unity, and totally shun violence in the country.

Excerpt 182:

I	Suggest	Corp members from the South should serve in the South or their states.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

(The Nation, April 20, 2011)

Excerpt 183:

Soyinka	Stated	that is was unfortunate that those whom incited the crisis in the North were not remorseful, by judging from their body language
Sayer	Process: verbal	Verbiage

(Punch, April 19, 2011)

Excerpt 184:

Wole Soyinka	described	The post-election violence in some Northern state, it was well planned ahead of time.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

(Punch, April 20, 2011)

In excerpt 182, the speaker used the verbal process “suggest” to show his/her concern to the killing of corps members who were posted to the Northern part of the country to serve their fatherland. The massacre of these Nigerian youths was quite disheartening, which called for urgent attention. Also, in excerpts 183 and 184, Wole Soyinka’s view on the post-election violence, was that, the violence was well planned ahead of time. The initiator of the violence had pre-conceived what would be their reaction to the election results, especially, if it was not to their favour. The speaker was highly horrified due to the homicide of innocent citizens and the obliteration of properties. Despite the predicament inflicted on the affected Nigerians, the perpetrators of this havoc were never rueful.

Excerpt 185:

Galadima of CPC	Said	they can’t go to court and they won’t accept the results
Sayer	Process: verbal	Verbiage (quoted)

(*Punch*, April 15, 2015)

Excerpt 186:

He	Said	he was specifically dismayed by the ‘glee’ with which the decimation of human lives was carried out by rioter and the pitiless approval.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage

(*Nigerian Tribune*, March 3, 2011)

Excerpt 187:

Wole Soyinka	said	that the road to change is an arduous one
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage (quoted)

(*The Nation*, April 15, 2015)

In excerpt 185, the Nigeria’s constitution made provision for any opposition party that is not satisfied with the outcome of the election results, to file a petition in court of

appeal. In the case under discussion, Galadima of CPC was not interested in taking the matter to the court, but he was ready to take jungle justice. It was a clear indication of violence. In an ideal situation, any political party member, who is not comfortable with the election results is supposed to lodge his/her complaint with the tribunal but in this case, the party members have decided to take law into their hands. In excerpt 186, the speaker uses functionalisation to express the nature or degree of inhumanity to human in the society. The lexicons such as ‘glee’, ‘appalled’, ‘sadistic’ and ‘decimation’ are used to perform significant functions in the verbiage. The speaker expresses shock with the number of human beings that were killed during the riot. The adjective “sadistic” was used to qualify the noun “satisfaction”, which revealed the negative reaction of the perpetrators towards the death of fellow human beings. Also, in excerpt 187, the sayer (Wole Soyinka) says that ‘*the road to change an arduous one*’ the clause implies that much energy or effort is needed to attain good success in life.

Excerpt 188:

A critic	once said	that a good man cannot rule Nigeria
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage (quoted)

(Nigerian Tribune, April 16, 2015)

Excerpt 189:

Wole Soyinka	Calls	it the Nigerian way of dying
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage (reported)

(The Nation, March 3, 2011)

Excerpt 190:

The PDP	Said	it would petition the United Nation and other global democratic institutions on the role of military and for the killings of Nigerians during the presidential election
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage (quoted)

(Leadership, March 04, 2011)

In except 188, the sayer, being a critic, is of the view that ‘good man cannot rule Nigeria’. Although, concrete evidence was not given to support this assertion, one can

infer from the opinion that Nigeria is a complex nation, made up of people with diverse ideologies and political backgrounds. Excerpt 189 reveals the country’s electoral process as a pathway to people’s death. This assertion is evident in excerpt 190; the People Democratic Party (PDP), wanted to petition the United State for not saying the truth about the electoral process. Military were employed to scare and kill Nigerians during the election. This act is barbaric and discomfited, especially in any country that claimed to be practicing democratic system of government. People should be allowed to vote in the people of their choice(s), not being enforced to vote against their wishes.

4.3.7.2 Opinions revealing moral decadence and the use of verbal process

Decadence can be viewed as a state of worsening or decay, especially due to being exceptionally morally corrupt or self-pity. Moral decadence can be said to mean turn down, decompose and corruption. Political and financial corruption is considered as aspect of moral decadence.

Excerpt 191:

I	Say	a loud yes!	the traditional rulers have all embraced politics for it pays them handsomely
---	-----	-------------	--

Sayer	Process: Verbal	Adjunct/exclamation mark	Verbiage (quoted)
-------	--------------------	-----------------------------	-------------------

(The Nation, April 2, 2019)

In excerpt 191, the opinion of the speaker is expressed towards the focus-shift that the traditional rulers have exhibited. They have possibly shortchanged their monarchical responsibilities for political appointment considering the adverb used to modify the verb ‘pays’; “the traditional rulers have all embraced politics for it pays handsomely”.

Excerpt 192:

He	Calls	the 2019 general elections ‘the worst in Nigeria’s history’
----	-------	---

Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage
		<i>(Nigerian Tribune, March 15, 2019)</i>

Excerpt 193:

He	Calls	the 2019 general elections ‘the worst in Nigeria’s history’
----	-------	---

Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage
		<i>(The Nation, April 12, 2011)</i>

In excerpt 192, the sayer referred to the 2019 election as ‘the worst election conducted in Nigeria’. Some possible background to this view is in the fact that Nigeria’s democratic system has failed to improve on the electoral process in the country. Excerpt 193 reveals that Nigerians are no longer interested in the leadership quality of Buhari. One could possibly conclude that he has not measure up with the moral standard that Nigerians were expecting from him. President Muhammadu Buhari promised to fight corruption, but unfortunately, he has not been able to dutifully carry out the fight against corruption. The verbiage “say” is used to reflect the attitude of Nigerians to the leadership role of President Buhari, his inability to fulfil some of the promises he made to Nigerians.

4.3.7.3 Opinions showing good morals value with the use of verbal processes in moralistic perspective.

Verbal processes are the processes of saying which are expressed through the verbs such as “said”, “tell”, “promised” “say” and “expressed” to show the opinion of the sayer.

Excerpt 194:

He	Said	my ambition is not worth the blood of any Nigerian
----	------	--

Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage
-------	-----------------	----------

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 195:

He	Promised	The country free and fair election
----	----------	------------------------------------

Sayer	Process:	Verbiage
	Verbal	

(*Punch*, April 2, 2015)

Also, in excerpts 194 and 195, “said” and “promised” are used to make reference to the speeches given by Goodluck Jonathan during the 2015 presidential election. Despite the fact that president Good Luck Jonathan was the incumbent president, he went ahead to make an open declaration that there should not be any act of bloodshed in the country. His reaction to the election results was enough to enable Nigerians to realise the truth about politics, it is a game. Obviously, there would be a winner and a loser in any contests whether at the local, state or federal level. The 2015 presidential election result was the first election conducted in Nigeria, which has peacefully unseated the incumbent president. In fact, the positive reaction of president Good luck Jonathan. Jonathan supported his claim that “the blood of Nigerians does not worth his political ambition” Despite his agitation for peaceful co-existence after the announcement of the election results, some people like Orubebe still attempted to disrupt the peace of the country.

Excerpt 196:

This writer	is proud	to say	he was one of those who vigorously challenged that assumption by arguing for a system based on leadership alternation in our type of divided country
Sayer		Process: Verbal	Verbiage (reported)

(*The Nation*, March 20,2011)

Excerpt 197:

They	were told	that Buhari belongs to the umbrella which has become avery common emblem.
Sayer	Process: Verbal	Verbiage (reported)

(*Vanguard*,, March 19, 2019)

Excerpt 198:

He himself has expressed support for the idea of a
one-term presidency.

Sayer Process: Verbal Verbiage (quoted)

(The Nation, March 28, 2019)

Excerpt 199:

He himself has expressed support for the idea of a one-
term presidency.

Sayer Process: Verbal Verbiage (quoted)

(The Nation, April 5, 2011)

Excerpt 200:

But the president Said no, please don't do it

Sayer Process: Verbal Verbiage (quoted)

(The Guardian, March 29, 2019)

The speaker deploys reflexive pronoun (himself) in excerpt 199, to emphasise the position of the incumbent president on the idea of one term in the office. The verbal process of saying “has expressed” is used to unravel the speaker’s opinion on one term in office of the president.

In excerpt 200, the incumbent president reacted to the issue raised by the PDP and pleaded with them never to react negatively he said, ‘no please don’t do it’ the opinion portrayed objection and a polite way of commanding the people not to engage in action that would spur global crisis.

4.3.7.4 Analysis of the relational process

Relational processes deal with the process of being in the world of abstract relations. Relational clauses involve a connection between two separate entities. This relationship

is established through copula verbs such as 'be', 'seem', 'become', and 'appear'. Excerpts on relational processes which reflect violence in moralistic perspective are:

Excerpt 201:

It	Is		Particularly worrisome that the violence occurred at a time all Nigerians should be congratulating themselves for successfully holding a presidential election
Identifier	Process: identifying	Relational	Identified

(The Guardian, April 14, 2011)

Excerpt 202:

It	Is		a bad signal that rather than improvement on their attitudinal over election, politicians are still desperate.
Identifier	Process: identifying	Relational	Identified

(Leadership, April 15, 2011)

Excerpt 203:

Violence	Is		an integral part of Nigerians politics
Identifier	Process: process	Relational	Identified

(Nigerian Tribune, April 20, 2011)

Excerpt 204:

President Goodluck Jonathan	Is		acknowledge for humility
--------------------------------	----	--	--------------------------

presidential election to be tagged with violence and bloodshed. The presidential election caused division along ethnic and religious lines. The above excerpts are instances, which revealed the negative disposition to the election results while excerpt 203; unveil the ex-president's (Jonathan) positive reaction to the election results and his ability to douse people's tension in the country. Before the pronouncement of the winner in 2015 presidential election results, President Goodluck Jonathan had congratulated his opponent and strictly warned Nigerians, especially his party members never to initiate fight in any form. His ability to concede defeat has boosted or fostered the strength of democracy in the country. Jonathan had successfully displayed a character that portrayed him as a cheerful loser.

In excerpt 204, the ex-president Goodluck Jonathan was tagged as a man of humility based on his positive disposition to the 2015 presidential election results in the country. On the contrary, the speaker in excerpt 205 used the adjective "timid" to qualify the ex-president. From the speaker's point of view, the ex-president was not a well-trained politician, possibly that made him to concede defeat even as the incumbent president.

Excerpt 206:

It	Is	a huge opportunity to end violence and thuggery nationally in politics ...
----	----	--

Identifier	Process: process	Relational	Identified
------------	---------------------	------------	------------

(The Guardian, April 19, 2011)

Excerpt 207:

It	Is	Instructive that the entire election results were received with relative satisfaction
----	----	---

Identifier	Process: identifying	Relational	Identified
------------	-------------------------	------------	------------

(Nigerian Tribune, April 13, 2011)

In excerpt 206, the speaker considered the election results of 2011 as another opportunity for Nigerians to end negative reaction to the election outcome in the

Excerpt 210:

The North/South political dichotomy	Is	dangerous to the corporate existence of our dear country.
Carrier	Relational process: Attributive	Attribute

(The Nation, April 13, 2011)

Excerpt 211:

Nigerian politics	Is	still far from advanced democracy
Carrier	Relational process	Attribute

(Punch March, 28 2019)

Excerpt 212:

This 2011	Is	a watershed year for thuggery Elimination in elections
Identifier	Process: process	Relational Identified

(The Guardian, April 14, 2011)

In excerpt 208, the speaker makes it explicit that Nigeria belongs to Nigerians, not to any ruling party or politician. Therefore, the role played by individual would be of great impact, either to lead to the growth of the country or retrogression in both economic and political development. Also, in excerpt 209, the speaker points the attention of the president-elect to the fact that he was responsible to all the citizens, irrespective of their religion, ethnic group or political affiliation. In any country, where there is political segregation, it would be difficult for rapid develop to emerge. The moment the election results were announced in 2011, because it did not favour the opposition party represented by Muhammadu Buhari, youths from the North started protesting, which later degenerated into a serious violence in the country. From the foregoing, the

speakers in excerpts 210 and 211 put it forward that Nigeria is still very far from democracy, since people are yet to cast their votes without molestation and willingly accept the election results without protesting, which would relapse into violence. In excerpt 212, the speaker opined that the 2011 presidential election result would have been used to curb the act of gross indiscipline that the Nigerian youths have engaged themselves in. The killings of fellow human being should not be the aftermath of any election if truly a democratic system of government is being practiced in Nigeria.

The following examples derived from our data relates to how the writers have been able to depict the events and the fact is understood as one participant is configured with another relational participant that has to come from the same domain of being. The participants identified are the carriers; attribute: *the North/South political dichotomy, Nigerian politics, dangerous to the corporate existence of our dear country and still from advanced democracy respectively, identifier; identified Dr. Jonathan, likely a timid boxer forced into the ring by hardened promoters, Nigeria, for Nigerians and Nigerian only*. The writers have decided to use this strategy of pitching a participant with another. This is done in order to give the reader clue or semblance of what the situations during and after the presidential election may seem like.

4.3.7.6 Analysis of mental process

Mental process has to do with sensory verbs; it predetermines the meanings of feelings or judgment. Grammatically, all mental processes involve two participants: The *senser*, the cognisant being who is concerned with the mental process such as feeling, thinking, or perceiving and *phenomenon* that which is felt, thought, or perceived by the conscious senser (Martin et al., 1997:105). The tables below show the different dimensions of the mental process as found in the data.

4.3.7.6.1 Mental process that reveal corruption and brutality in moralistic perspective

Excerpt 213:

I	was worried	Not so much by your tone which was a dictate of its circumstance as by its apparent selectivity
---	-------------	---

and dictatorial
undertone.

Senser

Pro: mental

Phenomenon

(The Punch, March 9, 2011)

Excerpt 214:

I

know for sure

that even if Jesus comes as a man to conduct election in Nigeria because of our nature as bad losers, we will still reject the outcome.

Senser

Pro: mental

Phenomenon

(Vanguard, March 8, 2011)

Excerpt 215:

I

Feel

anytime people from the Northern region are killing South-South should be killing the people from Northern region too so their non-regard for human life will stop.

Senser

Pro: mental

Phenomenon

(The Nation, March 10, 2011)

The speaker deploys the word “selectivity” in order to show the poor electoral process obtainable in Nigeria. People are supposed to exercise their electoral right by voting for the leaders of their choice but the reverse is the case in Nigeria. The involvement of political fatherism has basterdised our political strength and fundamental human right, since some of the leaders selected to occupy political seat, have little or no genuine passion towards the social welfare of their people at heart, they eventually become dictators and never allow peoples’ view to prevail. In excerpt 214, the speaker is very certain about the nature of Nigerians, especially towards the election results; the people

are known for their reluctant nature in accepting the election outcome, most importantly, when it does not favour their party members. They said categorically that, if Jesus being the Messsiah, a righteous man who would not compromise his standard for any reason should be saddled with the responsibility of conducting the election in Nigeria, people will still complain of result manipulation. Therefore, it was not surprising that, despite how Prof Attahiru Jega relentlessly worked to conduct an election that was relatively free and fair through the introduction of card readers, people still complained that the election was not free and fair.

In excerpt 215, the speaker perceives high level of social injustice on the part of Southerners living in the Northern part of the country. The speaker used the mental process “feel” to reveal his emotions towards the incessant killing of people from other parts of the country, who are living in the North. From the above excerpts, “Know”, “feel” and “worried” are mental processes realised under the cognition type. The knowledge of the political situation in the country was acquired through the understanding that the speaker has about the political trend in the country.

Excerpt 216:

This 2011	Is		A watershed year for thuggery Elimination in elections
Identifier	Process: process	Relational	Identified

Nigerian Tribune, March 28, 2011

Excerpt 217:

Everyone	Knows	that the araba riots of 1967 which led to our civil war trailed the virtual discrimination of the political and military leadership of the North by the essentially Igbo coup of January 1966.
Senser	Pro: mental	Phenomenon

From excerpts 216 and 217, it is obvious that the reaction of both the Northern leaders and the Eastern part of the country was clear pointer to division in the country. The

mental process “want” as used by the speaker in excerpt 216 denotes intention of the leaders from the North. In excerpt 217, the speaker uses indefinite pronoun “everyone” to begin the statement, which was a deliberate involvement of Nigerians to recollect the antecedent of the civil war that took between July 6, 1967 and January 15, 1970. The civil war that lasted for thirty months had destructive consequences on Nigerians. This includes death, displacement of people and obliteration of public infrastructure both physical and social capital.

Excerpt 218:

It	Feels	like an election in which people were offered on an altar to mollify a god and make it easy for safe passage as seen in mythologies and folklores
Senser	Pro: Mental	Phenomenon

(Vanguard, March 25, 2011)

Excerpt 219:

No parent	will feel	happy to train a child from basic classes to tertiary stage only to have that child killed while discharging services to the fatherland
Senser	Modal Mental	aux/ Pro: Phenomenon

(The Nation, March 20, 2011)

In excerpt 218, the election is likened to the type that demands the acts of using human beings as appropriation or cleansing of an altar in order to allow free passage of the contestant to the corridor of power. This act of barbaric killing of innocent Nigerians, which include the killing of Nigerian youths that were, employed as the ad hoc staff in the state where they were posted to serve their fatherland; the Northerners killed the people that are non-native members and displaced many Nigerians. The election is

personified to act as the senser; “feel” is the mental process showing cognition and “election in which human beings have been sacrificed on an altar to appease a god...” is the phenomenon. The speaker deployed the use of “myth” and “legend” to unveil the strange behaviour displayed by the Northerners, most especially, the political thugs among them.

In excerpt 219, the speaker refers to the “parent” as the senser with the use of modal auxiliary verb and the mental process “feel” to reveal the emotional feelings of the parent towards the killing of their naive children. Apparently, no matter the level of loyalty any parent displays towards his/her country; it would appear absurd for such a parent to rejoice over the death of a child; whom he/she has trained from primary school to the tertiary level, only for such parent to witness the death of his/her child while serving the fatherland.

Excerpt 220:

They	Know	that denying Buhari’s victory would attract sanctions of unimaginable proportions from the talakawa (poor)
------	------	--

Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
--------	--------------------	------------

(Leadership, March 28, 2019)

Excerpt 221:

They	Want	to take care of their pockets so they do not lose out completely
------	------	--

Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
--------	--------------------	------------

(The Nation, March 25, 2011)

Also, in excerpt 220, the speaker uses the mental process of cognition to express his feelings. The speaker was very certain of what could be the reaction of Muhammadu Buhari if he failed to emerge as the president. The word “talakawa” is a loan word from Hausa language. The poor people usually depend solely on the rich people and see them as the only source of livelihood in the community. These set of people are typically oppressed and demeaned by the rich people, yet, they cannot liberate themselves. The

speaker was of the opinion that if the elected president has not emerged as the winner, possibly the “talakawa” would have disrupted the peaceful co-existence of the people living in the country. The “talakawa” ideology is prominent in the Northern part of the country, since the few rich are the benefactors to the poor people in the society. Therefore, they are ready to lay down their lives in order to protect the interest of the wealthy ones in their state.

Excerpt 221 refers to the talakawa group. They are too desperate to take care of their pockets. Despite the fact that their lives were being wasted in the process, they never gave up in the struggle for political power. These talakawa people are extremely poor; it is difficult for them to really differentiate between wrong and right. Their basic problem is how to feed their mouth on this note, they are ready to die for the leaders without putting into consideration the aftermath of their action on the economic and sociopolitical stand of the country.

Excerpt 222:

...I Think this is the first time where a contestant has called his rival to...

Senser Process: Mental Phenomenon

(*Guardian*, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 223:

I Think more in terms of the APC winning the election

Senser Process: Mental Phenomenon

(*Vanguard*, April 5, 2015)

Excerpt 224:

I Feel truly honoured and humbled that the Nigerian people have so clearly elected me to lead them

Senser Process: Mental Phenomenon

(*Punch*, April 2, 2015)

In excerpt 222, the speaker uses the cognition – type (think) to reflect on the political trend in Nigeria. The 2015 presidential election was the first time in which the contestant, ex-president (Goodluck Jonathan) had called his opponent to congratulate him. The attitude displayed by the ex-president was a clear picture of his high moral standard and value for human lives. If he had displayed negative reaction to the election results, his followers or political loyalties and thugs would have used the opportunity to disrupt the peace of the country.

In excerpt 223, the speaker concludes that he has seen the winning nature of the APC. It should be pointed out that in 2015 people were desperately looking for political change. They were no longer interested in the Peoples’ Democratic Party (PDP), the party has ruled the country for sixteen (16) consecutive years and they believed that they had nothing new to offer Nigerians again. As a result of this, Nigerians were relentlessly clamouring for “change”, which they had the political transition peacefully with the help of the ex-president. While in excerpt 224, the newly elected president Muhammadu Buhari reacted to the election outcome. He felt truly honoured and humbled with the attitude of Nigerians towards the election results. He has been contesting since 2003 before he won the election in 2015. Obviously, he had contested for four uninterrupted political periods before winning on the fourth attempt. He made a public declaration that the election result has really humbled him coupled with the positive attitude displayed by the incumbent president.

Excerpt 225:

I	Feel	Proud of the fact that it has come and gone peacefully...
---	------	---

Senser	Pro: Mental	Phenomenon
--------	-------------	------------

(The Guardian, March 5, 2019)

Excerpt 226:

Nigerians	Feel	a sense of relief that the elections have come and gone and we are still at peace with one another other...
-----------	------	---

Senser	Pro: Mental	Phenomenon
--------	----------------	------------

(Nigerian Tribune, March 5, 2015)

Excerpt 227:

I	Feel	proud of the fact that it has come and gone peacefully and the transition and inauguration are up and coming
---	------	--

Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
--------	--------------------	------------

(The Nation, March 8, 2019)

The speakers in the above excerpts deploy the mental process “feel” to express the attitude of both the president elect and Nigerians to the election results. The fact Nigerians were able to proof the international observers that have made certain prediction about the election, especially the 2015 presidential election results actually amazed everybody, because it went on smoothly without any record of death or displacement of lives and properties. The speaker uses the mental process of perception “feel” to reflect the disposition of the newly elected president to the election outcome. President Mohammadu Buhari made an open declaration of his state of being after the election results were announced. Nigerians have successfully displayed their national value towards human rights.

4.3.7.6.2 Mental processes revealing nationalistic perspective

Mental processes are deployed in order to unveil the psychological rather than physical action. The realisation of mental process is attained through the deployment of verbs such as “think” and “believe” from the purview of nationalistic perspective.

Excerpt 228:

I	Believe	that we have a genuine case of born-again democrat
---	---------	--

Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
--------	--------------------	------------

(The Nation, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 229:

I	Think	the priority of Buhari’s administration should be to pacify and try to mend the various cracks in the Nigerian society
---	-------	--

Senser	Process: Mental	Phenomenon
--------	-----------------	------------

The speaker in the above excerpts encourages Nigerians to persevere, bringing it to their memory that nothing is wrong with their land. The speaker also persuades them to desist from the acts of killing their fellow human beings.

Excerpt 232:

There	Were	sparks of violence following outcome of the presidential election
	Process: existential	Existent

(Punch, April 2, 2011)

Excerpt 233:

There	Are	millions of questions to be answered and our president Goodluck Jonathan must justify our mandate by ensuring that every drop of bloodshed in the carnage in the North is fully accounted for by instituting an intensive probe of event,
	Process: existential	Existents

(The Nation, April 4, 2011)

The excerpts above reflect the happenings in the country. The existential process type is used to state reality of the state of being before, during and after the election had taken place. The process types as revealed in the excerpts above indicate how violence disrupted the peace of the country immediately the presidential election results were announced. In excerpt 233, the 2011 election was conducted smoothly and regarded to, as the most credible election in the country. The post-election violence initiated the moment president Goodluck Jonathan was declared as the winner. The post-election violence claimed about eight hundred (800) lives and displaced almost sixty-five thousand (65000) people, making the election as the most violent in the Nigeria's history. The violence erupted by the notion that the Muhammadu Buhari, a northerner, should have won the election. The speaker opined that the president should probe into the matter and set up commission that would critically examine the factors that led to violence.

Excerpt 234:

There Were pockets of violence and avoidable death in some areas
Process: Existent
existential

(Nigerian Tribune, April 12, 2011)

Excerpt 235:

There Is no mouth or words of the mouth that can explain the injured hearts of parents that lost their wards in the xenophobic rage that took place in the North.
Process: Existent

(Vanguard, April 12, 2011)

There were records of violence in the country, especially in the Northern part of the country. The speaker in excerpt 235, opine that no amount of words can mend the irreparable loss or damage that occurred in their respective families. The pains inflicted on the families of the victims cannot be substituted with money or materials. The speaker compares the violence in the North to the xenophobic rage in the South Africa, which was the killing of foreigner like people from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Cameroon etc. They believed that people from these aforementioned countries were threat to their economic strength. The Southerners living in the Northern part of Nigeria were killed during the post-election violence, because the winner of the presidential election is from the Southern part of the country. Meanwhile, the Northerners have a political affiliation to Mohammadu Buhari, who emerged from the Northern, in order to display their political loyalty towards their leader; they resorted to killing of innocent Nigerians residing in their states.

Excerpt 236:

There Was no repeated and insistent statement from Buhari urging his supporters and security agents that this election was not do or die one.
Process: Existent
existential

(Nigerian Tribune, March 3, 2019)

The speaker was not comfortable with the disposition of the president towards the election, he never instructed Nigerians not to engage in any form of fight because of the election. The speaker expected the president to be assertive and firm in passing on message to the people.

4.3.9 Behavioural processes of transitivity

The behavioural process also features in the opinions of people on the presidential election result in Nigeria as it revealed sentiments in moralistic perspectives in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 237:

I would have said the same thing to him if he had won for onus lies on the winner to convince the rest of us that he is not given to such sentiment.

(The Punch, April 27, 2011)

Excerpt 238:

Soyinka also said that going by the figures available to him as a part of monitoring group, he believed that Jonathan won the April 16, presidential poll.

(The Nigerian Tribune, April 25, 2011)

Excerpt 239:

He said that the reports he had, showed the elections went well in most places with impressive turnout, except for incidences of underage voting, ballot box snatching and pockets of violence.

(Punch, April 15, 201)

The behavioural process type reveals the mental or emotional state as opposed to physical nature of actors in the representation of public opinion on the Nigerian presidential election results. In excerpt 237, the speaker is of the opinion that his declaration as the winner lies in the hand of the winner to say the real truth about his achievement. In excerpt 238, Soyinka openly declares that during the 2011 presidential election, Jonathan won the election. In except 239, the speaker portrays the election results as being free and fair in most states, but he concludes that, in some areas possibly in the North, there were cases of underage voting that is, a situation whereby people that are below eighteen years (18) are allowed to vote. Also, cases of ballot snatching and pocket of violence were recorded to unveil mental and emotional state, which reflected the behavioural process of transitivity.

4.3.10 Analysis of material process

Material process involves an action verb, an obligatory entity, and a participant. Material process has actor and goal as its participants, and there may be indication of circumstance.

4.3.10.1 Material process reflected social responsibility in nationalistic perspective

This is the process of doing something or something happening, involving an actor and a goal or the target that is affected by the action.

Excerpt 240:

Nigerians	were not allowed	the right to choose	our leaders
Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance	Goal

Excerpt 241:

A country	where the cabinet	will be	a team	of educated patriotic competent Leaders of integrity
Actor		Future tense modal Process: Material	Circumstance	Goal

Excerpt 242:

Nigerians	have proved	to the world that they cannot be perpetually predictable	as a failed nation state
Actor	Process: Material	Circumstantial	Goal

In any democratic nation, the citizens are obliged to perform their civic responsibility, which include their right to vote for the leader of their choice. Unfortunately, the citizens were deprived of this right of performing their civic responsibility. The speaker, in excerpt 240, uses the noun “Nigerians” as the social actor with the material process

“were not allowed’ as the process of doing, “the right to choose” as the circumstance and “our leaders” as the goal. In excerpt 241, the speaker believes that those who will be his cabinet members will be people that are intellectually competent to perform the responsibilities they would be saddled with. They must be people of impeccable character. The speaker used “a country” to serve as the social actor with the use of future tense, “a team” as the circumstance and “of educated patriotic competent leaders of integrity” as the goal. In excerpt 242, through the people’s vote, they were able to demonstrate to the whole world that they cannot be referred to as a failed nation again. Nigerians used their votes to vote for the leader of their choice. The right to vote and to be voted for was fully exercised by the citizens, which is their primary responsibility in any democratic country.

4.3.10.2 Material process revealed the positive moral

Excerpt 243:

Prof. Attahiru Jega	is becoming	an instant	international hero
Actor	Process: Material	Circumstance	Goal

(*Leadership* April 5, 2015)

Excerpt 244:

Jega	has demonstrated	patriotism and integrity
Actor	Process: Material	Goal

(*Nigerian Tribune*, March, 28 2015)

The role that professor Jega played in conducting a free and fair election in Nigeria was highly significant. He ensured that there was introduction of card reader, which facilitated a free and fair election in the country. It also enhanced the reduction in the acts of rigging election results in the country. Prof. Attahiru Jega, in the excerpt, is the speaker’s actor in the material process “is becoming”. This process shows the actor’s present status, with the circumstance as “an instant’ and the goal to be “international hero”. Similarly in excerpt 244, Jega is the actor; the material process “has

demonstrated” unveils the actor as a man of integrity who has the love of his country at heart.

4.3.10.3 Material process showing negative moral

Excerpt 245:

Only Atiku	Has the kind of money to throw away	On a dicey mission	As challenging Buhari
Actor	Pro: Material	Circumstantial	Goal

Excerpt 246:

Nigerian politicians are reputed to make empty promises that they know cannot be fulfilled.

(Leadership, April 20, 2011)

Excerpt 247:

It is a pity that my role model in women folk in Nigeria, the woman I referred to as Mummy Dora ventured herself into the dirty Nigerian politics.

(The Nation, April 27, 2015)

This implies empty or vague promises made by the politicians during electioneering period to the citizen. From the above excerpts, the speaker has; therefore, through a material process “are reputed to make” related the vague promises usually make by Nigerian political actors to failure to fulfil their promises. They are used to the act of cajoling people in order to gain political ground. In excerpt 247, the material process “referred” together with the pronoun “I” is deployed by the speaker to make assertion and clarity of intention and disappointment in his assumed role. The speaker stands as the actor assigning responsibility of a role model to “Mummy Dora”. These material verbs are used transitively to unveil the processes of transferring “doing” actions between the actor and the goal. The speaker regrets the fact that the person he has chosen (Prof. Mrs Dora Akunyili) has disappointed so many people, especially those people looking up to her, people that have so much trust in her ability to bring sanctity and sanity to our political system The speaker uses material process of action such as “referred” and “ventured” to make reference to the action performed by the speaker.

Excerpt 248:

I can be convinced that nobody should **rig** for you is not another campaign rhetoric intended to deceive the public and portray you as an innocent gentleman.

(Nigerian Tribune, March 5, 2019)

Excerpt 249:

He urged Atiku to reject the result because “the outcome was not the will of God.

(The Guardian, March 3, 2109)

Excerpt 250:

Atiku might have lost the election but his outing was no less remarkable. ...a man damaged beyond repair through intra party struggle...

(Punch, March 4, 2019)

In excerpt 248, the speaker uses the first person pronoun “I” at the subject position to show the speaker’s loss of total trust and confidence in the statement made by the president considering the statement made by the speaker. His opinion is that no individual should commit electoral fraud in order to win the presidential election. Despite the use of persuasive words, he is unable to convince the entire public as an innocent man.

Also, the so called “man of God” pushed the aspirant from PDP to reject the outcome of the election result, which produced the incumbent president that the overwhelming vote cast for the sitting president, which he urged not to accept the statement as being true. In excerpt 249, the third person pronoun “he” is used as the actor while Atiku is the goal. The speaker deployed the material process “to reject” to show lack of acceptance of the presidential election results because it was said not to be the “will of God”. In excerpt 250, Atiku is the actor and the material process, “might have lost”. The use of material process of doing is used to indicate bad antecedent of the party and the contestant, the speaker opined that Atiku who contested in an election has less political importance and has damaged his political career to an extent through the internal dispute that occurred through party that produced him, especially, the damage that the PDP inflicted on the entire country resulted into his failure to win the presidential election.

4.3.10.4 Material process revealed in moralistic perspective; violence

Except 251:

Nigerians have spoken and **no amount of destruction** can reverse the wishes of the people.

(Leadership, April 27, 2011)

Excerpt 252:

The **barbaric killing** by these **butchers** and their **barons** will continue to make the **nation** move **two steps forward** and **twenty steps backward**.

(The Nation April 26, 2011)

Excerpt 253:

We must stand up against **violence** and any civil disturbances.

(The Guardian, April 23, 2011)

Excerpt 254:

Those **promoting violence** are advised to adopt a change of attitude.

(The Nation, March 19, 2019)

Excerpt 255:

They **burnt** the **family home** of vice - president Nnamdi Sambo in Tindun Wada, Zaria in Kaduna state.

(The Nigerian Tribune April 27, 2011)

The people have expressed their feelings through their voting that no amount of chaos can sub-merge their yearnings. In excerpt 252, the unwarranted or uncivil way of butchery the innocent citizens in the cause of discharging their duties to their fatherland. This negative attitude will make the nation to be arithmetically moving forward and geometrically moving backward. Also, in excerpt 253, the speaker called the attention of Nigerians to the need for them to rise up against unwarranted chaos and destruction of lives and properties that has characterised our election in the country. The speaker uses the collective noun “we” to show the assumed responsibility on people’s part.

The demonstrative pronoun “those” is used in excerpt 254 to portray the people that engage themselves in the act of destroying lives and properties. They are encouraged to desist from the act of vandalisation and they should embrace peace and unity in the country or they should seek redress in court, instead of killing their fellow human beings.

Also, in excerpt 255, the violence led to complete destruction of vice-president candidate’s house, who was the sitting vice president of that time (Nnamdi Sambo).

This revealed the high rate of violence, which usually predominant our election in Nigeria. The above excerpts described the destruction of places of worship, killing and vandalism of sacred places and annihilation of properties in some other parts of the country like Niger, Sokoto, Taraba and Bauchi.

4.3.10.5 Material process revealed rejection of results in diachronic perspective

Excerpt 256:

One had thought Atiku **would** gracefully **accept** defeat and **congratulate** Buhari on his not-too surprising victory. That he did not do so, **opting...**

(The Nation, March 1, 2019)

Excerpt 257:

Atiku **failed to understand** that...

(Vanguard, March 2, 2019)

Considering the excerpt 256 above, the speaker opines that the antecedent disposition of Atiku has deprived him of the opportunity of winning the election. Going by the magnanimity in defeat that was displayed by the ex-president Goodluck Jonathan, one would have thought that the same quality was displayed by the former vice - president of the country. From the historic purview, he was too ambitious and desperate to become the president of the country. In excerpt 257, he refuses to understand the supporters of President Mohammadu Buhari are ready to support him till the end of his political career. Some of them would prefer to sacrifice their lives for the political gain of their leader. This contrasts him with Atiku who does not have political prowess and charisma that could trigger a great support from the people.

Table 4.2: Frequency representation of percentage of transitivity processes in the public opinion (Quantitative analysis of transitivity process in the selected data)

Transitivity	Distribution	Percentage	Processes
Verbal	22	28.0%	Tell, call, suggest, said, told etc.
Mental	18	23.0%	Think, believe, feel, know, want, etc.
Existential	7	9.0%	There, was, were, is etc.
Relational	12	15.1%	Is, was, seemed, etc.
Material	18	23.0%	Demonstrated, wasted, become, allowed etc.
Behavioural	2	2.5%	Convinced, believe, sentiment
Total	79	100%	

Source: Researcher (2022:160)

Table 4.2 shows the distribution and the percentage of each of the transitivity processes used in the excerpts. The verbal process is the most predominant process used by the public in their expression of opinions about the outcome of the election. Out of a total distribution of 79 processes; verbal processes are 22 which take 28%. This shows that both president and the people use verbal process of “saying” than any other process to indicate President’s commitment on social and political reforms. Second to this is mental process which has the distribution of 18 out of 79 and which is marked by 23% to express peoples’ perception of the need for good government.

The third on the rank is the existential process which indicates that there are political issues that have been in existence before the Presidential election was conducted; it has 7 out of 79 with 9% to express opinions that have been in existence. The fourth on the list is relational processes which are 12 out of 79 and 15.1% used to express the peoples’ opinion on the presidential election results and the aftermath of the election. The fifth process used by the people is the material process; it takes 26% out of 100% while the least on the table is behavioural process with 2 out of 79, which has 2.5%

4.3.11 Mood and modality system

Language is a way of reflecting experience and reality (experiential meaning) on the one hand, and expression of way of acting (interpersonal meaning) on the other hand. It has been experimented in previous sections of this chapter that modality is not completely constrained to modal auxiliary (or semi-auxiliary) verbs. Some of the other modal elements include adjectives (e.g. necessary, possible etc.), participles (e.g. alleged, demanded, etc.), lexical verbs (e.g. wonder, order, etc.), adverbs (e.g. perhaps, obviously, etc.). A number of clauses in our data are analysed below. The focus of this analysis will be on how the writers interact with readers through mood choices and modality. First, the use of declarative clauses is examined as they reflect readers’ opinions judgments on the presidential elections.

Subject Finite/Predicator

(*Punch*, March 12, 2011)

Excerpt 263:

This is telling rejection

Subject Finite/Predicator

(*The Nation*, February, 28, 2011)

Excerpt 264:

He Was Portrayed during his campaign as a candidate of national unity and consensus.

Subject Finite Predicator

(*Vanguard*, April 20, 2011)

Excerpt 265:

We Can Speak of free and fair election today

Subject Finite Predicator

(*Guardian*, March 5, 2011)

Excerpt 266:

He Repeated this on different occasions

Subject Predicator

(*The Nation*, March 3, 2019)

Excerpt 267:

He Warned politicians repeatedly not to rig for him

Subject Predicator

(*The Punch*, March 7, 2019)

Excerpt 268:

This will be a good starting point in our quest for genuine national electoral renaissance

Subject Modal/ Finite

(Nigerian Tribune, March 8, 2019)

Excerpt 269:

A former National Described The victory as a huge victory for all
Secretary of the PDP, Nigerians
Olagunsoye Oyinlola

Subject Predicator

(The Punch, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 270:

I Promised the country free and fair election

Subject Predicator

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 271:

PDP should be Celebrating rather than mourning

Subject Modal/Finite Predicator

(The Guardian, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 272:

History Will Remember him for his political maturity

Subject Modal/Finite Predicator

(The Nation, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 273:

The APC also confirmed the historic call

Subject Predictor

(Vanguard, April 2, 2015)

4.3.11.2 Interrogative clauses

In the interrogative structure, the positions of a finite operator and subject are reversed; the predicator and the rest constituents of the clause remain the same. A question can be open-ended or close-ended. It is open-ended when it searches for missing information in an indefinite manner. This type of question is known as WH question. A question is closed-ended when what the speaker wants to know is the POLARITY “yes or no”. The inversion of subject –operator is the same as for the Yes/No type, except when ‘who’ functions as subject. It does this by stating a time position, through tense, or by communicating the feelings of the speaker, through tense, or by expressing an attitude through modality. From the examples below, the interrogative structures are used to question the authenticity of the election results, the motif and the point of view of the actors and institutions involved in the issues about the presidential election.

Excerpt 274:

Should we then assume that the improvements achieved in this zone by the PDP were down to its rigging prowess?

(Guardian, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 275:

But **can’t** we learn from the previous mistakes and avoid making the same mistake?

(The Nation, March 16, 2019)

Excerpt 276:

Must mistake be made in every election conducted in Nigeria?

(Vanguard, March 15, 2019)

Excerpt 277:

Must ballot boxes be snatched in every election?

(Nigerian Tribune, Feb. 29, 2019)

Excerpt 278:

Why always conducting elections in a manner that would make people go to court to seek for redress?

(The Punch, March 20, 201)

Excerpt 279:

Why aren’t we rebelling every single day considering the fact that about ninety-eight percent of Nigerians cannot adequately feed and decently live under the present system?

Excerpt 280:

If political position is about service alone, then why must one shed blood to retain it?

(The Nation, March 2, 2011)

Excerpt 281:

Why must the mandate of the winner of election be splashed with filth just to show that the loser had been short-changed in the process?

(Nigerian Tribune, March 2, 2019)

Excerpt 282:

Why must jobless youth be pushed onto the street to make the nation ungovernable for the winner?

(Vanguard, March 14, 2019)

4.3.12 Lexicalisation in public opinion on the presidential election results

Lexicalisation, which is recognised as wording by Fairclough (1992:190) deals with use of lexical items from various register fields, which can give hints to the opinion of the speaker. People present their feelings regarding the election results in diverse ways such as violence, bias, fairness and justice. Some other writers present the president-elect as the best president for Nigeria. The national newspapers analysed use lexical items to foreground the preponderant opinions on the presidential election results. Its key characteristic is the use of words which show the subject-matter as an unpopular idea. Based on the analysis, it was discovered, through linguistic means, that the letters to the editors, readers' comment and opinion's column represent their ideological connections about the disposition of people towards the election results as being bias; violence, fairness and justice as well as some social actors are corrupt. This is particularly perceptible as highlighted in bold characters in each of the examples given. The highlighted items are related to the other in each section and have a common perspective.

4.3.12.1 Lexical items representing the presidential election results as violence

The speaker engages some lexical items to project the presidential election results as being violence. These lexical choices are carefully selected by the speaker to unfold the

effect of the post - election violence on the Nigeria's political space in particular and the socio-welfare of the people in general.

Excerpt 283:

If **political position** is about service alone, then why must **ones use blood to retain it?** What a **colossal waste** to the parents of those young men and women whose only **offence** is that they have accepted to **serve our nation** as **polling officers**. **Violence succeeding elections** is as **old** as the **Nigerian independence** but one would have taught that **maturity** and **accommodation** of one another's **idiosyncrasies** would by now have become part of our **culture** but it seems that **despite** the **rhetoric** of the past, **no tangible lesson** had been **learnt**. ...the voices of those **senselessly sacrificed** to **appease** the **gods** of the **greed echo** from the **deep vaults** in the **commentaries** everyday...**hematologists** could **fetch buckets of blood** of **innocent Nigerians** from the **river of blood** of **dug by brutes** in **human draper** on the **streets** of Northern Nigeria. The usual slogan, which we heard several times from his **opponents** while the campaign lasted was “**songs of war**” such as “**Nigeria will burn**”, the country will **not know peace** and so on to the **extent** that **everybody believed** that the **impending election** would **signify** the **end** of a **united** Nigeria.

(The Nation, April 11, 2011)

In the sample above, the writers have been able to portray the attitudes of some politicians towards the political position. Most of these politicians are desperate and power drunk. They could go to the extent of killing their fellow human beings in order to retain political power. Also, the writer laments over the extremely large killing of people in the country, especially in the Northern part of the country. Most of the victims are members of the National Youth Service Corps who were engaged as polling officers. It can be said that out of a total number of one ninety- nine (199) content words in the excerpt 283 of them related to the theme being discussed.

4.3.12.2 Lexical items that suggest qualities of a good leader

Excerpt 284:

Unless political leaders are able to **demonstrate** that **kind** of **selflessness**...

(Nigerian Tribune, March 8, 2019)

Excerpt 285:

...**violence** in these elections has its **foundations in the leading candidates**...

(Vanguard, March 5, 2011)

Excerpt 286:

He also **warned politicians repeatedly not to rig for him...**

(Punch, February, 28, 2019)

Excerpt 287:

...an **incumbent president lost an election** in Nigeria. In line with his **promise, he conceded...**

(Punch, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 288:

He **barred** anyone from **fighting** for him...

(Nigerian Tribune, April 2, 2015)

Excerpt 289:

Jonathan also **refused to contest the result...**

(The Nation, April 5, 2015)

Excerpt 290:

...All these **efforts** from Jonathan **ensured...**

(Vanguard, April 3, 2015)

Excerpt 291:

leaders can **set good examples** that **will help strengthen the integrity** of our electoral **process...**

(The Nation, March 1, 2019)

Excerpt 292:

President Goodluck Jonathan is **acknowledged** for **humility**.

The above examples reveal the leadership quality of Goodluck Jonathan and the positive roles in played before, during and after the election. His positive disposition towards the election results help to reduce tension in the country. Those who wished to make trouble after the election results were released did not know how to kick start it since the most affected person is not interested in violence. The total content word in the above excerpt is 291 while the lexical items used to deploy Goodluck Jonathan as a man of integrity is 105.

4.3.12.3 Lexical items representing vote-buying, rigging or selection of candidate into power

Excerpt 293:

...such that **electoral victories** will be **rejected** as **flawed** on the **basis** of **rigging, bloodshed** and **killing**.

(Punch, April 21, 2011)

Excerpt 294:

...**extremely hard to change** the **political parties** which **decide** who will be on **our list of choice**, and the **small list** that we have had to **choose** from by **voting** has **hardly been impressive**.

(The Nation, April 19, 2011)

Excerpt 295:

...it wouldn't be a **Nigerian election** if the **loser** doesn't **cry rigging**.

(Nigerian Tribune, March 3, 2019)

Excerpt 296:

...the **police** and **military being** available to be used as **instrument** of **rigging**.

(Punch, March 5, 2019)

Excerpt 297:

...**challenging** the **victory** of the ruling APC ... all the parties were involved in **rigging** and **vote-buying**.

(Leadership, March 3, 2019)

Excerpt 298:

PDP will **shock**, maybe **stagger**, ...the military **collaborated** to **rig** the **election** for **president Buhari**.

(Nigerian Tribune, March 7, 2019)

Excerpt 299:

The **rigging machine** of the **ruling party** was **switched on**.

(Vanguard, March 8, 2019)

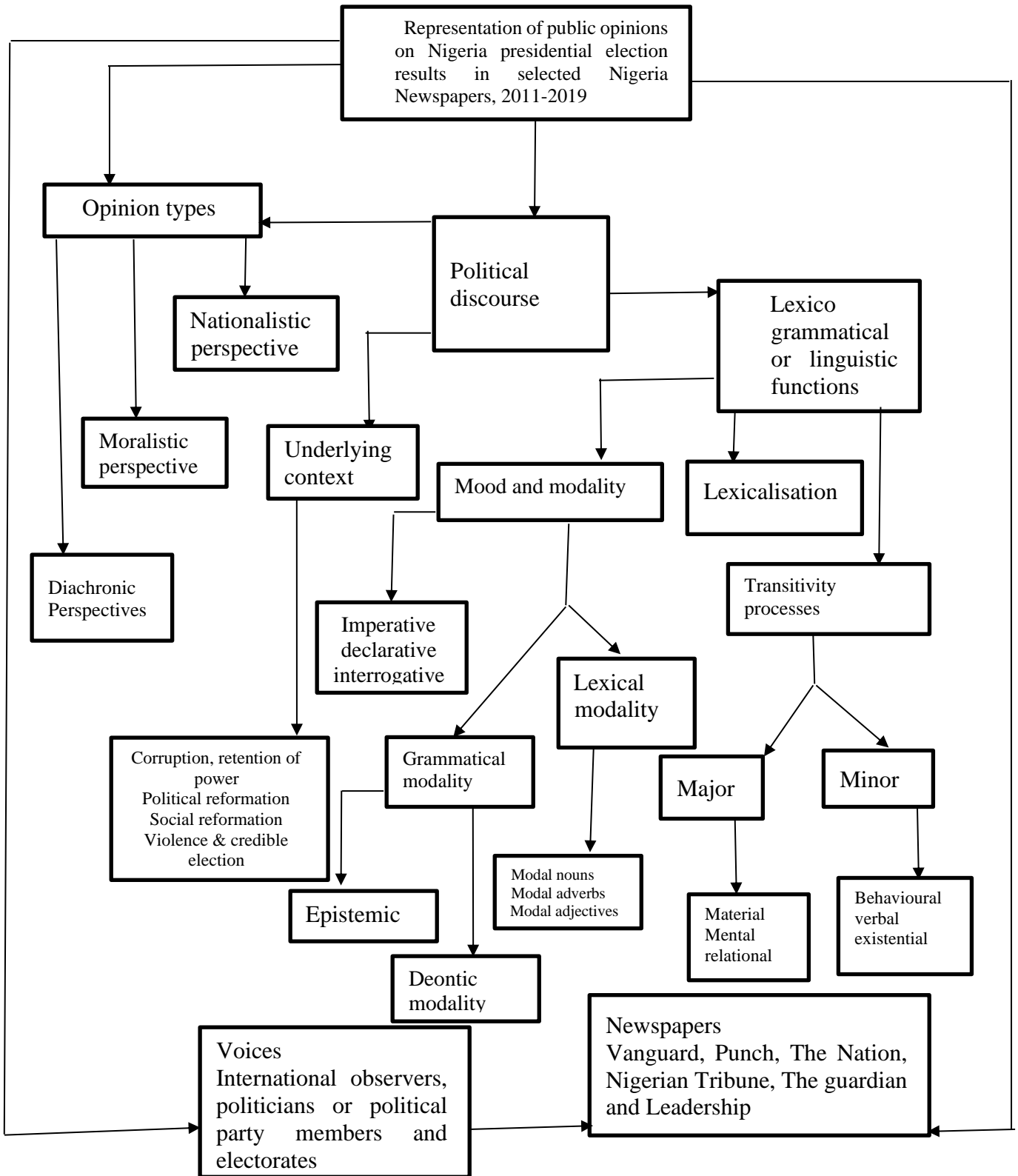
Excerpt 300:

... “**zoning**” and “**rotation**” because the **sentiments** and **emotions** that **conspired** in producing Goodluck Jonathan as an elected president...

(The Guardian, April 3, 2015)

In excerpt 293, the speaker deploys lexical items such as “conscionable” and “responsive” to reflect the positive attitude that a politician who is not fraudulent in nature should display. In a situation whereby power of incumbency would not dictate the tune of the election results, the idea of rigging and killing of innocent citizens on the ground of election would be totally eliminated in the country. Also, in excerpt 294, the speaker opines that Nigerians are born into the corrupt system, which was established by their progenitors. Apart from the fact that it has brought about retrogression in the political space in the country, the political structure is very difficult to change. The political god-fathers determine who will occupy the helm of political affairs in the country, which has bastardised the strength of democracy in the country. From excerpts 295-299, the election in Nigeria has been characterised by vote-buying and rigging the irony of the situation is the involvement of military and police in the act of rigging the election results. These military and policemen were supposed to be concerned with the security of lives and properties but the politicians engaged them to scare people, humiliate Nigerians and possibly kill innocent citizens in the process of rigging the election results; while excerpts 298-300 showcase the involvement of party members in the acts of rigging and vote-buying, this has advanced to the introduction of rigging machine in order to make it easier and faster for them to manipulate the results in favour of the ruling party or the next party candidate who will occupy the position.

Figure 4.1 Schema showing the findings of the study.



Source: Researcher (2022:168)

4.4 Discussion of findings

This study has revealed the deliberate choice of modalities, lexical items and structures of language used in texts and how they contribute to meeting the set goals of the speaker in the representation of public opinion on Nigerian presidential election results. Discussion of findings is done under the following sub-headings:

- a. the different opinion types used in political discourse;
- b. the contexts that constrain the public opinion types on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results; and
- c. how various linguistic devices used in the representation of the public opinions on the Nigerian presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers.

To start with, the different opinions types identified in the study are nationalistic, historical and moralistic. People expressed their opinions on nationalistic perspective, which is associated with peace and unity among Nigerians. This enhances sustainability of peaceful co-existence among the different ethnic groups in the country. Furthermore, the study reveals that Nigerians must see politics as a unifying factor, there must be a bond that exists among the three ethnic groups; irrespective of multiplicity, ethnicity and religious affiliation, all the tribes and religious groups are tied together under one name, which is Nigeria. This finding aligns with Lagonikos (2005) who also investigates public opinion using grammatical insights from systemic functional grammar in analysing the texts. In the same vein, it corroborates Igwebuiké's (2008) opinion because both examined linguistic choices used to deploy the plights of the masses as portrayed through the print media. However, this present study somewhat differs from that of Igwebuiké, in that Igwebuiké investigates ideology in open letters whereas; this investigates how public opinions are represented on the 2011-2019 presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers.

People express their views on the 2015 presidential election results as historic victory while the 2011 presidential election results was tagged as being violent. It is observed that in the political history of electoral process in Nigeria, politics has been characterised by violence, rigging, disorderliness and bloodshed; this therefore supports Osisanwo's (2013) view. Also, this study finds out that moralistic perspective unveils negative and positive disposition. The positive moral reflects commendation, sportsmanship and magnanimity and the negative aspect showcases corrupt leaders and power drunk

politicians. Ayoola (2010) is similar to this present study because it has generated public pronouncement in a manner that promotes two perspectives: the positive and negative also, the present study has generated opinions from moralistic perspective, which expressed both positive and negative disposition to the presidential election results.

In addition, the contexts that constrain the public opinion types on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results are corruption, retention of power, social and political reformation, violence and credible election. These identified findings are in line with the view of Sunday (2009) because both studies are on Nigerian election and the underlying contexts that constrain people's opinion on election. Both examined election in Nigeria from critical discourse analysis.

To crown it all, the linguistic functions in the representation of public opinion on the presidential election results in Nigeria have been expounded in this chapter. From the analysis, different opinion perspectives; nationalistic, moralistic and historical perspectives with different modal verbs used by the writers to unveil their point of view on the election results were deduced. It has also examined transitivity system putting into consideration different processes and participants. On the final note, this chapter examined the lexicalisation processes. The next chapter gives the summary and conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the study

This study has examined representation of public opinion on Nigerian presidential election results in Nigerian newspapers. This work is divided into five chapters. Chapter one serves as the introduction to the study, it comprises background to the study, the discourse on public opinion, language use and presidential election results within the Nigerian political domain. It explains further how people express their opinions using language as an instrument through which emotions, feelings, intentions and ideologies are revealed and influenced. This therefore helps the study to draw its aim and objectives, which are clearly stated, significance of the study, statement of the research problem, research question; which answers are proffered to in the study. The scope of the study is between 2011 and 2019 in which Nigerian presidential elections were conducted.

In addition, reviews of existing literature and concepts that are relevant to the study was done. The concepts discussed are politics, democracy, election, media discourse, public opinion and political debates and speeches. Also, the empirical review of literature on political discourse, media discourse, political discourse, political speeches political manifestoes and public sphere dialogue were carried out. Lastly, the theoretical framework, which entrenches Norman Fairclough's Dialectical relational model to Critical Discourse Analysis complemented by M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and Halliday's transitivity, is explained.

Also, the methodology, which comprises the research design, source of data, the sampling size and technique and analytical schema. Data for the study are drawn from six widely read newspapers in Nigeria: *Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune*, *The Guardian*, *Vanguard*, *Leadership* and *The Nation*. For equivalent sake, three hundred 300 opinions were collected. 50 opinions from each of the selected newspapers are subjected to critical discourse analysis.

Three opinions types are identified in the study: nationalistic, diachronic and moralistic. There are different contexts that necessitate public opinion; corruption, retention of power, social and political reformation, violence and credible election.

These representations unveil how grammatical and lexical modalities express peoples' attitude or feelings towards the presidential election result.

As a whole, this study has examined how various linguistic devices are used in the representation of public opinions on the Nigerian presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers. The identified various linguistic devices are lexical and grammatical modalities used to reflect people's attitude and inadequacies, condition for good governance, obligation and collective responsibility, heroic victory, sentiments, peoples' plight, volition, violence, justice and fairness, praise, expectancy, promise and appeal; all these are deployed to express peoples' attitude or feelings towards the 2011-2019 presidential election results in Nigeria. Suffice to reiterate here that the findings which are discussed in this segment are premised on the following answered research questions:

i. What are the opinion types identified in the selected newspapers?

Three public opinion types were identified in the study: nationalistic, diachronic and moralistic. The nationalistic opinion type revealed strong identification with one's nation. The set goal of people with this opinion type is to work in unity in order to boost the economic strength and moral standard of the people. The deontic modality "should" and epistemic modality "must" are deployed to express weak form of obligation and reflect the background knowledge of the speaker on the possible measures to take so as to maintain peace and unity in the country. The lexical items "battle" and "grievance" are pointer to the existence of political acrimony between the two major parties in the past; while the lexical item "forget" is used to suggest urgent need for reconciliation and unity among the parties and Nigerians at large. The use of strong modal auxiliary verb indicates compulsion in the maintenance of peace and unity. Interrogative statements are used to express bad influence that some power drunk politicians have dominance over the unemployed youths. Also, law enforcement agents are compelled to seek for the security of lives and properties, which will enhance peaceful co-existence in the country. The diachronic point of view reveals the systematic account of the political events in the country. The study reveals rejection of 2011 presidential election results, which leads to violence in some parts of the country. The 2015 presidential election results revealed the acceptance of the results and it was recorded as the historic victory. It was the first time in the political history of Nigeria that an incumbent president would be voted out of power. The opinions accentuate the moralistic perspectives which express positive and

negative disposition towards the election results and make affirmative statements to support the good quality of the ex-president. The moralistic perspectives reveal commendation on the positive note while lack of performance reflects negative disposition. The lexical modal verb “commend” implies need for Nigerians to appreciate and imbibe the high moral standard exhibited by the ex-president. The frequency representation of opinions on three opinion types shows a total number of sixty opinions, out of these sixty opinions, nationalistic perspective has twenty-six (26) opinions at 43%, which is the highest. Moralistic perspective has nineteen (19) opinions at 32% occupying the medial position; while diachronic has the least number of opinions of fifteen (15) at 25%.

ii. What are the contexts that constrain the public opinion types?

The public opinion types are found in six contexts: corruption, retention of power, social and political reformation, violence and credible election. Opinions on moralistic were manifested in the context of retention of power and corruption; diachronic opinions were used in the context of credible election.

iii. What are the various linguistic devices are used in the representation of the public opinions on the presidential election results in selected Nigerian newspapers?

Public opinions and context were discursively marked off by modalities: grammatical (epistemic and deontic) and lexical verbs, which are used to unveil peoples’ attitude towards the election results. Epistemic modals represent praise in diachronic perspective and reveals obligation and social responsibilities in nationalistic perspectives; deontic modals reflect expectancy in nationalistic perspective and moral viewpoint mirrors election results as being biased, promise, social obligation and responsibilities, appeal, justice and fairness. Six processes namely material, mental, relational, verbal, existential and behavioural are deployed. Material process of “doing” reflects social responsibilities in nationalistic perspectives, violence, positive and negative disposition to the election results from the moralistic perspective and rejection of election results from the diachronic perspective. The mental processes are associated with the emotional feelings towards the election results. The mental processes reveal corruption and brutality from the nationalistic and moralistic purview. Verbal processes express the processes of “saying” which reflects violence. Existential serves as the symbol for the existence of something, which is deployed in the study to construct violence in diachronic and

moralistic perspective. The behavioural process deals with human physiological and psychological behaviour. It reflects sentiment in the moralistic point of view; while relational process reflects desperation in the nationalistic and moralistic perspective reveals violence, obligation and social responsibilities. Lexicalisation is another linguistic tool deployed in the study to unveil lexical items that reveal quality of a good leader, rigging of election results, vote-buying and violence

This final chapter is arranged in these following sections; the summary of the study, findings, conclusion, contributions to knowledge and suggestion for further studies are encapsulated

5.2 Conclusion

The use of language in the representation of public opinions on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Nigerian presidential election results in the national newspaper has been examined and analysed in this study. It is observed that Nigerians expressed their opinions in different forms. Public opinions are represented under six grounds in the Nigerian context-democratic system, peace and unity, obligation and social responsibility, historic victory, commendation and high moral standard, the opinions presented in this study established that public opinions in the presidential election remain a controversial issue in Nigerian society and politics. Epistemic modality reflects the knowledge and beliefs of Nigerians about the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results. The study revealed that modal auxiliaries ‘must, should, have to, need to, ought to’, have been used to perform deontic function, portraying writers’ desires and the need to carry out certain obligations. They are used to emphasise the need for Nigerians and president-elect to exhibit joint effort in order to have a stabilised democracy in the country. Writers have used these modalities to point out the obligations of the states, religious institutions and the nation.

The analysis reveals that the textual representation of public opinions on the Nigerian presidential election results. We observed that the ideological presentation of language which facilitated better understanding of the opinions presented by writer(s) to the reader(s) or audience. This study has been able to establish the link between public opinion, media discourse and functional grammar; the discourse is socially constitutive and has the ability to affect the lives of the people. The public express their points of view through the media. These analytical objectives are crucial to the explication of

how the world operates about given social issues which have social, political and economic relevance.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The focus of this study was on public opinion on Nigerian presidential election results.

The reliance on newspapers for data restricted the study to only those who had the skills and resources to get their ideas published. That flaw meant that a vast majority of Nigerians who did not have the skills or the opportunity to send their opinions to newspapers house or even those whose presentation of their ideas could not meet the standard acceptable to the newspapers had their ideas not heard. Again, the ones published could just be a vocal minority who had access to the newspaper houses. These limitations, however, did not invalidate the finding

5.4 Recommendations

The analysis of the data showed that the 2011 presidential election was peacefully conducted but the most violent election in Nigeria. The violence was triggered by a belief that the opposition aspirant for the presidential election; Muhammadu Buhari, a northerner should have won the election which led to the killing of people and displacement of others. The 2015 presidential election result received positive reaction from Nigerians as a result of election credibility. While The 2019 presidential election result was regarded as relatively peaceful since there was retention of political power by the incumbent president. The presidential election results were regarded as being rigged when a party is not favoured and cases of vote buying and under age voting were discovered in all the elections considered. Based on these findings, the following recommendation are suggested.

- i. The two prominent political parties in the country, the All Progressive Congress (APC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) in conjunction with other political parties should must adhere strictly to the terms of peace accords they signed at different levels and openly warn their aspirants, members and supporters against engaging in violent acts during and after the general election.
- ii. Law enforcement agents should be extremely vigilant and ensure inciting opinions do not result in disrupting the peaceful conduct of the elections. In doing this, they must be impartial and neutral.

iii. Nigerian voters should be orderly, peaceful and avoid dangerous reactions during and after the election.

iv. Independent National Electoral Commission INEC, National Peace Committee (NPC) and other key stakeholders should educate people on the importance of peaceful conduct during electoral processes.

v. Government should work on the electoral reform committee (ERC) set up by late Umaru Musa Yar'dua in order to improve the transparency of elections by appointing reliable leaders to head the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Also, long term effort should be made in building a strong, democratic and peaceful society, based on the rule of law, accountability and transparency.

5.5 Contributions to knowledge

This study has many benefits to both the academia and the society at large. This is because study has been able to authenticate and recap the importance and significance of linguists and discourse analyst on matters relating to electioneering, media or other linguistic means. It has helped in the categorisation of opinion types based on the speakers' point of view. The study of public opinion on presidential election in Nigeria serves as a medium for Nigerians to channel their views regarding the political structure in the country through the media, which would cut across the globe in order to facilitate criticism on Nigerian politics. It is a tool for social and political reformation in the country. The feelings and attitude of the people towards the election are projected in the Nigerian newspapers. It was discovered through linguistic means that the letters of the editors, readers comment and opinion column represent their ideological connections about the disposition of people towards the election results as being; violence, credible election, retention of power, corrupt political system, social and political reformation in selected newspapers, which were analysed to achieve the objectives of the research.

5.6 Suggestions for further studies

This study has limited itself to examining the linguistic functions in public opinion on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 Nigerian presidential election results in the national newspapers. The study on the one hand, identified different opinions on peace and unity, historical victory, democratic-system, commendation and high moral standard associated with three perspectives that is, nationalistic, moralistic, and historical

perspectives. On the other hand, the study identified different processes and participants identified in the public opinion on the presidential election results in Nigeria and how lexical items are used to portray different point of view on the election. Further investigation could be carried out on how linguistic functions in public opinion on the 2011, 2015 and 2019 presidential election results are represented in online newspapers. This could lead to new discoveries in terms of what opinions are represented in such report and how they are represented.

References

- Adedimeji, M. 2005. Language functions and conflict management in Nigeria: a functional linguistic approach. *Trends in the study of language and linguistics in Nigeria: a festschrift for Philip Akujooobi Nwachukwu*. Ed. O. Ndimele, Port Harcourt: Grand Orbit Communications & Emhai Press. 187-198.
- Adetunji, A. 2009. The speech acts and rhetorics in the second inaugural address of Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and America's President George Bush. *Language, gender and politics: a festschrift for Yisa Kehinde Yusuf*. Eds. A. Odebunmi, A. E. Arua & S. Arimi, Lagos: Concept Publication. 275-296
- Agbado, C. U. 2008. A Speech act analysis of political discourse in the Nigerian print media, *Ikenga International Journal of African Studies*. 10.1:159-191.
- Akinterinwa, B. 1999. Nigeria and France, 1960-1995: the dilemma of thirty-five years of relationship. Ibadan: vantage publishers.
- Alao, D. 1992. *News reporting*. Lagos: Unique Publications.
- Alo, M. A. 2008. The representation of people in the news in the Nigerian Print media. *Perspectives on media discourse* Eds. A. Odebunmi, R. Taiwo & A. Adetunji, Germany: LINCOM EUROPA Publishers
- 2012. A rhetorical analysis of selected political speeches of prominent African leaders. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*. 1.87-100
- Amirian, M. R., Rahimi, A. and Sami, G. 2012. A critical discourse analysis of the images of Iranians in western movies: The case of *Iranuim*. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literature*. 1.5:1-13.
- Ayedun- Aluma, V. 1996. The role of the press in promoting democracy in Nigeria. *Nigeria: the mass media and democracy*. Eds. I. Ismail & A. Tunde. Yaba: Civil Liberties Organisation. pp 23-56
- Ayeomoni, M. O. 2007. Lexical analysis of select political discourses of Nigeria's military Heads of State. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Department of English, University of Ibadan
- Ayoola, K. A. 2010. The presentation of ideological perspectives on Niger-Delta discourse in Nigerian Newspapers. *Journal of Nigerian English Studies Association*. 13.17-32
- Ayodele, A. 2008. Turn-taking strategies in Nigerian legislative discourse. *Issues in Political Discourse Analysis*. 2.2:153-172

- Baker K. M. 1992. *Public Opinion Invention: essays on French Political Culture in the eighteenth Century*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Baker, P. 2006. *Using corpora in Discourse Analysis*. London: Continuum.
- Bakhtin, M. 1986. *Speech genres and other late essays*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bayram, F. 2010. Ideology and political discourse: a critical discourse analysis of Erdogan's political speech. *Annual Review of Education, Communication and Language Sciences*. 7.23-40
- Bazerman, C. 2004. Intertextuality: how texts rely on other texts. In prior, P. and Bazerman, (eds.) *what writing does and how it does it: An introduction to analysing texts and textual practices*. Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Beard, A. 2000. *The language of politics*. London: Routledge
- Berelson, B. 1952. Democratic theory and public opinion. *American Sociological Review*. 13.542-554
- Bell, A. 1991. *The language of the news media*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Berisha, I. 2006. *Media, agjenset e komunikimeve*. Peje: Media Communication Agencies.
- Bloor, T. & Bloor, M. 1995. *The functional analysis of English: a Hallidayan approach*. London: Arnold
- Bloor & Bloor 2007. *The Practice of critical discourse analysis: an introduction*. London: Hodder Education
- Bopry, J. 2002. *Semiotics, epistemology and inquiry*. Retrieved from http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Document/S4R/Sem_01-13.html (Accessed on December 15, 2012)
- Caffarel, A. 2009. A systemic approach to analysis and interpreting ideology. In illustration from French editorials. *Revista Alicantina de Estudios Ingleses*. 22.27-43
- Carvalho, A. 2007. Ideological cultures and media discourses on Scientific Knowledge: Re- reading news on climate change. *Publish understanding of Science*. 16.2:223-243
- Chilton, P. 2004. *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Chiluwa, I. 2005. Discourse pragmatics of news headlines and lead stories in Tell, The News and Newswatch. Unpublished PhD thesis University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

- Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. 1999. *Rethinking critical discourse analysis*.
Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Cook, G. 1999. *Discourse and literature*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Press.
- Couthard, M. 1981. *An introduction to discourse analysis*. London: Longman
- Crystal, D. & Davy, D. 1969. *Investigating English style*. London and New York:
Routledge.
- Curtier, W. 2009. A critical discourse analysis of media discourse on information
technology: preliminary result of a proposal method for critical discourse
analysis. *Information System Journal*. 4.2:175-196.
- Daramola, A. 2008. A child of necessity: an analysis of political discourse in Nigeria.
International Pragmatics Association, 18.3:355-380
- De Wet, C. 2000. A media discourse analysis of racism in South African schools.
International education journal. 2.5:23-45
- Declerk, R. 1991. *A comprehensive grammar of English*. Tokyo: Kaitakusha
- Dukor, M. 1998. *The state and the media in Africa* in Dukor (ed) philosophy and politics
discourse on values and power in Africa, Lagos.
- Dunmire, P. 2005. Pre-emptying the future: rhetoric and ideology of the future in political
discourse: *Discourse and society* 16.4:489-513
- Eagleton, T. 1991. *Ideology: An introduction*. New York: Verso
- Eggs, S. 1994. *An introduction to systemic functional linguistics*. London: Pinter
Publishers
- Ebon, M. 2004. *Broadcast ethics*; a paper presented at the general assembly of the
broadcasting organisation of Nigeria.
- Fairclough, N. 1989. *Language and power*. London: Longman
..... 1995a. *Media discourse*. London: Arnold.
..... 1995b. *Critical discourse analysis*. London: Longman
.....2001a. *Language and Power*. Harlow: Longman.
.....2001b. Critical discourse analysis as a method in social scientific research, in R.
Wodak, & M. Meyer (Eds.). *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (pp. 121-
138). London: Sage.
..... 2003. *Analysing discourse: textual analysis for social research*. London:
Routledge
- Foucault, M. 1978. *The history of sexuality: the will to knowledge*. London: Penguin.
- Fowler, R. 1986. *Linguistic criticism*. London: oxford U.P

- 1991. *Language in the news; discourse and ideology in the press*. London: Routledge.
- Gutmann, A. & Thompson, D. 1996. *Democracy and disagreement*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Guther, R & Mughan, A 2000. *Democracy and the media: A comparative perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haig, E. 2012. A critical discourse analysis and systemic functional linguistic approach to measuring participants power in a radio News Bulletin about crime. *Studies in Media and Society*. 3:45-73
- Halliday, M. A. K. 1975. *Learning to mean – explorations in the development of language*. London: Edward Arnold.
- 1994. *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- 2004. *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold publisher
- Halliday, M. A. K. & Matthiessen, C. M. 2004. *An Introduction to functional grammar*. London: Hodder Arnold
- Hardman, D. 2008. *Political ideologies and identity in British newspaper discourse*. An unpublished PhD. Thesis. University of Nottingham.
- Haryo, S. & Dwi, P. 2022. Representation of power and ideology on Jokowi's speech. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi*. 21.2:238-251
- Held, D. 1996. *Model of democracy*. Standford: Standford University Press.
- Henry, F. & Tator, C. 2002. *Discourse of domination: racial bias in the Canadian English language*. Toronto: University of Toronto press.
- Heywood, P. 1997. Political corruption: problems and perspectives. *Political Studies*. 10:417-435
- Hodge, R. & Kress, G. 1991 *Social semiotics*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- 1993. *Language and ideology*. London and New York: Routledge
- Hennessy, B. C 1985 *Public opinion* Duxbury press: University of Michigan
- Huckin, T. 2012. *Critical discourse analysis and rhetorical and composition*. National Council of Teachers of English

- Hyman, H. H. 1957. Toward a theory of public opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 21:54-554
- Igwebuike, E. G. 2008. A critical discourse analysis of open letters to President Obasanjo in selected Nigerian newspaper. An unpublished M.A project Dept. of English. University of Ibadan.
- Iwatomo, N. 2007. *Modality and point of view in media discourse*. Retrieved January 16, 2016 from <http://human.kanagwa.ac.jp/~16308>.
- Iwatomo, N. 2007. *Modality and point of view: a contrastive analysis of Japanese wartime and peacetime newspaper course Edinburgh working papers in applied linguistics*; university of Edinburgh 9:17-41
- Jason, P. 1996 The Nigerian Press today' Journalism in Nigeria: Issues and perspectives. Eds. Dare, O and Uyo, A. Lagos NUJ Lagos State Council.
- Kress, G & Leeuwen T. V. 2006. *Reading images*. New York: Routledge
- Limani, S. 2006. *Media and democracy*. University press.,
- Luu, C. 2016. The linguistics of mass persuasion: how politicians make 'fetch' happen (part 1). *JSTOR Daily*. 2.1:2-9
- Medubi, O. 2008. Cognitive strategies in German and Nigerian Political Cartoons. *Issues in Political Discourse Analysis*. 2.2:121-152
- Machin, D. 2007. *Introduction of multimodal analysis*. London: Arnold Press
- Noelle-Neuman, E. 1979. Public opinion and the classical tradition. *Opinion Quarterly*. 43:143-156
- Oha, O. 1994. *Language in war situation: A stylistic study of war speeches of Yakubu Gowon and Ojukwu*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Okolo, C. B. 1993. African social and political philosophy: the challenges facing the mass media in Nigeria transition to civil rules; in Agba (ed) *Journal of Liberal Studies*. 6.1:43-56
- Okpanachi, M.T 2009. Discourse analysis of President Obasanjo's National address on the Nigerian Labour Congress on 8th October, 2003. Odebunmi etal (eds). *Language, gender and politics: A festschrift for Yisa Kehinde Yusuf*. Lagos: Concept Publication. 313-326.

- Olowe, J. O. 1993. *Language and ideology in Nigerian newspapers in the English medium*. Ph.D. Thesis, Dept. of English. Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife.
- Oladeji, N. 1991. Language and political evolution in Africa: A case study of some Yoruba political songs. *Ife Annals of the Institute of Cultural Studies*, 19-35
- Olaosun, I. E. 2006. *Language and visuality in selected commodity advertisement in some Nigerian newspaper*. PhD thesis, Dept. of English, University of Ibadan.
- Opeibi, B.2009. *Discourse, politics and the 1993 presidential election campaigns in Nigeria: A re-invention of June 12 Legacy*. Lagos: Nouvelle Communications Limited.
- Olateju, M.A 2004. *Discourse analysis; Analysis discourse in the ESL Classroom: Ile- Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press*.
- Osisanwo, A. 2011 *Language and ideology in news magazines' representation of Nigeria's 2003 and 2007 general elections*. PhD thesis, Dept. of English, University of Ibadan.
- 2012 "Conversationalisation of discourse in *Tell and The news'* representation of Nigerian General Election (NGE) Working papers: journal of English, University of Port Harcourt. 5.1:166-185
- 2013 Discourse representation in news stories on Obasanjo's third- term plot in TELL and THE NEWS. *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic studies*.
- Osisanwo, W. 1991. Detecting bias in newspaper reporting: a comparative analysis of reporting styles in English. *Topical issues in communication arts*. Ed. O. Solomon. Uyo: Modern Business Press Books Ltd. pp 52-74.
- Oyeleye, L. & Osisanwo, A. 2013a. Expression of ideologies in the media representation of the 2003 and 2007 General Election in Nigeria. *Discourse and society*. 24.6:
-2013b. Lexicalisation in media Representation of the 2003 and 2007 General Election in Nigeria. *World Journal of English language*. 3.2:
- Palmer P.A. 1936. *Public Opinion in political theory, Essays in History and Political Theory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pethe, R. 2018. Why should public opinion matter in a country? *International Journal of Advance Research and Development*. 3.7:66-69

- Ravelli, L. 2000. Getting started with functional analysis of texts. *Researching language in schools and communities*. 1.27-63
- Taiwo, R. 2007. Language, ideology and power relations in Nigerian Newspapers Headlines: Published 2007.
- Schiffrin, D. 1994. *Approaches to discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Simpson, P. 1993. *Language, ideology and point of view*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Tejumaiye, A. 2008. Mass media and democracy consolidation in post 1999 Nigeria. *Journal of Arts and Social Sciences (MAJASS)*. University of Maiduguri: Maduguri.
- Thompson, G. 1996. *Introducing functional grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Valeri, M. 2010. The term politics reconsidered in the light of recent theoretical developments. *Scientific Journal (IBSUSJ)*. 4.1:39-44
- van Dijk, T. 1988. News as discourse, Hillsdale NJ: Erlbaum 1998a. *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage
- 1996a Opinions and ideologies in editorials: <http://www.discourse-in-society.org/editorial.htm> (March 8, 2013)
- 1998b. Opinions and ideology in the Press, Bell, A & Garrett, P. Ed. *Approaches to media discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- 1990. Discourse and society: A new journal for new research focus. *Discourse and Society* 1(1) 5-16
- 1993. Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse and society* 4 2 249-283
- 1998b. *Ideology: A multidisciplinary approach*. London: Sage.
- 2001. Critical discourse analysis. Schiffrin, D, et al. Ed. *The handbook of discourse analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell
- *Politics, ideology and discourse*. Retrieved March 18, 2013, <http://www.discourses.org/download/articles>

- 2006. Ideology and discourse analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*. 11.2:115-140.
- Widdowson, H. 2000. *Linguistics*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Press.
- Wodak, R. & Cillia, R. 2006. Politics and language: overview. *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*. 6.707-719
- Xing, Y. 2013. *Language and state: an inquiry into the progress of civilization*. U.S: University Press of America.
- Yule, G. 2000. *Pragmatics*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Press.